Assessing Streetcar Feasibility in Your Community

Rail~Volution

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Recapturing the heart of America!

- Historic and modern streetcars are making their way back into the American mainstream

- Planners, developers and business leaders flocking to streetcar cities
Recapturing the heart of America!

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Beyond Nostalgia

- Resurgence of inner-city living
- Valued amenity for developers
- Reliable mobility option for dense neighborhoods
Answering Key Feasibility Questions?

- Why streetcar vs. bus or light rail?
- Who will ride the streetcar?
- Will streetcar support or hurt existing transit?
- Will streetcar spur redevelopment?
- How much will it cost?
- Can our community afford it?
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Why not just add buses?

VS

Metro Rapid

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Streetcars accelerate and organize development

Tampa

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Developers willing to participate in financing
Streetcars offer a “legibility” that buses can’t match
Streetcars offer good introduction to rail transit for communities interested in light rail

Tacoma, WA

Memphis, TN
Who Will Ride?

- Occasional travelers:
  - Shoppers
  - Visitors
  - One-time parkers

- Trips for which:
  - Speed is not a critical factor
  - Distances are not great

.Extension of pedestrian facilities...
Market Street, San Francisco
Kenosha, Wisconsin
Will Streetcar Compete with Existing Transit Service?

- Grow ridership overall, rather than compete
- Connections support diverse market base
- Higher costs to serve key generators are merited
Tacoma, Washington

Ridership windfall on feeder services
South Lake Union, Seattle

Transit option for underserved neighborhood
Will Streetcar Spur Redevelopment?

- Expect streetcar to catalyze & organize development
- Make sure the market is active
- Assess demand for urban housing & mixed use
Portland, Oregon

3.5 million sq. feet of commercial space
Portland, Oregon

5,295 residential units
Portland, Oregon

Over $1.5 billion in new development
Salem, Oregon

5-year demand for downtown housing is 50 - 100 units, with no active housing projects
How much will it cost?

- Streetcar capital costs are higher than bus, but lower than light rail
  - Expect $12 to $20 million per track mile

LRT in Denver, CO

Trolley Bus in King County, WA
Portland facilities are relatively bare bones!
Vehicle choice impacts cost & feel of the project
Can we afford it?

- Many Ways to Develop Funding Package
  - Local Funding
    - Nexus to Economic Benefit
    - Land Owners to Realize Benefits?
  - Federal Funding
    - Local match contributions?
    - Competitive in Small Starts?
South Lake Union, Seattle

Significant private funding provides political traction

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Portland, Oregon

Diverse local funding package helps avoid federal contributions

- City of Portland Resources: $3.7M
- Federal Transportation Funds Agreement with Tri-Met Reallocated as Local Funds: $5.0M
- Parking Fund-Cash: $2.0M
- Parking Fund-Bonds: $28.6M
- Local Improvement District Private Sector Funds: $9.6M
- Tax Increment: $7.5M
- HUD Grant: $0.5M
Institutions and government challenge to raising local funds
Successful streetcar line...

- Demand for short circulation trips
- Connections to regional network
- Mix of uses or variety of markets
- Presence of occasional users
- Desire to accelerate planned development
- Property owners willing to contribute
Transportation solutions for livable communities....

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