

Melvil Street Permanent Closure Community Meeting

September 1, 2022

1. **Opening and Format by Yanni Demitri, Culver City Public Works Director (CCAD BID)**
2. **Presentation for the Culver City Arts District Business Improvement District (Full Presentation is Attachment X in the staff report)**
 - George Montgomery, President of the CCAD explained the history of how the pandemic led to the closure however, due to the pandemic, the CCAD BID couldn't really activate the Melvil block, noting that the original intent was to help the local restaurants survive at the time.
 - Edgar Varela, Executive Director of the CCAD discussed improvements to the area conducted by the CCAD BID including artificial turf, shade structures and some trees/lighting to make the area look better. CCAD BID hired a maintenance contractor who lives in the area to keep it clean and to water the trees. Noted that it is hard to plan events without the closure being permanent. Potential programming options could include artisanal market for vendors, and possibly a Farmers' Market. If full closure approved, then the CCAD BID can program its use to build the community feeling. Will be showing the space to potential users.
 - Lee Chernotsky from Rosie's and Board Member of the CCAD BID. Rosie's has been operating in Culver City since 2014. The closure will help the community grow and together need to design the space to help all "connect" the community socially and help recent businesses.
 - PowerPoint presented by Lee Chernotsky. Encourage the creative community to try "learning new things" and to learn from each other. Potential to call it "Melvil Park." It has become an organic space for people to come together.



MELVIL PARK

INVEST IN COMMUNITY

The time we are in is full of uncertainty - but we are 100% sure the time is now to make Melvil Park a permanent fixture of the impact the entire community can make together while Culver City continues to grow exponentially.

2020

CCAD Business Improvement District led community effort to activate the Melvil street closure \$25k spent on the existing improvements as well as weekly maintenance of the area CREATING local jobs.

2021

Temporary Use Permit and Special event permits secured for events supporting local collaborations between local nonprofits, business, and residents. Each initiative created access to work for people with disabilities.

2022

Approve permanent closure -
Continue investing in local by working together with Culver City Creatives to design and grow green spaces like this one that connect us ALL.



MELVIL STREET PARK



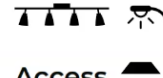
#melvil4people



Potential district wide sponsorship opportunity

Community

Opportunities to engage with local impact, industry, and thought leadership - Like only we can in Culver City!



Access

Accessible OUTDOOR and sun protected community program space to promote local collaboration and SAFETY.



Local Creatives

Digital and Mural artists, content producers, comedians, writers, musicians - this is for you!



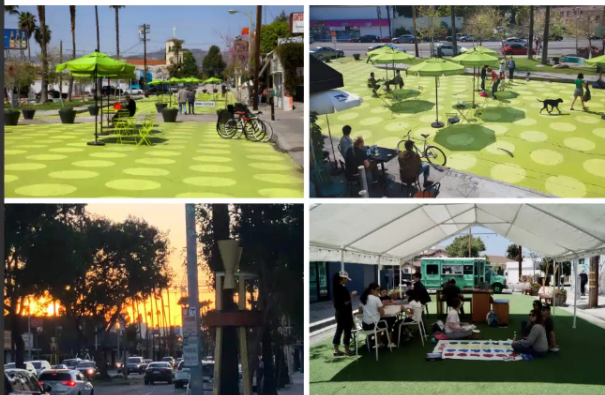
Local Business

This space supports local Non-Profits, Coffee shops, restaurants (takeout), Pilates Studios, and Production companies

03



MELVIL PARK



#melvilstreetclosure

COMMUNITY

Outdoor space, designed to connect local creatives, businesses, patrons, and residents with access to the opportunities Culver City Creative together!

Already happening in LA - Sunset Triangle Plaza

- 1 The segment of Griffith Park Boulevard that was transformed into Sunset Triangle Plaza was regularly being closed down for a farmer's markets. Additionally, it was redundant path for vehicles and the closure served to create a walkable neighborhood destination.

<https://ladotlivablestreets.org/projects/Sunset-Triangle-Plaza>

It's known as the "Sunset Triangle Plaza" seems to have been first conceived in about 2012 and made real by 2014. 8 years later it's still going strong.

