

**Becky Romero**

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**From:** Brandon Smith <thatbrandonsmith@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:19 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Public comment: January 23 Item 13A

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Madame Mayor and members of the City Council,

I wanted to provide a comment on item 13A from January 23's Meeting after watching the discussion online. I share the desire to see continuous improvement in our city. Encouraging businesses to improve their buildings is a goal I agree with because of the beautification of Gardena and the increased business activity (and resulting tax revenue) it brings. Put simply, investments like these should be positive feedback loops where investment leads to local prosperity, which allows more investment.

I commute from Vermont to El Segundo via Rosecrans nearly daily, so I'm well-acquainted with the level of service this 2-mile stretch experiences in the mornings and evenings. My average speed is approximately 15 miles per hour, sometimes as low as 10. This is, you're aware, a common occurrence across LA county and most of the country as a whole.

Two things Director Tsujiuchi said stuck out to me:

- "If you just pick out a building in the middle of Rosecrans, people are going to just drive by it and probably not notice it."
- "... a liquor store with a vehicle that went through the front..."

Both of these statements were quick, offhand comments, but I ask you to step back and examine them further. They both speak to the disservice the actual design of Rosecrans Avenue is doing to our community.

Rosecrans is currently designed in accordance with the paradigm of almost every other surface street in America—prioritization of car traffic flow over all else. The only reason anybody even stops along it is because of stoplights. It's designed to pass cars THROUGH Gardena, not bring people TO Gardena. We implicitly understand this—drivers will not notice improved façades as they are "zoom down the street," per Mayor Pro Tem Henderson's comment. Yet this reality is like water to a fish—it is so self-evident we don't even notice it anymore.

When traffic clears out, especially at night, we are left with incredibly wide open areas for irresponsible drivers to take advantage of (something I also experienced recently dealing with an emergency at 3 a.m.). I don't know the specifics of the car going through the liquor store window, but clearly something went wrong here, almost certainly related to speed. The wide, open space of Rosecrans—when it is not crammed with rush hour traffic—is an enticing invitation, consciously or unconsciously, to drive at more dangerous speeds than are objectively appropriate for where our children walk, our neighbors ride bikes, and our friends walk their dogs.

I urge you, in addition to this façade program, to investigate ways to begin re-thinking this and every other thoroughfare in Gardena, especially when naturally it comes time to repave them. Very often, I would argue, lanes are too wide, free parallel parking too abundant, and markings unclear enough that we are making things more dangerous for our citizens. This in turn leads to more people traveling THROUGH Gardena trying to get somewhere else, and fewer people naturally discovering a new restaurant, book store or tailor they could come back to find and time again. Instead, even something as radical-sounding as sacrificing a car lane for a dedicated, shared GTrans and bike lane would, in most likelihood, lead to smoother, safer-flowing car and pedestrian traffic in the long run.

For more information I encourage you to read the case studies on the Strong Towns organizations website ([strongtowns.org](http://strongtowns.org)), founded by a professional engineer seeking to encourage long-term improvements in cities across the country. This is not an easy fix—but it is the best fix for the most prosperous Gardena for our children.

Thank you for your time,  
Brandon Smith