Railvolution

October 18, 2011
WHAT ARE WE BUILDING?

- 3.1 mile Downtown circulator loop-initially
- 15 stops
- With a 1 mile future connector to Uptown
  - University and Hospitals
- Phased implementation
VISION: FROM THE RIVER TO THE ZOO

Connect two largest employment centers in the Northern Kentucky Greater Cincinnati Regions
VISION: FROM THE RIVER TO THE ZOO

DOWNTOWN CINCINNATI

70,000 WORKERS AND 14,000 RESIDENTS
VISION: FROM THE RIVER TO THE ZOO

UPTOWN - THE UNIVERSITY-MEDICAL COMPLEX - 80,000 WORKERS & 50,000 RESIDENTS
BENEFITS OF THE STREETCAR

- Encourage private development.
- Create Jobs
  - Est. 310 construction for revised route
  - Est. 25-30 for ongoing operations
- Return 92 acres and more than 500 vacant buildings into tax-producing properties
- Attract young professionals
- Provide an urban amenity
- Begin a larger transportation system
- Connect our assets
CINCINNATI’S RENAISSANCE

THE BANKS
CINCINNATI’S RENAISSANCE

FOUNTAIN SQUARE
CINCINNATI’S RENAISSANCE

OVER-THE-RHINE’S REBIRTH
RECENT MAJOR PROJECTS IN CINCINNATI

- MGM-HORSESHOE CASINO
REVISED PHASE 1A
FINANCING

Cost to Build: $95 million
Revenue Secured: $99.5 million

- Urban Circulator Grant
- OKI Grant
  - Metropolitan Planning Organization
- City Bond Financing
- Private funding (Duke Energy)
OPERATIONS

Estimated annual operating cost: $2.5 million

Funding Sources:
- Casino revenue – up to $3 million
- Parking Meter revenue – $400,000
- Fare Box - $465,000 - $675,000
- Naming Rights, Sponsored stops – $200,000
  • Conservative estimate
- Establish operating reserve - $2.0-3.0 M
OPERATING FACTS

- Runs 18 Hours a day, 365 days a year
- 10 minutes wait time/20 minutes off – peak
- 5 vehicles
- Uses a single overhead catenary wire to minimize visual impacts
- Operated by the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (Also operate our buses)
Total Investment: $95.5 million dollars
Total Economic Impact: $1.3 billion dollars
13 to 1 ratio
Possible Phase 2 routes

- University of Cincinnati
- Environmental Protection Agency
- University Hospital
- University Medical College
- Cincinnati Children’s
- Cincinnati Zoo
NEXT STEPS:

- Environmental Process Complete
  - Finding Of No Significant Impact issued on June 10
- Signed agreement with SORTA to be the designated recipient of federal funds
- Design work on-going
- Finalizing Car Procurement
  - Researching Hybrid Vehicle
- Working with utilities on relocation issues
How did we build support for the Streetcar Project?
14 different studies since 1998 have recommended building a streetcar in order to drive economic development.

In 2007, HDR did a feasibility study of building a Streetcar in Cincinnati.
MAJOR MILESTONES

- 2007, City Council directed the City Administration to move forward on building a Streetcar.
- Early 2010, Cincinnati won $15 million in State funding
- Spring 2010, City Council passed approval for $64 million in bond financing
- Summer 2010, $25 million Urban Circulator Grant
- Winter 2010, additional $37 million State Grant
PUBLIC OUTREACH

- 39 public presentations, forums, and open houses since 2007.
- In 2009, 11 City sponsored public meetings
- 20 meetings with business stakeholders representing local banks, hospitals, universities, corporations, and utilities.
- February 2011, 6,000 informational postcards mailed to citizens and businesses within a three block radius of the streetcar route.
OPPONENTS

- COAST – the Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending and Taxes
  - Local tea party group that pre-dates the tea party
- NAACP – local chapter
- City Unions
- One former Congressman
CHALLENGES FACED

- Issue 9
- Governor
- Changing Council
- New Ballot Initiative
- Utility Relocation
ISSUE 9 IN 2009

- Ballot initiative to require a vote each time the City wanted to spend money on ANY rail transportation project.

- They tried to frame it as only about the Streetcar
ISSUE 9 IN 2009

Cincinnatian’s For Progress

• Local coalition formed to defeat the ballot initiative
• Framed the debate in terms of jobs and development – “Progress”
• Built a broad base of support across the community. Over 100 endorsements.
• Raised $200,000 to defeat the initiative
GOVERNOR

Governor Kasich elected in 2010.

Not a rail supporter
  • Gave back $400 million for Cincinnati to Cleveland high speed rail

Pulls back $52 million in promised State funding – Hoping to kill the project
STATE LEGISLATION

House Bill 114 – amendment to transportation budget bill.

• Bans the use of State funding for the Cincinnati Streetcar – directly or pass-through funding.
CHANGING COUNCIL

- Originally 8-1 in favor of the Streetcar
- 7-2 – A Republican member switched because of pressure from the right
- 6-3 – An additional Republican is elected
- 5-3 – A member is banned from voting on the project because of conflicts of interest
- 4-4 – A Democrat resigns and appoints a Republican to replace him
STATUS

- Council has approved moving forward with the Streetcar project
- Not a majority to stop the project
- So, we are moving forward
- November election is important for project/city
NEW BALLOT INITIATIVE

- Would ban building a streetcar until 2020.
  - Their new strategy is “This isn’t the right time.”
- Backers: COAST and NAACP
- Cincinnatians For Progress leading the fight
Thank you.