Expansion Plans Rolling

ALONG

Greenlink to add two more downtown trolleys by next summer, director says

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The Greenlink bus service plans to expand free trolley service in downtown Greenville this coming summer, its chief executive said.

Mark Rickards, who is also Greenville's transportation director, said Greenlink hopes to launch two more trolleys, for a total of four, and add stops at County Square, the Greenville Zoo and the Bi-Lo Center.

Rickards said he hopes to expand the service from weekends only to seven days a week, with especially late service on Fridays and Saturdays. He also envisions shuttling workers between County Square and Main Street at lunchtime.

"It depends on how much money we have," said Rickards, who developed a three-trolley system in Williamsburg, Va., in a previous job.

The two trolleys that run downtown now are owned by The Drive baseball team and operated and maintained by the city of Greenville.

They provide free service on weekends between Fluor Field and the North Main area, with a stop at Heritage Green. They are also used to carry passengers between County Square and Fluor Field during Drive games.

Rickards said Greenlink won't have funding to expand trolley service until the beginning of its next fiscal year in July at the earliest.

The two new trolleys would cost between $200,000 and $250,000 each, he said, with the federal government covering 80 percent of the cost.

A combination of funds from the federal and state governments and the Greenville Transit Authority would pay for the drivers, Rickards said.

"We would hope to get private advertising and sponsorships as well," he said.

There also is talk of expanding trolley service into downtown-area neighborhoods, such as Alta Vista, which includes McDaniel Avenue and Augusta Street.



Greenville's downtown trolley makes it's way along Main Street, providing free transportation from the West End to the Bi-Lo Center. Plans to expand the service from weekends only to seven days a week are being considered. KEN OSBURN/STAFF

TROLLEY

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ity of expanding service into Alta Vista and other downtown-area neighborhoods, such as Haynie-Sirrine, Cleveland Forest, North Main and Heritage.

The downtown trolley already runs through parts of the Heritage and North Main neighborhoods on weekends.

Brasington said he will ask residents in another survey how and when they would use the trolley and how much they would pay to ride it, if anything.

"There would be a lot of benefit for a lot of people in the city of Greenville for expanding into the surrounding neighborhoods and creating that kind of interconnectivity," he said.

Wil Brasington, president of the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association, said trolley service was the most frequently cited neighborhood enhancement in an email survey of residents.

"Why the trolley? There's a certain fun factor that's associated with it," said Brasington, alumni director for Clemson University.

Rickards recently met with members of the neighborhood association and reviewed plans to expand trolley service.

Brasington said he is working with Rickards to explore the possibil-

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Daily