

HCC Discussion Summary

DATE: May 29, 2003

TOPIC: Vehicle Access to Downtown Walking Mall

DISCUSSION: Commission has been approached to permit vehicles on the downtown walking mall between 6th Avenue and Broadway. The downtown walking mall was created as part of the 1970's urban renewal effort. Some business owners have expressed an opinion that allowing vehicles would result in an economic improvement attributable to increased public access.

SUMMARY: It was the general opinion of HCC members present to leave the walking mall in its present state. However, several HCC members expressed that their opinion is subject to change as information regarding geometrics and economic impact is made available.

HCC raised the following questions / comments for the Commission's consideration:

- City funding should not be used on this proposed project.
- Safety issues of increased vehicle-pedestrian interaction, possible use of other forms of wheeled-vehicles such as bicycles, skateboards, and rollerblades.
- Geometric design issue of one-lane vs. two-lanes. Safety considerations suggest that a standard two-lane design with adjacent sidewalks is necessary to minimize accidents. However, at the loss of the present aesthetic character.
- Vehicle capacity / parking to adequately generate economic improvement to justify rationale for project construction, i.e. what is the project cost / benefit ratio?
- Traffic signalization at the intersection of LCG and Broadway may cause safety issues between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Slow-moving traffic in this urban corridor will trap exhaust emissions creating an unhealthful environment for business owners, workers, and the public.
- Weekend / late-hour bar traffic may be provided with greater access for vandalism than what is currently allowed.
- The number of cash-and-carry businesses that would benefit from vehicle access is limited to a select few. In lieu of a vehicle access solution, has BID explored greater advertising / event opportunities to spur economic improvement?
- Will there be metered parking on the proposed roadway parking spaces?
- Will the TIF-funded parking structure provide any economic improvement? Why didn't BID propose this project as a TIF proposal?
- Will seasonal use of the roadway be permitted? Will snow removal be at an additional expense to the city beyond what is currently obligated?

· Current core businesses have existed to date without need for increased vehicle access.