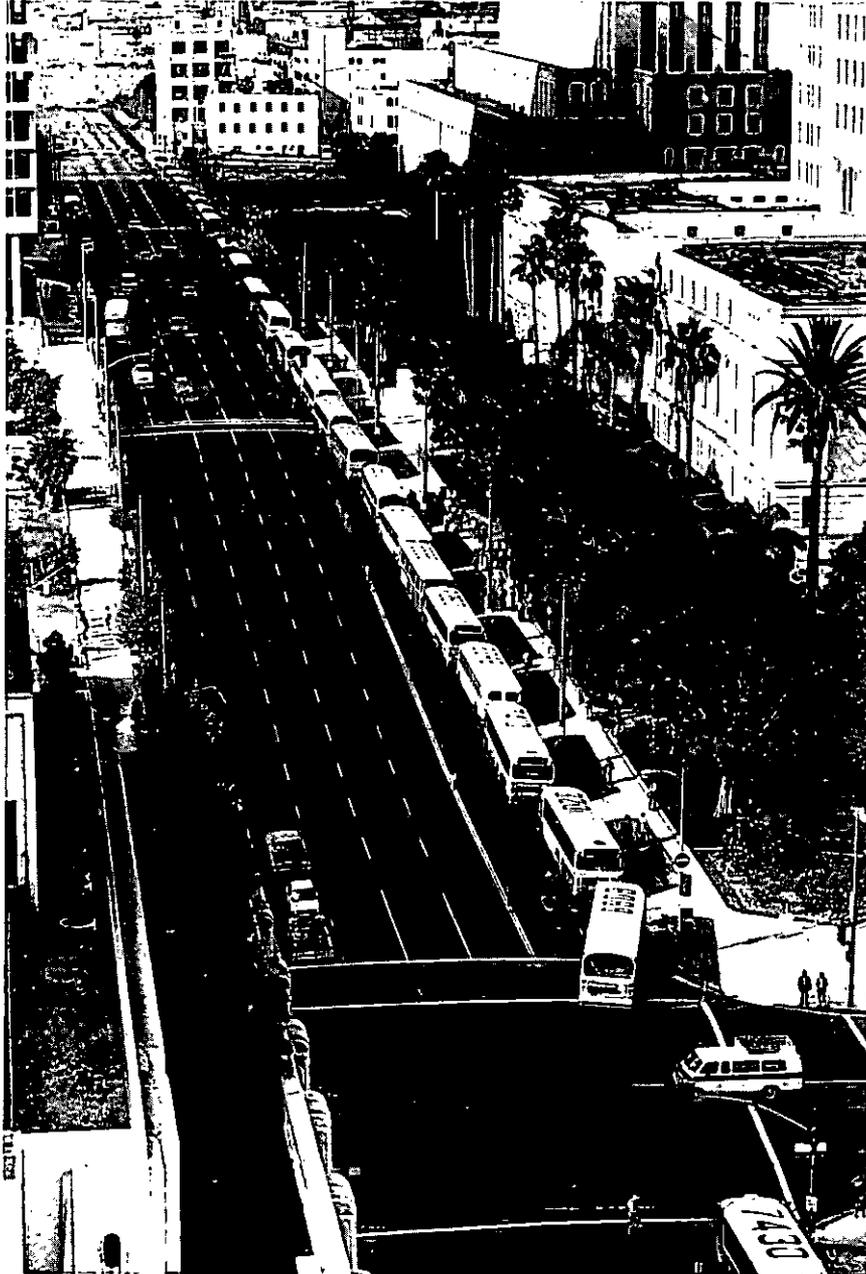


Public Transit in the Los Angeles Central Business District



SCRTD
1983
.P82
c.2



Southern California Rapid Transit District

PUBLIC TRANSIT IN THE LOS ANGELES
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

COVER PHOTO

Los Angeles Times Copyright Photo. May 1981. Back up buses in the contraflow bus lane during the afternoon peak period in front of City Hall was the result of a major traffic accident on the freeway to the north. Photo illustrates the vulnerability of surface buses to periodic disruptions in traffic flow. However, normally buses travel through the contraflow bus lane in a free flow manner at all times of the day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
SUMMARY	1
BACKGROUND	2
● The Los Angeles Region	2
● The Southern California Rapid Transit District	4
● The Importance of Public Transportation in the Los Angeles Central Business District	4
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CBD TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	5
● The CBD: The Focal Point of the Regional Bus Network	5
● Los Angeles Area Transit Boardings	7
● Bus Routes in the CBD	7
RECENT TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS AFFECTING THE CBD	10
● Downtown Shuttle Bus Route	10
● El Monte Busway	11
● Spring Street Contra-Flow Lane	12
STUDIED TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CBD	13
● TSM: General	13
● One-Way Streets	14
● TSM: Major Bus Preferential Treatment Proposals	15
● Expanded Bus-on-Freeway Services	15
● Downtown Circulation Improvement Plans	16
● Commuter Rail Improvements	16
● Light Rail Transit	16
● Metro Rail Project	18
● Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency Support for General CBD Transit Improvements	18
PRIORITIES FOR LAND USE PLANNING	19
● Moving People (Instead of Vehicles)	19
● Importance of Pedestrian and Transit- Users' Amenities	19
● Mixed Land Uses	22
● Joint Development	23
● Large Scale Redevelopment	25
● Containment of Skid Row	26
● CBD Parking Management	27
● Equal Access: Auto vs. Transit	29

SUMMARY

This paper provides an overview of public transportation in the Los Angeles Central Business District (CBD), surveys transit improvements and recommends priorities for land use planning in the CBD.

The Los Angeles region is less dominated by its downtown area than the established eastern cities. Nevertheless, Downtown Los Angeles is by far the largest single regional employment financial, civic and cultural center for all of the urbanized Los Angeles region comprising 12 million people. The revival of the Los Angeles CBD in recent years further increases its importance to the region. Projections call for substantial additional growth accruing to the Los Angeles CBD in the next 10-20 years.

A major element in continuation of Downtown Los Angeles growth is the maintenance of good accessibility and internal circulation. Public transit, as this paper outlines, is the single, most important means of improving accessibility to and circulation in the CBD.

In order to improve access to and circulation within downtown Los Angeles, joint efforts are essential by all concerned. This includes Los Angeles City officials and their staff, private groups and individuals, private developers and all public agencies with involvement in transportation. Planning for and promotion of the use of public transportation is essential for the continuation of economic and cultural growth for downtown Los Angeles.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles Region

Before examining the Central Business District (CBD) and its relationship to public transportation, it is helpful to look at the entire Los Angeles area's relationship with transit.

Contrary to general opinion, Los Angeles is not a low-density city. It is, depending on the calculation method used, either second or third in the nation in urbanized area population density. There is, however, a greater dispersion of commercial centers than is true of the other major American cities which, in turn, means greater dispersion of trips; particularly those most readily attracted to public transit. This situation combined with the existence of the most extensive street and freeway system in the nation

(built almost entirely with no provision for rapid transit or expedited bus service) results in a lower proportion of the population regularly riding public transportation than is true in many other major American cities.

<u>Urbanized Area</u>	<u>Residents/Square Mile</u>
New York	6683
Philadelphia	5349
Los Angeles	5313
Chicago	5247
Baltimore	5163
Buffalo	5085
Washington, D.C./Md.	5018
Miami	4715
Boston	3992
Pittsburgh	3095
Cleveland	3033
Atlanta	2696

Source: SCRFD Alternative Analysis Draft 1979 Environmental Impact Statement/Report on Transit System Improvements in the Los Angeles Region (1970 Census Data).

CBD COMPARISONS

	<u>AREA</u> <u>(Sq. Miles)</u>	<u>FLOOR SPACE</u> <u>(Sq. Foot</u> <u>Millions)</u>	<u>EMPLOYMENT</u>	<u>EMPLOYMENT</u> <u>DENSITY</u> <u>(Sq. Miles)</u>
New York	9.0	172.5	816,192	90,688
Philadelphia	2.5	42.9	110,051	44,020
Los Angeles	2.9	63.8	200,000	68,966
Chicago	1.1	40.0	212,000	192,727
Washington, D.C.	1.7	30.0	128,000	75,294

(1970 Census Data)

TRANSIT MARKET SHARES

	<u>LOS ANGELES</u>	<u>NEW YORK</u>	<u>PHILADELPHIA</u>	<u>CHICAGO</u>	<u>WASHINGTON</u>
Metropolitan Area	4%	42%	13%	17%	12%
CBD	25%	84%	64%	75%	37%
L.A. Metropolitan Area					
SCAG Region	3%	(LA, Orange & Ventura Counties & Western urbanized portions of Riverside & San Bernardino Cos.)			
L.A. County	4%	(SCRID boundaries, i.e. urbanized portion of LA County*			
Central City	8%	(WLA, South Central LA, ELA & LA CBD Sectors*			

* - Includes municipal carriers.

TRANSIT AVERAGE WEEKDAY BOARDINGS*

New York	5,009,000
Philadelphia	1,488,000
Los Angeles	1,430,000
Chicago	2,400,000
Washington, D.C.	935,000

* - For all transit modes for each metropolitan area including commuter rail. Monthly Transit Ridership, American Public Transit Association, September 30, 1981. Commuter Rail figures from SEPTA and MTA Planning Departments.

The Southern California Rapid
Transit District

Public transportation carries about 4% of all trips made in the Los Angeles region. The Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) carries about 90% of these trips, with the balance carried by several municipal operators. Two of the municipal operators (Long Beach and Santa Monica) extend considerably beyond their city boundaries.

The SCRTD is the largest "all-bus" public transportation system in the nation in all categories, including route miles and passengers carried. The SCRTD has more than twice the route miles of any other system. Even when compared with cities having rapid transit, the SCRTD ranks third in the nation behind New York and Chicago (Philadelphia is fifth) in number of passengers carried. An average weekday sees approximately 400,000 people boarding one or more SCRTD buses, for a total of slightly more than 1,300,000 weekday boardings.

Bus ridership has grown steadily since the start of the three year reduced fare program in July 1, 1982. This program was made possible by the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) one-half cent transit sales tax funds. The base local fare was reduced from 85 to 50 cents with proportional reductions in the express distance charges. Seniors, students and the handicapped ride for only 20 cents. As of April 1983, the SCRTD ridership averaged about 1,400,000 weekday boardings.

