Metropolitan Transit System

PCC Light Rail Vehicle

HISTORY
In 1892, famed entrepreneur John D. Spreckels bought a failed streetcar operation and launched the San Diego Electric Railway Company. Spreckels' business played a key role in San Diego's growth, providing access to areas such as Mission Hills, North Park, Kensington and East San Diego that were largely undeveloped at the time.

By the 1930s, however, streetcars were losing business to more versatile city buses and private automobiles.

In a last resort, industry executives designed the Presidents Conference Committee car, aiming to improve the style and comfort of a streetcar ride. More than 5,000 of these vehicles were produced. They made their San Diego debut in 1937 and continued operations until April 1949.

The PCC cars acquired for San Diego's vintage trolley service are a postwar model – more readily available and in better operating condition than surviving examples of the cars that first plied local streets.

Since 2006, San Diego Vintage Trolley, Inc. (SDVTI), a wholly owned non-profit subsidiary of MTS, has raised funds and managed the restoration process. No public funds were spent to restore the trolley. Over 3,000 volunteer hours and $850,000 were spent restoring the first car, Streetcar # 529 to its original glory and adapting it for service on the current light rail system.

On August 18, 2011, MTS accepted #529 into service and operates it on the Silver Line, a 2.7-mile loop around downtown San Diego.