MEMORANDUM
February 5, 2009

TO: Ada County Highway District Commissioners
Mayor Bieter and City Council

FROM: Kelli Fairless, Executive Director
Valley Regional Transit

Jade Riley, Assistant to the Mayor
City of Boise

Phil Kushlan, Executive Director
Capital City Development Corporation

SUBJECT: Downtown Boise Multimodal Center

Requested Action
Consider 10th Street as an alternative location within the right-of-way for the multimodal center. Support forwarding the alternative to key downtown stakeholders and the public for comment. Direct staff to proceed with further due diligence items outlined below.

Background
Attached is a detailed status report on the downtown Boise multimodal center. The multimodal center location and environmental analysis is part of the Treasure Valley High Capacity Study. The multimodal center is being funded through a Section 5309 earmark authorized and appropriated in the transportation authorization called SAFETEA-LU.

As identified in the attached briefing, the project team began to consider alternative locations within downtown rights-of-way in early November. The identifications of new alternatives are being considered in the environmental process of the project to make sure that the best alternative have been considered and forwarded to FTA.

The first alternative considered was the existing Main Street transit center. A transit operations analysis indicated this site would be unfeasible due to Main Street being one-way and the effect it would have on the traffic flow on 9th Street. The team identified 10th Street as a candidate location between Main and Bannock for further consideration.

The project team held meetings with ACHD staff in December, January and February, and completed preliminary analysis on traffic, transit operations, and rough design to determine if the location of a transit facility in the right-of-way could be feasible.

Staff Recommendation

Attached are the results of the analysis completed to date. The project team and the staff team reviewed the information enclosed over the past couple weeks. It appears that design could mitigate any business concerns or traffic and transit operations problems that may arise.

Specifically, staff has identified the following design elements to be further examined during the due diligence phase:

- Ensure design of facility supports adjacent business growth
- Ensure design allows for proper sidewalk activities
  - Safe flow of pedestrians
  - Commercial activities by adjacent businesses
  - Furniture zone (e.g., benches, planters, trash cans, etc)
- Retain vehicular traffic flow through site but in a compatible manner
- Ensure site is welcoming to bicycle traffic (e.g., existing bike corridor)
- On-street parking after transit operations cease in evenings and on weekends as well as loading/unloading zones during day.

Staff recommends the concept be forwarded to the public for comment and input. The result of the public input will be forwarded to the respective policy boards and the Downtown Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC) to consider whether we should replace Site H with the 10th Street location as the preferred alternative.

A detailed project schedule is attached to this packet. A meeting is scheduled for property and business owners in downtown on February 18, and a general open house is scheduled for March 4.

Packet Contents

Briefing Paper
Traffic Analysis and Conclusions
Rough Design Elements
Schedule

VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT

Status Report on Downtown Boise Multimodal Center
February 3, 2009

Background

The Treasure Valley High Capacity Transit Study (TVHCTS) has been underway since late 2007. The project includes three elements: 1) Location and environmental analysis on the downtown Boise multimodal center; 2) Alignment analysis for the Streetcar project; and 3) Modeling updates and identification of alternatives for future study in the I-84/rail corridor.

The multimodal center is being funded by a federal earmark of $9.5 million dollars secured in the transportation authorization called SAFETEA-LU. The focus of the multimodal center so far has been to identify a preferred location and complete an environmental document that would lead to a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The federal government requires the environmental documentation to be approved prior to obligating any additional funds for land acquisition, engineering or construction. In addition, funds must be spent within three years of the year appropriated. A waiver was secured to allow VRT to carry forward the 2006 funds last year. The 2006 and 2007 funds are due to expire at the end of the current fiscal year (September 30, 2009) if the funds cannot be obligated. Another waiver to extend the funds would require an act of Congress. These funds are only authorized for the downtown multimodal center.