Another perspective of the impact public transportation has on the Los Angeles region comes from a 1981 SCRTD comprehensive marketing survey. The survey found that, in the urbanized portion of Los Angeles County, 41% of the population of 16 years or older ride public transportation at least once a month.

The breakdown for regular, moderate and infrequent riders is as follows:

Number of Trips by Public Transit Per Month	LA County % of Population 16 yrs or Older	
	Category	Cumulative
20+	8%	8%
4-19	10%	18%
1-3	23%	41%

The Importance of Public Transportation
in the Los Angeles Central Business
District

While transit's importance to the entire Los Angeles area might appear somewhat minor, its importance to the CBD is beyond question. There are about 1,300,000 person trips (auto, bus, taxi, and truck passengers, as well as pedestrians) entering and leaving the CBD each weekday. Slightly more than one quarter (27%, about 350,000) of these trips are made on SCRTD buses. Municipal bus operations into the CBD raise transit's trip proportion very slightly. Transit's 27% market share is carried in only 1.5% of the 600,000 vehicles entering and leaving the CBD daily. Transit's share increases to 35% during the weekday morning and evening peak hours, and to 50% when those persons passing through the CBD during the peak hours are excluded.

There are approximately six major east-west transit streets in the CBD and an equal number of major north-south transit streets. During peak periods, about 50% of all persons traveling on these streets are on SCRTD buses. Examples of some of the percentages carried on these streets are shown below.

Bus Passengers as
Percent of all Persons
Traveling on CBD Streets

<u>Major East-West Streets</u>	<u>Percent Bus Passengers</u>	
	<u>All Day*</u>	<u>PM Peak Hr.</u>
Seventh @ Central	68.7	73.3
Wilshire @ Figueroa	50.5	62.6
Temple @ Grand	48.0	48.2
First @ Broadway	40.4	54.3
Fifth @ Hill	39.2	55.3
Sixth @ Hill	39.2	50.2

<u>Major North-South Streets</u>	<u>All Day*</u>	<u>PM Peak Hr.</u>
Grand @ Temple	75.4	76.8
Main @ Twelveth	73.4	72.8
Hill @ First	63.8	70.7
Broadway @ Seventh	58.3	66.6
Spring @ First	58.0	65.6
Olive @ First	57.1	56.0

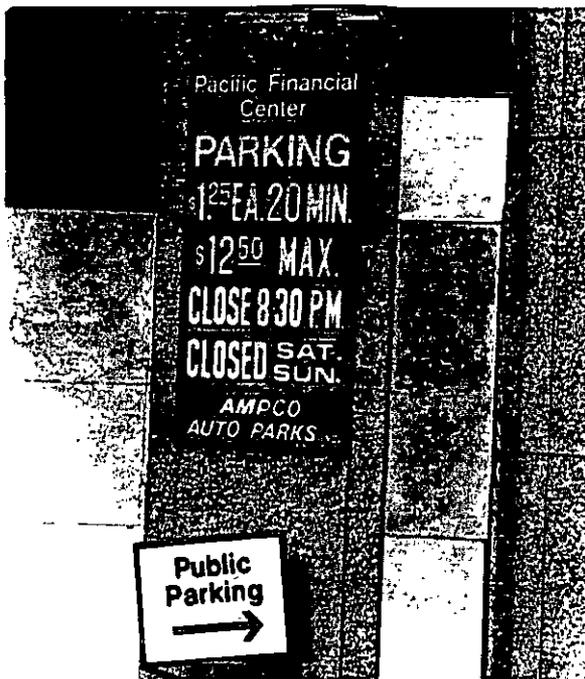
* (14 Hrs.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CBD
TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

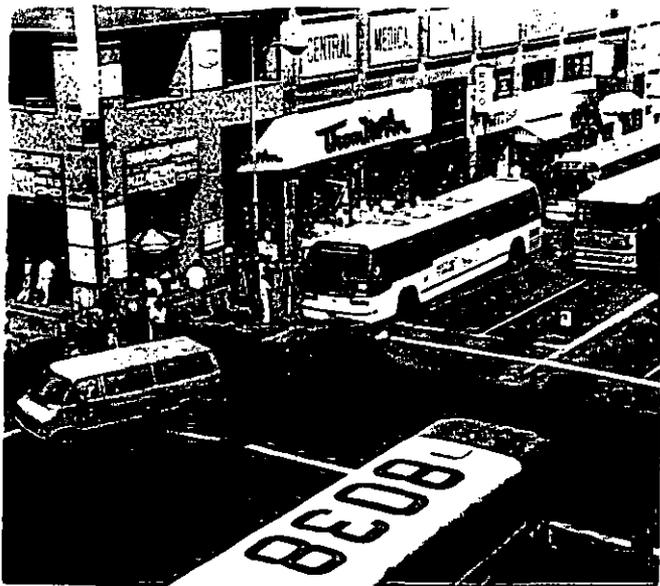
The CBD: The Focal Point of the
Regional Bus Network

Public transportation is, as has been shown, very important to the CBD. The reverse is also true: The CBD is very important to the transit system. The CBD is the focal point of the regional bus network and generates a large portion of the total transit ridership in the region. Transit is at its best when serving a concentration of trip ends such as occurs in the CBD, while the private auto is most competitively disadvantaged under the same conditions.

The effectiveness of the buses in getting to and through the CBD makes this part of the system an especially attractive alternative to the auto as a transportation mode. Auto disincentives are built into the CBD. The CBD parking is restricted, not always close to desired destinations, and relatively expensive. This compares with suburban shopping and employment centers which generally have abundant, convenient and free parking.



● Parking Prices Posted on Flower Street. High Parking costs are a strong auto disincentive. ●



● Midday view of intersection of 7th and Broadway - two major transit streets. During peak period vehicles regularly back up into intersection. Bus queues at bus stops of three and four buses are common. ●

Whereas autos can move much faster than buses in the outlying areas, the CBD's crowded streets do not allow autos to maneuver around stopped buses. This thereby tends to equalize the travel time of the two modes. This equalization of the two modes enables

buses to compete more successfully with the auto when the CBD is the destination point. This is important to the market share which transit obtains of all trips made.

Another way the CBD influences the bus system is its effect on bus schedules. Since the majority of SCRID's major lines go into or through the CBD, any traffic congestion which is greater than usual can have the effect of throwing schedules out of alignment. A disruption in the schedules on downtown lines affects a major portion of the entire system. CBD traffic management, therefore, is an important factor in SCRID's operations.



● Looking west on 5th St. at Spring St. Cars remaining in the intersection after the light change block opposing traffic. ●

Although the Los Angeles region is characterized by a greater dispersion of commercial activity than many other U.S. cities, the Los Angeles CBD, with an employment population of about 200,000, is by far the largest single center in the region. As indicated in the following table, a high proportion of the total regional transit ridership is generated within the downtown area.

Los Angeles Area Transit Boardings
(Showing Proportions of Boardings in Various Segments)

(1982)

<u>Area</u>	<u>Sq. Miles</u>	<u>Total Boardings</u>	<u>Boardings Per Sq. Miles</u>
Total Area	1,300	1,300,000	1,000
CBD	3	242,000	80,667
Central City*	397	680,000	1,713
Suburban	900	378,000	428

* - Excluding L.A. CBD

The downtown area is defined here as bounded by the Hollywood, Harbor and Santa Monica Freeways and Alameda Street (see downtown map). The Central City can be broadly defined as all the area within a ten-mile radius of City Hall. In terms of the greatest ridership density, the area would extend about five miles on the east and 18 miles on the west (extending to Santa Monica). The balance of the Los Angeles area is listed as "suburban," and includes portions served by SCRTD and various municipal bus operators. Boardings of municipal operators are excluded from the above estimates. Addition of municipal operating boardings will increase total boardings to 1,450,000 per weekday (as of April 1983).

The average speed at which buses can operate to and through the CBD affects significantly the attractiveness of the bus service to the CBD. Improved average speed in the CBD would benefit the greatest number of present and potential riders compared to riders in any other single area of the region. Not only is there presently the greatest concentration of transit riding occurring in the CBD, the greatest potential for increases in transit riding also exist in this area. This is due to the inherent advantages of public transportation in the CBD in attracting a larger market share of travel compared

to all other centers in the region.

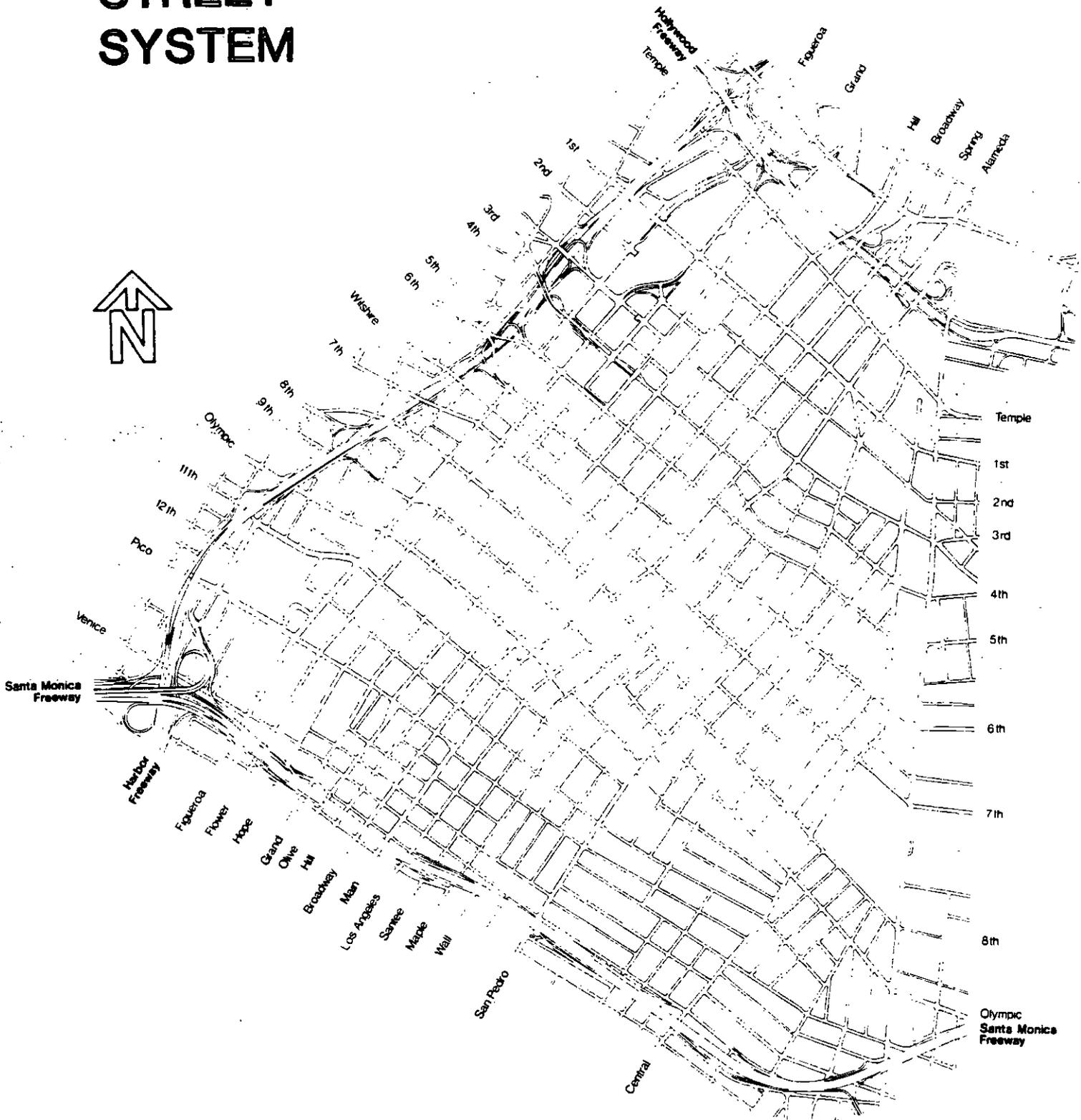
Transit captures a much smaller portion of trips through the CBD (between communities on opposite sides of the downtown) area due to much faster auto speeds. Improved CBD bus speeds would make public transportation more attractive for these trips as well.

