

City Council Land Use Committee – 17 October 07  
Extended Remarks by Gordon Summer

### The Folly of the Trolley

I'm reading a book by Dick Morris called "Outrage." It's about \$400 billion of stupidity, from the U.N. Oil for Food Scandal to Congressional Ripoffs. The trolley portion of the 'C' Street plan should be in the book.

It is outrageous that proponents of one form of travel should insist on denying, hindering, blocking, endangering people using other forms of travel. Folks come downtown primarily in 3 ways: by car, bus and trolley. When they are here, they get around primarily in 3 ways: by car, by trolley and by foot.

In either case, trolleys are just 1 of 3 main alternatives. (And there are others, of course.)

Trolleys that are longer than city blocks are significant hazards to pedestrians, buses and cars. When trolley cars protrude, pedestrians (I'm one) are forced into traffic lanes. In front of buses and cars. I'm in danger and they're in danger of hitting me. Or stopping short and getting rear-ended. The folks in the buses and cars are doubly at risk. Because they become pedestrians too . . . they *walk* to their final destination. Trolley riders themselves are in the most danger! Half the time, going or coming, they *have to cross* 'C' street.

So our MTS folks say we should lengthen city blocks to accommodate their trains. Lengthening blocks in one direction hinders traffic in the other. They want to significantly *cut* the traffic flow on 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., a main artery out of downtown connecting to the 163, and on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., a main artery into downtown from uptown. And folks in cars and buses aren't their only target. They want to *narrow* the sidewalks on these streets.

Downtown's residential population is going from 25 to 90,000. Its workforce is going from 75 to 150,000. How do you think these people are going to get around? The answer is primarily by car and by foot. To hinder those 2 ways of getting around for such a huge number of people is an outrage.

No matter how many bureaucrats want people to use the trolley, most folks ain't gonna do it. Because it doesn't go where they need to go. This ain't NY or Chi. or SF. This is Southern California, and whether you like it or not, our mass transit systems, even 20 or 30 years from now, will not be as extensive or convenient as those of the older cities.

Endangering pedestrians and hindering automobile traffic are outrages. Especially when there are solutions that don't require it. Order shorter trolley cars. Hook up 1 new short car between 2 old long cars. Or simply use fewer cars per train. Or set up a short-car downtown loop. If you have to screw up traffic, do it at 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, which are not main arteries. Have 3 stops instead of 4 on 'C' Street.

Just minutes ago, the leaders of MTS said that 'C' Street is the most important segment in . . . *the focus of* . . . the entire trolley system. If that's so, base the length of your trains on fitting the needs of the 'C' Street corridor! Duh!

My message to MTS is simple: Figure out how to do your thing without hurting others! To even *consider* doing so much harm to the majority of the public is an *outrage*.