

CITY OF CORONADO

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

July 26, 2012

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) was held on Thursday, July 26, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Mike Blood, Rachel Hurst, Matt Little, Lou Scanlon and Ed Walton were present. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the June 28, 2012 Meeting – The minutes were approved unanimously.
2. Oral Communications – None.
3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Accommodate a New Stop for the Old Town Trolley Tours Company on Orange Avenue adjacent to Coronado Rotary Plaza – Mr. Johnson said that the Coronado Visitors Information Center asked the City about approving a new stop location for the Old Town Trolley Tours Company adjacent to Rotary Plaza in the 1000 block of Orange Avenue. The idea behind the proposal is to increase visitors' experience of being dropped in the middle of the business district and coming to the Visitors Center. The trolleys make their first landing at the Ferry Landing Marketplace at First Street and B Avenue; then they proceed south on Orange Avenue and make a right on Isabella, a left on Ocean Boulevard to see the Hotel Del and the beach, a left on R. H. Dana, and back onto Orange Avenue where there's another stop in front of McP's Irish Pub. The trolleys run every 30 minutes and the first trolley reaches Coronado at approximately 9:20 a.m.

There is a 45' red curb zone at Rotary Plaza that supports an MTS bus stop and just south of that is a 30' green curb zone that was installed for commercial use of Rotary Plaza. The proposed new route would make an immediate right on Park Place, a right on Star Park Circle, a right on Flora Avenue, and a left on Isabella to catch the original route. There would be about 20 trips per day on the proposed streets. The trolleys would need to refrain from any amplified information or music while in the residential neighborhood and no ticket sales would be collected at the Rotary Plaza location. Old Town Trolley Tours would provide any signage that they feel would be necessary to identify the stop. The City has jurisdiction to alter the Old Town Trolleys' route.

The staff recommendation is that there be up to a three-month trial period, utilizing the green curb zone in front of Rotary Plaza, and that a new route using Park Place, Star Park Circle and Flora Avenue be established to accommodate this new stop.

Mr. Blood asked the distance between the current stop at McP's and the proposed new stop and Mr. Johnson stated that it is about 500'.

Mr. Little asked if MTS would allow Old Town Trolley Tours to share that bus stop and Mr. Johnson said they would not disagree; they can support the request as long as the City is also in support of it. If this happens, they would like to have a formal agreement with Old Town Trolley Tours.

Mr. Walton noted having received four emails in opposition to the proposed route change and one from the Chamber of Commerce in favor of it. He also spoke to the general manager of Old Town Trolley Tours, who was unable to attend today's meeting, and he expressed that Old Town Trolley Tours would like to work with the Visitors Center and they want to do it on a trial basis as well because it is a business decision for them. They want to make sure they can continue their 30-minute headway with this stop.

Jane Newstead lives at the corner of Star Park Circle and Park Place. She said Rotary Plaza expansion project eliminated a great deal of commercial traffic from Star Park and Flora. Now 20 commercial vehicles per day will circle a park where children play. She's concerned about this traffic stopping and starting at her corner, the noise, the safety of children on bicycles and playing in the park, and suggests that if a stop is wanted on this side of Orange Avenue, it would be better to take out the three metered parking places in front of Chase Bank for the trolleys to stop; then they can continue down Isabella.

Heinz Steiner, 1007 Flora Avenue, said the Engineering Department has not had enough time to do proper studies on what benefits the stop would give to the City. He also said not enough time was provided to residents and homeowners. At this time of year a lot of owners rent their homes for one or two months and wouldn't be present to make any judgments on the re-routing. The use of residential streets for commercial traffic is not acceptable. There are impacts from exhaust and noise that change the living standard in those areas. In addition, the intersection of Isabella, Flora, E and Tolita has been studied before; it's a very dangerous, six-point intersection. Some mitigation in the form of a crosswalk and blocking some parking spaces to increase visibility have been made, but to have the trolley make a left-hand turn at that dangerous intersection defies common sense.