Ultimately, the best way to adequately serve both trips to, as well as through, the downtown area is by means of grade separated right-of-way for public transportation, i.e., rapid transit.

Bus Routes in the CBD

In common with other major urban public transportation systems, SCRTD's bus route network is concentrated in the central city area. There is a semblance of a grid pattern of routes within the central city area; but, in line with historical demand, bus routes converge upon the CBD in a radial pattern. The Sector Improvement Plan (bus service improvement program for the District's service area, by sector) reinforced the grid pattern through route extensions and straightened out routes which turned off major transit streets.

DOWNTOWN STREET SYSTEM



Downtown Los Angeles Bus Routes Effective January 30, 1983



Bus Planning Department

1234
78

Sunset Blvd

▲ Terminal of the
Minibus Line 202, Line 600,
and other Special Services
not shown

1811
23

Temple St

1st St

3rd St

4th St

5th St

6th St

Wilshire Blvd

7th St

8th St

9th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Pico Blvd

Venice Blvd

Figueroa St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Figueroa St

Grand Ave

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Grand Ave

Olive St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Olive St

Hill St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Hill St

Broadway

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Broadway

Main St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Main St

Los Angeles St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

Los Angeles St

N Main St

Flower St

Hope St

Diamond St

3rd St

5th St

6th St

7th St

8th St

Olympic Blvd

11th St

12th St

N Main St

Maple Ave

San Pedro St

Central Ave



Map not drawn to scale

In 1981 prior to the new route numbering system, of the total 224 regularly scheduled bus lines, 99 operate into the Los Angeles CBD. Some of these 99 lines have alternative routes, thus providing even more route options for persons traveling to or through downtown Los Angeles. Of the 99 lines serving the CBD, about 50 operate as express service providing an alternate express route to the basic local route. After beginning on suburban surface streets, express service is operated over all of the radial freeway routes serving the Los Angeles CBD. While some of the local routes operate through the CBD, all of the express routes terminate within the downtown and Wilshire areas. There are also "limited" routes ending in the CBD, providing expedited, limited-stop service on surface streets.

Buses run every few minutes even during midday on major downtown transit streets. The capacity of the bus loading zones is reached on many streets during peak periods. Excluding Spring Street southbound at the City Hall and the contraflow lane, the present maximum volume of buses occurs northbound on Hill Street where 110 buses pass in the evening peak hour.



● Bus loading zone on Sixth Street near Broadway. The narrow sidewalk causes congestion, with waiting bus passengers and pedestrians competing for same limited space. ●

RECENT TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS AFFECTING THE CBD

Downtown Los Angeles Minibus Route

A downtown circulation route was established in 1971. Although there was frequent bus service on most CBD streets available for circulation trips within the downtown area, the public did not perceive the existing service as a convenient travel alternative.

The multitude of buses and the large variety of routing in the downtown area was confusing to the potential circulation trip user. Without a knowledge of all the routes in downtown, the public saw the movements of the buses as unpredictable. Prospective riders also saw the regular fare as too high for the few blocks they intended to ride. Lastly, the stigma which public transit has in the minds of some, hampered the use of regular bus lines for circulation purposes.

The success of the CBD mini-bus program included several important elements: the loop route (the configuration of which was posted at each special bus stop), an extremely low fare, and small - sprightly decorated - special buses not associated with the public transit image.



● Passengers boarding a shuttle bus on First Street. Bus has distinctive paint scheme for easy identification by riders. ●

Funding for the downtown mini-bus route was provided by a special service contract with the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. This set a desirable precedent, SCRTD believes, for special funding for any special bus services which provide particular local benefits. In 1978 the County terminated its subsidy for this service and SCRTD assumed the County's financial responsibility.

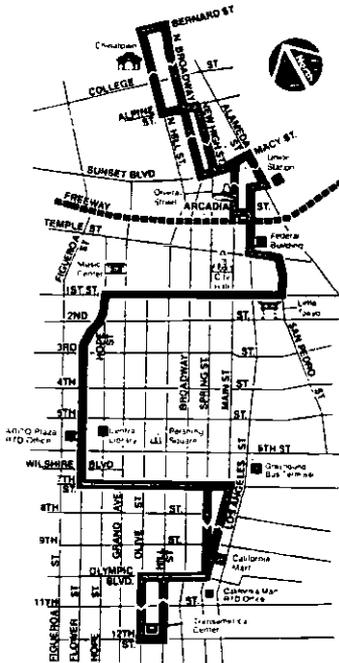
Today, despite route and fare changes and their impacts on ridership, the shuttle bus service continues in downtown Los Angeles and has acquired a large measure of community interest and support.

El Monte Busway

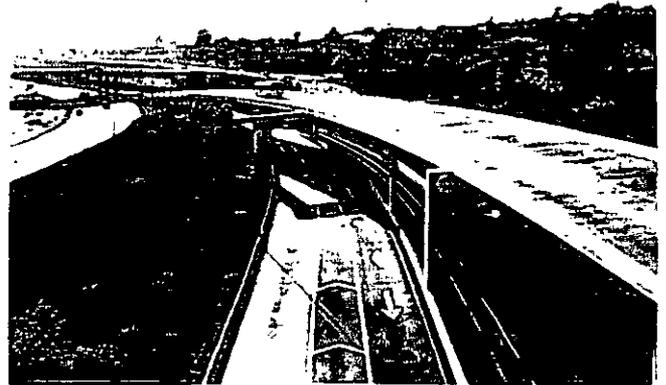
The El Monte Busway is the closest thing to rail rapid transit for this region. Beginning service in 1973, the Busway consists of exclusive bus lanes on the San Bernardino Freeway between El Monte and the vicinity of Union Station.

More than any other busway in the nation, to date, this facility emulates some of the desirable aspects of rail rapid transit. It has two on-line stations as well as a large terminal station and a parking lot in El Monte. Patronage growth has been impressive. However, due in part to a series of fare increases and to the introduction of carpools using the special lanes, the growth rate has now leveled off.*


**MINI-BUS
STOP**
 Line 602
 25¢ Fare

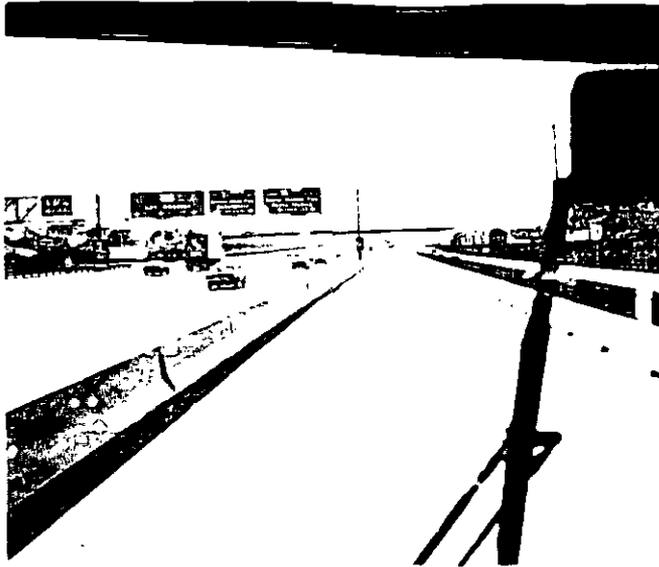


● Mini-Bus Stop Sign showing mini-bus route. ●



● Busway viewed west from University Station Bridge. ●

* - Excluding the gas shortage induced patronage increase starting in April-May 1979.

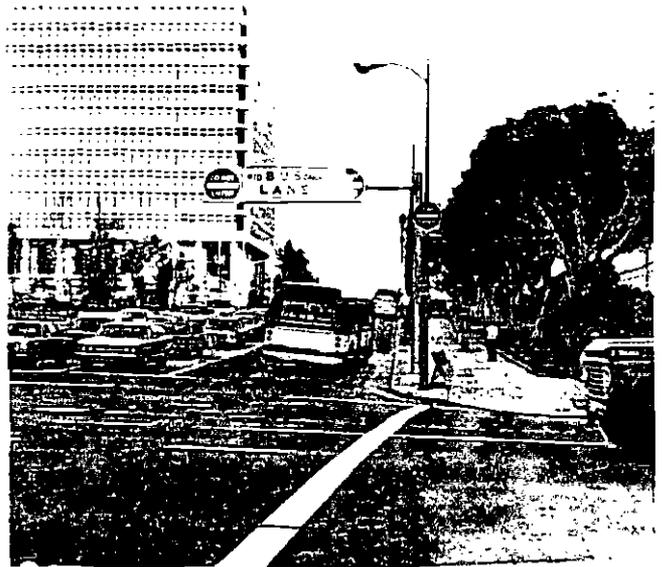


● Traveling westbound on the Busway.●

Exclusive, grade-separated lanes are needed most in downtown Los Angeles, where the buses must negotiate stop-and-go traffic. Bus routes using the Busway have three separate routes through the CBD and one route bypassing the CBD via the Hollywood and Harbor Freeways. At one time an additional route used the 1.2 mile long contraflow exclusive bus lane along Spring Street on an experimental basis. This line was discontinued due to low patronage.

