

## Regarding Streetcar project

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Dana Gabbard

Aug 20, 2018 7:41 PM

Posted in group: **Clerk-PLUM-Committee**

In re agenda item #2, Aug. 14 2018 meeting file 11-0329-S12, please find comments attached

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**From:** wtluic@aol.com <wtluic@aol.com>

**Sent:** Monday, August 20, 2018 7:15:17 PM

**To:** dgabbard@hotmail.com

**Subject:** Re: Streetcar article for Streetsblog (draft)

### ***Comments on streetcar construction and routing as needed to be discussed in the EIR***

#### ***Overall questions***

What will be the effect on bus service of this project?

Specifically what buses will be rerouted and what service may be reduced?

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Will any bus stops be required to move from current locations?

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Is the streetcar Operator willing to accept delays due to current bus service or is it going to come back at some time in the future and ask for bus removal, or bus service movement or reduction in service?

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Compare the ethnicities and income levels of streetcar ridership versus bus ridership on any affected routes; will there be disproportionate burden due to the streetcar for low income and nonwhite transit bus users?

What would the specific impact be?

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NOTE; removing bus service while retaining car access is elitists, racist and has a negative environmental effect.

Removing transit access and riders who use transit at all times with those who use transit only occasionally is not acceptable. Please elaborate on different types of riders likely to use streetcar compared to bus users along the route and overall environmental effect of removing access for them?

Please discuss why this streetcar will not have that effect and displace lower income transit users for occasional recreational riders.

### ***General problem***

A downtown development plan that excludes or hopes to exclude or reduce low income access to downtown is negative environmentally.

The major flaw in the streetcar as part of a downtown tourist line is that it serves few people and transit riders will have an overall reduction in transit use and thus is environmentally negative.

It would be much better for a streetcar system that is a real transit service providing useable service on current MTA routes 45, 4 and 33 (for example) Which would help the transit users and downtown circulation system.

One way loops for downtown streetcar and circulator bus loops have a history of failure, rideship and economic and racial segregation of transit.

Construction of streetcar would cause major disruption of an already existing bus service. Who is it that seems to want reduced downtown bus service. In this era of climate change bus service is just the thing that needs to be made better so everyone can use it. A development model that removes and reduces bus service must be replaced with a model that encourages, increases and restores bus service in downtown and all areas. We must improve bus service so middle and upper classes will and can use buses not just trains and tourist streetcars.

The streetcar as proposed continues to contribute to a more ethnically and income segregated city. In this era of climate change an income integrated city with public transit for all 24 hours a day is our only option, Pushing the poor to the fringes of the city and suburbs and creating areas that de facto exclude them is an environmental disaster, forcing the poor to areas they must drive in and leaving the cities for a segregated elite who are using cars way more than previous residents did. Please discuss how this streetcar will continue to cause this to happen or not with specific statements.

### ***Problems with construction detours***

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Mitigation could be possible by putting Hill and Broadway buses in two way service on Broadway while construction takes place on Hill then moving buses all over to Hill as Broadway construction takes place.

Please discuss whether the negative effect of construction alone can cause such a negative impact on bus service as to warrant not building this project.

What will the construction effects on bus service be specifically?

### ***The core problem the one way couplet versus two way streetcar on Broadway and only real mitigation is two way service streetcar on Broadway***

The only real mitigation is two way service on Broadway, discuss doing this along with more rational two way route on rest of loop to Figueroa. And the construction of buses lanes in both directions on Hill street.

Will long term movement of all or one direction of bus service to Spring or even worse Main streets result from this project.

The fatal flaw is the one way couplet and loop system; please discuss why a two way streetcar on Broadway is not possible discussing environmental effect only of which car use is only a negative.

Philip Capo

wtluic@aol.com

5623028800

-----Original Message-----

From: Dana Gabbard <dgabbard@hotmail.com>  
To: wtluic <wtluic@aol.com>  
Sent: Tue, Aug 7, 2018 7:44 pm  
Subject: Re: Streetcar article for Streetsblog (draft)

Great.

Any capital project has the impact of the sort you describe. But is the project meeting a need? That is the threshold it needs to reach to be justifiable.

A local reporter and I exchanged e-mails and agreed the likelihood of the project happening is murky.

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From: wtluic@aol.com  
Sent: Tuesday, August 7, 6:52 PM  
Subject: Re: Streetcar article for Streetsblog (draft)  
To: dgabbard@hotmail.com

thats great your revision is what i said other not as important what do you think about my other comment

-----Original Message-----

From: Dana Gabbard <dgabbard@hotmail.com>  
To: wtluic <wtluic@aol.com>  
Sent: Tue, Aug 7, 2018 6:35 pm  
Subject: Re: Streetcar article for Streetsblog (draft)

Sorry I already submitted it and they published it. Based on a discussion with Perias I removed the reference to funding since it is capital not operations that this involves.

"Philip Capo, local activist, who stated opposition to the loop and having single track service in opposite directions on parallel streets."

