

Streetcar Extension: A Strategic Mistake

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MARTA's plan to extend the the streetcar is a strategic mistake.
It will hurt this city for decades.

First, this is a strategic mistake for Atlanta:

- It deploys transit to the wrong areas -- to areas with low density.
- It deploys along a bad route: the Beltline route cannot bring riders into the city center.
- It uses a very costly technology – light rail.
- It creates major equity issues -- both racial and socio-economic.

The streetcar extension is also a strategic mistake for MARTA:

- MARTA will be further locked into to a bad system (even more than it is today)
- It commits MARTA to yet another technology. This creates high maintenance costs.
- It misallocates capital spending.
- It will damage MARTA's reputation for expertise.
- It will further discredit transit in Atlanta, worsening the harms from today's streetcar.

Why is this project being implemented? My literature review has found little rigorous analysis to justify this project.

- Already back in 2010, the Franklin administration, which favored Beltline transit, determined that it was economically unjustifiable.
- MARTA should perform a rigorous cost-benefit analysis.

Atlanta needs the MARTA Board to exercise leadership:

- The Board can save the agency and the city from a strategic mistake.
- The Board can reconsider this project (or de-prioritize this project.)
- The Board can allocate capital where it provides the greatest benefit at the lowest cost (as is being done with BRT.)
- This decision will affect Atlanta transit for decades to come.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to provide input.

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