Spring Street Contraflow Lane

Use of the Spring Street contraflow exclusive bus lane commenced in 1973 in conjunction with the start of the operation of the Busway. The contraflow lane has proven itself to be a workable concept for downtown Los Angeles. Initially the lane encountered some merchant and parking lot owner opposition. Today, after 10 years of an acceptable safety record, the lane has received general community/business acceptance.



● Spring Street Contraflow lane near City Hall.●

The contraflow lane significantly increases the visibility of bus service which, in turn, increases the public's awareness of transit's availability—an important attribute of rail rapid transit often missing in bus operations. Use of this lane has also resulted in the transfer of several bus routes from the skid-row environment on Main Street, thus providing a substantially improved environment for waiting passengers.

It appears that service reliability on the contraflow lane has been improved. However, results of the bus lane speed studies have not been conclusive. This is due, in part, to the short distance of the lane.

The Spring Street contraflow lane provides valuable experience for implementation of bus preferential treatment facilities and traffic management techniques within downtown Los Angeles and elsewhere in the region.

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS STUDIES IN THE CBD

TSM: General

Various methods for improving transit in the CBD have been studied. Extensive consideration has been given to general Transportation Systems Management (TSM) applications. These include one-way street designations, TSM preferential treatment proposals for buses, expanded bus-on-freeway services, rapid transit, a downtown people mover and CBD transit improvements suggested by the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and by the Los Angeles City Department of Transportation (DOT).

The term "Transportation Systems Management," which dates back to its use in the September 1975 Federal Register, refers to efforts to obtain greater efficiency and productivity from present public transportation resources. Internal TSM can be accomplished by the operating agency on its own, e.g., scheduling improvements. External TSM requires the support and/or approval of other jurisdictions, e.g., traffic management changes affecting the operation of buses on public streets. In downtown Los Angeles, most external TSM proposals are within the purview of city departments, and usually fall within that of the Los Angeles City Department of Transportation.

External TSM proposals within the Los Angeles CBD are concerned with increasing the average speed of buses while avoiding decreased bus route accessibility. Other proposals include providing more street-side transit information, passenger shelters and general pedestrian amenities.

Bus speeds in the downtown area average approximately eight miles per hour during the peak periods. This low speed increases bus operating costs and, compared to the slightly higher auto speeds, clearly is not attractive to the would-be CBD transit rider.

Three major factors are involved in achieving faster bus speeds: reducing boarding and alighting time, avoiding signal delays, and obtaining special lanes for buses. The SCRTD's innovative and aggressive pass promotion efforts may have reduced fare collection delays to the minimum possible, short of a free fare policy. Lower bus floors or high-level, curb-side platforms (as used in rapid transit stations) would also speed bus loading. Lower bus floors, although the object of much research and development effort, are currently beyond the state of the art for heavy transit buses. Also, it is doubtful that either the carriers or the cities involved would accept high-level bus loading platforms in mixed traffic. In other cities, this concept has been proposed for CBD stops of light rail.

Lengthening the space between bus stops is another way of speeding up buses, but this results in longer walk times for passengers. Fewer bus turning movements result in faster times (due to less time spent waiting to turn) but may result in longer spacing between stops, again bringing about longer walk times. Since longer walk times are a disincentive to bus use, any lengthening of the space between bus stops as a means of speeding bus movements must be considered very carefully.

Bus signal preemptions to extend green time for buses may have some limited applications. In the downtown area, the opportunities may be negligible due to heavy cross traffic at almost all intersections which have heavy bus volumes. The necessity of equipping a major portion of the bus fleet with the necessary hardware for preemption is also a negating factor compared to the benefits obtained.

Buses can be expedited with special lanes, such as the Spring Street contraflow lane already discussed. However, presently most of the right hand curb lanes throughout the CBD are, in effect, bus-only/right-hand-turn lanes. This is true on all CBD streets

during the peak periods, and on some major transit streets all day. Selective use of auto right-hand-turn prohibitions could help free the curb lane for uninterrupted bus movements.

The prohibition of left turns on Seventh Street, excluding RTD buses, has significantly expedited traffic flow on this major transit street in downtown Los Angeles.

Parking and freight-loading violators have the effect of removing the entire right hand lane from use. For general CBD application, it appears that the most promising action would be better enforcement of existing "no parking/no stopping" restrictions.



● Illegal Parking along Spring Street. ●

An equally important consideration to transit regarding one-way streets is the loss of about half of all available curb space for bus loading. This impact cannot be overstressed, since the major factor in determining bus capacity is available curb space for bus stops. Additional one-way streets with mixed traffic would exacerbate this problem. As a general rule, transit would probably derive more benefit from foregoing the additional capacity obtained from one-way streets in favor of retention of bi-directional streets with reduced auto traffic.



● Main Street One-Way ●

One Way Streets

The use of one-way streets to increase the general traffic flow complicates significantly bus route layouts and confuse the transit-riding public. This is particularly true regarding transfer to CBD bus lines for distribution trips and the use of these lines for internal circulation trips. Walking distances are increased with one-way street bus routes for persons who could otherwise use a bus route on a two directional street.

There is little, if any, additional capacity that can be squeezed out of downtown surface streets for general vehicle traffic flow. In the long term, expanding the capacity of the CBD street system over present levels in order to make possible greater traffic flow may actually decrease the attractiveness of the CBD as a place to work, shop, live, or go for entertainment.

Alternatively, additional street capacity could be used to increase the attractiveness of bus service to, through and within the CBD. The willingness of the downtown community, primarily the business community, to forego some general vehicular flow increase in favor of improved bus flow and better pedestrian amenities will depend upon that community's awareness of the importance of public transportation. The community needs to be aware of the favorable impact that transit has on downtown Los Angeles and the even greater benefits possible when proper improvements are made.

TSM: Major Bus Preferential Treatment Proposals

One of the major bus and pedestrian preferential treatment proposals is the Broadway Mall. The project has been deferred indefinitely due to merchants and parking lot operators opposition, as well as, due to the uncertainties created by the passage of Proposition 13 in June 1978. Since then, there have been two surveys conducted with conflicting findings as to merchant support/opposition for the project.

The project concept consists of low capital cost modifications to test the feasibility of restricted or auto-free traffic control, coupled with expanded provisions for pedestrian and bus use. Favorable initial results, would have led to more capital intensive plans to be developed for permanent conversion. Since high capital cost pedestrian amenities are often very important in transit malls, succeeding without such amenities could be fairly difficult.

Major CBD streets which have been identified for further study of alternative special bus and pedestrian treatments are Seventh, Sixth, Fifth and possibly First Streets.

Several possible experimental bus treatments and general traffic control

techniques have been considered. Although the planned, full-scale, experimental Broadway Mall has been shelved temporarily, preferential treatments for buses and pedestrians, as a means of stemming the flood of autos into the downtown area, continue to be under active consideration. In some cases, where exclusive lanes or streets for buses may not be practical, reduced traffic flow with buses continuing to operate in mixed traffic may be a possibility.

On selected CBD streets, a section of the curb lane at the end of the block might be eliminated as a moving lane in favor of wider bus passenger waiting areas with appropriate amenities. For the mid-block section, the curb lane could be devoted to parking for deliveries and other short-term uses. Such an experiment would test the impact of significant reductions in street vehicle capacity in favor of possible benefits in the form of more room for pedestrians and bus passenger waiting areas. Buses would no longer have to weave in and out of bus loading areas, but still would be able to pass each other. This might reduce bus loading delays. The resultant impact of the overall reduced vehicular capacity, and the increased movement of people, must be considered carefully before implementation.

Another experiment related to the mall concept would be to restrict through vehicle movements to buses only. All other vehicles would have to turn right at the first intersection after entering, in effect creating a transit street. Provision would have to be made for the vehicles that would be diverted to parallel streets.

Expanded Bus-on-Freeway Services

As a part of the cooperative regional interagency transit planning program (Regional Transit Development Program --RTDP), planning is underway for both short and long-term expansions to the

existing bus services operated over freeways. All but one of the present express bus routes terminate in the Los Angeles CBD. Future plans call for an expanded network which would provide express services more evenly throughout the region along major transit corridors. Thus, the CBD would not be the sole focal point of the service as it is today.

The largest portion of any express bus network will continue to serve the Los Angeles CBD. As such, it has the potential to significantly increase transit market share of total travel to the CBD. On downtown streets, most probably express buses will continue to operate on a through-route (no transfer required) self-distribution basis. Express bus passengers will be able to transfer to the Downtown People Mover* and to the Metro Rail line, when these facilities are built. (*Construction of the DPM has been deferred indefinitely).

Downtown Circulation Improvement Plans

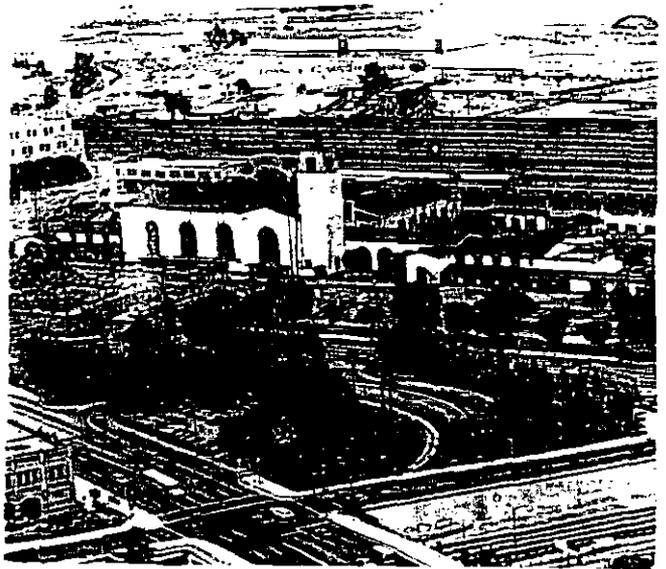
The Downtown People Mover (DPM) has been a part of the current RTDP effort. It has been planned as a 13-station aerial guideway, running between Union Station and the Convention Center, through the west side of the CBD. The line would improve internal circulation within the CBD and serve regional bus users and regional parking lots at the two terminal stations. When the initial Metro Rail line is built, major transfer points will develop at the locations where the two guideway lines intersect. The DPM offers challenging joint development potentials at major sites targeted for redevelopment on the west side of the CBD.

