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D.C. Streetcar: Delivering Opportunity

Washington, D.C.'s Streetcar Program Promises to be a Catalyst for Mobility and Prosperity

Streetcars are making a comeback in a number of cities across the U.S and, after a half-century absence on District of Columbia streets, they are poised to make a profound revival. In announcing a 22-mile priority system last year, the District is currently pursuing the nation's most aggressive streetcar system.

For District residents, commuters and other travelers, streetcars will provide a missing element of premium transit (i.e. rail or high quality bus service), boosting mobility and driving significant economic opportunity. Mayor Vincent Gray views the \$1.5 billion investment as a down payment on the future and has directed my agency, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), to turn this ambitious vision into a functioning reality.

In partnership with a host of able contractors, the D.C. Streetcar program is off to a solid start. Working together, we will implement a growing network of streetcar lines that will be a primary means of getting around the city, while serving as a catalyst for high-quality, transit-oriented development that strengthens neighborhoods.

An Outstanding P3 Opportunity

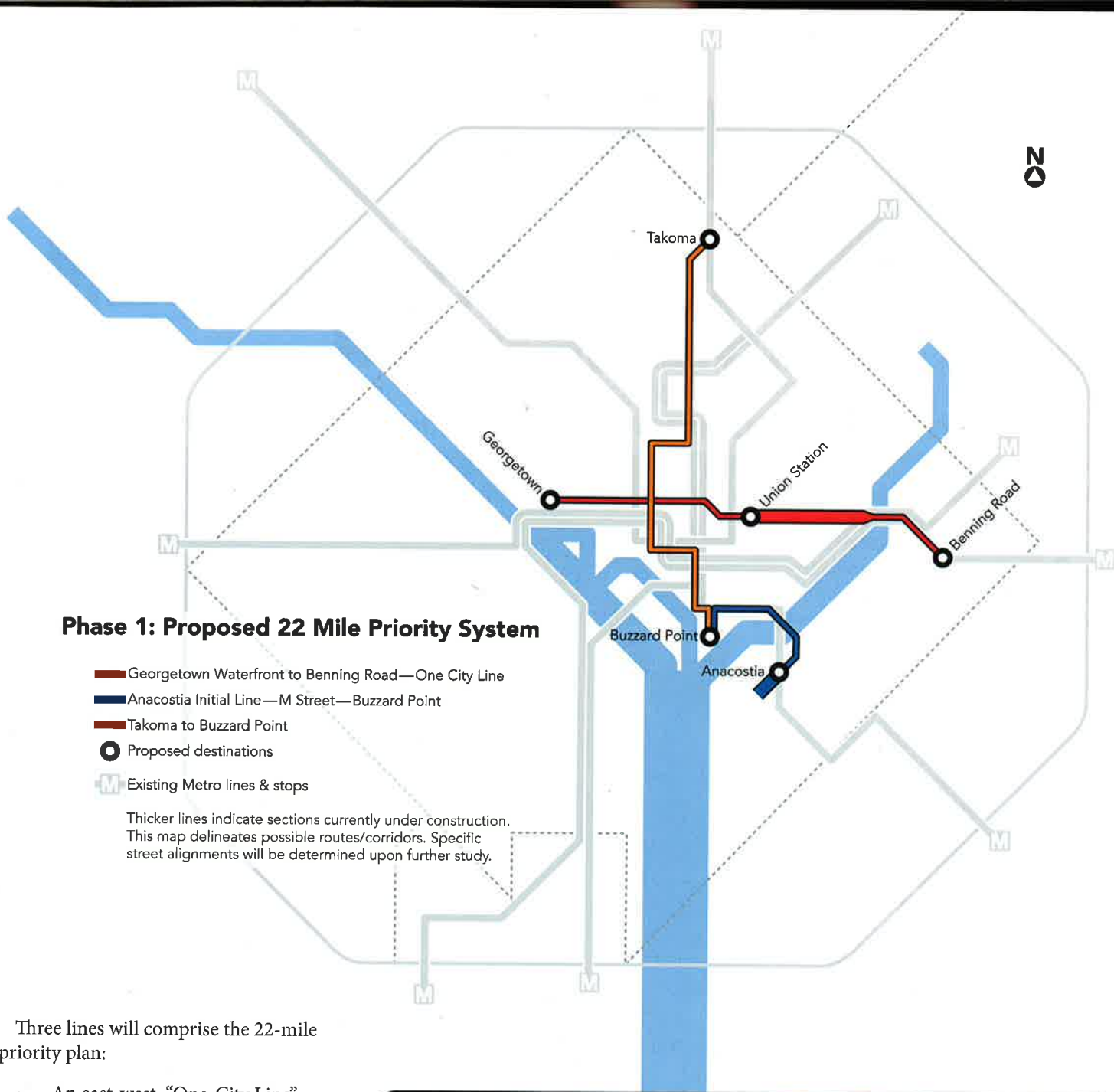
Last summer, DDOT began exploring the feasibility of utilizing a public-private partnership (P3) for the 22-mile priority streetcar system as a means of accelerating service delivery. The first step was a Request for Information (RFI) that sought input from contractors to help guide our planning and development efforts. We were extremely pleased by the reaction. More than 20 responses came in from a variety of leading firms and teams in the transit



New tracks run down the busy H Street Corridor in Northeast D.C.