- 2 Melvil Street Park has eliminated the traffic congestion that used to reroute itself from Washington Blvd onto the local streets including Melvil. It has also become a safer alley path for locals with small children riding to and from school with access due to less traffic. Additionally, it created a space for community to connect safely outdoors. COVID is part of our new reality especially those who are immunocompromised in our local community- It our responsibility to create safe spaces we ALL NEED here in the Culver City Arts District.

04

The Sunset Triangle Plaza (STP) photo is near Griffith Park.

Work to eliminate traffic congestion and accidents and keep community and riding bikes and seeing kids play in a safe area. STP closed weekly for a Farmer's Market, but the traffic access it provided was minimal, so they decided to close it permanently for the local coffee shop to use and a nearby café too.


MELVIL PARK

LOCAL CREATIVES

The Culver City Arts District is defined by our Creative Community. This small park within a vibrant commercial area that closes the street of to car traffic and converts it into an outdoor plaza and calm creative environment encouraging the community to stop and

LOCAL IMPACT

Impact this space has had on ROSIES since securing TUP

- 12 Apprentices trained to work across industries
- Over 5,000 hours of on the job training during a global pandemic for people with Diverse Abilities
- in partnership with:









#melvilstreetclosure



05

Edgar: Less cars, slower cars is the way to go for a modern city.



LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY IN SUPPORT-



01

Pilates Pod
 Signed petition of support

02

ROSIES

03

Cadfab

04

Brunello

05

TING

06

Helms Bakery District

07

Culver City Arts Business Improvement District

08

EK valley

09

Culver City Residence association

10

The Shay Hotel

Support Local

→

07

Lee: The EK Valley road closure area on WA Blvd should remain open and keep the road closed so they may continue to operate.

3. Community Comments

Ken Mand, Arts District Resident and Culver City Arts District Resident Association: Input with community is very important and important to have conversations for the potential of space. The Space could be very special and moving forward could be embraced by residents throughout the Arts District and make the area shine. Birthday parties and Farmers' Market can be held here, more art displays, and

with more input from the local businesses we will use it for other events and to display art. Apple is coming, Cumulus is opening up so we will have dramatic changes to WA Blvd. This is a special space. Believe we can mitigate challenges and annoyances and can collaborate with the neighbors to make it all work out.

Shona Paesel: Speak with multiple hats as an Arts District resident, mom who uses space and on Board for the Culver Arts Foundation. Space is special and a haven with during the pandemic. Able to spend countless hours beneath the tent and participate in the Pilates/yoga classes, which are a lovely experience. Community mural on the building walls is really beautiful and a special moment for son to participate. Witnessed restaurants/business using the space and it is great to see. I call it the “Marvelous Melvil Activation Hub”. Love the space and can’t wait to see what happens in the future

Eric Paesel: Arts District resident and the Melvil space has been a huge plus and is a silver lining during the pandemic. My wife attends the Yoga class there every Saturday. We don’t have a similar space nearby that we can program and be controlled by the Arts District BID, and they are maintaining the area, so I support it continuing with permanent closure.

Maria Mendoza: I live on Melvil, my backyard faces the alley. Why is Melvil the only one closed for use by local businesses, it isn’t fair without telling us or warning us first. It’s not a community space, we weren’t even told about it and are not allowed to use it either. Only one business benefits from it, not the neighbors. No one in our street taking benefit. No one on my street wants to keep it closed. I hate the loud music, and there is trash too. Parking is a big issue without it, especially illegal alley parking as a result of limited parking that blocks access to residents, including my driveway exits to the alley. There is a lot of homeless who are noisy themselves, and they are attracted there to have parties and hang out and they throw rocks and become violent sometimes. I started petition for my street to re-open. Why not close another street, not ours! I have a lot of stress and I visit a therapist as a result of the closure. My daughter is stressed out too and is ill and my son too.

Ali Lexa: As we lose more and more access to our homes, it creates even more grid lock and the only thing there is the Rosie’s van! No restaurants are using the block. They already blocked all the parking on Washington Boulevard and that has helped the restaurants, but not the residents. How about we close it once weekly for the Farmers Market instead as a compromise? Traffic congestion just moves to Washington Boulevard and doesn’t go away at all. The local businesses would benefit more by having parking for their clients. What about using Syd Kronenthal Park instead – it is just three blocks away! We were patient during the pandemic, but now we suffer more traffic gridlock as a result. We should be involved more in such decisions and we weren’t. Please reopen the block.