The City of Los Angeles has cancelled the DPM due to the withdrawal of federal funding for the project. The City, however, in so acting, is in the process of assessing available alternatives for improved internal circu-

lation within the CBD and for assessing funding options.

Commuter Rail Improvements

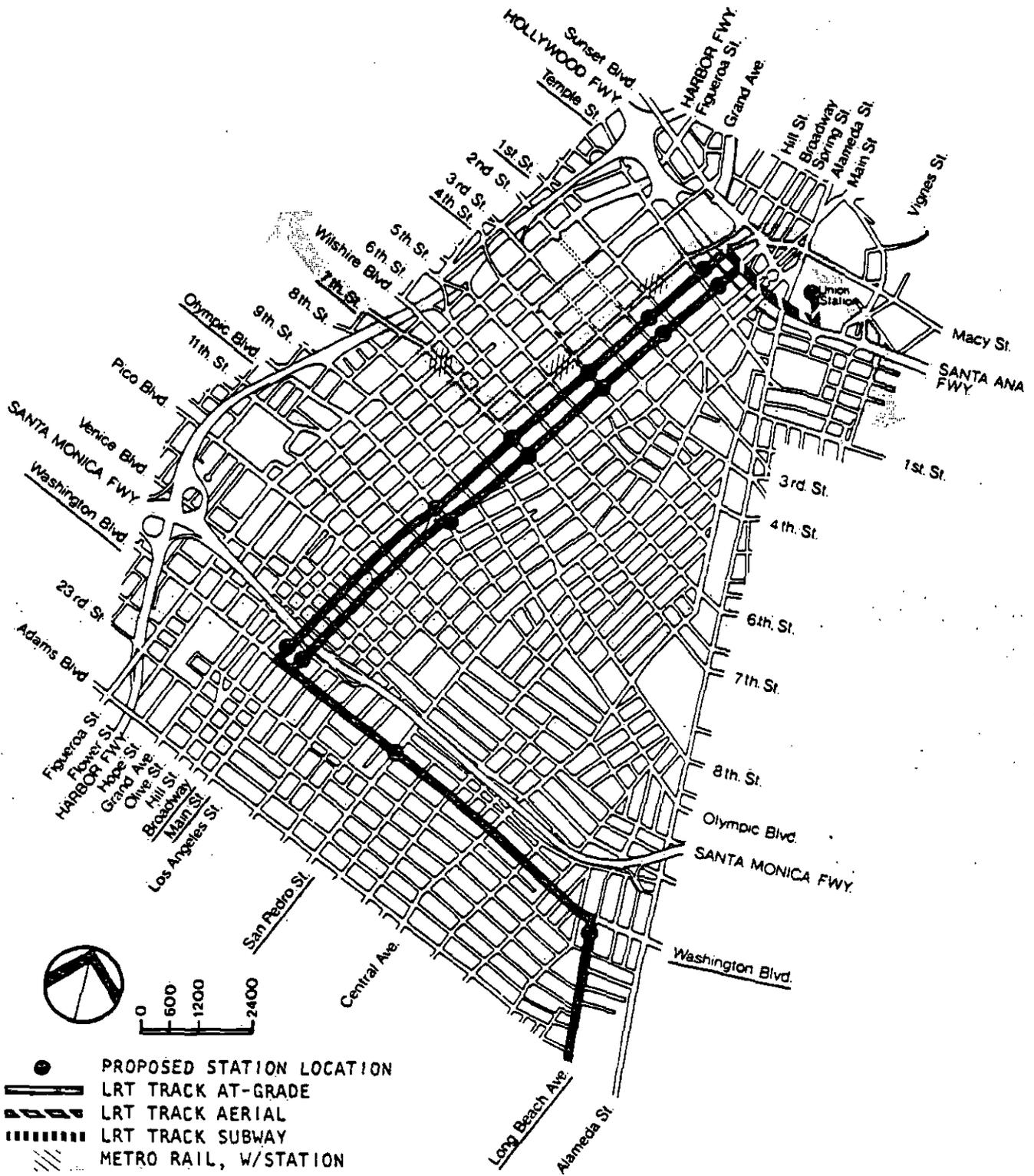
Currently, Caltrans funds three of the seven Amtrak round-trip trains between Union Station and San Diego. One of the Caltrans-funded trains operate during commuter hours. Future plans call for Caltrans to add one or two more trains during commuter hours to the San Diego line. Caltrans also has longer range plans to operate commuter rail service to Oxnard and to Riverside and San Bernardino.



● Union Station ●

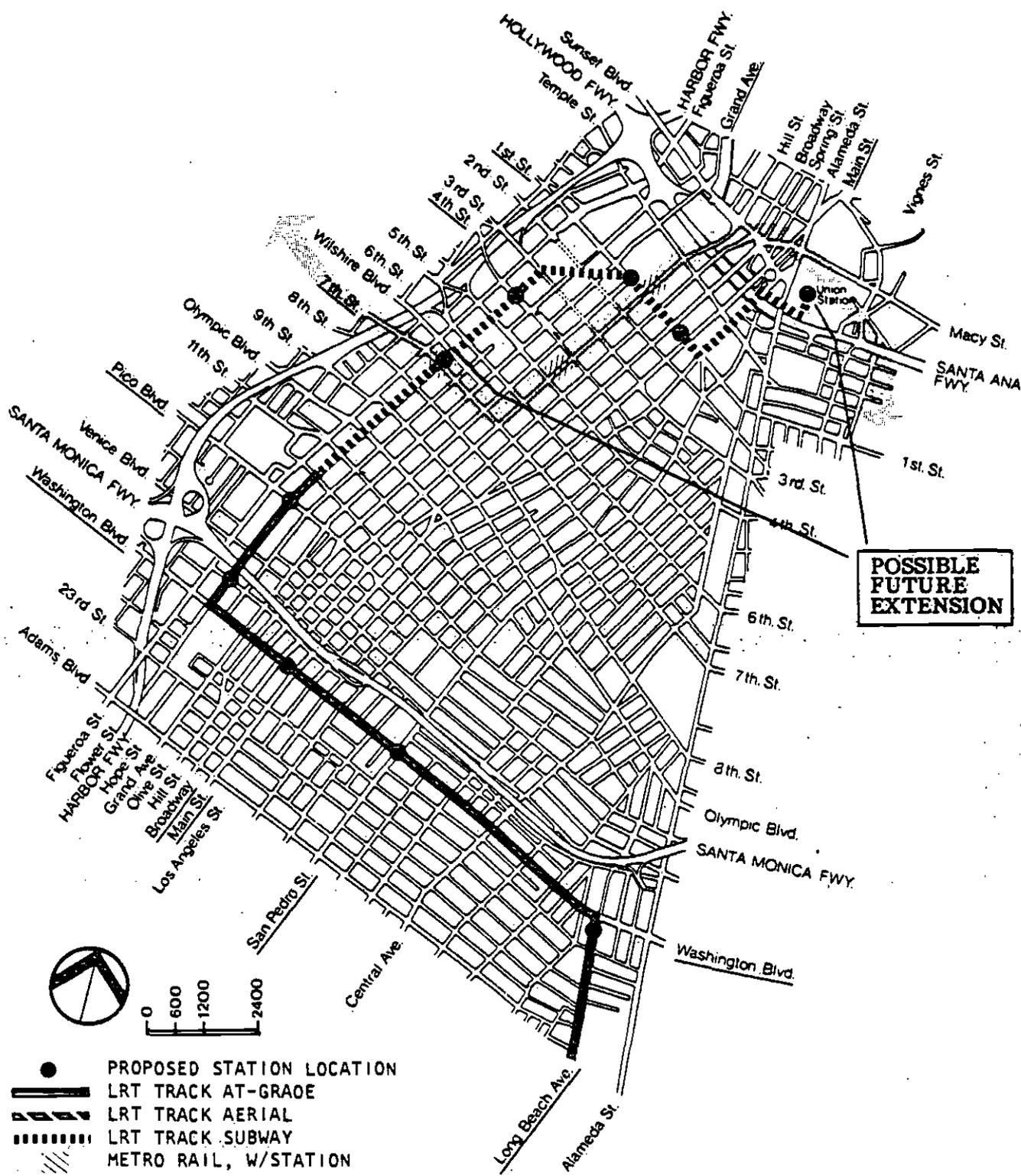
Light Rail Transit

Light rail consists of operation of modern street cars sometimes on their own right of way separated from street traffic and sometimes in the streets in mixed traffic. Several of the rights-of-way under consideration would entail rail operation into downtown Los Angeles. Existing rail rights-of-way in the region have been surveyed.



