



**Photo credit:** *André Natta*

Wouldn't it be great if we had some sort of rapid transit connecting the BJCC/downtown with UAB/Five Points South? It's actually in the works, and you have a chance to be part of the planning process this coming week.

According to [this article by Eddie Lard](#) on al.com, the [In-Town Transit Partnership Project](#) has been planning this since 2005. Buses have been brought in for demonstration purposes, including the one pictured above that [visited the city last November](#).

Currently the idea is to have free buses (larger ones than usual) running up and down a dedicated lane on 18th Street, with 10 bus stations along the way at spots including the [Railroad Reservation Park](#) and [Central Station](#). The concept here is that transit attracts people, which means foot traffic, which means development—stores, restaurants, condos, offices, etc.

The Birmingham project is based on successful models in cities like Denver and Calgary. Personally, I like this idea as an improvement on the DART trolleys; a dedicated lane would allow the new buses to actually run on a schedule, like a subway or light rail train would and unlike the current traffic-trapped DARTs. Also, the selection of 18th Street is a wise one, since it has plenty of destinations along the route (theater district, McWane Science Center, Civil Rights District, Railroad Park) and hits closer to the heart of UAB while avoiding the traffic of 20th Street.

The ITP is hosting planning workshops that will give residents of neighborhoods around the city center the opportunity to voice their opinions on transit beginning Monday and going through Thursday of this week. For details, [click here](#) and scroll down to *Project News*.