

## STREETCAR ACTION PLAN



Streetcars are designed for local transportation and are most successful when tied into the local transit system. These transit vehicles are powered by overhead electricity and streetcar models range from modern to historic.

A downtown circulator—in this case a streetcar—will help connect the various Downtown districts and improve linkages to Downtown light rail stations and give local residents a way to move around town without a car. A streetcar will also foster economic development in areas it serves that are currently underutilized.

In recent years, many of the city's older Downtown buildings have been converted into condominiums and apartments, offering a range of housing options in the Downtown district. There are a large number of surface parking lots that are ripe for development and would benefit from a streetcar system, especially one that would connect these areas to DART light rail stations.

Dallas cannot achieve its full development potential if residents and visitors have limited options to reach all Downtown destinations. A downtown streetcar will provide a quick, efficient, and low-cost circulator system that improves access to Downtown districts, landmarks and sites prime for redevelopment. The entire transit system could be enhanced and the service area expanded through the introduction of a streetcar system. In addition, it could serve as a great amenity for tourists and convention visitors. Finally, it would be a catalyst for redevelopment by creating better accessibility. A streetcar is a compelling image-maker and symbol of transportation progress, enhancing the appeal of the Downtown area.

Many studies have been done about the concept of a downtown circulator that include using DART trains, the McKinney Avenue Trolley, DART buses and even modern streetcars. None of these studies completely concluded how a circulator will impact development and economic growth, which transit services would be the best fit, and how such a service could be financed and implemented.



The city of Tacoma streetcar station provides a pedestrian shelter with disability access.



Downtown Dallas street widths provide enough space for installing a streetcar.

## How Street Cars Drive Economic Development

- They add character to city streets.
- They provide easy, convenient transportation.
- They can reduce costs associated with parking for the City and developers.
- They use a wide variety of public funds for construction.

Many private and public sector interests support a streetcar system that builds on rapid transit. DART has completed its first light rail line through the city core and is now initiating a planning process for a second route. In addition the McKinney Avenue Trolley was extended from 2.8 miles to 3.8 miles to the north to connect with the City Place DART station and the West Village. Plans are under way to extend MATA further onto Olive Street to the existing Downtown transit mall. \$3 Million dollars are earmarked for the Olive Street extension at this time.

## What Questions the Action Plan Will Answer

- What benefits would a streetcar system bring to Downtown development;
- Which routes would maximize economic growth and development opportunities;
- How would a streetcar system integrate with DART rail and bus service; and
- How would the system be financed and operated.

## Anticipated Activities

The following activities will take place as part of this action plan:

1. Establishment of a Downtown Streetcar Advisory Committee (DSAC): The DSAC will provide the forum for review of analyses conducted by staff and consultants on key decision points related to alternative routes, finance and governance. This effort will be a joint coordination involving the City of Dallas, DART and MATA. Throughout the process, the public, agencies and stakeholders will be asked to provide their thoughts and opinions.
2. A comparative assessment of streetcars with other technologies: Although this action plan presupposes the efficacy of a modern streetcar system, an assessment of other technologies such as light rail, buses and McKinney Avenue Trolley technologies will be conducted to educate decision-makers on the costs and benefits of the options.

Table III-2.2 Selected Modal Comparisons

	<b>LRT</b>	<b>Modern Streetcar</b>	<b>McKinney Ave.</b>	<b>Bus</b>
Travel Function	Local/Regional	Local	Local/District	Local
Market	Urban/Suburban	Urban	Urban/Tourist	Urban/Suburban
Power System	Overhead Electric	Overhead Electric	Overhead Electric	Diesel or Electric
Station Spacing	250' - 1.5 miles	250'	250'	250'
Downtown Development	Significant	Significant	Significant	Minimal
Pass Capacity	120-150	105-110	25-60	60-90
Capital \$/3 miles	\$90m-\$300m	\$45m-\$90m	\$12m-\$15m	<\$500k
Operating \$/hour	\$167	\$122	\$40-\$50	\$80-\$90

Capital costs in this table (above) are extrapolated from newly built streetcar systems in Tacoma, WA, Portland, OR, and Tampa, FL. Operating costs are based on Portland's expenses.

