

Communication from Public

Name: Angela Lightfoot

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Council File No: 14-0499-S5

Comments for Public Posting: To: Los Angeles City Council members The attached file contains my comments to Councilman Paul Koretz's office on August 21st regarding the proposed grant for the Uplift Melrose Project and the lack of outreach to residents, lack of any traffic and transportation studies and inadequate planning on a project of this magnitude that changes a major traffic artery and impacts the residential streets and business owners permanently. Respectfully, Angela Lightfoot Stanley Avenue Resident (Melrose/Fairfax district)



Angela Lightfoot <moneypennyla@gmail.com>

The Proposed Uplift Melrose project

32 messages

Angela Lightfoot <moneypennyla@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 11:40 AM

To: Councilman Paul Koretz <paul.koretz@lacity.org>

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Dear Councilman Koretz ,

Last week, I attended the zoom meeting of the MCCW in order to learn more about the proposed Uplift Melrose project. As a long term resident of the area, I wanted to know what it was all about and how it could affect this neighborhood. The proposal design as shown was lovely, and I wish I could wake up magically one morning and find that Melrose now looked like that. However, I also realize that this project could equally mean that I wake up one day to a nightmare of finding that my residential neighborhood streets are now far noisier, jammed with traffic , and full of parked cars from commercial customers and commuters looking for alternative ways to travel east and west. As they say, the devil is in the details. There were precious few of them in the presentation at that meeting, other than some pretty renderings.

- I think it is extraordinary that the August 11th meeting was the first public presentation for a proposal of this magnitude, where a main traffic artery is going to be reduced by 50% and a loss of parking by apparently about the same percentage. AND, that the deadline to apply for this 40- 50 million dollar grant is a month away – seriously?! What private sector business would even consider spending that kind of money without a good plan - why would local government? Is spending close to \$50 million on a less than a two mile stretch of street really a good use of taxpayer funds? I wonder how many miles of street paving could be done all over the City for that amount. Plus, it would seem logical that StreetsLA should consider repaving the section of Fairfax Avenue between Beverly Blvd. and Santa Monica Blvd. which is in absolutely terrible condition, **before** implementing a reduction of traffic at the intersection of Fairfax & Melrose.

- The late notification of this proposal to the public is unacceptable and sufficient outreach to area residents has not been done, has been overlooked or just plain ignored. The StreetsLA survey asks questions about sidewalks and bikeways, but nothing about traffic or parking problems. This gives the distinct impression that the MCCW, StreetsLA and Melrose BID are doing an end run around area residents & businesses to push this proposal and apply for the grant. It is my understanding that once a grant such as this is approved, no changes are allowed, so it is even more important for better consideration and deliberation of any plan. The Brown Act requires that bodies like MCCW take their actions and conduct their deliberations openly. It also further states that **“The people insist on remaining informed** so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.” I do not believe that the people have been sufficiently informed in this case and that a single zoom meeting with a small segment of the public (many of whom did not profess to be residents, just bike riding enthusiasts) does not constitute reasonable community input and was not sufficient for MCCW to even vote on the issue.

This lack of public outreach can surely be considered non transparent government. Melrose BID had email contact with many area residents last year in relation to the Stanley Plaza proposal, so they could easily have emailed many residents information about this. Flyers should have been posted and mailings done. On the Stanley Plaza project proposal, which was considerably smaller than Uplift Melrose, there were public meetings over many months to allow for public input. This needs to be done on Uplift Melrose as well. The September 15th deadline simply does not allow sufficient time for proper evaluation of this proposal, especially given the restrictions of Covid -19 and inability of people to congregate in person to ask questions and hold back and forth discussions. To the best of my knowledge, no further public outreach such as flyers or emails have been done since the August 11th meeting.

