

Honorable Council Members, Staff and Other Interested Parties:

As a long-time Silver Lake resident who lives on Rowena Avenue, I am writing to ask that the Transportation Committee reject and reevaluate Council Member Ryu's resolution (11-2130-S4) asking LADOT to spend scarce time and resources adding traffic lanes in front of my home. This is a safety matter, pure and simple: I walk my seven-year-old son to school every day on Rowena. The street slices between Ivanhoe Elementary School and Camelot Day Care, and among the many homes and small businesses on the street are a convalescent hospital, a care center for the elderly, a fire station and a large Masonic community hall. My community does not deserve to be made into a commuter thruway with its concomitant safety challenges, high-speed drivers and pollution.

I've talked personally with residents and users of the facilities above, and people are livid. Despite traffic moving too fast as it is now, Rowena is a fine street with great walkability, good mixed transit options, pleasant businesses and predictable safety. The scores of families I've spoken with cannot fathom why anyone would want to press more traffic onto the street, even up to the curb. Imagine the terror in taking your child to school when cars are whizzing by at high speed. That will be the result of these changes if it moves forward.

It's my understanding that a small group of entitled residents went deep on this issue because they don't like cars driving on their exclusive streets -- the same streets built with my and your tax dollars! They complain about cut-through traffic that is currently dogging the city in all sectors, and they attribute the cause to safety improvements on my street, which is sometimes blocks away from them. Well, I can tell you there is seldom traffic here on Rowena: No boondoggles, no gridlock and no bumper-to-bumper marathons, and I've observed it at all times of day and night. What that tells me (and probably anyone else who connects cause and effect) is that Rowena isn't the problem.

Please reorient this discussion to helping the people concerned about their own streets make improvements to their streets. If they are worried about safety, make their streets safer. If they are worried about cut-through traffic, propose solutions for their streets, not ludicrous changes blocks away that will make my street a bad place to live.

Safety, safety, safety! Please also do something to slow down the traffic on Rowena. I see people struggling to cross the street every day to get to the facilities mentioned above, restaurants and shops. We need a crosswalk in front of the Masonic community hall, better traffic lights and crosswalks at the corners where all the parents walk their kids to school and definitely a reduced speed limit here with proper traffic law enforcement.

One final thing, I respectfully request that as public servants you heed the wisdom of those who served before you. The Rowena Road Diet was advocated by numerous citizens over the course of a half-decade, planned publicly through a variety of venues and approved in a major public transportation plan that received unanimous consent of the Los Angeles City Council.

Thank you,

John Engelke