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*From the Baltimore Sun*

## City pledge for a study raises hopes for trolley

By Jill Rosen  
Sun reporter

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With a pledge of money from the city, hopes live on for a trolley that would link the Inner Harbor with the Johns Hopkins University's Homewood campus.

The Board of Estimates approved \$200,000 yesterday -- the initial portion of up to \$800,000 the city has promised -- to help pay for a study that will determine whether a trolley is logistically possible.

The engineering study will examine how the trolley might interfere with utility lines and if the train could make it up the hills of Mount Vernon.

"There are a lot of issues," said Ed Myers, senior principal at Kittelson & Associates, the firm analyzing the trolley concept. "It's definitely not a done deal at this point."

Charles Street Development Corp., an organization dedicated to promoting development along the Charles Street corridor, has been pushing the trolley idea for two years.

The organization sees the 7.5-mile line heading north on Charles Street and south along St. Paul Street north of Mount Royal Avenue and Cathedral Street below.

The working estimate to buy and install the 10-car system is \$150 million. If a trolley system still seems feasible after the engineering study, which is expected to take about a year, the organization will then try to get a better handle on the cost and where the money would come from.

Myers said the group has promised not to seek federal transportation money that would compete with any other regional rail projects.

Charles Street Development is inviting the public to two community meetings at which it will present the trolley plan and take questions. The first is at 6 p.m. today at the Baltimore Convention Center. Another will be at 6 p.m. Monday at the [Baltimore Museum of Art](#).

In addition to the city money, Baltimore Development Corp. is contributing \$100,000 for the study, eight developers have promised a total of \$60,000, and Charles Street Development is hoping for \$100,000 from the state.

The organization hopes that a trolley will not only bring more tourists north of the Inner Harbor, but that the infusion of more people to those areas will encourage more investment from developers.

"We believe, based on the experience in other cities, that developers will find those sites more attractive," said David Funk, chairman of the group's trolley committee. "The corridor can become more vibrant, more robust than it is today."

The group has not decided what type of trolley would be best for Baltimore. There are modern versions that look like light rail trains and other types designed to look like historical trolleys.

Research has shown that the modern ones tend to work more smoothly while the historic styles are more of an attraction, Funk said.

"I have a hunch we're likely to come out on the side of function," he said. "We want to promote ridership, and whatever course leads to ridership is the one we will take."

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[jill.rosen@baltsun.com](mailto:jill.rosen@baltsun.com)  
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