

Streetcar revival means more mobility, more American jobs

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Earlier this month, I blogged about Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff's visit to Tampa for the grand opening of the [TECO Streetcar Line](#) extension to Whiting Street. This \$5.3 million project links [downtown Tampa](#) to residential areas, restaurants, hotels and entertainment.

But the TECO Line is just one part of a wave of streetcar projects sweeping across the nation, and last week the [Community Streetcar Coalition](#) held their 2011 Streetcar Summit to assess the promising achievements of the previous year and plan for the next 12 months. The CSC includes more than thirty local governments, transit authorities, engineering firms, and rail car manufacturers. And they are all rightfully excited about the [future of streetcars in America](#).



At the summit, Administrator Rogoff spoke about a range of topics including future efforts to provide federal funding for streetcar projects, the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, Buy America provisions, and emerging technologies in the streetcar market such as streetcars that operate wirelessly without overhead cables.

As the TECO Extension in Tampa demonstrates, DOT is dedicated to improving public transit services by supporting streetcar projects all across the country. In addition to Tampa, DOT grants have boosted streetcar projects in [Dallas](#), [New Orleans](#), and [Salt Lake City](#). And you may recall from [another blog](#) earlier this month, we recently signed a TIGER grant agreement with the city of Tucson for its [Modern Streetcar Project](#). This

3.9 mile transit line will offer an affordable, environmentally friendly transportation option to the more than 125,000 people who live, work, or attend college along the route.

One important benefit of America's streetcar revival is the return of domestic streetcar manufacturing and the jobs that industry will create. The Tucson project, for example, has already ordered cars from the [Oregon Iron Works](#). And Rockwell Automation, in Wisconsin, has engineered the first domestic streetcar propulsion technology in a generation. Three other US companies have expressed interest in manufacturing girder rail for streetcar systems. I think you'll agree that a new segment of American manufacturing is a very promising development.



Streetcars foster livability. They connect urban destinations and spur redevelopment of urban spaces into walkable mixed use, high-density communities. Transportation projects like streetcars spark America's neighborhoods into become safer, healthier and more vibrant. In fact, in several cities, streetcars are reviving some of the very same neighborhoods they once helped create.

Streetcars are exactly the kind of American innovation that President Obama spoke about last month in his State of the Union address when he urged us to dream big and build big. And DOT will continue to support these critical projects. Jobs today, livable communities and economic redevelopment tomorrow--that's how we win the future.

<http://fastlane.dot.gov/2011/02/streetcar-revival-means-more-mobility-more-american-jobs.html>