



April 30, 2023  
Dan Halden  
StreetsLA  
<via email>

**RE: Feedback on Revised Rock The Boulevard Options**

Dear StreetsLA, LADOT, and Council District 14 staff:

Approximately five years ago, The Eagle Rock Association (TERA) publicly kicked off our Rock The Boulevard initiative. We embarked on a series of well-attended community workshops and surveys to better understand the community's aspirations for the boulevard. Our volunteer board members and design consultant attended meetings with City staff to vet technical design elements. We ultimately arrived at a shared vision that included a side-running protected bike lane, a wider median, and various sidewalk enhancements.

We appreciate StreetsLA's enthusiasm for this project and the opportunity to provide feedback on the revised design options for Rock The Boulevard and thank the project team for continuing to iterate design elements based on input from the community. In 2022, TERA surveyed its members to seek an update on community opinion of this vital improvement project. The survey showed members overwhelmingly favored a side-running design and improvements that enhanced the sidewalk experience. Since 2018, our members have consistently communicated a desire for a safer, greener, more pedestrian-friendly, and more multi-modal Eagle Rock Boulevard. It is grounded in these shared community goals that TERA has the following comments on the current Rock The Boulevard options:

**Option 1 - Cycle Track:** This option provides a quality, protected bike lane, and other sidewalk improvements. However, Option 2 serves as a cohesive upgrade on this option, providing improved bikeway safety and reduced parking impacts relative to Option 1. Absent any modifications to significantly reduce this option's parking impacts, Option 1 may not be a viable option to advance.

**Option 2 - Hybrid:** Developed based on community feedback within Streets LA's Community Advisory Committee, this is the most viable design of the three options currently being presented and remains consistent with the original vision that the Eagle Rock community developed in 2018. Option 2 retains the most on-street parking and does not have the severe, concentrated parking loss associated with Option 3. Option 2 is also the only option that gives much attention to widening sidewalks for entire blocks

rather than simply at corners. Finally, Option 2 provides more sidewalk-oriented trees that will shade pedestrians on our sidewalks, where people enjoy outdoor dining, wait for bus stops, and walk to access homes and businesses.

However, there remains room for improvement. In our letter to StreetsLA dated November 3, 2022, we requested modifications to maximize the benefits and opportunities associated with this design. Unfortunately, only some of these recommendations were incorporated into an updated design. Since that time, Eagle Rock residents have developed a modified iteration of Option 2 that includes some of TERA's prior recommendations in what is being called the "Walkable Boulevard" concept. TERA has reviewed the Walkable Boulevard, and we see promise in this design, which is described in greater detail at [equitableeaglerock.com](http://equitableeaglerock.com). We ask that StreetsLA study this community-generated proposal or incorporate its key features into a revised Option 2 design.

**Option 3 - Median Running:** This design has improved and worsened since it was first introduced to StreetsLA's Community Advisory Committee. From the outset, this design promised to preserve nearly all existing trees and was estimated to lose only 17 parking spaces along the entire mile-long stretch of the project limits. To some, this was seen as a "win-win" situation. It was based on this promise that this design was further explored.

However, since this option was first introduced, the parking loss associated with this option has increased to 82 parking spaces. This option no longer saves the most parking and removes the most existing trees. Meanwhile, this option has reduced protection for pedestrians, particularly near Westdale, Norwalk, and Yosemite Drive. This option does not sufficiently reduce pedestrian crossing distances either. Parts of Eagle Rock Boulevard are 113 feet wide, and here Option 3 only reduces end-to-end crossings by 12 to 16 feet, depending on whether curb extensions are 6 or 8 feet wide. The conditions Option 3 imposes on pedestrians and businesses with its concentrated parking loss between Westdale and Fair Park are unacceptable, particularly in the context of the pending opening of Vidiots at the Eagle Theatre at the intersection of Eagle Rock Boulevard and Yosemite. Vidiots is set to be a major new destination within Eagle Rock. Option 3 unacceptably proposes eliminating all space for vehicle drop-offs on Eagle Rock Boulevard, pushing drivers and ride-share vehicles onto adjacent residential streets.