Broadway/Spring At Grade
Long Beach - Los Angeles
RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT
 LOS ANGELES COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

LA-1 **Fig. 3.1**
Downtown Los Angeles
Alignment Alternatives
 PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF / KAISER ENGINEERS



Flower St. Subway

LA-2

Fig. 3.2

Long Beach - Los Angeles
RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

Downtown Los Angeles
Alignment Alternatives

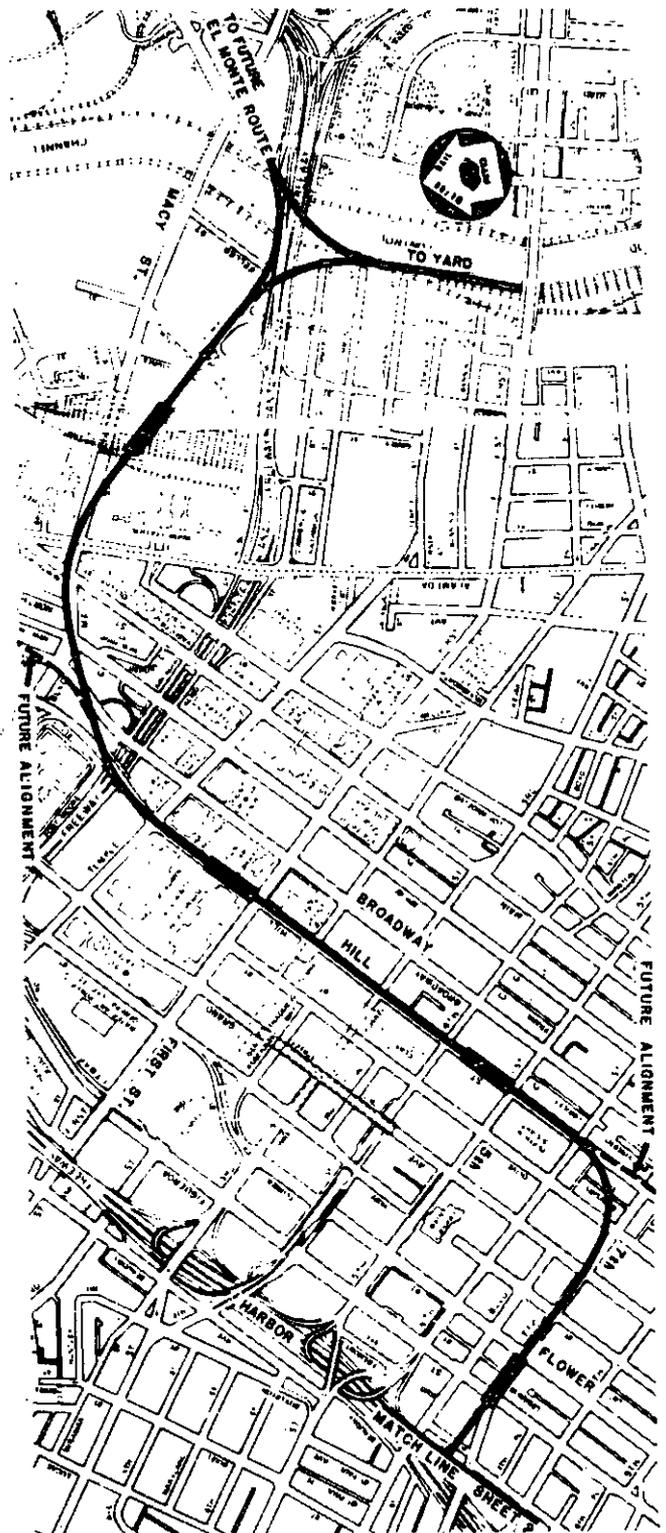
LOS ANGELES COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF / KAISER ENGINEERS

The Long Beach to downtown Los Angeles rail corridor has been identified as the first priority for conversion to light rail operation. Within downtown Los Angeles several alternative light rail distribution routes for the Long Beach rail line have been identified, including the following: Broadway/Spring Couplet, at-grade (Alternative LA-1); and a Flower Street Subway (Alternative LA-2). The latter includes at-grade operation from the railroad right of way to approximately Flower Street at 12th Street, where the tracks enter a portal in the median to become a subway track.

Metro Rail Project

As a part of the Regional Transportation Development Program (RTDP), alternative analysis refinements are being completed on an initial (starter) rapid transit line for the regional corridor called the Metro Rail Project. Preliminary engineering and the second tier EIS/EIR will be completed in the Fall of 1983. An UMTA grant application for final design and construction will be filed early in 1984. The Metro Rail line will extend from Union Station through the Wilshire corridor to North Hollywood. The line will be constructed in subway, with a Hill St. and 7th St. alignment in the CBD. Similar to the DPM, the five CBD subway stations will provide opportunities for joint development adjacent to the stations. Construction of the Metro Rail line will permit more bold parking management strategies. These will be designed to encourage greater transit usage and less reliance on traffic management techniques designed to maximize vehicular flow capacities of surface streets as a means of improving accessibility to the downtown area.



● CBD Alignment - Alternative A, Metro Rail Final Report, Project Milestone 3, Route Alignment Alternatives, February, 1983 ●

Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency Support for General CBD Transit Improvements

The Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is actively working with SCRTD staff and other public agency staff to bring about improved public transportation to the downtown area. Alongside the SCRTD and the Los Angeles City Department of Transportation staff, the CRA is reviewing opportunities for bus preferential treatments on downtown streets. Among other things, the CRA is interested in better information signs at bus stops and in street-side amenities which are of particular benefit to waiting transit users, and also benefit all pedestrians.

The CRA, along with Los Angeles City and the SCRTD fund jointly the downtown minibus service.

PRIORITIES FOR LAND USE PLANNING

Moving People (Instead of Vehicles)

Transportation planners, and even traffic engineers, are beginning to think in terms of moving people rather than moving vehicles. It appears that auto disincentives are premature as far as political acceptance is considered. Economically, they are counter-productive if they place downtown areas at a competitive disadvantage with subregional centers. Alternatively, transit incentives can be pursued. These incentives will increase substantially accessibility by public transportation, while at the same time maintain the competitive position of the CBD for persons who need or perceive a need to continue to use their private auto to access the downtown area.

Importance of Pedestrian and Transit-User's Amenities

Together with the emphasis of transportation planners on moving people, land use planners need to focus on making downtown areas more attractive places for work, shopping, entertainment and living. An improved pedestrian environment contributes to all of these objectives and also makes transit usage more attractive.

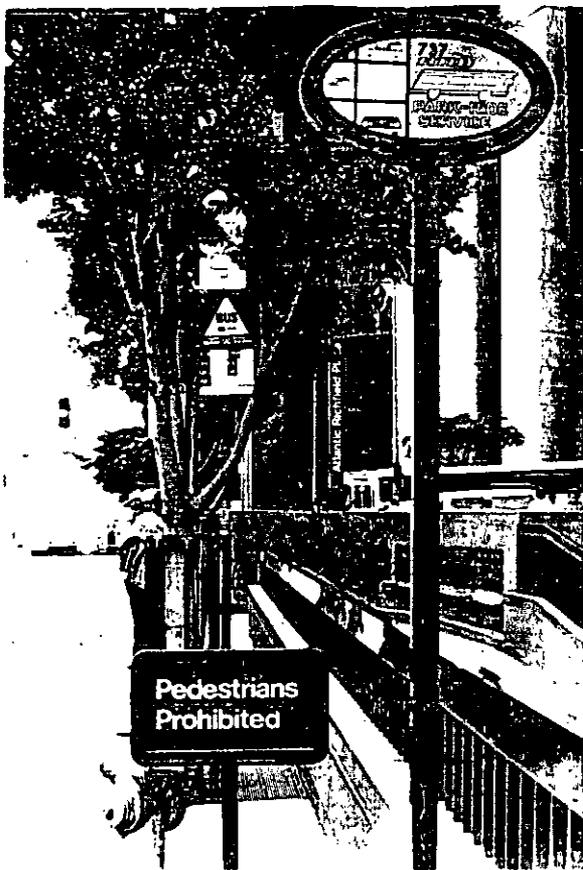
For example, bus shelters funded by advertising should be located where they will serve the most transit riders.

Transit Incentives



● Wide sidewalks and bus shelters at City Hall provide a convenient waiting area for bus patrons. Such amenities encourage the use of transit.●

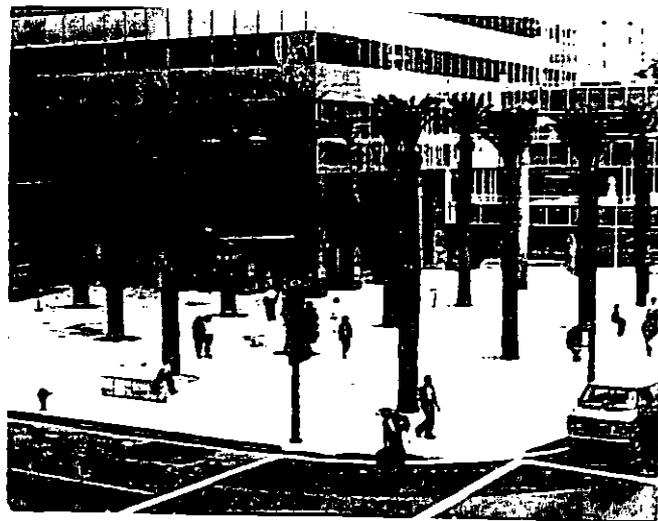
Transit Disincentives



- The bus stop at ARCO Plaza, because of its limited space, makes waiting for a bus inconvenient and dangerous.●

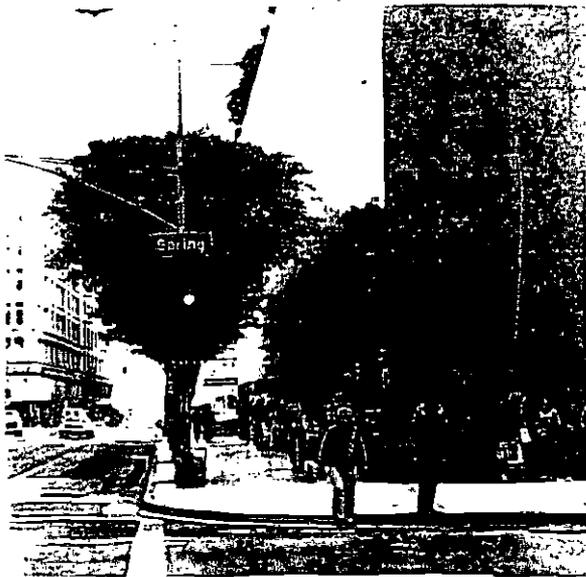
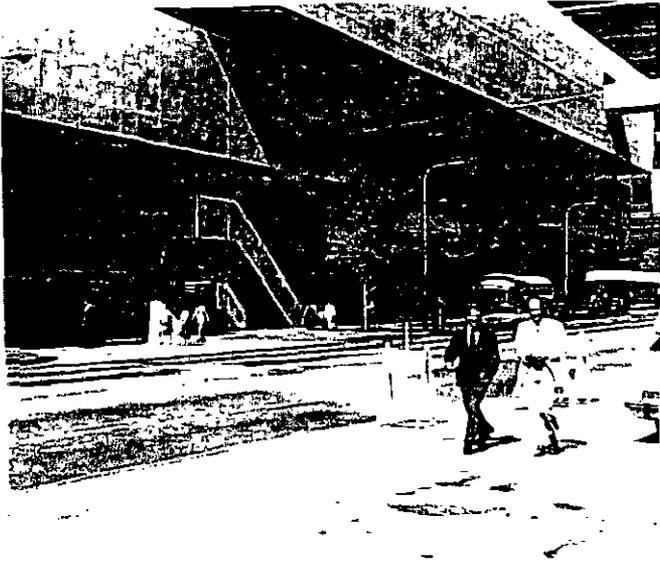
Wider sidewalks, better street lighting (for crime prevention), better street furniture and mini-parks are part of the physical improvements related to the pedestrian environment. Even more important is the encouragement of a high level of street-side activities throughout downtown. This encourages walking which, in itself, is a substitute for vehicular traffic. It also makes the area safer. Concentration of shops and restaurants at the street level enhances the competitive position of transit in providing access to these activities.

