



Eagle Rock BRT Project Deserves Fuller Community Engagement and Clarity

By Councilmember Kevin de León

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Dear Neighbors,

The NoHo-Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project proposed by Metro has reached a critical juncture and as your City Councilmember, I am obligated to weigh in.

During my campaign for City Council, I made clear that I would withhold judgment until the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was released. After its release last fall, I submitted a letter to Metro expressing my deep concerns about all of the proposed alternatives because none adequately addressed the variety of concerns raised by the Eagle Rock community.

Alternative F1, a center running option, removed a significant number of medians. Alternative F2, a side-running option, removed the bike lanes; and F3 only provided a single stop in Eagle Rock at Figueroa Street --- bypassing the rest of the community by taking the 134 Freeway.

Since that time, inspired by the Beautiful Boulevard proposal, Metro introduced a new alternative called “Refined F1.” This alternative is a side/center running option that reduces Colorado Boulevard to one lane each way east of Eagle Rock Boulevard.

I have long been a champion of clean transportation and I am proud to have authored SB100, making California the first state in the nation to

commit to achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045. One of the key strategies to reach this goal is providing high-quality transportation to major destinations.

Unfortunately, this particular project has divided Eagle Rock, a community known for its dialogue surrounding important issues and the neighbor-to-neighbor relationships that sustain our “small town” experience. This community has always been willing to actively participate in conversations about Eagle Rock's future as exemplified by Take Back the Boulevard and the ongoing Rock the Boulevard initiative.

The process by which Metro has engaged to solicit feedback runs counter to years of open and transparent collaboration between local government and the Eagle Rock community. At the beginning of the year, Metro shifted gears and after one Zoom presentation to the general public a new option emerged - the proposed Refined F1 alternative, and the sole meeting on this option did not present a full picture for residents about impacts.

I applaud the efforts of the community members behind Beautiful Boulevard for their outreach and initiative but it is inappropriate for Metro to attempt to use this work to fulfill Metro's own obligation to engage the Eagle Rock community. I would not be doing my job as a Councilmember if I failed to ensure that my constituents had the opportunity to learn about this new option, raise questions, and directly engage with Metro staff about what is being proposed.

I know getting to a full consensus will be nearly impossible to achieve but we must try to engage as many people as possible. In order to do that, residents and stakeholders of Eagle Rock must feel like they have had ample opportunity to review all new options; assuming that one meeting achieves this is unrealistic.

My request of Metro is simple - now that the county is on the brink of fully reopening, they must hold a series of well-advertised and COVID-safe in-person meetings that allow the community to understand the options

before them and where all residents of Eagle Rock can evaluate the best options and provide feedback. In addition, Metro should develop an alternative to the original F1 option that attempts to restore medians and curb extensions while preserving safe bike lanes and maintaining two through lanes consistent with feedback heard during the Draft EIR process. Metro should present both the new option and the Beautiful Boulevard Refined F1 option to Eagle Rock residents so that they can weigh the benefits of each.

I firmly oppose moving forward with an alternative for Colorado until Metro has held the aforementioned public meetings.

Regardless of where you stand on Refined F1, the lack of open dialogue and a robust discussion comparing alternatives has undermined the public trust and support. This is a huge and important decision for the community and should not be taken lightly.