

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Schroder called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with all members present except Vice Mayor Ross who indicated that he would be about 10 minutes late. Mayor Schroder also stated that he had a prior commitment to speak at the graduation ceremony of Vicente High School and would be leaving around 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Lara DeLaney, Councilmember, Janet Kennedy, Councilmember, Michael Menesini, Councilmember, Mark Ross, Vice Mayor, and Rob Schroder, Mayor.

EXCUSED: None.

ABSENT: None.

I. DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC CIRCULATION WORKSHOP

City Engineer Tim Tucker presented the staff report. He explained the past changes in the downtown traffic circulation and the reason for the workshop, and summarized staff's recommendation to restore two-way traffic in the downtown for two primary reasons: (1) the two-way traffic model meets minimum design standards and works with the approved flex spaces; and, (2) the two-way traffic option is equitable for all business owners who qualify for outdoor dining. The one-way one lane traffic option with diagonal parking on one side and no parking on the other does not provide for outdoor dining opportunities to properties on one side of the street.

Mayor Schroder opened the workshop for public comment.

Mitch Avalon presented another alternative with 5 suggestions, based on what made the 500 block successful: 1) keep the 500 block the way it is; 2) extend the one way traffic on the 500 block to the plaza; 3) work a schedule for deliveries; 4) find places for additional parking; and 5) post adequate signage. He also suggested the City consult with the fire district on safety.

**Vice Mayor Mark Ross arrived at 5:10 p.m.*

Noralee Gipner suggested that the City use the 500 block as an example since they had been successful, and added that it would be a shame to break something that was working well.

An unidentified male speaker stated that from his perspective as a landscape architect and an avid user of downtown, Mr. Avalon's and Mr. Duncan's idea was a step in the right direction. He encouraged the Council to consider it.

Fred Morris, Attic Child Furniture, stated that although his business was on the 600 block, it was doing quite well. He also expressed concern that if the one-way traffic was extended, his exposure would be diminished, and that the streets would be too crowded with deliveries and other trucks.

The owner of an antique shop at 814 Main Street stated that he had observed business picking up again, and that it was getting harder to find close parking, which was important to his business. He also expressed concern about visibility and stated that he supported staff's recommendation.

Ana Steiner stated that although she did not live in Martinez, she loved the City and enjoyed the outdoor dining. She said that she did not want to see a change on the 500 block.

Mel Krane, owner of an antique shop on the 600 block, expressed concerns about loading and unloading if the parking and traffic direction were changed. He stated that he did not think one-way traffic was appropriate for the 600, 700 and 800 blocks.

Marty Ochoa stated that he wanted to make sure the parklets would still be available for the rest of Main Street.

Mike Alford stated that he did not think one-way streets in downtown had worked in the past and it would not work now. He stated that the businesses on the 500 block were very popular and had good products, and people would not be discouraged from returning by two-way streets. He also stated that Mr. Avalon's and Mr. Duncan's plan would be confusing.

Mike Magnier stated that the number of one-way streets in downtown made routes excessive and confusing. He stated that although the one-way streets were beneficial to the restaurants, it was damaging to the rest of Main Street.

Ann Mobley stated that she wanted the 500 block to stay the same, but she understood the City would do what it had to in order to provide outdoor dining to everyone else and protect clearance and parking. She suggested that staff look at the circulation pattern of the entire downtown and consider if streets like Berrellesa and Alhambra should be changed to two-way. She stated that all the businesses in downtown were good and she wanted to see them all succeed.

Char West, Char's Flower Shop, expressed sympathy for the stores that needed deliveries, and stated that she had never suggested all of Main Street should be one-way. She thought that the 500 block should stay one-way, but the side streets needed to be addressed.

Pat English, Haute Stuff, stated that the 500 block's success had attracted more people to the downtown and benefited the rest of the businesses on Main Street. She believed that the 500 block's experience was enhanced by the one-way street, and changing it to two-way would hurt their businesses.

Mike McGowan, Pacifica Pizza, stated that he did not think two-way traffic would hurt his business, but he also did not think that the 500 block was causing any traffic problems. He agreed that the side streets would need to be addressed and that the rest of Main Street should stay two-way. He added that he did not want to wait to get an outdoor dining platform while the street direction question was addressed.

