

# Groups striving to alleviate downtown traffic glut



Dave Carey, The Examiner  
Jul 3, 2007 3:00 AM (119 days ago)

## **BALTIMORE -**

Bumper-to-bumper traffic in downtown Baltimore may soon be a thing of the past.

(Kristine Buls/Examiner)  
The intersection of Charles and Centre streets is part of the proposed trolley car route in Baltimore City.

With efforts from groups such as the Downtown Partnership, the Greater Baltimore Committee and Charles Street Development Corp., the private and public sectors are coming together on different ideas to improve the city traffic scene.

“We are very supportive of new transit options in downtown. It’s becoming a much more successful destination for residents and shoppers, and congestion is something we are trying to deal with,” said Mike Evitts, a spokesman for the Downtown Partnership. “We also are concerned about the growing problem of east-west congestion.”

The most recent of the proposed fixes is the trolley system from the Charles Street Development Corp. Development is in the study and research stage, with the City Board of Estimates voting last week to support a \$200,000 feasibility and engineering study. The report will confirm whether the proposed route from the Inner Harbor to Homewood would work, compensating for several hills and turns. Investigating the possibility since 2004, previous CSDC research estimates that a fixed-rail system would cost \$100 million to \$150 million.

“We want to spur development in the corridor, see new residential office and retail projects in some of the vacant lots and enhance the urban livability,” said Kristin Speaker, executive director of the CSDC.

The Greater Baltimore Committee, while supportive of the trolley project, wants to make sure its own plans for the Red and Green lines of the Metro system are carried out. The Red Line would run east to west (Woodlawn to Canton), while the Green Line extension (Hopkins to Morgan State) would be north to south.

“People are starting to see the various transportation pressures imposed, and it creates innovative ideas and stimulates the thought process,” GBC President Donald Fry said.

Plans also are in the works from the Downtown Partnership to launch its own metropolitan traffic watch Web site next week. The group also hopes to implement a free east-to-west shuttle in the city to help with the gridlock on Lombard and Pratt streets in the coming year.

## **More information**

» Click here to go to the new traffic watch Web site to be launched by the [Downtown Partnership](#).

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***What type of mass transit would work in Baltimore? Respond below in our comment section.***

*Examiner*