

SAN DIEGO

C-STREET CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

SUMMARY: PUBLIC WORKSHOP 2
HELD 2006.06.22

CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM



**C Street Corridor Master Plan
Stage Five: Plan Alternatives
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INTRODUCTION

The San Diego Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) hosted the second Public Workshop for the C-Street Master Plan on Thursday, June 22nd, 2006. The purpose of this second workshop was to update the community on work done to date, receive feedback on preliminary findings, and to solicit input on further issues and priorities that should be addressed as C-Street Master Plan moves forward. Public input and participation are key elements of this project and additional public events will be undertaken at specific times during the process.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the Public Workshop process and outcomes. Input and feedback received during Public Workshop #2 will be used by the consultant team as it continues to refine the master plan alternatives and design concepts.

BACKGROUND

San Diego's C Street is a major pedestrian and transit corridor of local and regional significance. The condition of the street has declined and is in need of significant improvement. In August 2004, the C Street Task Force was created to address the problems of C Street and it was determined that the extent of transportation, infrastructure, and public realm improvements required comprehensive planning and a thorough implementation strategy.

The Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) commissioned a multidisciplinary design team led by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP (SOM) to develop a Master Plan and 30 percent schematic design drawings for the revitalization of the C Street corridor, including improvements to landscaping, architecture, engineering and transit services. The project is a partnership between CCDC, MTS, SANDAG, and the Downtown Partnership.

The purpose of the C Street Master Plan is to create an overall vision for the revitalization of the C Street corridor from India Street to Park Boulevard; and to define specific improvements including trolley, transit and infrastructure investments, streetscape enhancements, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and public art opportunities.

Community participation is an integral part of the project. This public participation process aims to achieve widespread public input to help shape the vision and design of the C-Street Corridor. CCDC will host a total of four community workshops during the project process.

OVERVIEW

On Thursday June 22nd, 2006, the San Diego City Centre Development Corporation hosted a Public Workshop for the C-Street Master Plan. The meeting was held from 5.30 to 7.30pm at the Westgate Hotel in downtown San Diego.

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The meeting was advertised through a variety of methods, including:

- CCDC Website posting (www.ccdc.com);
- Mailed letter to approximately 2,730 individuals and organizations;
- Email notice to approximately 2,300 individuals and organizations;
- Hand distribution of informational fliers to residents and merchants on C Street; and,
- Paid advertisement in The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Approximately 100 people attended the workshop, including approximately 60 citizens as well as representatives from CCDC, the City of San Diego, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), and the consultant team - Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, LLP (SOM), DMJM Harris, KTU+A, Katz Okitsu & Associates, and Wade Communications, Inc.

Presentation materials included information boards and handouts, and a PowerPoint presentation prepared and given by the consultant team.

MEETING FORMAT

The Public Workshop was preceded by a series of display board that provided an overview of the study area, existing conditions, preliminary alternatives, and design opportunities that could be considered as part of the Master Plan process, along with a summary of the priorities voting results from the previous workshop.

Workshop attendees were provided with a brief questionnaire asking for feedback on the preliminary alignment alternatives, land use concept, and streetscape ideas.

The meeting commenced with a welcome by Hon. Kevin Faulconer, City Councilmember for District Two, and an introductory overview by CCDC. The introductions were followed by a presentation by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The purpose of the presentation was to update the community on work done to date, receive feedback on preliminary findings, and to solicit input on further issues and priorities that should be addressed as the project moves forward.

The presentation was given in two main parts. The first section included a review of feedback received at the previous meeting, followed by a brief discussion of how public and committee feedback was being used to influence the project visions and objectives. The discussion went on to detail many of the transportation issues and constraints that the project must address, and concluded with a review of the preliminary street alignment alternatives and the pros and cons of each option.

The second section focused on initial land use concepts and streetscape ideas. In between each section, attendees were invited to participate in an open discussion facilitated by Wade Communications. Attendees were also instructed to provide their feedback on a brief questionnaire that was submitted to the consultant team and the completion of the workshop.

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PUBLIC COMMENT OVERVIEW

Members of the public provided diverse and valuable feedback in four major areas: transportation; land use; streetscape design; and general comments. The following paragraphs are only highlights of some of the verbal and written remarks, which follow in detail.

“Transit Mall” or “People Place?”

