Streetcar 101: An Introduction to Streetcars and Their Role in Building Livable Communities
Today’s Session

• A review of the streetcar renaissance in the U.S.
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• A discussion of the economic benefits of streetcars
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• An interactive ‘talk radio’ panel discussion on key issues related to streetcar implementation
"Heritage" streetcar projects on the ground today
“New” streetcar projects on the ground within the last 15 years
Streetcar projects in planning, design, or dreams
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Downtowns Across the U.S. See Streetcars in Their Future

By ROB DRIEHAUS

CINCINNATI — From his months-old French bistro, Jean-Robert de Cavel sees restored Italianate row houses against a backdrop of rundown tenements in this city’s long-struggling Over-the-Rhine neighborhood.

He also sees a turnaround for the district, thanks to plans to revive a transit system that was dismantled in the 1950s: the humble streetcar line.

“I am going to be silly because we move away from things too quickly in this country,” Mr. de Cavel said. “Streetcar is definitely going to create a reason for young people to come downtown.”

Cincinnati officials are assembling financing for a $132 million system that would connect the city’s riverfront stadiums, downtown business district and Uptown neighborhoods, which include six hospitals and the University of Cincinnati, in a six- to eight-mile loop. Depending on the final financing package, fares may be free, 50 cents or $1.

The city plans to pay for the system with existing tax revenue and $30 million in private investment. The plan requires the approval of Mayor Mark Mallory, a proponent, and the City Council.

At least 40 other cities are exploring streetcar plans to spur economic development, ease traffic congestion and draw young professionals and empty-nest baby boomers back from the suburbs, according to the Community Streetcar Coalition, which includes city officials, transit authorities and engineers who advocate streetcar construction.

More than a dozen have existing lines, including New Orleans, which is restoring a system devastated by Hurricane Katrina. And Denver, Houston, Salt Lake City and Charlotte, N.C., have introduced or are planning to introduce streetcars.
Why streetcars?
Streetcars have become a major tool in the redevelopment of many cities.
Streetcars can provide a transit improvement or enhancement that is somewhere between buses/BRT and light rail in cost and capacity.
Streetcars can extend the pedestrian experience and promote walkability
Streetcars can enhance vibrant streetlife and redevelopment if combined with other development activities including new zoning.
Streetcars can be one tool to reduce VMT while increasing trip capacity
Today’s Session

• Gloria Ohland/Reconnecting America: The Economic Impact of Streetcars
Today’s Session

• Interactive ‘talk show’ panel discussion:
  - Keith Jones / URS Fort Worth
  - Jeff Boothe / Holland & Knight / Community Streetcar Coalition
  - Rick Gustafson / Shiels Obletz Johnsen / Portland Streetcar Inc.
  - Jim Graebner / TranSystems Denver
But First, What’s on Your Mind?