

# The QLine

## BUILDING FRUSTRATION

This past week, Q-line asked:

**An ongoing streetscape improvement project in Downtown has led to increased traffic and some business owners have complained that it has hurt their bottom lines. This, coupled with the renovation of Santa Monica Place, has made the area a hard place to navigate lately. Have Downtown construction projects impacted your life and how? Here are your responses:**

**"I AM SURPRISED THE QUESTION IS** limited to Downtown. It seems that all of Santa Monica is under some sort of construction. I am sick of the traffic jams, dust and noise. If developers have their way, it will never end. The city makes money while the residents suffer. I can't wait to vote yes on Proposition T. It's a no-brainer."

**"ALL THIS SO-CALLED HORRIBLE** improvement of Downtown Santa Monica hasn't bothered me personally as I haven't gone west of Fifth Street for a long time. I don't plan to, except for my trips to Barnes & Noble."

**"YES, IT'S CHANGED A LOT FOR ME.** Second Street and Fourth Street used to be my favorite streets for walking and shopping. But since the cutting down of the trees, I just can't bear to go by there anymore. And I now do all my shopping on Fifth Street. Sorry about that, Second and Fourth!"

**"YES, I WAS JUST THINKING PEOPLE** should come live next door to one of these construction sites. The noise, the truck fumes, dirt flying all over. Three or four years of this, six days a week, eight hours a day has a terrible impact on one. Finally the reward is being blocked in, no view, no air flow anymore. Where are the open spaces I keep hearing about?"

**"I PERSONALLY SHY AWAY FROM** Downtown Santa Monica and only go there on a need-to basis. For my purpose, it has more to do with traffic than construction. There is no escaping the construction – and it is not just Santa Monica. Along Lincoln Boulevard to Jefferson Boulevard we have had massive construction of condominium projects. Along Olympic Boulevard to Barrington Avenue, we have had massive condominium and apartment building construction including Bed, Bath, & Beyond. It is nearly impossible to drive on Olympic without having a blinking lighted arrow sign directing me into a single line of traffic that is six blocks long. The biggest negative to new construction is the impact it has on compounding the already horrific congestion of automobiles and people who find themselves crowded into the small geographical area of Santa Monica. I see these same people on the evening news driving back home to the valley, which renders down to moving the automotive congestion north for the evening only to return to Santa Monica the following morning."

**"IT'S PRETTY DISCOURAGING DOWN** there. And I often take the bus, but now I take the bus more often when I have to go to Downtown Santa Monica. But I will say I don't go as often because it is so awful, so I wait until I've got a whole bunch of things to do and then hop on the bus."

**"YEAH, GOING INTO DOWNTOWN SANTA** Monica's pretty much impossible. There's never any parking, the traffic is impossible, especially because of the idiots they put in charge of organizing the traffic. All the construction, all the bums, all those things make Santa Monica an unpleasant place to go."

**"THE DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION** project has made me have to walk in the middle of the street in front of ongoing traffic because the sidewalks were blocked. I hate to go Downtown now because the beautiful trees on Fourth street – many of them have been ripped up. And the traffic is horrible, the bus traffic is terrible, and the construction has made it even worse. Our beautiful beach city is becoming just another big city. Get rid of the current City Council."

**"HI, I'M ANSWERING YOUR QUESTION** regarding the traffic. My response is the traffic in the Downtown area has impacted my life tremendously and also has made it very unsafe for people to traverse the two streets they are working on, Second and Fourth streets. Particularly Second Street where there's a preschool and a church and a lot of other things. They've made it so that a wheelchair cannot even get by right at Wilshire Boulevard between Wilshire and Arizona. And I've actually brought it to the attention of two people working at the site and they have said they would pass it on, but to date it is still the same. Buses go into the sidewalk and there's only two and a half feet of sidewalk. The rest is a trench and the people could fall into or tip over in their wheelchair. You can barely get by in a stroller. And the other day when they were doing a lot of construction, there was construction at every end of the block at all four corners, and there were no tags up for pedestrians and big preschool, and this has happened before – brought it up to the attention of the city and I think a couple of hours later they fixed it but it took them quite a while to do so. So yes, it's very unsafe, and I think it's interesting based on the fact that they say that they took down these trees for safety issues when the traffic they have created is completely unsafe for people, and frustrating."

**"PARKING IS OUTRAGEOUS, AND THE** traffic is abusive. I drive over to Fox Hills mall where the parking is free and JC Penney and Target are available."

**"THE SECOND AND FOURTH STREETS** improvement plan, particularly the unnecessary destruction and removal of the ficus trees along those streets, has impacted many residents' lives. They've been disillusioned about the real accountability of city staff and the City Council, because they haven't listened to all of the neighborhood groups and the many residents who wanted them to take a different approach. I hope people continue to support the Treesavers and the work that they are doing."

**"THEY HAVE BADLY IMPACTED ME. I** used to love going up Santa Monica and shopping in the Civic Center and now I avoid it like the plague. Losing the ficus trees was a tragedy and you can't go on green lights anymore. You just sit there in gridlock. And we're already one of the most densely populated cities in the entire county of Los Angeles and in the daytime, our population triples so I can't go anywhere between four and seven anymore or in the morning. So I just have to head somewhere else to go shopping. And it's too bad, I used to love shopping in Downtown Santa Monica."

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