Many comments related to transportation expressed concern about the potential for transit and cars to have an adverse impact on the character of the pedestrian environment. More people seemed to support the concept of the proposed “Northern Alignment” (re-aligning the trolley tracks on the northern side of the street and creating a single, continuous driving lane from west to east on the south side of the street). Some people favored the idea of having short-term parking on the street, but would not want to see longer-term parking on C Street.

Life After 5 p.m.

With regard to the proposed land use plan, diversity was a strong and recurring theme – diversity of people, of economic activity, and of land use. Some citizens noted the importance of capturing the synergy of the Gaslamp Quarter where it meets C Street, yet not competing with Gaslamp as an entertainment district. More night-time activity is desired and there seemed to be favorable reaction to the concept of adding more educational/cultural/institutional land uses on and around the street.

The Big “Wow”

In verbal and written comments, many citizens expressed support for the idea of a bold design gesture on C Street – a “wow” element. Public art, artistic lighting, enhanced landscaping, water elements, special events, gathering places were mentioned as strong desires, as they were in the first public workshop. A number of people also praised the goal of incorporating sustainable design solutions (e.g. solar lighting, permeable paving to reduce run-off, etc.).

VERBAL FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The following is a detailed summary of the issues and ideas brought up during the two Public Comment periods:

Transportation-Related Comments

- Route trolleys around the bayside; use C Street for shuttles, historic trolley cars.
- Allow cars and trolley to share the same lanes/right-of-way. The transit system in downtown needs to be re-organized.
- Major transit nodes should be on downtown periphery (12th & Imperial; Kettner & Broadway); to lessen volume on C Street.
- Transit created the problems on C Street.
- Either create a “transit mall” or a “people place.”
- Where are the bike lanes on the alternatives?
- Pedestrian safety at intersections should be improved; now intersections are designed to serve needs of transit; need better pedestrian controls (protect the most vulnerable – the young and elderly).

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- Parking is not needed on C Street; enough is available on side streets and in garages.
- Sidewalks should be wider than those shown in the alternatives for transit loading, sidewalk cafes.
- Vehicular traffic is “weird.” Don’t put cars in the core area.
- Transit service should become more frequent at night.
- Service access is limited because downtown doesn’t have alleys.
- Trolley should run as a couplet on B and C Streets (westbound on B, eastbound on C Street).
- The northern alignment alternative is preferred; a continuous driving lane will work.
- Sidewalks that are too wide can promote loitering; widths like those in the Gaslamp make it exciting.
- Question the need for the medians shown.
- No one leases space unless there is vehicular access.
- Driving lane should be used for pick-up/drop-off.
- Parking creates clutter on the street.
- Gaslamp sidewalks are only congested during weekend nights and ballgames; otherwise they’re not as crowded.
- Trolley should loop around downtown in one direction, on a single track.
- Alternatives seem to be eliminating options for four-car trains.
- Transportation (trolley) is needed for students and people from the south.
- State Street in Chicago is a successful model for C Street; don’t take the trolley away.
- Narrow streets can work.

Land Use-Related Comments

- C Street has 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. land uses now; add night time uses.
- C Street has a diverse population; consider uses appropriate for the population.
- Promote economic diversity along C Street.

Streetscape Design-Related Comments

- Re-branding of the street is necessary as a part of a larger street/place-making effort.
- Don’t make sidewalks too narrow; look at sidewalk widths in the Gaslamp, they are not ideal for pedestrians.
- Early improvements should be made to sidewalk areas.
- Master plan should include more landscaping and open space.
- The whole corridor should be thought of as “open space.”
- Example of tree grates and bollards near church at 4th & Beech.
- Landscape with flowers that attract birds.
- Don’t plant grass along C Street, it failed near Horton Plaza.
- Integrate art; reference to Story Trail arts program.
- Focal element needed for pedestrians.

General Comments

- Don’t want C Street to smell badly as the Gaslamp does (from trash, restaurants).
- Downtown San Diego could be cleaner.
- Consider needs of Clean & Safe program; service lane needed.
- Master Plan boundary should be extended to 17th Street; City College should be part of the plan.

