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Fort Collins Gets Approval For Rapid Transit Buses



Reporting
Mike Hooker

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (CBS4) — Plans for a 5 mile rapid transit bus system in Fort Collins have cleared a major speed bump. The city's Mason Corridor project was officially recommended for federal funding.

The bus system, which officials described as "rubber-tired light rail," would run through part of Colorado State University's campus, running down Mason Street from Cherry in Old Town to Harmony Road.

"The idea is that it's high-frequency transit service; it's easy to get on and easy to get off ... very user friendly," Fort Collins transportation planner Kathleen Bracke said.

Bracke said they envision buses in their own dedicated lanes with priority at intersections. The busses would stop at stations every 10 minutes.

"The stations are very comparable to a light rail station," Bracke said. "Really the only difference is that it runs on tires instead of on a rail. The beauty of that is that it's a lot more flexible to operate and a lot more cost effective."

The Mason Express, or "max," corridor would also have bike and pedestrian trails all running along the 5 mile route.

CSU student Andelyn Harrison praised the Max plan.

"Definitely being able to know that I can go from one side of town to another pretty much any time of the day I want to is convenient," Harrison told CBS4.

In Denver the 16th Street Mall Ride shuttles are an example of the kind of convenience and urban development boost Fort Collins aims for.

"When you think about what the 16th Street Mall looked maybe 10 or 15 years ago and how much the shuttle has helped that entire corridor change and grow and enhance over time ... really, that's how we see the Mason Corridor serving Fort Collins."

The federal portion of the \$74 million project still has to survive Congressional budget hearings. Presuming that happens, the city hopes to start construction in the second half of 2009 and have the new rapid busses running sometime in 2010.

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City of Fort Collins

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