



At issue: Streetcars

A divided City Council approves public funding for streetcars to shuttle crowds through the Platinum Triangle and into the Anaheim Resort. Here we have a voice in

By: Cynthia Ward – November 28th, 2012

Enhanced bus proposal a better option

While Anaheim gladly welcomes tourists, and their needed dollars, we must resolve visitor-related traffic issues. To that end, a divided Anaheim City Council narrowly approved public funding for streetcars to shuttle crowds from the ARTIC transportation center, through the Platinum Triangle, and into the Resort.

The proposed system of streetcars, which would look like this European car, consists of 10 vehicles traveling 3.2 miles in 18 minutes.

Anaheim leaders selected the \$318 million rail system over a \$53 million enhanced bus proposal. Streetcars reportedly attract more passengers, and spur more economic development, over the "less desirable" buses. But are streetcars really \$265 million more desirable?

Transportation expert Randall O'Toole's recent study (Cato Institute Policy Analysis No. 699) reports buses transport roughly five times more passengers than streetcars. Buses offer flexibility to add vehicles during peak periods – an essential feature for Anaheim's unique gridlock situation resulting from events at Angel Stadium, Honda Center, and Disneyland. Buses are cheaper to purchase, operate, repair and maintain, and they do not require the streetcars' expensive infrastructure. Buses can be rerouted during emergencies, while a disabled streetcar leaves rails unusable.

New clean-energy buses typically produce fewer greenhouse gases than streetcars using existing fossil-fuel burning electricity sources.

Historically, buses replaced streetcars following complaints about traffic congestion, right-of-way conflicts at intersections, and pedestrian safety.

I support Mayor Tait's responsible stewardship of public funds, requesting further examination of costs and impacts. Anaheim should reconsider the bus option that efficiently serves tourists and staff at Disney's Florida properties.