
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: October 4, 2005
TO: City Council Members
FROM: Russell Weeks
RE: Briefing: Light Rail Update
CC: Cindy Gust-Jenson, Rocky Fluhart, Sam Guevara, DJ Baxter, Tim Harpst, Gary Mumford, Valda Tarbet, Mary Guy-Sell, Jennifer Bruno

The contents of this memorandum first appeared as an e-mail to City Council Members on September 22. The material may be used as background for a scheduled briefing by the Administration on Thursday.

Staff has followed-up with DJ Baxter, Mary Guy-Sell and Valda Tarbet on the question that was asked regarding the status of design for TRAX stations between the Delta Center Trax station and the Intermodal Hub. Below is a brief summary. Council staff would like your feedback on whether it is or was the City Council's intent that design work for the proposed station(s) between the Delta Center station and the Intermodal Hub not be started until a City Council decision is made on the number of stations in that area.

1. The Administration is negotiating with UTA on funding for the TRAX connection (to the Intermodal Hub).
2. The Administration is currently processing a contract amendment for the design work. They intend for it to be executed in the next two weeks. When it is executed, the design work for the TRAX connection will commence.
3. The Administration intends for the design work to include a two-station proposal, but with modifications to be made later if the Council elects to have only one station. The two-station proposal would locate one station on 200 South Street west of the street's intersection with 500 West Street, and on 400 West Street between 100 South and 200 South streets.
4. The Administration indicates that it feels it is important to move ahead on design including the design for the stations, so work can progress once funding issues are worked out with UTA. According to the Administration, because the proposed 200 South Street station west of 500 West Street would be present whether one or two stations ultimately are built, the only design change necessitated by a one-station decision by the City Council would be to remove the 400 West Street station from the design. The Administration contends that removing the design of the 400 West Street station – if necessary – would be less costly than either delaying the design process until after a City Council decision or having to design a second station on 400 West Street at a later date.

5. According to the Administration, the reason it has not yet come to the council for a decision regarding the number of stations is that UTA has changed its thinking several times in recent months about how the line would be funded. Council members have recommended that the Administration be fully prepared to discuss the proposed arrangements for funding the extension at the time the number of stations is discussed. Until the Administration receives a commitment from UTA on a funding arrangement the Administration finds acceptable, it does not plan to advance the number of stations issue with either the Planning Commission or City Council. Until now, the design process has been delayed by the uncertainty about how to fund the extension. The delay has cost the project about \$10,000 per month. The Administration contends that the project is at a point where design must start immediately to retain chances of opening the extension by the time commuter rail begins operations. The stated operational date for commuter rail is 2008. The Administration contends that further delays in design will jeopardize the construction schedule. The Administration believes that the next phase of design should proceed – with the understanding among all parties that a decision about the number of stations may necessitate the removal of the 400 West station from the design. The Administration contends that would move the entire process forward but keep all options open.
6. It is anticipated that the design cost associated with including the stations is less than \$100,000 of a total \$1.82 million in final design costs for the TRAX connection. The cost of designing one station now and adding a second station back in later would more than double the \$100,000 expense, according to Administration estimates.
7. There currently is \$8 million appropriated by the City Council in the Intermodal Hub budget. The total design fee for the TRAX connection is \$2.453 million, including the cost of preliminary design which already is done, according to the Administration. The RDA Board has appropriated over time \$2.4 million for design and construction of the TRAX connection. Of the \$2.4 million in the RDA appropriations, \$700,000 was appropriated for design. Of that sum, \$300,381 already has been spent for preliminary design. The Administration says it plans to use different sources of funding in sequence instead of pooling all fund sources because that method makes managing contracts easier. As a result, in the early stages of final design the Administration plans to use federal funds the City Council appropriated to the Intermodal Hub fund. Because RDA staff has expressed reservations about using RDA funds before a decision on the number of stations has been made the Administration says it will not plan to use RDA funds until the City Council has made a decision about the number of stations for the TRAX connection.
8. The Administration also contends that the City Council and RDA Board – through its budget approval and RDA appropriations – authorized the Administration to execute a contract for the entire design process. According to the Administration, the Administration itself decided to split the contract into preliminary design and final design. The Administration contends that its decision is the only reason that a delay is possible at this point.