


SUBMITTED FOR
TO COUNCIL
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From: "BHA in L.A." <bha_in_la@yahoo.com>
To: "L.A.Ci. DeputyCityClrk SharonGin" <sGin@Clerk.LACity.org>, "L.A.Ci.CD14 Cncilmn Villaraigosa CoS Jimmy Blackman" <jBlackma@Council.LACity.org>, "L.A.Ci.CD15 Cncilwmn Hahn CoS Michael Molina" <mMolina@Council.LACity.org>
Date: 12/09/2004 4:53:19 PM
Subject: CF 04-1136: Opposition to the Soto Street bridge demolition

CF 04-1136, December 10, 2004 council calendar:
 Opposition to the proposed Soto Street bridge demolition

Addressed chiefs of staff: please print this and make sure your principals read it before council time Friday, December 10th.

In order of pertinence and effectiveness, these are some of the arguments against demolishing the extant Soto Street (at Huntington Drive) bridge. This does not exhaust the scope of my objection. Nevertheless, attending to personal crises has prevented me from writing more sooner:

1. The Soto Street/Mission Road ex-railway highway bridge in El Sereno /is quite/ historic. The contrary analysis in the proposed negative declaration is methodologically invalid. Limiting an analysis of historicity to a structure's architecture is /obviously/ inadequate, for it omits /famous occupancy and use/ as a criterion.

It is the only /FOUR-TRACK electric-interurban bridge/ extant in the southland. If its demolition is approved, then no visual clue will remain that the entire width of the contiguous (touching) Huntington Drive was once a private right of way of a high-class electric-interurban railway instead of just another dreary, banal street. (Landscaping and artwork cannot make the substitute road better than just another dreary and banal street.)

In fact, (1) just HOW MANY railroad/railway bridges have been converted to highway use (a) in L.A. City, (b) in L.A. County, and (c) in California? In fact, (2) just HOW MANY four-track bridges, other than bridges in railroad yards and approaches to yards, exist in all of (a) L.A. City, (b) L.A. County, and (c) in California? Without written answers to such questions /in addition/, the city cannot validly exercise its quasi-judicial discretion to determine that the subject bridge is not historic, eligible for either the state or national registers.

2. It is a necessary, useful HIGHWAY (yes, highway) asset, politically so, even if (some would say) not now functionally so.

It is a HIGHWAY "FLYOVER", a critical element of the surface-highway /strategy/ called "high-flow arterials" and "super streets". That strategy is still superior (or less inferior) to freeways, express tollways, and "improvements" to them because (a) building high-flow arterials does /not greatly/ increase travel speeds, it does /not greatly/ reduce travel times, and, therefore, its potential to induce new and redirect existing auto traffic to it (leading a highway's effectiveness to self-destruct) is significantly less, (b) high-flow arterial /type/ "improvements", being less expensive than freeways, can be built on multiple, neighboring arterial streets, thereby lessening the adverse /centralization/ of auto traffic (the very essence of traffic jams), and (c) with dramatically reduced urban demolition and alteration of traffic patterns, the tolerability in urban environments is much greater.

However, the FLYOVER centerpiece of the high-flow arterial strategy (along with underpasses and roundabouts) is much politically maligned because of its visual impacts, which can be reduced only somewhat by architecture and foliage. The visual impacts are politically much exaggerated because of the extreme dearth of well-known, familiar EXAMPLES of flyovers in urban environments. THE LOSS OF THIS FLYOVER WILL GREATLY UNDERMINE ALL EFFORTS TO GAIN GREATER COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE OF THIS TRAFFIC-COPING (never say the LIE of "traffic relieving") STRATEGY.

3. Someday, who knows in which millennium, this bridge might again be needed for perennially financial short-falling urban transit. Indeed, this intersection was part of the LACTC's northern route for its so-called Route 10/60 (Pomona-San Bernardino Freeways) transit corridor, studied in depth in its route-refinement study in the early 1990s?. At that time, the proposed LRT route was via Huntington Drive, Main Street (El Sereno/Alhambra), Palm Avenue, and the SPTC Alambra Line (El Paso Line, Sunset Line) right of way, along the trench. (Actually, I have forgotten which route I saw on the LACTC's conceptual plan and profile between the bridge and Downtown Los Angeles, and the route along the Alhambra trench instead of in streetcar mode along the historic Main Street/Las Tunas Drive route was ridiculous for sacrificing most of the ridership potential.)

Moreover, even if never used for LRT, it could still be a vital element in an urban-busway scheme. There, a continuous track or right of way would not be essential, for buses could leave the dedicated right of way and follow streets in mixed flow to reach rider destinations. However, the cost-effectiveness of such a scheme might be mortally undermined if a new transit bridge had to be reconstituted which such scarce funds.

OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS: The third argument is plainly the weakest, but is seriously advanced nevertheless.

I have seriously, for many years, promoted a sophisticated low-build, /multiple-highway/ enhancement option as an alternative to the SR-710 Long Beach Freeway north extension monstrosity. Mine is much superior both to the Caltrans 1976± DEIS "Highway Variation" option and the South Pasadena low-build option, for mine far more /disperses/ and smooths traffic (but not makes it speedier) along /multiple/ street paths, including one master-planned by the City of Los Angeles for which no effort has been undertaken for implementation (a paper-only dream for them).

Soto Street is not explicitly included among them, but it would be a much less controversial alternative to the master-planned Eastern Avenue route I just described, at least for accommodating the (small) fraction of traffic in the SR-710 corridor which passes between the L.A. inner city (not just downtown) and Pasadena. An extended Eastern Avenue route, combined with a new SR-710/I-10 north-to-west and east-to-south freeway connector, is oriented more to the larger auto-travel markets of north-south to Pasadena-Eagle Rock and El Monte to Pasadena.

/Elements/ of my old SR-710 low-build can be seen at my website:
maps:

[HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AltLowBuild-1.JPG](http://www.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AltLowBuild-1.JPG)

[HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AltLowBuildSR710.JPG](http://www.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AltLowBuildSR710.JPG)

[HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AdaptedNELA1979PlanMap.JPG](http://www.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/AdaptedNELA1979PlanMap.JPG)

text:

[HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/SR-710ideasDraft.HTML](http://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/SR-710ideasDraft.HTML)
[HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/SR-710Pasadena0.HTML](http://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/SR-710Pasadena0.HTML)

(In the last file, perform a Ctrl+f search for this text to shortcut to the relevant part: "north of Alhambra Avenue/Mission Road in the city of Los Angeles")

Examine the folder's directory at [HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/](http://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/HighwayAlternatives/) to see other useful but impertinent background writings of mine. I utterly lack the necessary time to raise my website—or even that folder—to a decent standard, including an index (cover) file and links to similar writings by others. Please pardon my egregious inadequacy.

NOTE THAT YOU MUST EXACTLY COPY THE UPPER-CASE/LOWER-CASE PATTERN SHOWN for every letter after the [HTTP://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/](http://WWW.GeoCities.com/BHA_in_LA/). The Yahoo GeoCities internet router is finicky case-sensitive, regrettably.

BHA in L.A., BHA in Los Angeles

BHA_in_LA@Yahoo.com
BHA_LA_CA@HotMail.com
30-year resident of Northeast Los Angeles
Boyhood rider aboard two old Red Car lines
323-254-8298

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<http://mobile.yahoo.com/mailedemo>

CC: "BHA in L. A." <BHA_in_LA@yahoo.com>