<https://la.streetsblog.org/2018/08/07/if-last-weeks-hearing-was-any-indication-enthusiasm-is-low-for-downtown-streetcar/>

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To: dgabbard@hotmail.com

could you state i am opposed to current routing and use of transit money not the idea of a streetcar itself . since then i have become more concerned about effects on current bus service. will they really accept all the current buses sharing platform stops with streetcars, and streetcars sitting behind buses or will there be more pressure to remove buses and what will happen to buses during construction, where will hill and Broadway buses go for several years, this is of course mainly a problem because both hill and Broadway are used

-----Original Message-----

From: Dana Gabbard <dgabbard@hotmail.com>

To: Perias Pillay <pspillay@yahoo.com>; John Ulloth <ullcott@yahoo.com>; Phillip Capo <wtluic@aol.com>

Sent: Mon, Aug 6, 2018 5:44 am

Subject: Streetcar article for Streetsblog (draft)

Perias, John & Phil:

This is what I came up with. John's notes will be posted to be read in full via a link. Any suggestions, things I missed? I hope to submit it by Tuesday morning. The version that appears on Streetsblog will include links to articles, website, documents, etc.

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Last week on the Facebook group for Southern Cal Transit Fans a link was posted to an article in the Downtown News on an upcoming public hearing for the downtown Los Angeles Streetcar proposal. Out of curiosity to gauge the level of support for the project I decided to attend.

I have been tracking this proposal since becoming aware in the mid-90s of the efforts by the original proponent, George Eslinger, a retired director of the city of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting. The history of the proposal is complicated, involving successive entities as sponsor before becoming the pet project of Los Angeles City Councilman Jose Huizar.

The latest step of the process is the release of an Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The city of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, Metro and the city of Los Angeles Dept. of Transportation are jointly managing the development of the project and its environmental review process as the local lead agencies. The Federal Transit Administration is the federal lead agency.

Thursday August 2<sup>nd</sup> the hearing for public comments began at 6 p.m. on the first floor of the Caltrans building in downtown Los Angeles (1<sup>st</sup> and Main Street). I had a medical appointment that day so I arrived late but luckily local transit activist (and Vice President of Southern California Transit Advocates) Perias Pillay was there from the start and after the meeting gave me the gist of what happened before I arrived.

At 6:15 p.m. a Power Presentation by Shariz Tangri (General Counsel of Los Angeles Streetcar, Inc.) on the project began, which last until 6:30 p.m. About a dozen members of the public were in attendance.

There were only a few who made comments after the end of the presentation. These included:

Philip Capo, local activist, who stated opposition to the loop. He also principally objected to money eligible to improving bus service (if any) being used for the project.

An older gentleman who stated he surely was the only one in the room who had actually ridden the streetcars when they operated, decried the old Yellow Cars and spoke glowingly of how it beautified Broadway when the tracks and overhead wires were removed. He emphatically opposed the project.

John Ulloth, another local activist, made extensive notes for his comments that had to be truncated due to the 2 minute limit but he kindly shared the notes which I have posted online. He was overall unsupportive

but provided input in case the project goes forward.

One has to wonder based on this event how much support the project actually has. Of the speakers none were unabashed fans. Besides outright opposition by one the few others had quibbles shared on the basis of, "well, if you are set on doing it." I sought in vain to perceive the sort of community consensus that is essential to securing the federal funding proponents are seeking. L.A. Subway Inc. has held community meetings that reportedly had a good turnout. Why didn't they spread the word to ensure proponents were present to speak fervently in favor of the streetcar? The number of staffers in the room from various agencies equaled attendance of members of the public, which is not a good sign. Perias had to point out the lack of a sign for the meeting in the courtyard of the building for one to be put out to guide potential attendees.

While one meeting having a paucity of turnout (and seeming zero promotion in advance) is not fatal to the project it is troubling. As is that it has been over a year since the website and Facebook page of the proponents have been updated. Also I have heard buzz other L.A. city electeds object to so much transportation funding being sunk into a single council district, for a project with at best tepid predicted ridership. Plus one wonders if construction doesn't commence while the chief proponent is in office what the prospects of the project are once Huizar is termed out in 2020. Will it slowly fade into obscurity, the fate that many other proposals in our region have met since the start of the millennium?

While I was researching the aforementioned streetcar proposal survey some notable activists privately shared with me qualms about this project. John Ulloth was dismayed when speaking to staffers that they spoke more about the streetcar drawing development than of its value as transportation.

Personally I have always seen it as being more for tourists and likely to often be stuck in traffic due to the lack of a dedicated lane. A video I saw a few years ago on the creation of the Portland streetcar (which is credited for the revival of interest in urban streetcars) that impressed me so I will concede it may be a viable idea in some instances. But for all this money being spent what do we get from this project that isn't already provided by the existing DASH system? And nowadays does downtown actually need any help to spur development? One wonders.

The EA is posted on the Engineering Bureau website along with three volumes of Appendices. Comments are being taken through August 21<sup>st</sup> and can be submitted to:

City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
Bureau of Engineering  
1149 S. Broadway, Suite 600  
Los Angeles, CA 90015-2213  
Attention: William Jones  
[eng.lastreetcarproject@lacity.org](mailto:eng.lastreetcarproject@lacity.org)

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