

January 24, 2007

To: Kevin Faulconer, City Council Member

From: Helen Elias, Sub Committee for the Removal of Access Barriers (SCRAB)
Elizabeth Bacon, Facilities Access Review Committee (FAR)

RE: C Street Corridor Master Plan – Disability Access Recommendations

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with Sachin Kalbag, Senior Urban Planner/Urban Designer with the Centre City Development Corporation to discuss the C Street Corridor Master Plan on behalf of the SCRAB and FAR Committees of the Citizen's Review Committee on ADA and Disability Issues.

We reviewed the three plan options which are currently being considered by CCDC in order to accommodate the trolley cars recently purchased by MTS. Currently, the downtown trolley stations are not safe for pedestrians because the three-car trolleys block the crosswalk, and pedestrians are forced to step into the parallel street traffic in order to cross. Any reconstruction of these intersections should include improved pedestrian safety.

The plan options presented involve closing intersections to cross traffic, extending the sidewalks at corners, narrowing or reducing traffic lanes, narrowing the width of the crosswalks, and redirecting traffic. Some of these options do not comply with State and Federal Access regulations designed to protect the safe access of pedestrians with disabilities. They are particularly hazardous for blind/visually impaired pedestrians or those with mobility limitations. It is our understanding that the new elongated trolley cars do not increase ridership.

We strongly assert that it is *backward thinking* to reconfigure City streets to such an extent, at a cost of \$80 million to the taxpayer, only to accommodate the length of the new Trolley cars. It is less expensive, more efficient, and safer to require the trolley car specifications to appropriately fit the standard block of San Diego City streets.

Instead of considering the plan options presented, we make the following recommendations:

Modify the Trolley by:

- Returning to vendor to redesign car to meet specifications that fit the existing structure of C Street block length and the needs of San Diego
- researching other vendors and consider changing vendors in order to provide more capacity in shorter cars
- Mixing and matching cars to fit the length of the block (2 large and 1 smaller)
- changing to a two-car trolley in order to retain the four stops
- designing automatically opening doors, otherwise, mathematically re-calculating and installing the raised rectangle for blind pedestrians to position within the reach of the door to be opened.

However, if, MTS insists on ordering the elongated cars which, in the three car configuration, exceed the length of the standard City block, our first recommendation would be to close C street to vehicles and create a pedestrian mall. If the pedestrian mall is not an acceptable option, then all of the following changes must be incorporated into Plan B as presented by CCDC Planner, Sachin Kalbag, in order to protect pedestrians from significant danger.

Restructure the intersections at 6th Street and 7th Street by:

- Removing North/South pedestrian crosswalk in front and back of trolley and block completely with landscaping, thus, creating a 3 way crosswalk.
- Extending platform on the South West (SW) side.
- Installing two curb cuts per corner: NW (1), NE (2), SE (2), SW (2).
- Installing truncated domes on curb ramps and on island with railing.
- Providing ramp to sidewalk which is at 1:15.
- Removing crosswalk.
- Changing to a one traffic lane instead of two.
- Installing Audible Pedestrian Signals using the “Polara” technology to program relevant information about the intersection. Install two ped poles on the Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest corners, and one ped pole on the Northwest corner
- Installing rubber on track to prevent wheelchairs and canes from sticking.

Provide a safe path of travel by:

- Installing clear and contiguous sidewalks not less than 6’ wide on the Northwest and Northeast side of intersection
- Providing 8’ x 14’ unobstructed spaces adjacent to on-Street disabled parking with the curb ramp and access isles to serve as required access aisles not exceeding 1.5% cross slope in all directions. (No trees, poles, or other street furniture may impinge upon this space).
- Selecting trees with no falling fruits.
- Prohibiting sidewalk cafés located within the station area.

We must state again emphatically that the obvious solution to pedestrian safety at trolley stations on C Street is to purchase the cars of a proper length to meet the specifications of the standard block of the City of San Diego.

We look forward to a follow-up meeting to share the outcome of your discussion with the C Street Corridor Master Plan Task Force. In the interim, please contact Disability Services if you have questions or need further information.

Cc: Paul Jablonski, CEO, MTS
Ernie Linares, Disability Services Interim Coordinator, City of San Diego
Sachin Kalbag, Senior Urban Planner, CCDC