



Briefing to Council Railroad Projects



“Rail” Presentations made to LRC

- Rail in the Pass
- Economic Development resulting from Alternative Transportation Modes: Streetcars
- Moffat and Nichols report: Regional rail plan for El Paso region



Rail in the Pass:
Past, Present, and Conceptual
Impacts
of Rail in the El Paso Region

given by
El Paso MPO



Impacts of Rail in the Region

- History of rail development in El Paso region
- Rail volume projections
- Recommendation for MPO to lead with rail again
- City of El Paso to lead initiative with Cd. Juarez and State of Chihuahua for future use of Ferro-Mex/BNSF line
- City of El Paso to commission study of
 - Relocation of rail lines
 - Reduction of congestion, pollution, hazmat



LRC Action

- Consult with MPO for modeling related to air quality rail traffic
- Obtain update on the New Mexico extension of railroad from Belen to Las Cruces



New Mexico Rail Runner

- Discussed during Special City Council Meeting with City of Las Cruces
- Council voted to prepare a resolution in support for consideration in support of Rail Runner extension to El Paso



Economic Development
Resulting from *Alternative*
Transportation Modes:
The Modern Streetcar

Given by
Jane Shang



Streetcar Presentation

- El Paso has stock of 9 streetcars
 - Stored at EPIA and private property
- Evaluated benefits of reinstituting El Paso stock into streetcar system
- Researched other communities with streetcars systems
 - Kenosha, Little Rock, Portland, Tampa, Dallas, and others



Streetcar Presentation

- Benefits
 - Ridership: discourages use of personal vehicle, reducing operating costs, auto accidents, traffic congestion, air pollution)
 - Economic Development: encourages private investment along routes which result in increased property value, land density and housing demand



Streetcar Presentation

- Negatives
 - Primarily benefits one area, downtown
 - Power infrastructure to operate vehicle
 - Permanency will not allow flexibility to alter system, routes
 - High vehicle cost (\$3M per vehicle)
 - High annual capital costs
 - High operating costs: \$275K/mile/year vs. \$70/hr for a bus



Streetcar Presentation

- Varied Costs by City
 - Characteristics vary widely
 - Streetcar lines often part of larger project that includes other elements
 - Examples:
 - High end: San Francisco: \$30M/mile (mainly visual enhancements, expensive materials-marble, granite)
 - Low End: Kenosha: \$3M/mi (innovative-renovated vintage cars, used steel ties where track already existed)



Streetcar Presentation

- How to Support Operating Costs
 - Fares
 - Local improvement district
 - Tax increment financing
 - City subsidy
 - Sponsorships/naming rights
 - Private contributions
 - Advertising



Streetcar Presentation

- Keys to Success
 - Public/private partnerships
 - Master development agreements
 - Local improvement district
 - Public support and stakeholder involvement
 - Commitment to reduce parking
 - Mixed use development
 - Economical construction and operation
 - Minimal business disruption



LRC Action

- Recommendation to Council to remain focused on transit projects already in place
 - Smart 101
 - BRT
 - New Transfer Centers
- Do not move forward with streetcar system projects at this time
- Explore options to stop or postpone degradation of existing streetcar stock and funding appropriations



Follow-Up

- Met with Representatives from Paso del Norte Streetcar Preservation Society and El Paso Historical Society
- Acknowledged El Paso not ready for a streetcar system
- Looking at options for indoor storage of all 9 streetcars
- Will evaluate availability of funding or other resources for refurbishment of streetcars



A Regional Rail Plan for the El Paso Region: The Next Phase of the Moffat and Nichols Report

Given by
Jane Shang



Moffat/Nichols Report

- El Paso is largest international commuter and commercial ports in western hemisphere
- 23M border crossings from pedestrians, commuters and commercial trucks
- El Paso is home to:
 - Union Pacific Tucumcari Line
 - Burlington Northern Santa Fe
 - Both lines connect to Ferro-Mex
 - \$56B in goods passed through El Paso annually
 - Rail cargo projected to grow 8%



Problems

- Trains don't originate or end in El Paso but pass through or are reassembled
- Rail movement occurs within Downtown
- Rail crossings restrict local traffic movement
- Hazardous materials transported through City
- El Paso has 68 rail crossings
- Low development of prime downtown real estate



Goals

- Improve movement of goods and mobility
- Encourage use of rail, rather than trucks for freight
- Stimulate trade between El Paso and Mexico
- Increase economic development
- Improve safety and circulation at crossings
- Address environmental concerns related to movement of goods



Goals

- Enhance quality of life
- Relocate existing rail facilities located in Downtown El Paso
- Make better utilization of Downtown real estate
- Options for international commuter rail service



Options for Implementation

- Construct Santa Teresa Intermodal Rail Station and Crossing \$295M+
- Construct Downtown Juarez-El Paso Rail trench (dependent on site location)
- Construct an Intermodal Rail Facility at the El Paso International Airport \$58M
- Construct Rail Outer Loop – Northern and Eastern Section \$581M



Options for Implementation

- Relocate and redevelop existing downtown rail sites \$71M+
- Rail Trench Project \$174M



Moffat & Nichols Recommendations

- Santa Teresa Intermodal Rail Station
- Dallas Yard Redevelopment
- El Paso Airport Intermodal Facility
- LRC took no action