The public and key stakeholders have been engaged throughout the project in a transparent and open process. Decision-making is coordinated through a joint team of funding partners and the consulting team. Decisions are vetted through a policy advisory committee and a technical advisory committee. Attached are the Purpose and Needs and the Goals and Objectives statements approved by the Downtown Policy Advisory Committee for the project

Preferred Location

Throughout fiscal year 2008 the policy and technical committees considered a variety of locations in the downtown area within or adjacent to a sector of downtown determined to be the most desirable from a transit operations vantage point (see Attachment). There was additional consideration for a location that would serve a future circulator system and high capacity services coming into downtown from the western commuter corridors. Attached is the current proposed alignment for the future streetcar.

A focused effort was made early in the process to identify parcels with willing owners to partner with. Early in the project two sites were eliminated because of unwilling property owners. One of those early sites included an option in the right-of-way. The project team held three well attended public outreach sessions to gather input on the project, including one specific for adjacent property owners. Additionally, the team took

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members of the Downtown Boise Association (DBA) on a site visit of transit centers in Portland, Eugene, and Salem, Oregon.

The technical analysis and public input culminated in a recommendation by the Downtown Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC) to approve Site H as the preferred location. The VRT Management Committee approved the site in August 2008 and the environmental document was submitted to FTA along with letters of support from the key public agencies with jurisdiction in the downtown area.

Additional Analysis

FTA returned initial comments within a few weeks of submittal of the environmental document. They recommended a more detailed evaluation of the site including some preliminary conceptual design developed with the property owner. In the meantime concerns of some downtown business interests pertaining to the compatibility of the facility with proposed adjacent development continued to rise. Another visit to a more urban center in Bellevue did not assuage the concerns being raised.

The analysis continues to support Site H as an operationally sound location and the property owner continues to indicate his support to partner on the project. The site visits and additional work on conceptual design required by FTA has caused the project team to think about additional alternatives for the project that include the use of the right-of-way.

Alternative Location

The environmental document has been completed on Site H and is ready for submittal to FTA. The project team began meeting with ACHD staff in early December to prepare for a policy level discussion with both the ACHD Board of Commissioners and the Boise City Council to explore the feasibility of an in-street option.

The additional analysis included a scan of potential streets that would serve the operations of transit and would provide the least impact on traffic. A review of the exiting transit center and possible enhancements to the facility on Main Street were explored initially. This location was deemed to be operationally unsound because of the one-way access on Main, the distance required to stage all the buses near the area, and the negative affects it would have on traffic flow on 9th Street.

The alternative location identified for study is on 10th Street between Main and Bannock. The analysis includes considering the vision for downtown, a traffic analysis and a high-level design to determine if the facility could fit in the right-of-way. More detailed conceptual design will be developed after an initial meeting with policy-makers from key jurisdictions.

Advantages of Alternative Site

We have identified some potential advantages to the new location that are being evaluated further as the project continues to move forward. We learned from the site visits to other multimodal transit facilities that an option in the right-of-way has the potential to be more visible to the public. Design allows better integration between

various modes. The new alternative could also provide better value for the public investment because the cost of purchase and construction is likely to be significantly less. In addition, it preserves developable real estate in the private sector, with the opportunity to use existing, underutilized buildings for the mandatory functions envisioned in the multimodal facility.

Key Issues

Several meetings have occurred between the staff of the various key agencies. The key issues of focus have been to develop a process that considers the following issues:

- Communicate a collective vision of downtown development and the integration of the modes of transportation into that vision;
- Determine and analyze the traffic impacts to the downtown street grid and determine any cumulative effects if the 10th Street right-of-way were converted to a non-traffic use;
- Discuss the precedent this might communicate for future discussions about the roadway network in downtown;
- Determine the potential to use design to mitigate concerns that are raised through the process; and
- Identify opportunities to integrate the collective desire for a vibrant active place that meets the needs of pedestrians, transit and road operations.

These issues will be considered and addressed throughout the vetting process with a variety of key stakeholders including policy-makers, business owners, commuters, and transit users.