- As far as I am concerned, it is inconceivable to ask neighborhood residents or area merchants to make an informed decision on such a large project without pertinent facts, such as a traffic plan, parking plan, estimated construction time for the project, how merchant clients access their businesses during construction, will dockless mobility riders use the bike lane, who is responsible for ongoing maintenance and many, many more. If these plans exist, no mention was made of them at the zoom meeting. If such plans do not exist, that alone should be enough reason to demand that the parties proposing Uplift Melrose put in the work, do the research and planning, offer solutions and present it to the public. Only then can a plan be agreed to by all parties.
- If LADOT has not done a study of the impact of traffic flow regarding the loss of two lanes of traffic from Fairfax to Highland and the surrounding area, it is beyond crazy, is poor planning and in my opinion, negligent. Melrose is one of the more narrow traffic arteries in the area. Clearly, fifty percent of traffic is not going to magically disappear once it hits this stretch of Melrose and there will be significant impact all along Melrose and surrounding streets, but especially bottlenecks at the major intersections. While I understand that one of the objects of this proposal is to reduce and slow traffic and encourage walking along this stretch of Melrose, I think everyone needs to be realistic about what a reasonable expectation of “reduced traffic” is.

The Uplift Melrose proposal design wants to make Melrose the type of area that will draw more people when completed, which means there is a distinct potential of increased traffic from outside to the neighborhood, even if through commuter traffic somehow gets diverted elsewhere. Melrose BID’s own study last year showed that over 90% of people coming to shop on Melrose Avenue came by car or UBER. I surmise that while the percentage of alternate transportation users might increase, it is improbable that the majority of persons frequenting the type of shops on Melrose will come by bike, public transportation or on foot in the future. The spread of Los Angeles is simply not going to change.

- Given the recent looting and burned buildings on Melrose, it seems prudent to ask for an explanation of how this plan will impact emergency vehicles, including ambulances and fire engines. Have emergency services been asked for and given their input on this proposal?
- The Melrose BID, your own office, area merchants and residents already know that parking for Melrose shoppers has ALWAYS been a serious problem for the area. Uplift Melrose as presented, makes an already bad problem worse, and offers ZERO options of how to solve it. I am shocked that Melrose BID would accept a plan with decreased parking. The Melrose Avenue shopping district is a single commercial street situated in the middle of a much larger residential area along with two schools. The residents do not much impact the businesses, but the businesses certainly impact the residents. Residential streets absorb the parking overflow for restaurants, valet parking, retail stores and The Melrose Trading Post etc. Additionally, there are several blocks – Stanley, Curson and Sierra Bonita – that are not in any PPD, so these blocks would disproportionately bear the further burden of parking from this project, since they have no recourse to setting up parking restrictions.
- I want to state that I am not against improving Melrose. I would love to see it be a much nicer street for pedestrians and I think that many of the

improvements shown in the renderings would be wonderful. If a good plan that solves the traffic and parking and various other issues created by the project is presented, I believe the neighborhood residents and merchants might support it. Residents, who are the majority stakeholders in the area, deserve to be presented with a comprehensive plan that they can live with. Shame on StreetsLA and LADOT for presenting a plan that offers no solutions to the problems it creates and shame on MCCW for failing to perform due diligence and ask for those solutions on behalf of the residents they purportedly represent.

I would urge you to reject this very rushed and poorly considered proposal at this time and until such time as needed outreach to the neighborhood and appropriate studies have been done. I would suggest that StreetsLA, MCCW and Melrose BID all step back and take the time to come up with a comprehensive plan that offers solutions to the problems the plan creates, present it to the area residents with plenty of time to receive input and then apply for a Caltrans grant. That is the only logical, fair and sensible way to proceed at this time.

Best regards,
Angela Lightfoot
Stanley Avenue Resident

James O'Sullivan <jamesos907@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 12:22 PM

To: Angela Lightfoot <moneypennyla@gmail.com>

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There is a council file you should be placing comments into. Fix The City has just put something in but it may take time to get there.

<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=14-0499-S5>

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Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 12:46 PM