Ashley Aparino stated that she had been attracted to Martinez because of the small-town feel and because of the variety in downtown. She stated that she already had problems finding parking on her two-way street as it was, and that she did not like confusing downtowns with one-way streets. She stated that her restaurant was opening in late June and invited the public to stop by. Carolyn Duncan stated that she loved Martinez and was disappointed by the rivalry and lack of

trust displayed in the community. She also stated that the Council should be doing more leadership to bring the community together and make use of people's talents and ideas. Albert Turnbaugh stated that he appreciated Ms. Duncan's comments and agreed that disagreements should not be taken personally. He expressed concerns about restaurants leaving because of lack of business and accessibility. He believed it would not hurt the 500 block to make it two-way and did not think that its success was due to it being one-way. He agreed that one-way streets and diagonal parking could be confusing and dangerous.

Dick Duncan stated that the design of the 500 block could not be carried all the way up Main Street because the street narrows. He stated that there was room for diagonal parking on the 600 block, and that there had not been enough accidents due to diagonal parking to make it an issue. He stated that making the streets one-way would help with deliveries and loading and unloading, and would help maintain the atmosphere of the 500 block. He said that increased values would come from working hard together to come up with a solution and rewarding good ideas.

Rachael Ford stated that she was not biased toward one-way or two-way, because her focus was making downtown the best it could be for the benefit of the entire City. She said she had spent a day at the Farmers' Market talking to residents and customers up and down Main Street and nearly everyone she talked to agreed that all of Main Street should be two-way. She stated that from her research on one-way and two-way streets, one-way streets were designed for 9-5 commuters, and many cities were changing from one-way historic downtowns to two-way streets to encourage shoppers in downtown.

Harlan Strickland encouraged the Council not to change the 500 block, since it was working so well. He suggested that elements of the 500 block be integrated into the rest of Main Street, to find out which elements were making it successful.

**Mayor Schroder left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.*

Seeing no further speakers, Vice Mayor Mark Ross closed public discussion and brought the item back to the Council.

Councilmember Janet Kennedy expressed appreciation for all the public input and good ideas and information on this issue and stated that it would help the Council in making their difficult decisions.

Councilmember Lara DeLaney thanked everyone for coming out and giving input, and agreed that it was important to have serious discussion on this issue. She stated that extensive research had shown some communities converting from two-way to one-way, while others had converted from one-way to two-way--the important thing was what was best for Martinez's unique situation. She expressed concern that the City was rushing into a decision without doing enough analysis of the streets. She stated that the 500 block had been thriving and the Council should be learning from them what made them successful in order to duplicate it in the rest of downtown. Councilmember DeLaney also expressed concern about safety with having the dining platforms on a narrow two-way street with parallel parking, and noted that diagonal parking was easier and created more spaces. She suggested that a thorough circulation study of the downtown should be done and that the discussion should be continued instead of the Council rushing to a decision. Councilmember Michael Menesini stated that they had been studying and working on the downtown for many years. He stated that he was not afraid to experiment to try to find out what

worked best, and suggested that it would be a bad idea to delay making a decision when they had heard a lot of reports, facts, and new ideas, although he added that any decision that was made tonight could be changed or adapted in the future. He stated that it was important to find out what was best for Martinez, and that would have to be a subjective decision. He noted that successful downtowns tended to have residential opportunities, and added that many of the successful downtowns in the area had two-way streets. He noted that the Specific Plan encourages two-way streets to enhance retail visibility, and stated that he thought two-way streets encouraged the village-like feel. He thanked staff for their hard work on the staff report, and stated that he thought the recommendations were best for public safety, ease of circulation, slowing down traffic, and the atmosphere of downtown. Councilmember Menesini also stated that it was not a bad thing if people had to park farther away from their destination, since it would encourage them to be exposed to other businesses while walking. He expressed appreciation for all the public input.

Vice Mayor Mark Ross thanked the public for attending. He said that the most important factor for the success of an area was the unique energy created by the businesses in it, and he stated that was what was present in the 500 block due to the owners' hard work there. He noted that he had not yet made up his mind on the issue, but suggested that the 500 block could stay one-way if they felt that was important to their success, and the rest of downtown could return to two-way if they felt it would help them. Vice Mayor Ross applauded Ms. Duncan's comments, but expressed confidence that the City's residents could support each other and work together in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 6:51 p.m. to a Regular Meeting on June 6, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall in the Council Chambers, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, California.

Approved by the City Council,

Rob Schroder, Mayor

Mercy G. Cabral, Deputy City Clerk – 6/6/12