

PEACHTREE CORRIDOR

PARTNERSHIP

Myths vs. Facts

MYTH: *The Peachtree Corridor Partnership has not conducted enough research to determine the feasibility of a streetcar.*

FACT: The concept of building a modern streetcar in Atlanta has been actively and thoroughly studied for the past three years.

Research first originated in 2005 through Atlanta Streetcar, Inc. After a year of initial study, Mayor Franklin formed the Peachtree Corridor Task Force, which released its recommendations in March 2007. The Task Force had 22 members and five subcommittees comprised of technical experts and consultants who, together with representatives from the City of Atlanta, the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown, Midtown and Buckhead Community Improvement Districts (CID's), studied – in great depth and detail – the issues related to mobility and transportation, land use and zoning, finance, planning and design, and housing choice. The final report released in March 2007 reflected months of studies, surveys and public opinion polls, as well as 15 public input sessions conducted along the corridor.

Shortly after the release of the Task Force report, the mayor established the Peachtree Corridor Partnership to work with relevant property owners and neighborhood groups, Atlanta City Council, the CIDs, and other interested parties to determine how to best implement the recommendations. This phase of the effort has included additional technical and financial studies.

MYTH: *The streetcar adds limited mobility that really doesn't amount to much.*

FACT: Given the large amount of planned and projected growth along the corridor, the proposed streetcar system will add a great deal of mobility by:

- Reducing the number and size of parking facilities needed, thereby reducing the number of cars moving around the area;
- Boosting overall transit ridership by connecting to current and future systems;
- Providing clean, “green” transportation that is free of fumes;
- Allowing higher densities to function better;
- Promoting vibrant street life and support a walkable lifestyle;
- Helping to shape and focus development and redevelopment in Downtown and Midtown.

MYTH: *The system is redundant to MARTA.*

FACT: The streetcar is considered the “last mile” link to MARTA, complementing the existing MARTA rail service by providing a comfortable trip between MARTA stations along the corridor, as well as providing quick transit to the riders’ final destination — in many cases after they have departed a MARTA train or commuter bus.

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The streetcar also appeals to motorists who otherwise would not consider taking a bus. The modern streetcar has many positive features that buses sometimes lack, such as a smooth and comfortable riding experience, reliability, and lack of emissions and noise. It would also reduce the need for buses within the designated area and possibly allow for re-routing some existing bus routes to focus on trips to and from the corridor instead of within the corridor.

MYTH: *The streetcar is a novelty, not a need, and only visitors will ride it.*

FACT: The modern streetcar is not a “tourist trolley,” though it will make it easier for visitors to access Atlanta’s attractions. The greatest need that the streetcar addresses is mobility. It will ease congestion by providing an alternative to short trips for residents and workers, as well as visitors. Experience with similar systems in other cities shows that modern streetcars primarily serve local constituents.

MYTH: *The amount of road construction, repair and widening that will be necessary to support this proposal would cost taxpayers several million dollars beyond the estimated cost of the streetcar; and it will contribute to the already troublesome and inconvenient construction taking place in the city.*

FACT: The projected cost of the project – \$190 million – includes all road construction and repair, and the projected revenue formula to cover the cost is very conservative. Streetcar systems can be built quickly and with minimal disruption, often block-by-block, closing a street section for only two to three weeks.

MYTH: *The Peachtree Corridor Partnership has plenty of other funding sources and should pursue those before seeking support from property owners.*

FACT: The Peachtree Corridor Task Force analyzed *all* potential sources of funding and concluded that no other sources are available now or in the immediate future to support this mobility solution. Moreover, having local funds will make Atlanta eligible and more competitive for federal funds, which the Partnership does recommend seeking, in addition to state funds. The City of Atlanta is also working to identify funds to contribute.

MYTH: *The special assessment district is unfair because it excludes single-family neighborhoods near Peachtree but includes condos and multi-family residential buildings.*

FACT: The idea behind the special assessment district is that the project is paid for by those whom will benefit most, specifically, owners of commercial space and residents of high-density properties on or close to Peachtree. Of these two groups, commercial property owners and developers will absorb more than half of the project cost. Further, a sizable portion of the cost will be met by taxpayers citywide through a contribution of the city’s general funds. This breakdown of funding sources means that corridor residents are getting roughly a 3-to-1 return on their investment.

MYTH: *The Peachtree Streetcar will not add but take away from the beauty and charm of the streetscape, adding an eyesore of overhead wires.*

FACT: The modern streetcars along Peachtree will be similar in look and design to light rail transit vehicles. Propulsion would occur from an overhead contact system that uses a single contact wire or “low profile” system to provide power, thus minimizing the visual pollution that existed with the tangle of overhead lines characterized by older streetcar systems.