Robbins Kelly, 1017 Olive, has a business at 1136 Loma and her mother lives at Tenth and E, so she goes through the Isabella/E/Tolita/Flora intersection at least twice a day. It is a dangerous intersection. There is also congestion on Park Place with diagonal parking and trucks. If the Visitors Center's main concern is getting people to the Center, she suggests that one of their volunteers greet the trolleys when they stop at McP's, provide them with information and brochures, and direct them across the street. She is not in favor of removing three parking spots in front of Chase Bank because parking is at a premium downtown. If you want to use an existing parking spot and you want people in the downtown, why not use the bus stop at Ninth and Orange, in front of the Union 76 station?

Phil Monroe, 28 Bahama Bend, provided some history behind the request. The Historical Association operates the Visitors Center. About a year and a half ago, because they wanted to see if they could serve the people better, they interviewed the four general managers of the hotels and two members of the CTID Board, Mary Ann Berta and David Spatafore, and their number-one recommendation to better serve the visitors that come to Coronado was to have the Old Town Trolley stop closer to the Visitors Center. The Visitors Center has a large, clean public restroom and a lot of materials about Coronado. They are ready to staff the stop with a person to greet visitors and answer questions. But the last thing they want to do is be at odds with the neighbors. The original idea was to stop right outside the Visitors Center, but Old Town Trolley Tours wants to show them the beach and the Hotel Del, so that idea was out. Then they looked at in front of Panera, where the trolley could then continue down Isabella. They met with Sgt. Mitchell of the Police Department and he recommended Rotary Plaza. The Visitors Center would be most happy to look at other options. There are loading zones in front of the Visitors Center and in front of the pharmacy; perhaps one of those loading zones could be eliminated and

public parking be created to make up for losing parking on the other side. Rather than have the T.O.C. turn down the whole idea today, he'd encourage staff to go back and look at some options to see how to welcome visitors to Coronado and have them see more of the business district. Now, they get off at McP's, go to the Del and the beach and come back, without having seen the businesses on Orange Avenue.

Rita Sarich, Coronado MainStreet, said MainStreet is strongly opposed to changing the route of the trolley tours to one of the most fragile residential neighborhoods. It's fragile because it's situated between downtown, the beach and the Hotel Del. Some of the most historic homes are located here. It already gets a huge amount of semi-truck traffic and pedestrian traffic cutting through to the Del and the beach. It has walking tours that go through Star Park Circle, which is a well-used park. Delivery trucks double park on Park Place – it is a very busy intersection. MainStreet is not opposed to having an additional stop at Rotary Plaza; it's worthy of a trial, as long as it doesn't negatively impact the plaza. It's not good to ruin a residential neighborhood to accommodate a business.

David Spatafore, 831 Coronado Avenue, thinks it's an awful idea to put trolleys on residential streets. As a business, he's been put under many restrictions regarding how and what he needs to do to operate and he thinks the City can put the Old Town Trolley under restrictions on how and what they need to do in this town. It's a successful route for them and they will accommodate. As a business owner and a CTID member, he thinks that the Visitors Center would benefit by having people get off a trolley and be greeted at a Visitors Center that's full of information instead of a bar, chain restaurant or gas station. He thinks to put it in front of Chase is a great interim solution, but it doesn't need to be done that fast. It would be better to table it and come up with a long-term solution that takes them down Orange, in front of the Del and possibly gives them a place to do some sort of a U-turn on Ocean rather than negatively impact residents.

Bob Balfour, 1315 Ninth Street, is the president of the CHA Board of Directors and is also a Visitors Center committee member. This has been a long process, meeting with the Old Town Trolley and the CTID to see what they can do to better their operations for the City. They have a world-class museum and have found that trolley riders getting dropped off at McP's go to the Del, come back, eat lunch and get back on the trolley. They'd like to see people delivered close to the Visitors Center. They also respect and understand the concerns of the neighbors. The Rotary Plaza idea really came from the Police who suggested that this was the right place to start with so as to not eliminate parking places. However, the idea of having the trolleys stop in front of Chase, which is relatively close to the Visitors Center, would be fine. They are anxious to move forward with this and that's a recommendation that they would support. It's time to make a change and the best place for people to learn about Coronado is the Visitors Center. He encouraged the T.O.C. to make a decision today.