Michael and Susan Rosen: Susan – Thank you Ali, you said much of what I was going to say. Does any Arts District BID board member live off Melvil? . . . I didn’t think so. They won’t suffer the trucks in the alley, littering, and commerce near their homes. Closing Melvil is NOT a public space – use Syd Kronenthal Park instead and MANY hold events there, so why can’t ROSIE’s hold their events there too? I don’t see anyone profiting (aside from businesses) from your programming intentions. The art galleries and office spaces nearby are all available to use their own space to have such events, and they will NOT benefit by this closure. This is a residential block and the pile of illegally parked cars in the alley and in front of our homes is unacceptable. Rosie’s is taking the lead to govern this effort after subletting the space from Industry Cafe? I pay taxes! Where will people park for an event you hold in this closed block anyway? No parking is left nearby except in front of my home! There is a beautiful park nearby –

that is where events should be held, away from my personal residential property. I love the Arts and I patronize them this has nothing to do with art, this is all about Rosie's parking their Van on the street.

Michael Rosen: Rosie's had an issue finding a place to park their Van, and that is all this block is successful in doing. The Arts District BID I approached and said you took eight parking spaces away from us, why didn't you come to us residents and ask our opinion first? I see the homeless there all the time and it is problematic and unwelcome, but they love the closed road use as a haven. I have to shoo them away, and clean up broken glass containers, fecal matter, and trash they leave behind and our children are exposed to all of it when they go to school. None of you live on Melvil – You have a beautiful park only three blocks away, why not use it and it has on-site parking too. May seek legal advice if this proceeds This is a residential street and is not intended for commercial uses.

CL: (Difficult to decipher) "Codie", a Rosie's client. Wants to keep Melvil closed.

Kathleen Kurkjian: As a local resident, I found the presentation very weak – and it is missing a lot of information. I agree with the lack of street parking being available and more neighborhoods in the area are applying for "permit parking" given the overflow parking into my neighborhood as a result of the nearby restaurants customers and now, a COVID-19 testing facility nearby. I have witnessed (while reading my newspaper) illegal parkers and I tell them to MOVE because they don't have a permit to display in their vehicle. I also object to the increased accidents at our corner. Plus streetsweepers cannot access the area that is closed off so it isn't being kept clean. The closure creates more traffic and slows flows down, not the opposite as claimed! Getting to Smart & Final takes 20 minutes to navigate from my home which is ridiculous. I have lived here since 1974 and it is difficult to get around. Use the space that you have already have available and this space is not needed -- it is just wrong. I should have been notified about the closure ahead of time and we weren't. Also, the businesses and Arts District don't even live here!

Kenji Haroutjanian: I support the closure, but I don't live that close to it. I do patronize the businesses in the area via my bicycle. I like the idea of the community space, but I agree the impacts to adjacent neighbors is a real issue – maybe we can develop some form of compromise? I love the Syd Kronenthal Park, but this would be a nice addition. I have no idea who Rosie's is or what they do. We all pay taxes and contribute to the betterment of the neighborhood.

Michael Monagan: I live on Fay and obviously there has to be a lot of work in regard to addressing the issues raised by the community. As a musician, I support building community spaces and support public performances, so the idea of music (not loud) and Yoga uses on Melvil is great. The space does need to be used and be vibrant, and input is necessary from everyone to determine its programming.

4. Closing – Yanni Demitri, Public Works Director

Appreciated the community's time and noted that everyone feels very strongly about these issues. If the Council directs staff to keep Melvil Street closed, a study will need to be done to assess the impact this closure would have on traffic circulation and noise. The City has zero tolerance for loud music that does not adhere to our noise ordinance or for parking violations in the alley—and when reported, violators are cited. When issues are reported, Parking Enforcement is immediately sent out. This location has been listed on a "hot list" of locations that gets cleaned up more frequently. A full closure will not occur

unless there is City Council direction. If the City proceeds with a closure, there would be more outreach to the residents to incorporate feedback and concerns, so it is done in a way to support the business in the area but keeps harmful impacts to area residents to minimum or eliminate any negative impacts where possible.