

**Fort Worth Star-Telegram**

## **Fort Worth to seek \$25 million grant for streetcar system**

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FORT WORTH — The city is going to apply for a \$25 million grant that could help fund a streetcar system in central Fort Worth.

Competition for the grant is likely to be strong: The federal transit authority has \$130 million available nationwide, and at least three other cities near Fort Worth are also interested in a share.

If it comes through, though, Fort Worth will be one step closer to funding its proposed streetcar system. The idea has been popular among central-city residents and urban planners, but no one has figured out how to pay the \$250 million price tag.

Council members also want to make sure that funding the project won't take away from other priorities, such as street repair and the planned southwest-to-northeast commuter rail line.

"It's prudent that we begin the process, but I wouldn't want us to use funds committed to other projects," Councilman Danny Scarth said at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

Councilman Carter Burdette asked whether the city has hired a consultant to finalize the plan. At a recent symposium on streetcars, the mayor of Charlotte, N.C., stressed that the plan has to be finalized before it can be funded.

"We've got to remember we're talking about a multimillion-dollar project. It's absolutely crucial that the first part of it, wherever that might be, is successful," Burdette said.

Land developers and neighborhood groups have been working on the plan for more than a year. Preliminary plans call for about 20 miles of electric streetcar tracks, serving downtown, the Cultural District, the medical district and other areas.

The city has applied for another transportation grant, which would provide \$33 million. The city has also discussed funding part of the project with money from the special tax districts that pay for amenities downtown and in the cultural and medical districts, Councilman Joel Burns said.

Mayor Mike Moncrief referred to the pilot "Molly the Trolley," a trolley-style bus route that has run through downtown since the summer.

"We have to start sometime in this project; obviously the downtown loop is the core," he said. "Putting Molly on tracks seems to be the next step."