We also have concerns about the minimal separation for bicycles in the central section of this design. Initially, designs that TERA reviewed had locations where the median bike path offered zero protection to bicyclists. Now, the median path provides more protection than initially proposed. However, this design still only offers 5 feet of separation between the bike path and traffic on a busy boulevard where cars go 35 miles per hour for almost the entire length between Westdale Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. By comparison,

Options 1 and 2 generally maintain at least 10 feet of separation by having a 3-foot buffer plus a row of parked cars that occupy 7 to 8 feet. TERA feels the constrained conditions and impacts on Eagle Rock Boulevard, particularly between Westdale and Fair Park, make Option 3 inconsistent with our vision for a safer, more pedestrian-friendly boulevard.

In addition to the Option-specific comments, as well as the recommendations requested and questions asked in TERA's prior November 2022 letter, we also want to highlight the following:

**Parking Loss:** We are concerned that between the February 23 webinar and April 12, which included a window of time when StreetsLA mailed fliers to potentially thousands of nearby residents and solicited input on design preferences, the public was given an inaccurate understanding of parking impacts associated with Options 2 and 3. During the February 23rd web seminar, Streets LA staff communicated that Option 3 eliminated only 31 spaces, the lowest number of all three options while communicating that Option 2 eliminated 122 - the highest amount of loss. However, the graphics provided indicated that Option 3 lost 62 parking spaces, which would still only be seven more than the estimated 55 parking spaces shown as eliminated in that same graphic for Option 2. On April 12, StreetsLA quietly updated parking loss estimates, and now Option 3 is estimated to lose 82 parking spaces, while Option 2 is the option that retains the most parking spaces. Option 2 is now estimated to lose 61 parking spaces, half of what was communicated to attendees in February. Given that parking loss is a sensitive topic, the lack of clarity on parking impacts between the options is problematic and throws into question the results of StreetsLA's online survey. It is unclear how many respondents would have provided different feedback had they known that Option 3 would eliminate 51 more spaces than stakeholders initially believed and that Option 2 would retain the most parking spaces of all presented options.

**Clarity on Pedestrian Crossings:** We need greater clarity on how HAWK signals and crossings, in general, are expected to operate for all design options. A recently installed HAWK signal at Eagle Rock Boulevard and Merton Avenue has been widely criticized for its non-intuitive and dangerous signal operation that sees pedestrians wait over a minute for a walk signal. Will crossing signals proposed by Streets LA for Rock The Boulevard see the same operation? Will pedestrians be able to cross the entirety of Eagle Rock Boulevard in a single crossing at proposed HAWK signals, or will pedestrians be asked to wait in the median and be forced to trigger a second crossing to get to the other side of the street? Does the answer to this question depend on the option selected and which segment the crossing is on? TERA does not support pedestrian signals that prioritize driving speeds over pedestrians and would not support requiring pedestrians to cross the street in two separate phases.

**Wider Sidewalks:** All options need to provide wider, more pedestrian- and business-friendly sidewalks, though Option 2, in TERA's assessment, has the most potential to widen usable sidewalk space and reduce crossing distances. We ask that all options be assessed to determine if sidewalks can be widened to allow for more outdoor dining and public seating and reduce the overall pedestrian crossing distance on Eagle Rock Boulevard.

**Construction Impacts:** The possibility of extensive and disruptive roadway and sidewalk construction is a significant concern for existing businesses on Eagle Rock Boulevard. StreetsLA must clarify the duration, timing, and severity of construction impacts on the Eagle Rock community.

**TERA Surveying:** As mentioned above, TERA previously surveyed members, and responses overwhelmingly favored a side-running design and design elements associated with a side-running configuration. For example, TERA members believe adding sidewalk trees is more critical than median trees. When asked what the most important qualities are for a better pedestrian experience, TERA members prioritized separation from vehicle traffic and the inclusion of sidewalk trees.

At this stage, consistent with the original mission of Rock The Boulevard and our membership, TERA continues to have the most faith in Option 2 to satisfy the boulevard's diverse needs and improve the conditions for all users, including people walking, bicycling, taking transit and driving. Therefore, we encourage StreetsLA to study the Walkable Boulevard concept to determine if it can further improve upon the positive characteristics of Option 2.

Sincerely,



Greg Merideth  
President

cc: Nate Hayward, Los Angeles City Council District 14  
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