

Streetcar Feasibility Study

As is the case in most North American cities, Minneapolis has a rich streetcar history. At its peak, the Twin City Rapid Transit Company (Twin City Lines) had 524 miles of streetcar track in the Twin Cities and owned 704 streetcar vehicles. By the late 1940s, however, streetcar ridership was declining and many streetcar lines were being replaced by buses. By the 1950s many streetcar lines and vehicles were in disrepair and by 1954, streetcar service in the Twin Cities ceased all together.

With the introduction of the Hiawatha Light Rail line in 2004, and several more lines in the developmental or planning stages, rail-based transit is making a comeback in the Twin Cities. As a follow-up study to the Access Minneapolis 10-Year Transportation Action Plan, Nelson\Nygaard and their consulting team (Meyer Mohaddes, SEH and Richardson-Richter) evaluated the feasibility of reintroducing streetcar service in Minneapolis. The primary goal of the study was to evaluate potential conversion of 14 "Primary Transit Network" corridors (as identified in the Access Minneapolis study) from bus operations to streetcar service.

This study was conducted in three main phases. The first and second phases utilized evaluation criteria to select the most appropriate long-term streetcar network and estimate potential changes to the underlying bus lines. The third phase identified several potential starter lines in and adjacent to downtown Minneapolis, developed planning-level capital and operating cost estimates and compiled a list of possible public and private funding options. Recognizing the potential economic development benefit streetcar lines have had in other cities, this study also gauged potential support for streetcar service among the development community and evaluated public/private funding opportunities.



Project Duration: 2006-Present

Total Budget: \$250,000

Fee to Nelson\Nygaard: \$167,000

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