Kelly Purvis, 560 C Avenue, is totally in support of another stop in the Old Town Trolley route; however, she thinks the route now is working really well and would hate to see that change, for all the reasons spoken about today – the safety, traffic, residents, and the fragile neighborhood that is already buffeted by the Hotel Del and traffic from Orange Avenue. She's hesitant to recommend having a stop at Rotary Plaza; she thinks stopping past the gas station, at the bus stop, and letting visitors go down the whole block of new and wonderful businesses along Orange Avenue, will eventually get them to the Visitors Center in a block and a half. The current method is they get off McP's and they walk south. Very few walk the other way. By dropping them off a block and a half away they will have to go by the Visitors Center and they'll

hit a whole range of businesses and shops in the downtown. The stop is in place and no parking places would be eliminated, so she suggests it be looked at for six months. If you get off at McP's it's hard to get across the street – it would be better to put them at an established stop.

Eddie Warner is on the MainStreet Board and she and her husband own Holland's Bicycles. She agrees with Ms. Purvis and thinks it makes total sense to spread the stops out much more widely if a second stop is added. If the stop was at Ninth and Orange, visitors would have the opportunity to go to the 800 block and see the renovated theater. This would expose them to everything Coronado has to offer, rather than cramming it all into a short, 500' distance. She thinks it's an awful idea to route the trolleys 20 times a day past a residential neighborhood. She doesn't see the need and knows that the MainStreet Board would not support ceding two or three parking spaces to a business. Three spaces in front of McP's have already been ceded for the trolleys' sole use during the daytime. To block off another section of parking that would only be used for their business is not something that most business people on Orange Avenue would support. She's not sure why the Chamber lent their support because she thinks it's detrimental to the businesses rather than helping them.

Susan Keith, 801 Tolita, said the Coronado Historical Association wears two hats because of the Visitors Center and the historic side. They've been working on getting another stop in the downtown for 10 years. Exactly how that is accomplished will be up to the T.O.C. They feel it's important for more visitors to be able to walk in the downtown and visit stores. As people have said, now people get off at McP's, walk up to the hotel and walk back to McP's. If there's a way to get them into the downtown and get them to walk through the business district, it's a win-win for everyone. It's not just for the Visitors Center, but it is the place where they can pick up information. She hopes that the T.O.C. takes what was said today and studies the two new options that have been presented – the three parking places at Chase and the bus stop at Ninth. Both of those would service the downtown to perfection. If what is being discussed today were to be adopted, parking would be lost because they'd take the green space by the Flower Lady. She'd like to see this studied more so that it can be a win-win for everybody.

Mr. Blood thinks Ms. Purvis' idea makes a lot of sense. He also sees a recognized need, but thinks today's proposal needs to be tabled to try to move the stop to another location. He supports studying this more and coming up with more data. If a stop is placed on that side of Orange Avenue he thinks that would help the situation.

Mr. Little is definitely for another stop, but he believes moving the route through the residential area is a problem as it would impact the homeowners. This needs more study.

Mr. Walton sees the benefit of having a stop on that side of Orange Avenue but he does not like the idea of going through the residential community and a park. He's also concerned about two stops being that close together, which is less than a block apart. He likes the idea of keeping the original route and trying to work with both Old Town Trolley and the Visitors Center to find a spot that can serve their needs, the businesses' needs and the tourists' needs. He'd like to send this back to staff to work with those groups to find a better location.

Mr. Scanlon said he's in agreement with what has been said; some very cogent arguments have been made as far as the impacts on the residential community. He agrees that City staff should re-examine this with the aim of establishing a stop on the west side of Orange Avenue, but eliminating any potential route that would go through a residential area.

Ms. Hurst asked if the trolley could stop in a yellow curb zone and Mr. Johnson responded that they can, as long as they are in the process of loading and unloading. They can't

stop and wait for a time like they can at their existing two locations. Ms. Hurst noted that there's a yellow zone near the Village Theater and wondered if that could be considered.

Mr. Blood moved to send staff back to explore other options, including that of a yellow zone, with a main focus on not re-routing the trolley through a residential neighborhood. Mr. Walton seconded it and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.