

# A.R.T.

ALLIANCE FOR RELIABLE TRANSPORT

ON THE WEB AT [HTTP://WWW.PROTRANSIT.ORG](http://www.protransit.org)

## NEWSLETTER & MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, January 31, 2007

6:30 – 8:00pm

... at The Seymour, 945 Pennsylvania Avenue, Miami Beach

**Please Note Special Day And Time!**

### Agenda

#### 1 Welcome and Introductions

#### 2 Discussion: *Reorganization Update*

Putting the ART mission—to promote multiple, inter-connected and environmentally sound transportation solutions for our community—into effect.

- Website update/Tobias
- Status on collaboration with the UEL's Transportation Sub-Committee/Denis
- Upcoming commission elections herald a major power shift. How can ART affect the outcome?/Open

#### 3 "5-Minute Quickies"

- Sierra Club/CTAC
- Bus Improvements

#### 4 Old/New Business

#### 5 Guest Speakers: Maria Echeverry, Transportation Manager and Christine Leduc, Bicycle Program Coordinator

This month our speakers will be updating ART on the status of the Miami Beach Bicycle Plan. As you probably know, bikes are envisioned as a major component of the measures designed to create a safer pedestrian environment. Yet, this seemingly simple plan can turn contentious when brought before the neighborhoods. What gives? Our guest speakers, employed by the City of Miami Beach Transportation Department, will address the issues.

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*In The News:*

#### Cities rediscover allure of streetcars

Updated 1/8/2007 11:15 PM ET

**By Haya El Nasser, USA TODAY**

The streetcars that rumbled and clanged through many American cities from the late 1800s until World War II helped shape neighborhoods. More than a half-century later, streetcars are coming back and reviving the same neighborhoods they helped create.

Several cities have resurrected the streetcar tradition and about three dozen others plan to — from Tucson, and Birmingham, Ala., to Miami and Trenton, N.J.

This return to the past is less about satisfying a sense of nostalgia than about enticing developers and people to old industrial areas and faded neighborhoods. As cities experience a much-publicized urban renaissance, streetcars have become another draw for investment in housing, stores and restaurants.

Cities hope that streetcars can do in this century what they did in the last: Connect neighborhoods and provide a relatively cheap alternative to walking and driving.

"The return of the streetcars is not really happening for new reasons but for the same reasons," says Michael English, vice president of Tampa Historic Streetcar, which operates along 2.5 miles connecting downtown, the fashionable loft and entertainment Channelside district and historic Ybor City. The city had a 54-mile system until 1946. The new line opened in 2002 and condominiums have been sprouting up along the way since.

"We spent \$55 million," English says. "It attracted well over \$1 billion in private investment. ... Part of the marketing attraction is that we were bringing back something that is viewed here very romantically. A lot of people who grew up here used it all the time."

In the face of worsening traffic congestion, public support for mass transit is rising. Many cities, however, cannot afford to build light-rail lines that often must extend several miles to have a chance of attracting federal dollars.

Funding of light-rail systems often requires evidence that they will save passengers time. To make that case, most rail lines have to stretch out to the suburbs to reach commuters, an expensive undertaking.

### **Trains with 'sex appeal'**

Electric streetcars are light-rail, too, but they're less expensive because they use lighter cars, fewer cars and shorter tracks that share the road with cars and buses. And they evoke many emotions, from a sweet longing for the good old days to the passion of Marlon Brando's primal cry — "Stellaaaaaaa" — in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

"Streetcars have sex appeal," says Len Brandrup, director of transportation in Kenosha, Wis., which opened a 1.9-mile line in 2000. "It resonates with folks. ... Developers don't write checks for buses."

Streetcar lines cost about \$10 million to \$15 million a mile compared with \$50 million to \$75 million a mile for light-rail lines.

Most streetcar lines stretch for less than 5 miles compared with 10 to 20 miles for light rail. They've become so appealing that some developers are helping pay for the systems, says Shelley Poticha, president and CEO of Reconnecting America, a national non-profit group that works to spur development around transit stops.

Some streetcars are vintage and refurbished. Others, such as Tampa's, are new trolleys designed to replicate the look of old. Yet others are new and look modern.

"It's an inexpensive way of providing transit," Poticha says. "It expands the reach of pedestrians in a community without having to build an expensive infrastructure. It can be built quickly, inexpensively, right into the street to get around without a car more easily."

Streetcars aren't a total solution to transit needs because they can't carry vast numbers of commuters, according to *Street Smart*, a new book published by Reconnecting America and other mass-transit advocates. But they can augment other forms of transit.

### Many cities buying in

How streetcars are reviving neighborhoods:

- Portland, Ore., often at the forefront of urban innovation, was the first to build a modern streetcar system in its downtown Pearl District.

It attracted about 100 projects worth \$2.3 billion in less than five years, all within two blocks of the line. They include 7,248 housing units and 4.6 million square feet of office and retail. Proximity to mass transit allowed developers to build fewer parking spaces. Ridership was more than triple projections.

- Kenosha, a small industrial city on the shore of Lake Michigan, had streetcars from 1903 to 1932. The streetcars died and American Motors and Chrysler plants closed. The city remained a rail hub between two growing metropolitan areas, Chicago and Milwaukee, and the plant closings gave it about 70 acres of prime downtown lakefront real estate to work with.

"We have what Chicago and Milwaukee have — land near the lake," Brandrup says. "Kenosha had to reinvent itself."

Bringing back the streetcar was part of the reinvention. About 100 buildings were demolished. Harbor Park was created. A museum, marina, and playground were built. The streetcar connects Harbor Park with downtown and the commuter rail station. Condos have opened along the line to accommodate the influx of residents escaping high housing costs in Chicago, 50 miles away.

- Little Rock opened its 2.5-mile River Rail streetcar in 2004. It connects key destinations — the arena, convention center and River Market District — and lofts, hotels, government buildings and museums. It has been so successful that work has begun on a mile-long extension to the William J. Clinton Presidential Library.

About \$200 million in development has either been planned or built along the \$19.6-million line, *Street Smart* estimates. Now, North Little Rock plans a \$28 million minor-league baseball stadium.

"Mayors, business people and developers are seeing this type of transit as an amenity that helps revive neighborhoods," Poticha says. "Yes, it's transportation but more than that, it's a package of urban renaissance tools."

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Hope for everyone. Thanks, Winsome.  
JHB

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The Alliance for Reliable Transport was formed in 2003 by Miami Beach residents who share an interest in improving public transportation. Meetings are open to the public.