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WRITTEN FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Approximately 23 citizens submitted written feedback on the questionnaire provided by the consultant team. Some of the comments are repetitive of remarks made during the verbal comment section (above). The following is a summary of the written comments received:

Transportation-Related Comments – Existing LRT Track Alignment Alternative

- Not the right choice – cuts the street in half.
- The current alignment is not functional.
- No. Disjointed and confusing without through traffic. [Cars on] 6th [Avenue] would need to exit in front of train.
- [Crossed out, indicating lack of support].
- The short block makes cuing difficult for automobile/transit mix. Signal timing? How will this work?
- If not the existing alignment, then the southern alignment.
- Cheapest and easiest to do. Non-visionary and more of a cop-out to a great opportunity. Does not improve at all.
- It does not work. We must have a continuous drive lane.
- Existing alignment “preferred.”

Transportation-Related Comments – Northern LRT Track Alignment Alternative

- The northern alignment pushes cars back into Broadway and into downtown internal congestion.
- Seems the best choice.
- Four stars for the continuous one-way driving lane. I believe the northern alignment is the strongest of the three alternatives. I agree that drop off parking for deliveries is very important.
- Sidewalk not wide enough, especially for a pedestrian corridor.
- Parked cars will block views of stores/pedestrians/energy of traveling cars. Pedestrian energy will be lost. Parking should be on side streets.
- Preferred alignment, however, all alternatives do not address LRT/pedestrian conflict in north/south direction (diagram sketched highlighting LRT car blocking north/south pedestrian path).
- This is preferred because it has the best pedestrian access from the south.
- Yes. Parking: 15 minutes, short term, pick-up and delivery, and trash pick-up.
- Preferred. Put BRT on Broadway; not on C Street; too much transit doesn't create a pleasant environment.
- Separating cars with median seems to isolate transit. Why not combine [them] allowing room for loading/drop-off/trash pick-up?
- Do not like.
- Best option from a practical for business standpoint; however, create commercial drop-off nodes rather than parking.
- The clear choice! You can drive, park...etc. The more compact sidewalks are not a problem. Gaslamp works very well.
- The northern alignment seems to be the best option.
- Northern!!
- Seems more natural to me as a driver, given eastbound flow.

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Transportation-Related Comments – Southern LRT Track Alignment Alternative

- [The southern] alignment is more inviting to cars coming from and returning to the north (Banker's Hill, I-5, 163, Hillcrest & Mission Hills).
- Seems confusing for cars.
- Better. Better light on northern sides of the street for cafes. Putting all buses from Market on C Street. Parking: 15 minutes, short term, pick-up and delivery, and trash pick-up.
- [Crossed out]. Wide sidewalks.
- 15' foot sidewalk one way, too narrow with outdoor seating?
- Second to the existing alignment.
- No way – with no right turns.
- Not the best choice. Northern alignment is preferable.

Transportation-Related Comments – General Comments

- Bike lanes? (on all alignments)
- It appears that [C Street] is a trolley/BRT/auto/truck mall rather than a “people” place.
- More bicycle lanes.
- Loading zones instead of full-block-length parking (illustration showing 28' sidewalks with 15' widths at loading zones).
- How do pedestrians cross without walking in travel lanes? Answer: LRT need less cars [shorter trains] if they use C Street.
- Alignments are okay but I would like to see train go underground.
- The amount of vehicular traffic should be minimized.
- Why discuss BRT if it is not in part of those schemes?
- No trolley is best.
- Do not agree with BRT or light rail only – create stronger pedestrian role. Agree with BRT loop. Would like to see all vehicular traffic eliminated as well as parking.
- Are we building a spare for MTS or are we building a place for humans?
- On-street parking is not needed.
- Shorter trolleys – quit blocking crosswalks and making pedestrians walk in the street.
- No travel lane – it's not needed or wanted there. Travel lanes are not compatible with providing a pedestrian-friendly area. Each option should assure that the trolley can grow with downtown.
- Must also include possibility of four-car trolleys or banish [the trolley] to coastal only [bayside] with shuttles/BRT/autos on C Street.
- I think it's better to allow cars through someplace – would allow more visibility for stores.
- I love transit, but a BRT lane doesn't address the need of a lane of traffic for access purposes.
- I want to feel safe 24/7 – this does not mean relocating homeless people – it means making a space where people want to be.

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Land Use-Related Comments

(Q: What type of land uses do you envision on or adjacent to C Street? Comments or suggestions?)