Good Pedestrian Access



- The storefront along Broadway and the entrances to the Broadway Plaza and the Wells Fargo Plaza invite the pedestrian to stop and enter.●

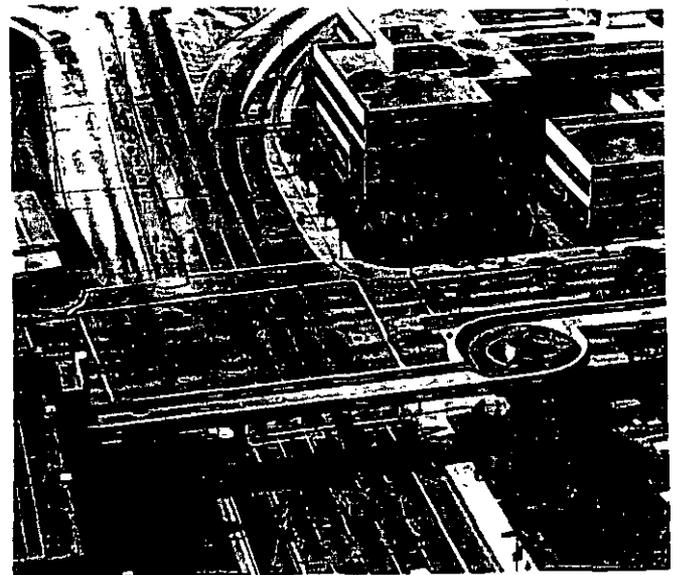
Poor Pedestrian Access



● The sterile facades of the Bonaventure Hotel and the Bank at Sixth and Spring Streets are not welcoming to the pedestrian.●

As an aside, it appears that the network of pedways provided for in the adopted plan for downtown Los Angeles has a reverse effect of the above. It

diverts pedestrians away from the street level in favor of attracting persons to single major office buildings reached solely by the private auto through large off-street garages. Pedways, of course, increase street capacity but at a cost of less accessibility to street activities by pedestrians.



● Pedways at Bonaventure Hotel and World Trade Center.●

Mixed Land Uses

For both newer and older buildings, zoning and building laws need to be modified to permit mixed uses. Street-side shops with apartments above the street level are an example of mixed use. This land use practice need not result in slum conditions, as evidenced by the many middle and upper income areas in European cities. Generally, mixed land use increases pedestrian movements at all hours of the day (thus making the streets safer), and also generates additional off-peak and reverse-peak transit demand.



● Building on Winston near Main under rehabilitation for artists studios and living quarters. Recently Los Angeles City has adopted an ordinance to permit artists to legally reside, under specified conditions, in industrial and commercial buildings converted to artist studios.●



● Building at Seventh and Spring under rehabilitation for housing for the elderly.●

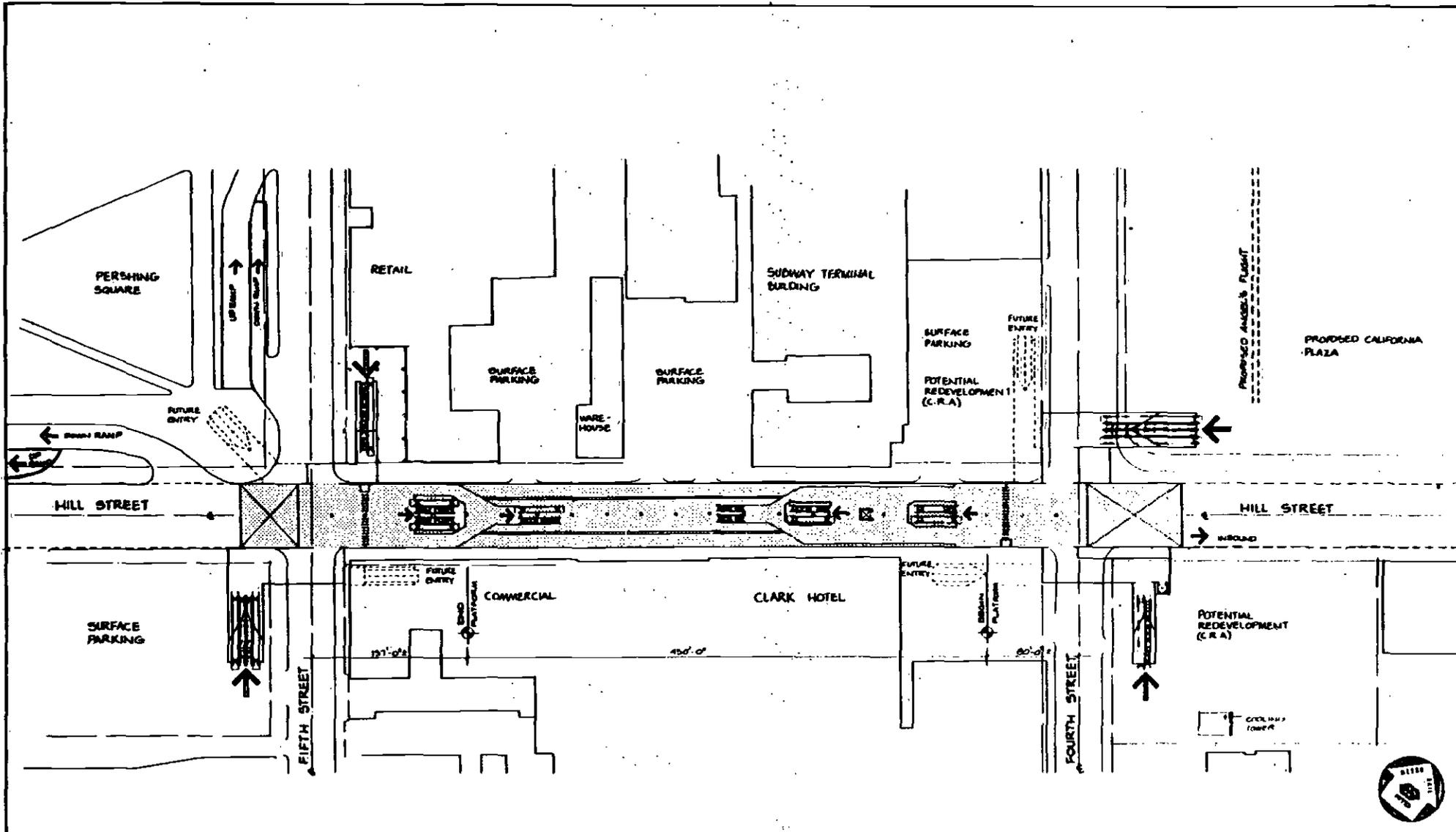
Joint Development

The DPM presented special opportunities for joint development and value capture strategies. Following up on favorable precedents set in the planning for the DPM, the SCRTD and the Los Angeles City Planning Department are moving ahead to identify mechanisms needed for joint development and value capture programs for areas around the Metro Rail Stations. Joint development involves integration of design of the Metro Rail stations with revenue producing (see illustration on the following page) development. Value capture involves recovery of portions of private development benefits (windfalls) from the Metro Rail project. Benefit Assessment Districts and fees are two value capture mechanisms. The planned four Metro Rail stations in downtown Los Angeles present exceptional opportunities to integrate the design of the stations with private development and to recover revenue to defray the capital and operating costs of the metro rail system.

Because Metro Rail stations will serve as many as 70,000 trips daily (35,000 boardings and 35,000 alightings), without the substantial adverse impacts that would result from an equivalent number of person trips through auto access, the potential will exist for creating intense, vibrant pedestrian environments with unique amenities and conveniences.

A wide variety of prospects exist when land uses are integrated into pedestrian flows of the magnitude which the stations will generate. Complementary uses can exist side-by-side in this environment which could not exist in the environment created when the same number of people are brought together by auto. The auto injects elements which are incompatible with a number of pedestrian amenities.

The intense, attractive pedestrian environments which are possible around the stations have enormous commercial value. The City and the transit agency are pursuing actively "value capture" techniques so as to benefit from the windfalls from such development.



Preliminary: Subject to change during final design

Southern California Rapid Transit District
Metro Rail Project
 PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING PROGRAM

**Fifth/Hill Station Location for
 Locally Preferred Alternative**
 Harry Weese & Associates

Large Scale Redevelopment

In order to attract commercial activity that seeks the newest office space (the prestige factor) in the region, some large scale redevelopment projects are desirable within the CBD. Without such redevelopment replacing the worst of the CBD's older buildings, the prestige office building tenants may be lost to other major subregional centers (e.g., Century City, Newport Center, etc.).

In the past, large scale redevelopment has provided parking facilities and only limited transit access, thereby reinforcing the attractiveness of access by the private auto with a proportional decrease in the attractiveness of transit. Certainly this has been the case in downtown Los Angeles, where new development has not yet had the opportunity for joint development with rapid transit and little effort was made by the developers to provide convenient access by the existing surface bus system.

Major redevelopment within the CBD has already been provided for in the expansive Bunker Hill project on the west side. This development will more than enable the Los Angeles CBD to compete for "prestige oriented" commercial tenants. What Los Angeles's CBD needs now is small scale, select site clearances with an emphasis on building rehabilitation. The intensity and diversity of activities, as occurs along Broadway should be preserved and enhanced. A priority target for building rehabilitation by CRA is now Spring Street.



● Crocker Bank Building under construction on Bunker Hill.●



● The Engstrum Apartment Building has been planned for preservation amid new development.● It may be replaced with a high rise as part of the proposed plan for the preservation and expansion of the Central Library. ●

Containment of Skid Row

Provision of social services and of additional street amenities in the skid row area, including parks and restroom facilities, is a basic first step in reversing the decline of adjacent areas. If Spring Street is to be rehabilitated, the containment of Skid Row is imperative.

A number of skid row projects are being implemented by the CRA, the Skid Row Development Corporation and by several private social service agencies experienced in working in the area. Projects include two phases of new housing, a major detoxification center, an urban park, a community center and a light industrial center.



