

## **TRAX planners looking toward downtown loops**

**Connections: Lines would make the area navigable**

By Heather May  
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Even before voters decide whether they want to build four more light-rail spurs from the suburbs to Salt Lake City, transit planners are thinking about what to build next: inner-city lines to help people get around downtown.

Salt Lake City and Utah Transit Authority officials are discussing building two miles of new tracks that would form a loop with existing TRAX routes.

One option connects the University of Utah line to 600 West and extends TRAX from the Delta Center to 700 South. A second option links Main Street to The Gateway at 400 West with a line along 200 South - and adds another line along 200 West to join downtown with 700 South.

The segments would not be built until after 2015 - when new TRAX lines to Draper, West Valley City, West Jordan-South Jordan and Salt Lake City International Airport could be finished.

Those four lines would be built if Salt Lake County voters approve an \$895 million bond in November. Polls show overwhelming support.

Planners also are talking about creating a downtown bus hub. The options include placing it at 200 South and State Street - since so many buses already pass through that area - or at the transit hub at 600 West and 300 South. "It would be great to have the whole transit system connected so it is understandable," said UTA consultant Alice Steiner.

The proposed new TRAX lines and bus hub are part of a year-long study aimed at developing a 25-year downtown-transportation master plan. Besides addressing light rail and bus service, the plan will outline recommendations for automobiles, parking, biking and walking.

The study - it won't be complete until spring 2007 - primarily covers North Temple to 900 South and from 700 East to Interstate 15.

### **Business**

leaders were briefed on the TRAX and bus options Wednesday morning.

One idea they didn't like: adding TRAX along 300 South. Audience members said the road already is too congested with numerous parking garages dumping cars onto the street and with the street's mid-block parking stalls.

And the city may kill the concept anyway because it is moving forward with a \$1 million plan to improve the 300 South parking stalls. Steiner suggested the city hold off on construction until the transportation plan is complete.

Planners have downplayed the idea of consolidating bus services at the 600 West transit hub because it is too far west from the downtown core. But some business leaders said the hub makes the most sense. It already will combine commuter rail, TRAX, Greyhound bus and Amtrak train service.

Another problem some noticed: The bus and TRAX proposals overlook connections to the city's west side.