
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 31, 2002
TO: City Council Members
FROM: Russell Weeks
RE: Petitions Related to Locating an Intermodal Freight Loading Facility in an Area Zoned M-1
CC: Cindy Gust-Jenson, Rocky Fluhart, Margaret Hunt, Stephen Goldsmith, Gary Mumford, Ray McCandless, Janice Jardine

This memorandum is intended to address material contained in the Administration transmittal regarding petitions by the Utah Transit Authority and Union Pacific Railroad to:

- Amend the City Zoning Ordinance to allow the construction of an intermodal freight loading facility in an M-1 (light manufacturing zone).
- Rezone a 22-acre piece of property at about 800 South and 5600 West from General Commercial zoning to Light Manufacturing.
- Amend the Salt Lake City Transportation Master Plan to remove 4800 West Street between California Avenue (1300 South) and 700 South Street as an arterial street, designate 4400 West Street between the same two streets as an arterial street, and close and declare as surplus about 1200 feet of the existing 4800 West Street so the northern portion of the street can be included as part of the freight loading facility.

The Administration is scheduled to brief the City Council on the petitions June 4, and the City Council is scheduled to adopt a motion setting a July 2 date for a public hearing on the petitions.

The purpose of the petitions is to advance the railroad's interest in building an intermodal freight loading facility between roughly 700 South, 4600 West, 1000 South and 5600 West streets. The Utah Transit Authority submitted the petitions because locating the proposed facility there would allow UTA to complete a deal with the railroad to buy part of the railroad's right of way to build a commuter rail line between Brigham City and Payson.

The process has been expedited for two reasons:

1. There is an August 30 deadline to close an agreement between UTA and the railroad.
2. UTA would like to issue \$185 million in bonds to pay for the right of way before the August 30 deadline, according to Planning Commission meeting minutes for May 16.

ITEM A4

The Planning Commission has approved a related petition approving building the proposed facility as a conditional use. The Commission adopted a motion to approve the facility on May 16.

Perhaps most pertinent to the City Council's consideration of the issues is the ordinance addressing the third petition involving amending the Transportation Master Plan and closing and abandoning a portion of 4800 West Street.

Section No. 2 on pages 2 and 3 of the proposed ordinance contain eight conditions that must be met if the portion of 4800 West Street is to be closed and abandoned. The conditions are:

The applicants (Union Pacific Railroad and the Utah Transit Authority) must agree to meet all City departmental requirements and to address the concerns of the City's Public Utility Department.

- Union Pacific Railroad must agree to allow a future crossing of the spur line for the future road connecting 4400 West to 4800 West.
- The applicants must agree to dedicate and construct a cul-de-sac, consistent with all applicable City standards, for the new terminus of 4800 West Street.
- The applicants must agree to pay the future construction costs of one half of the road from 4800 West to 5500 West when the road is needed due to future development.
- The applicants must agree to construct and dedicate the proposed 1000 South Street between 5500 West and 5600 West to the City and to realign the main access driveway from their project to tie into the new street.
- Any proposed improvements to 5600 West must be reviewed and approved by the Utah Department of Transportation.
- Union Pacific Railroad must agree to jointly investigate with the City methods to improve the 700 South rail crossing at about 4900 West, including consideration of widening the roadway to the full future width (84 feet), correcting the vertical curve designed to improve sight distances, and upgrading the railroad crossing gates and barriers.
- The applicants must make payment to the City for the fair market value of the closed and abandoned portion of the street, or its equivalent, in accordance with Salt Lake City Code Chapter 2.58.

The conditions appear to address concerns raised by City departments in consideration of the petitions. In particular, the Public Utilities Department and the Airport Department raised several concerns. According to the Planning Commission staff report, the Public Utilities Department noted that 4800 West Street has been planned as the location for a 16-inch water system loop to connect the 700 South water transmission line to the 1300 South water transmission line and grids to the 2100 South water transmission line. "The railroad and Public Utilities Department will need to find a way to make this grid while considering the cutting of 4800 West," the report said.

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The Public Utilities Department also had planned to make 4800 West the main right of way in the area for laying sewer lines. The department has “pointed major utilities” to the 4800 West corridor and has built a sewer trunk line to “take the sewer load from a large portion of the City’s west side,” according to the report. The report noted that preliminary examination of the line indicated that relocating the sewer line may not be feasible. “If this is the case, the railroad will have to make provisions and concession to allow 24-hour access to the pipe,” the report said.

Public Utilities also voiced concern about two other items. One is that drainage on the proposed site will have to be improved markedly, including construction of “a very large retention pond.” Public Utilities and the Airport noted that the retention could attract birds, increasing the potential for birds and airplanes to collide. In addition, Public Utilities voiced concern that 97 acres of the 238-acre site would be a hard surface, possibly asphalt. If asphalt is used, it probably would create a “heat island” – something “that cities are trying to avoid,” according to the Commission staff report.

Council Members may wish to ask the Administration about the concerns of Public Utilities and the Airport departments at the briefing.

It also should be noted that the West Salt Lake and Poplar Grove community councils have said they would support construction of the proposed facility only if Union Pacific Railroad ends the use of its 900 South railroad line. UTA officials have said there is no connection between the proposed facility and the 900 South railroad line.

Finally, City Council staff received a telephone call May 31 from the owner of four properties that lie between 700 South Street and the northern edge of the proposed facility. The owner voiced concern about the apparent speed of City consideration of the petitions and about the potential for his property to lose value if the proposed facility is built.