

Letter to Ms. Dolores Roybal Saltarelli

Sept. 13, 2010

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210 S. Spring Street: the Metropolitan News Company (owned by my wife and myself), which publishes eight California newspapers, including its flagship publication, the *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, founded in 1901.

The company has its printing press in the basement. It would cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to move the press and, after being disassembled and jostled, it is likely that its functionality would be diminished. Locations where it would be possible to secure approval for installation of the press would be severely limited, in light of EPA requirements. Proximity of the operations to the Civic Center is essential not only for news-gathering purposes, but the processing of legal notices at the Mosk Courthouse. Viable alternative sites might not exist. The present proposal is life-threatening to the company, thus to its newspapers, and to the jobs of its employees. (The report mentions a total of 40 persons being employed by all businesses in the building. The Metropolitan News Company, alone, employs a number greater than 40.)

Too, a building would be demolished that is part of the history of Los Angeles County. In the very space occupied by the Metropolitan News Company, there was from 1896-1914, the premier grocery store on the west coast, owned by Hans Jevne, a civic leader. Persons came by train from the various western states to stock up on goods, which were sent to them by rail.

Among the original tenants were 13 lawyers, one of whom, Joseph Scott, is depicted in the form of a statue in front of the Mosk Courthouse, and another, Isidor Dockweiler, has a county beach named after him. Although the upper stories were removed in 1971 after an earthquake, the bottom floor, mezzanine, and basement remain. The credit union, in essence a bank, is in the very space occupied by the First National Bank of Los Angeles (which later became Security Pacific) from 1901 to Oct. 19, 1929.

Where cigars are now being sold, at 124 West Second Street, steam ship tickets were sold 114 years ago. The building was the home of the California Club, Southwestern University (now Southwestern Law School), and the law firm of Graves, O'Melveny & Shankland (now O'Melveny & Myers).

The Olender Building is likewise an historic Los Angeles structure (and is not vacant).

The MTA knows that 208-210 S. Spring Street is occupied by a newspaper publishing company, *not a restaurant*. Two meetings were held with the MTA staff—on March 23, 2010, and April 28, 2010. My wife, Jo-Ann Grace, represented herself and me, as owners of the property, and represented the Metropolitan News Company, of which she is president, with the company also being represented by Vahn C. Babigian, our general manager.

You subsequently advised my wife that our needs and concerns are appreciated and would be accommodated.

Yet, the report, dated March 19, 2010, and released on Sept. 3, includes as an alternative the confiscation of our buildings, with no acknowledgement that a newspaper publishing company, and its printing press, are on the premises; that one of the newspapers was established in 1901; and that

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the buildings—which are not even lent the dignity of their names being reflected—have enormous historic value. (The names of the buildings were made known to the MTA at the meetings.)

Parking space is available for vehicles and equipment without raising multi-million dollar structures. There are parking lots close by. It might even be possible to lease space in them, rather than using powers of condemnation. There exist:

- A multi-level public parking lot on Spring Street, immediately to the south of our buildings (east side), with additional street-level parking south of there, to the end of the block, with some parking in a lot across the street (west side of Spring Street, extending to Broadway).
- Massive public lots behind our buildings (east of them, extending south of them), across from the LAPD parking on Main Street.
- A block-long parking lot south of the Kyoto Grand Hotel, on Second Street, bounded by Los Angeles Street on the West and San Pedro on the east.
- An empty, excavated lot between Second and First Streets, bounded on the east by Broadway and the west by Hill Street.

There is a vague allusion in the “Displacement and Relocation Technical Memorandum” to the *possibility* of “optional station entrances locations” on our property. To demolish historic buildings on the mere chance that someone would later decide to put an escalator there to an underground depot defies reason. Access could be gained from the lawn of the new LAPD Building, the vacant lot at the northwest corner of Second and Broadway, from the bottom floor of the Los Angeles Times’ multi-story parking lot, or from our site through a minimal *partial* taking or leasehold.

It truly does not make sense to raze historic structures when land devoid of structures is located nearby—and, with respect to the vacant land at Second and Broadway, is as close to the site of the proposed depot (Second Street between Broadway and Spring Street) as we are.

With respect to a possible transit system that is above-ground, the closing of Second Street to traffic would preclude the delivery to our premises of newsprint. Delivery is made at the rear of our building from Harlem Place which, though officially a street, has the appearance of an alley. It’s one-way, with entry on Third Street and exiting on Second. A truck carrying such loads could not back up for an entire block to Third Street. Without newsprint, a newspaper cannot be printed.

As a first step, I ask that the “Regional Connector Transit Corridor Displacement and Relocation Technical Memorandum” be withdrawn, and that it be redrafted, with attention lent to the matters discussed above. I would hope that in light of these considerations, an alternative location be chosen for an area on which to park vehicles and equipment.

Yours truly,



Roger M. Grace
RMG/mt



Broadway



2nd St



BE
Next? Just Listen.
CLEAR CHANNEL
570 KLAG
SPORTS



PARKING
PUBLIC PARKING
3 HOUR
15 MIN
5 MIN
ALL DAY
SUN



JOE'S RESTAURANT

PARAISO Restaurant
THE ORIGINAL SINCE 1932

Spring St







