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Great Park transit routes laid out

By SONYA SMITH
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IRVINE – City planners and consultants envision visitors traveling around the Great Park by trolleys, buses or monorail, and have laid out plans for four options for the City Council to consider for a mass transit system.

In a study session Tuesday, the Council discussed the options for Great Park transit to run among the Great Park, Lennar Corp. development, the Irvine Spectrum Center and the Irvine train station. The council will not make a decision on the transit system until June when staff will present one preferred system.

Each transit system varies in route, type of transit and price. For example, a monorail or bus on an elevated platform would cost \$78 million per mile, while trolleys running only on the ground would cost \$29 million per mile.

One option previously considered – Personal Rapid Transit – will no longer be studied as an option. In Personal Rapid Transit small, driverless cars are charged by an electrical rail and seat two to four people per car.

Staff said the technology is too new and is not viewed as a viable option by the Federal Transportation Administration or the California Public Utilities Commission.

The Great Park transit system is projected to open in 2012. The first phase of the park is to open in 2009. There are plans for a shuttle system for the park for the interim.

To pay for the transit system, city leaders plan to allocate the unused state funding once allotted to the CenterLine transit project, which voters rejected in 2003. The amount equals about \$125 million

But, to use that money the city needs approval from the California Transportation Commission. It also needs to find about \$120 million in matching funds.

A one-year study of the transit system will cost about \$5.6 million, with \$1 million from the Great Park Corp. and the rest coming from the Irvine Redevelopment Agency. The money pays for studies of the transit options, recommendations for a system and engineering and environmental reviews.

Next steps

May 2007 A second public meeting on the project.

June 2007 City staff and consultants present a recommended transit system, route and funding plan to the Irvine City Council.

2007-08 Project's engineering and environmental impacts will be studied.

July 2010-12 Project to be built and tested.

Summer 2012 Estimated opening.

Source: City of Irvine

Want more?

For more on the Great Park and old El Toro Marine Corps air base – including an interactive Great Park plan, videos, designer profiles, breaking news and archives – go to www.ocregister.com/greatpark.

Map