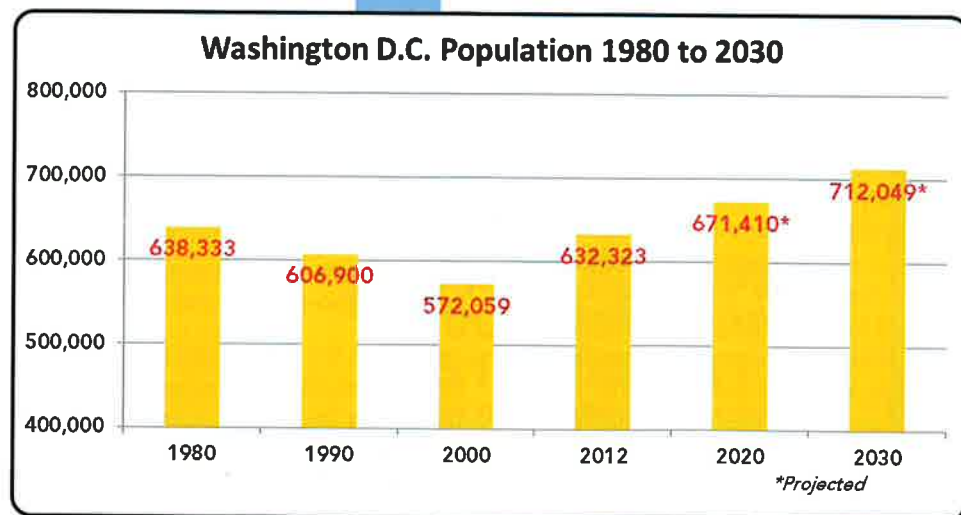
industry, both from within the U.S. and around the globe. Of those responses, seven were from complete or nearly-complete teams, while an additional five indicated their intent to form and lead a team if and when a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is issued.

Based on the strong response, DDOT has opted to pursue procurement of a P3 entity. Once issued, the procurement will be the only streetcar P3 in the nation. We are currently concluding analyses to address the input provided by industry, which will be used to craft the RFQ as the first stage of a two-stage Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals (RFQ/RFP) process to select a concessionaire (i.e. private partner).



Three lines will comprise the 22-mile priority plan:

- An east-west “One-City Line” connecting historic Georgetown to Union Station and neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River;
- A north-south line linking the southwest waterfront with the National Mall, downtown and neighborhoods along Georgia Avenue to the border with Maryland; and
- A second east-west line linking the southwest waterfront area across the Anacostia River to the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling military facility via the Capital Riverfront neighborhood along M Street.





New tracks run down O Street in the Georgetown neighborhood of D.C.

What's Old is New Again

Originally drawn by horses and later powered by electricity, streetcars were a fixture in Washington, D.C., for precisely a century, from 1862 to 1962. As is projected to be the case with our 21st century streetcar system, the existence of streetcar lines helped shape the city's urban fabric, as real estate developers built commercial and residential properties in close proximity to the streetcar lines. However, the popularity of streetcars declined after World War II, when the greater Washington, D.C., area experienced widespread suburban development and a huge surge in automobile ownership. The final blow for the original streetcar system occurred in the mid-1950s, when a charter transfer imposed a drastic requirement on the new owner: replacement of the streetcar fleet with buses.

But vestiges of the old system remain. Last year, DDOT completed a complete rehabilitation of O and P Streets in Georgetown, relaying original streetcar tracks and cobblestones that for decades had been treacherously out of condition while also providing modern-day enhancements.

The Promise of Streetcars

The D.C. Streetcar system will accelerate a resurgence that is already underway. After several decades of decline, population is up nine percent since 1990, with more than 623,000 residents now calling the District home. Additionally, the District's economy added nearly 61,000 jobs between 2000 and 2010 and now totals approximately 700,000 jobs.

By 2030, the District's population is forecasted to grow by more than 100,000. Its economy is slated to add 140,000 jobs. The number of "internal trips"—one-way journeys using one mode of transportation within the District—is also expected to increase 32 percent over the same period of time.

The ultimate 37-mile planned system (of which the 22-mile priority system comprises the initial segments) is intended to help handle the additional demand and be a mainstay of the District's balanced, multi-modal transportation network. According to a DDOT report completed in 2010, the D.C. Streetcar network is forecasted to provide more than 147,000 daily trips by 2030, improve travel times by up to 38 percent and reduce crowding on existing Metrobus lines by 27 percent in the corridors served by the new system.

What's more, by attracting new residents and employees, the complete network is anticipated to fuel more than \$300 million in retail spending annually, according to a study issued in 2012 by the D.C. Office of Planning. Other benefits outlined in the report show it will bring an additional 72,000 households into walkable distance of premium transit, whereas currently only about 22,000 households are within reasonable walking distance—fully a third of District households will be within an easy walk. Solidifying real estate gains in the District over the past decade, the streetcar grid is forecasted to add between \$5 and \$7 billion to the value of existing property, and spark an additional \$5 to \$8 billion in new residential and commercial development within a decade after completion.



New D.C. Streetcar sits on display.

These major forecasted gains are borne out by the experiences of other cities that have built streetcar systems. For example, a streetcar line in Portland, Oregon is credited with catalyzing \$3.5 billion in new investment, including 10,000 new housing units and 5.4 million square feet of office, institutional, retail and hotel construction. Streetcars in Seattle have attracted approximately \$2.4 billion in investment, including 2,500 residential units and 12,500 jobs.

These and other factors point to a bright future for the District of Columbia—a future that in no small measure will be riding on the streetcar.

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