




JERRY SANDERS
MAYOR

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: April 4, 2007

TO: Harry Mathis, Chairman, MTS Board
Paul Jablonski, Chief Executive Officer, MTS

FROM: Mayor Jerry Sanders 

SUBJECT: Downtown Loop Proposal

The Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) has been evaluating specific improvements including trolley, infrastructure investments, streetscape enhancements, pedestrian circulation, and public art opportunities along C Street. As part of this effort, CCDC has been studying the proposed relocation of the Fifth Avenue trolley station to the block between Sixth and Seventh Avenues.

Working within existing opportunities and constraints, several roadway reconfiguration alternatives have been identified and evaluated to accommodate the three trolley car train operation at the proposed station between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. However, considering the longer length of the new trolley cars, the need to mix old and new cars during an interim period, and the long-term plans for four-car trains, none of the studied alternatives can be implemented without compromising the pedestrian environment and the traffic circulation system in this location.

From a broader and more strategic operational future for downtown transit, I would like to request that MTS in collaboration with CCDC and SANDAG retain an independent evaluation of a proposal for operating a high-frequency trolley loop in the downtown area. Under this proposal, two trolley car trains that fit into the current blocks would loop downtown in both directions, with much more frequent headways. Regional three and four-car trains would pass through downtown along the bayside line that can accommodate them, rather than through C-Street. This operational scenario would require transfers from the regional lines at Santa Fe and 12th Avenue Stations to the Downtown Loop. I understand that MTS is concerned about the potential impact that transfers will have on rider-ship efficiencies, impacts to traffic circulation due to the frequent headways, and marginal increases in operating costs versus benefits.

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I am not requesting an evaluation of the Downtown Loop scenario to simply avoid the undesirable impacts at one station proposed by the C-Street plan alternatives. Rather, I would like to see an evaluation of the Downtown Loop proposal to see if it is simply a better long-term mobility strategy for downtown in terms of transit, the pedestrian, and automobile circulation. If it is, we should consider focusing on implementing the Downtown Loop rather than implement elements of the C-Street Plan that compromise the street and pedestrian system in the one station location. If it is not, we should proceed with the preferred alternative for the C-Street plan.

As the independent analysis of the Downtown Loop scenario occurs, CCDC and MTS can continue to evaluate and choose the best alternative of the C-Street plan so as not to cause additional delays. The decision to fund and execute the best C-Street alternative, however, should wait until the findings of the Downtown Loop study have been considered and a determination made whether or not to proceed with the Downtown Loop proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cc: Councilmember Kevin Faulconer, District 2, MTS Board Member
Councilmember Toni Atkins, District 3, MTS Board Member
Councilmember Tony Young, District 4, Board Member
Councilmember Brian Maienschein, District 5, MTS Board Member
William Anderson, Director, City Planning and Community Investment
Nancy Graham, President, CCDC
Gary Gallegos, Executive Director, SANDAG
Barbara Warden, President, San Diego Downtown Partnership
Sharon Cooney, Director of Governmental Affairs & Community Relations, MTS