Project Schedule

The technical analysis for the in-street alternative will be completed in advance of the February 12, 2009 joint meeting with ACHD and Boise City. Some preliminary meetings are occurring with property owners to gauge their response to the location prior to the February 12 meeting. The project team is completing a process and schedule for public outreach that is tentatively scheduled for February and early March. The goal is to have the DPAC consider the recommendation after the public outreach and forward their recommendation to the Ada County Highway District Board and the Boise City Council in advance of a final approval by the VRT Management Committee.

A few members of the project team will be meeting with FTA in late February to brief them on the status of the project. The briefing will include a discussion on the environmental documentation FTA will want to evaluate on a new location. The FTA will seriously consider whether the environmental document demonstrates the long-term feasibility of the project and how the project improves the transit system.

Please feel free to contact me at 846-8547 x 4212 if you have specific questions about the status of the project.

Attachment(s)
Vicinity Map and Proposed Circulator Alignment Map

Purpose and Needs Statement; Multi-Modal Center

Project Purpose

The **purpose** of the Downtown Multi-Modal Center is:

> *To construct a multi-modal center in downtown Boise that consolidates local and regional interconnected transit services and other transportation functions in a single location, and provides user-friendly transitions between public transit services, pedestrians, bicycles and other transportation modes. It will serve as a gateway to the downtown for commuters, tourists and visitors and be a catalyst for implementation of broader downtown land-use and economic development goals.*

Project Need

The **need** for the Downtown Multi-Modal Center results from:

- The community desire to connect the broad range of local and regional transit and transit-related services to downtown Boise in a single location.
- The historic and projected rapid population and employment growth in both the Treasure Valley and the Boise Metropolitan Area have strained the transportation system.
- The increasing levels of traffic congestion and travel delay within downtown Boise resulting in continued deterioration of travel conditions for transportation modes in and to the downtown area.
- The demand for improved, more efficient, effective and easily understood transit services in the downtown Boise area.
- The adopted regional and local transportation and land-use plans that encourage a cost efficient, innovative and effective multi-modal transportation system.

