

Miami seeks federal funds for streetcars

Feasibility under study for \$132 million project

BY DESERAE DEL CAMPO

The City of Miami is moving on a streetcar project for a 6.8-mile roundtrip loop between downtown Miami and the Design District. The project is set to begin operations in 2009.

The project is undergoing an analysis for federal funds, said Lilia Medina, manager for the project.

Miami commissioners in February approved \$550,000 to design infrastructure to accommodate a streetcar system in Midtown Miami. The funds came from the city's share of Miami-Dade County's half-percent transit surtax.

The city completed a feasibility study and the study concluded that the project is physically and financially fit.

The Federal Transit Administration is requiring the city to run the analysis study. The cost to build the streetcar system is estimated to be \$132 million, and the cost to operate yearly is estimated at \$3.5 million.

A prototype of streetcars in use in Portland, OR, is being used for the Miami project.

Ms. Medina estimated the city would have eight cars in operation running on tracks next to the curb with 10-minute headways. "The cars will run at 10-minute intervals between station stops and the streetcar will run on rail within the street right of way," said Ms. Medina.

The city is embarking on the analysis study to receive \$50 million from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. The act includes measures to integrate road, rail, transit, marine and air transportation financing.

"This is a very exciting project for the City of Miami," said Ms. Medina. "The next step is to have public involvement from the community, businesses, City of Miami commissioners and government entities such as Miami-Dade County and the Florida Department of Transportation."