

Fort Worth Business Press

Speaker: Transportation choices key to area competitiveness

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Former Charlotte, N.C., Mayor Pat McCrory spoke at Downtown Fort Worth Inc.'s annual luncheon Dec. 10, and told Fort Worth business and government leaders that a key to being a competitive city is having a successful public transit system.

“The more transportation choices you have, the more competitive you’ll be,” McCrory said.

McCrory served a total of seven terms as mayor of Charlotte – his last day was earlier in December - and served on the city council prior to being elected mayor. In running for mayor, McCrory said he ran on a platform of public safety, but later picked up transportation as a key issue when he saw similarly-sized cities gain a competitive edge with public transit.

Charlotte’s public transit makeover officially began after a few of the city’s residents found an original 1930s streetcar in the woods outside of the city. Over time, the streetcar was restored and public interest in a new transit system grew.

Years later, after expanding the city’s bus lines and creating streetcar and light rail systems, McCrory said economic development picked up, property rates grew, and the city’s transit system is seeing full busses and rail lines daily.

McCrory said Fort Worth, while at an advantage economically over other cities in the United States, has to update its transportation system to stay competitive business-wise.

He added that corporations sometimes move their headquarters from cities with lacking transit systems and high congestion, such as Fort Worth, to cities with reliable systems; a possible hint not lost on the lunch’s business crowd at rumors which surfaced in November that Radio Shack may be considering a move to Charlotte.

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