- So many land uses, does it all make sense as one cohesive place? What is the land use theme?
- Avoid dead zones.
- [Create] ten great “people” places along the street – no closer than 200’ and no more than 300’ apart.
- Can this street function to walk, bike, sidewalk café, trolley, BRT, truck/auto [all] fit in the existing width? I don’t think so.
- Bistros, small shops and residential.
- Please increase housing along this spine.
- Night schools, day schools, neighborhood services. Chicago model is very attractive.
- More SRO’s and other economic diversity.
- Primarily retail and residential.
- Relax historic preservation requirements so California Theater can be practically redeveloped.
- More development of retail space, restaurants and other places of interest.
- The western end should be an enhanced government sector area.
- Given the preponderance of restaurants in the Gaslamp area, it would appear that pedestrian-oriented retail should be emphasized in the center [of C Street].
- Let’s be careful not to replicate the bar/restaurant scene of the Gaslamp.
- At this point, any degree of greater vitality in the retail sector would help. I missed part of the presentation – has anything been presented regarding design standards for storefronts, such as % transparency, interesting architecture, etc.?
- B Street put back through [the Civic Center complex].
- Any land uses are fine with me, so long as it does not conflict with the trolley.
- As long as they are evenly spread out, restaurants along the way to evenly spread out people.
- Bring in one commercial property manager to put and coordinate all land uses, to expedite, revitalize.
- Retail, offices, residential, shopping, banks, art spaces/studios.
- Retail, restaurants similar to Gaslamp. Introduce residential – more entertainment. Think of a “linear” Horton Plaza. The corridor should read as one open space.
- Late evening entertainment. [Uses] without [the need for] more daytime parking. More night time uses: clubs for dancing, bands, dining.
- Ground floor retail with residential/office above; lots of boutiques; have private open space areas (pocket parks) open to the public but good to keep private so vagrants can be asked to leave. Not desirable to have open space areas for homeless to hang out in.

Streetscape Design-Related Comments

(Q: Do we want a “wow” factor on C Street? If so, how do we create it?)

- Ten great people places – See the Project for Public Spaces out of New York (Fred Kent).
- See Arts Commission’s C Street program, “Story Poles.”
- Need to design for most vulnerable pedestrians.
- Public art combined with landscaping creates visual interest; pocket parks, places to sit; mini-bistros and product carts create walking incentives and economic [productivity].
- Your attention to environmental sustainability is praise-worthy, as is your choice of trees.
- I like this lighting-covered tunnel – very “wow.” Maybe you want it playing off the tile/floor [materials].

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- No “plop” art; have an artist work integrated at the beginning.
- Art [and] education (about San Diego/sustainability/conservation).
- Enhanced pavement and landscaping with public art.
- Continuous art along the street would be wonderful (similar to the sculpture along the waterfront).
- Plaza, cafes, pedestrian-friendly storefronts.
- The canopy idea is very attractive.
- I would also like to suggest underground shopping and restaurants similar to Atlanta. I don't believe it will attract more residents, but more likely more tourists.
- There could be a large enough dedicated area in the center where musicians could play with appropriate permits.
- If you want to have dense tree planting like this, please do it right and budget for maintenance, so they thrive.
- Art installations, benches, bike racks.
- Public spaces – art – fountains.
- Some of the overhead structures and lighting concepts presented would do a lot for the street. Large landscape planters can impede pedestrian flow and should be limited in use. For natural elements, think minimal and thin, like vines on screens, water walls, and clean air and surfaces overall.
- C Street already has a “wow” with the trolley. However, a canopy or lights could be nice. Keep the trolley – it's essential to San Diego.
- The big “wow” idea sounds great. Much like Main Street in Vegas where it attracts many people to the area. It would be a huge attraction, especially during the holidays when many things could be done.
- [Like the] 16th Street Mall [in Denver]. Art, fountains.
- Wow = human places. A destination/celebration that is elegant, understated and functional for people. Artistic lighting. Sustainability. Solar lighting. Interactive art installations.
- Create strong landscape canopy. Current LRT stations are weak – need strong sculptural design.
- Water features. In evening, lighting art or artful lighting. I like the big wow – lights.
- [The wow] could add dynamics to the street. Must be done along the entire length, rather than in pieces.
- Lighting, landscaping, public art, events (closed street for certain events). Elegant, high-quality materials.

General Comments

- The comment on extending the C Street Master Plan to 17th Street makes great sense! Make full use of the City College resources.
- There is an incredible amount of information to digest. Why not have more information available in advance?
- Accommodate bicycles.
- Program activities along street – make the street interesting and exciting.
- Introduce family oriented uses.