

# River Rail Project

## Little Rock, Arkansas

(November 2002)

### Description

The Central Arkansas Transit Authority (CATA) is planning the implementation of a vintage streetcar circulator system on existing right-of-way connecting the River Market and the Convention Center in downtown Little Rock to the Alltel Arena in North Little Rock and to Pulaski County. CATA proposes that service be provided by four replica streetcars operating on a single track and powered by overhead catenary. The proposed system includes a 2.6-mile alignment, purchase of vehicles, and construction of a maintenance facility. Ridership projections estimate 1,000 to 1,200 average weekday boardings with an additional 1,000 to 1,800 riders on special event days. A future extension to the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library site is being examined, as well as an additional half-mile loop in North Little Rock. Revenue service is planned to begin in Spring 2004.

The project is estimated to cost \$15.1 million in escalated dollars, with a proposed Section 5309 New Starts share of \$8.6 million. Because the proposed New Starts share is less than \$25 million, the project is exempt from the New Starts criteria, and is thus not subject to FTA's evaluation and rating (49 USC 5309(e)(8)(A)).

<b>Summary Description</b>	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Vintage Streetcar System 2.6 Miles, 9 Stops
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$15.1 Million
<b>Section 5309 New Starts Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$8.6 Million (57%)
<b>Annual Operating Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$0.7 Million
<b>Ridership Forecast:</b>	1,000 Average Weekday Boardings

### Status

A feasibility study was completed in 1997. No formal Major Investment Study (MIS) was completed due to the limited scale of the proposed investment, the use of existing rail and street rights-of-way, and the estimated low cost. FTA approval to enter the Preliminary Engineering phase of project development was granted in May 1998. FTA approved project entrance into Final Design in September 1999.

TEA-21 Section 3030(a)(36) authorizes the "Little Rock -- River Rail" project for Final Design and Construction. Through FY 2002, Congress has appropriated \$7.93 million in Section 5309 New Starts funds to this project.

### Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Proposed Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funding (million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
Section 5309 New Starts	\$ 8.6	57.0 %
Flexible Funds (STP)	\$ 3.9	25.8 %
<b>Local:</b>		
Local Municipalities (Pulaski County, Little Rock and North Little Rock)	\$ 2.6	17.2 %
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$15.1</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

**NOTE:** Funding proposal reflects assumptions made by project sponsors, and are not DOT or FTA assumptions. Total may not add due to rounding.

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