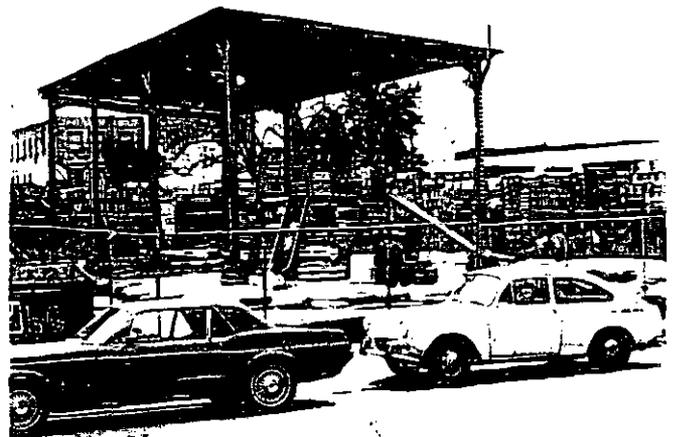
● Ballington Plaza - Phase I ●

Ballington Plaza is a new housing project located on Wall Street between 6th and 7th Streets providing housing for elderly and handicapped residents of the Skid Row area. The project is funded by the CRA and is owned and operated by the Volunteers of America. The first phase consisting of 270 units was completed in Fall, 1981. The second phase of 135 units will begin construction in Spring, 1983.



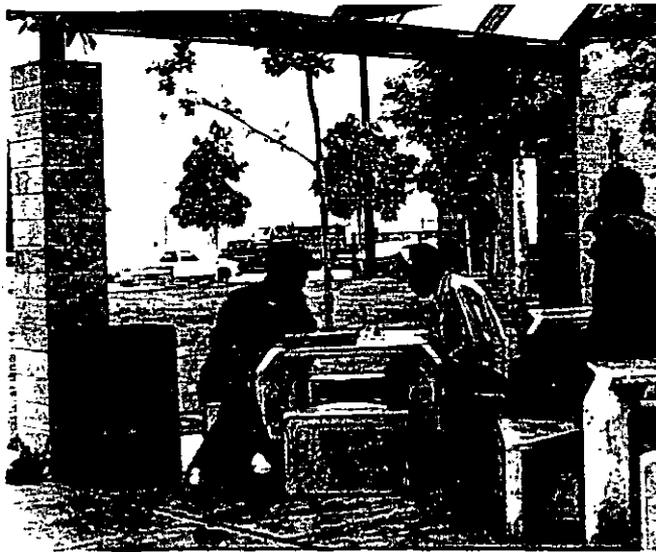
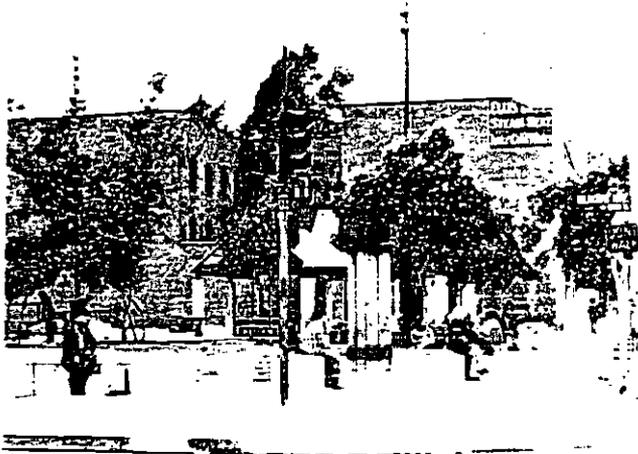
● Future Detoxification Center ●

The El Rey Hotel is being converted into a 450-bed detoxification center which will be named the Winegart Neighborhood Rehabilitation Center. This project is funded jointly by private and public sources and will be owned and operated by the Volunteers of America. Completion is scheduled for Fall, 1983.



● Para Los Ninos ●

Para Los Ninos is a day care center for children of the Skid Row area. The center, located on 6th Street near Gladys Avenue in a converted industrial warehouse, currently serves 85-100 children. Para Los Ninos is a non-profit organization funded by private sources.



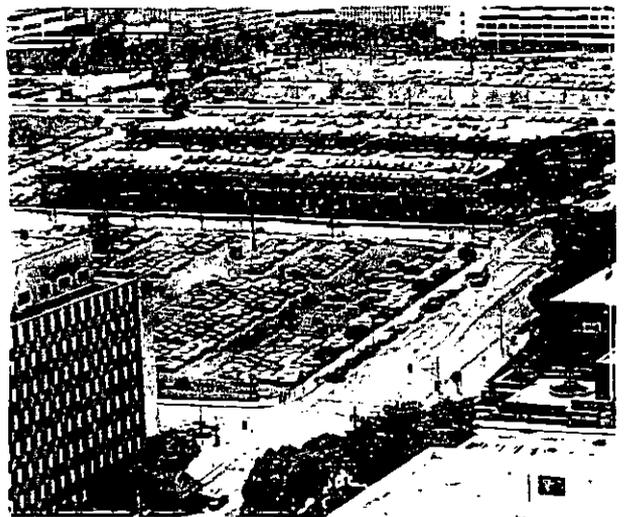
● Community Pocket Park at Sixth Street and Gladys Avenue. ●

The Community Pocket Park, as it is sometimes called, is a 1/3-acre urban park which was funded, designed and constructed by the CRA and is owned and operated by the City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department. Other Skid Row projects not pictured here are a community center for Skid Row

residents and the Community Light Industrial Center (CLIC). The Community Center is located in a converted light industrial building near Sixth Street and Gladys Avenue. The center is owned and operated by Los Familias del Pueblo, a non-profit organization funded by private sources. The CLIC project is located at Seventh Street and Gladys Avenue. It is a 40,000 sq. ft. light industrial building providing jobs for Skid Row residents. It is funded jointly by the CRA and the Los Angeles Economic Development Agency (EDA) and is owned and operated by the Skid Row Development Corporation, a non-profit organization.

CBD Parking Management

In the downtown area, more than anywhere else in the region, transit is a realistic alternative to the private auto for a substantial proportion of the traveling public. For this reason, parking management strategies--whose objectives are to shift trip makers from single occupant private autos to high-occupancy vehicles--have a better chance of success in the CBD than in most other areas. It is logical to start a parking management program with special emphasis on the CBD.



● CBD Parking Areas South of City Hall. ●

A fundamental concept behind parking management strategies is to allow people who choose public transportation to avoid auto costs—in this case, auto storage costs. Capital and maintenance costs for parking represent a large subsidy for the auto user. Generally, these costs are borne equally by auto and transit users—the latter group consisting of both transit riders by choice and transit dependent riders.

The basic goal of parking management strategies should be to approach parity in treatment between auto and transit modes. One approach is to cause the parker to pay directly a greater portion of the total costs of storing his vehicle while he is working, shopping, etc. For apartments, as is done now in Bunker Hill Towers for example, a surcharge could be applied to the basic apartment rental for the number of parking spaces used. This eliminates the unfair subsidy of auto storage costs by apartment households with fewer than average or no cars.

A second approach seeks to cause the transit user to be subsidized at a level, or some fraction thereof, equivalent to the vehicle storage costs that are incurred for employee, shopper and parking.

A third approach to parking management strategies would seek to reduce or eliminate building code and zoning parking requirements. An important step in removing the costs of auto storage from the non-auto user would be simply to let the free market forces determine the amount of parking to be provided for employees, shoppers, business patrons and apartment tenants. In instances where walking and transit access is poor, most building owners can be expected to continue to construct expensive parking facilities to protect their investments. In locations where walking and transit access is good, owners would see less of an economic need to provide extensive parking. Under such

conditions, and given the rationale for parking management plans, it appears only reasonable that a property owner not be required to provide additional off-street parking.

Finally, a fourth approach to parking management would seek to change regulations and ordinances which require accommodations for auto access (and storage) but make no provision for requiring equal access for transit vehicles (and spaces for their layover needs). Developers should be required to provide for access according to the number of people arriving by the various modes rather than by the number of vehicles; i.e., for 50 people on one bus versus 25 people in 20 autos.

Parking management policies also relate to value capture strategies to recover portions of private development benefits as a result of the public transportation system. Reductions in parking requirements as a result of proximity to public transportation and in particular the Metro Rail Project will result in significant cost savings to developers. In fairness to the region's taxpayers who financially support the public transportation system some of these savings to developers should be returned to the transit system to lessen the tax burden of public transport to the region.

City of Los Angeles Parking Management Plan

The City of Los Angeles in March 1983 adopted an ordinance which implemented a major part of its parking management plan. Elements of the plan include a reduction in the City's off-street parking requirements when transportation alternatives are provided and an increase in the allowable distance for off-site parking under specified conditions. Another element which is subject to negotiation with the unions representing city employees involves an increase in parking rates for city employees and in turn, provision for bus pass subsidies.

Equal Access: Auto vs. Transit

There is a need for both transportation and land use planners to exercise a leadership role in influencing public officials and private developers as to the economic and social benefits of providing good public transportation access to public and private facilities. Like other transit operating agencies, the SCRID frequently encounters opposition to obtaining necessary red curb space for bus stop zones along commercial streets. Yet, for the number of actual and potential customers and employees using that bus stop, the several foregone parking places make up a meager investment compared to the costs of off-street parking, whether surface parking or multi-story garages. Additional investments by land owners in some improvements and amenities, such as bus turnout lanes and passenger shelters, is not only socially enlightening but economically sound in terms of the dollars invested for the number of persons delivered. This is particularly true in downtown areas, where public transit usage is the highest.

Developers who invest in improvements to upgrade access by public transit should be able to substitute these costs for the costs of otherwise required parking. When this is done, a much greater incentive is created to provide a balanced access between transit and the private auto.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Author: Dan Miller, Supervising Planner

Support:

<u>Name and Title</u>	<u>Assistance</u>
Darline Velasco, Secretary	Word Processor Layout
Susan Chapman, Cartographer	Cover Design Including Photo Treatment
Paulette Cunningham, Planning Assistant	Data Update Layout and Proofreading
Haim Geffen, Senior Planner	Editing Photography

Review and Comment Input:

Jeff Carpenter, Supervising Planner
Ben Urban, Supervising Planner

Gary S. Spivack
Director of Planning
Southern California Rapid Transit District
June 1983
Revised December 1983

YAKI 111