3. Alternative routes analysis and cost estimates: DART and the City will collaborate in a study of streetcar service and will include this assessment in its second Downtown light rail line alternatives analysis. DART will study proposed routes and do early engineering and feasibility reviews together with the Downtown Streetcar Advisory Committee (DSAC).

4. Development or redevelopment assessment: One of the key advantages of a streetcar system is the potential for opening up opportunities for development and redevelopment. This is anticipated to be a significant factor in the relative benefits of alternative route alignments as well as the possibilities for private financing options. Development and redevelopment scenarios will be studied for each of the routes under consideration.

5. Evaluation of ridership estimates and other impacts on Downtown services: A Downtown circulator system can have tremendous positive impact on ridership on the entire transit system by enabling transit riders to access a wider range of areas and activities within Downtown without driving. Other impacts to be studied would include car traffic and streetcar safety, the number of on-street parking spaces that may be lost, new or relocated utilities, and streetscape amenities that would be needed for each route.

6. Review of possible financing, governance and implementation options: Solid research will be needed to decide how to best pay for a streetcar system. The action plan will include a summary of how other streetcar systems have been financed along with a list of likely sources of funding. An operating plan will be created for

Map III-2.17 Downtown Transit Access



This map shows Downtown transit access within walking distance. The red color indicates good service while areas in blue would benefit from new lines and connections.

Map III-2.18 Downtown Dallas - Proposed Streetcar Line



A Downtown streetcar could be routed through the Downtown area and into the Arts District.

# STREETCAR ACTION PLAN



The Dallas Arts District is expected to develop into a cultural hub and would benefit from a streetcar line.

each alternative streetcar route based on weekday, weekend and holiday service levels. It will include links to other transit services and modifications to DART services that might become redundant.

## Preliminary Timeline

The action plan can be completed in 12 months under the following timeline. This is a preliminary timeline that would change depending on the governance and funding options that are pursued. Federal funding options in particular will be driven by federal guidelines and requirements that would impact the timeline.

## Preliminary Timeline

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|-----------------|--|
| <b>Month 1</b>  | <b>a) Establish DSAC<br/>b) Define objectives and evaluation criteria<br/>c) Summarize transportation data in hand</b>   |
| <b>Month 2</b>  | <b>Present findings of comparative transit technology assessment</b>   |
| <b>Month 3</b>  | <b>a) Determine streetcar routes to be evaluated<br/>b) Hold a design charrette</b>  |
| <b>Month 4</b>  | <b>a) Hold first workshop<br/>b) Review draft of the operating plan<br/>c) Review findings of governance and operations analysis</b>   |
| <b>Month 5</b>  | <b>a) Review preliminary capital and operating cost estimates<br/>b) Review preliminary financing options<br/>c) Refine financing, governance and operational options<br/>d) Review proposed implementation schedule<br/>e) Olive Street Extension implementation initiation</b> |
| <b>Month 6</b>  | <b>Refine financing, governance and operating options</b>  |
| <b>Month 7</b>  | <b>a) Hold second workshop<br/>b) Summarize land use data on file</b>  |
| <b>Month 8</b>  | <b>Review method and data for redevelopment assessment</b>   |
| <b>Month 9</b>  | <b>Review refined development/redevelopment assessment</b>   |
| <b>Month 10</b> | <b>Refine financing, governance and operating options</b>  |
| <b>Month 11</b> | <b>a) Hold third workshop<br/>b) Review implementation plan/schedule<br/>c) Review draft report materials/outlines, etc.</b>   |
| <b>Month 12</b> | <b>Review final reports</b>  |