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## Developer kicks in for light-rail study

By Joe Baird  
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WEST JORDAN -- TRAX trains could be pulling into the station here and elsewhere on the west side of the Salt Lake Valley sooner rather than later.

A public-private partnership that includes the cities of Midvale, West Jordan, South Jordan and Murray, Kennecott Land and the Utah Transit Authority has ponied up more than \$3 million to complete an environmental study and preliminary engineering for the proposed Mid-Jordan light-rail line.

The agreement, announced at a Wednesday news conference, means the 10-mile TRAX extension linking the southwest end of the Salt Lake Valley with the main north-south TRAX line could be up and running as soon as 2009, according to UTA General Manager John English.

"We know how to do this now," said English, referring to the north-south and University TRAX lines. "And most of this [light-rail spur] is in an existing rail corridor. When we have the track, we can do it pretty quickly."

The total price tag for the Mid-Jordan line is about \$300 million, according to UTA estimates. The project already is part of the long-range transportation plan put forth by the Wasatch Front Regional Council, which has proposed funding the Mid-Jordan line and other transit projects via a half-cent sales tax increase, along with federal funding.

"The only thing missing from this project was money," said South Jordan Mayor Kent Money. "Based upon current funding, Mid-Jordan wouldn't be ready until 2015. We can't wait that long. With all of the growth and the need for transportation alternatives, this west-side line is vital for our communities."

Based upon current timelines, the Mid-Jordan line would be third on the current list of UTA rail projects, behind the Ogden-Salt Lake City commuter rail line and the TRAX spur from Delta Center to the new intermodal hub on the west edge of downtown Salt Lake City. Both of those projects are scheduled for completion by the end of 2007.

UTA says the Mid-Jordan cash infusion will have no impact on the proposed West Valley TRAX spur, which also is in the first phase of the Wasatch Front Regional Council's long-range plan.

That said, "it is nice to have the support of the [Mid-Jordan] communities," said Mike Allegra, UTA's rail operations director. "This is more about the relationships than the money."

Community support, he noted, will be vital in securing the federal funding needed to finish the Mid-Jordan line. Midvale, South Jordan and West Jordan, and to a lesser extent Murray -- already home to three TRAX stations -- all made financial commitments to move the process along.

The unique twist in Wednesday's events was the financial participation of Kennecott Land, which is developing the huge Daybreak residential development on South Jordan's western edge. Under the current plan, Daybreak would get a pair of TRAX stops.

"We're doing Daybreak, but in the long-term we've got bigger plans for the west bench," said Kennecott Land President Peter McMahon. "So transportation will be a critical element. We could have sat back and waited, but we wanted to be proactive and get involved."

The four cities and Kennecott Land will contribute about half of the needed \$3.2 million; UTA has agreed to provide the other half.

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