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Cities dig deep for TRAX line

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Some hefty contributions by several Salt Lake County cities may push the planned Mid-Jordan TRAX line a year or two ahead of schedule.

Last Wednesday the Utah Transit Authority Board of Trustees approved an interlocal agreement, which will be delivered to four cities, plus Kennecott Land Corp., for final approval.

In the agreement, Murray, Midvale, West Jordan and South Jordan, plus Kennecott Land Corp. would agree to give UTA \$1.5 million over the next two years to cover roughly half of the \$3.2 million environmental impact study needed to get federal funding for the new TRAX line.

"We think this is a huge step," said West Jordan mayor Brian Holladay. City leaders have said they are motivated to bring TRAX to their area out of a looming traffic crisis on their streets. Officials hope TRAX availability could relieve commuter congestion.

Kennecott Land is motivated to bring TRAX sooner to coincide with their upcoming Daybreak development, which planners say will bring in more than 13,000 new homes over the next 15 years.

UTA spokesman Justin Jones said his organization knew the communities were motivated, but funding shortfalls were the reality.

"We reached a point where we needed some additional funding from some of the communities to pursue the environmental work for the Mid-Jordan line," Jones said.

UTA is currently seeking heavy federal funding to build a commuter rail line from Salt Lake City to just north of Ogden.

Jones said without the community contribution, UTA would have to seek additional federal funding, which could set the Mid-Jordan project back at least one year, if not two.

UTA also plans to build a TRAX line to West Valley City. Jones said UTA is currently discussing the environmental impact study costs with West Valley officials.

Holladay said his city had already settled concerns with UTA regarding zoning rights and other details and that he is satisfied with the interlocal agreement.

Jones said the interlocal agreements are expected to be brought to each city council for approval next Tuesday evening.

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