Goals and Objectives; Multi-Modal Center

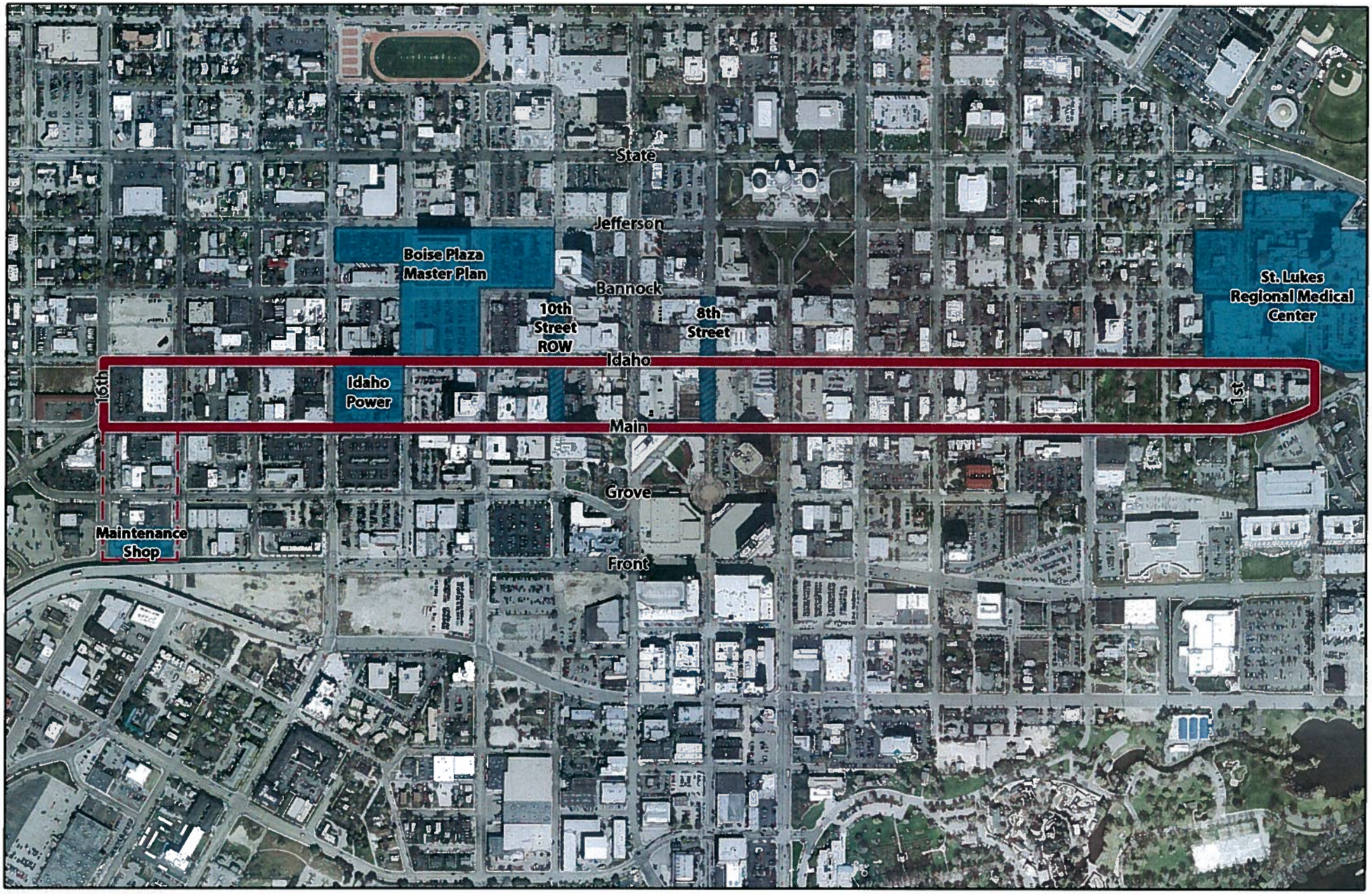
Project Goal

To construct a high quality, cost effective, user friendly and environmentally-sensitive multi-modal center within downtown Boise that will be the catalyst for efficient local and regional transit services as well as other forms of transportation which will also reflect the broader community values and goals of supporting land-use and transportation plans and economic development in downtown Boise.

Project Objectives

- Reflect community values and secure support from stakeholders such as downtown businesses, residents, property owners, commuters, transit riders, elected officials and participating jurisdictions.
- Increase the overall efficiency of the transit system and the overall transportation system.
- Support economic development in the downtown core and contribute to the overall vitality and growth of downtown Boise.
- Accommodate projected rates of growth in travel to and within the city.
- Develop public-private partnership opportunities.
- Implement the local and regional land-use and transportation plans.
- Reduce public confusion about access to and use of the transit system and increase the public understanding and ease of accessing the various transit services.
- Be a safe place for people to wait for transit services.
- Improve access to multi-modal options for the general and transit dependent populations in the region.
- Reduce the demand for parking in the central city.
- Provide environmental benefits such as improved storm water treatment, air quality and sustainability.
- Support the *Art in Public Places* program.

Boise Streetcar Alignment



February 2009

Created by CCDC


BOISE SR. HIGH SCHOOL
FRANKLIN
STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
PEDESTRIAN DISTRICT
ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL
BANNOCK
AREA FOR FUTURE SITING OF DOWNTOWN MULTI MODAL CENTER
H
B
A
C2
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GROVE
THE GROVE
MAIN
IDAHO
CIVIC CENTER
FRONT
BORAH
PROPOSED CONVENTION CENTER
BROAD
CAPITOL
MYRTLE
AVENUE A
AVENUE B
GRAND
MILLER
FULTON
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RIVER
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BOISE ART MUSEUM
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KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING / PLANNING
101 S Capitol Boulevard, Suite 301, Boise, ID 83702 P 208.338.2683 F 208.338.2685

DOWNTOWN MULTIMODAL CENTER - 10TH STREET EVALUATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (KAI) has conducted a preliminary traffic operations and circulation evaluation of a two-block section of 10th Street and the surrounding area associated with a possible on-street alternative for the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center (MMC). This analysis is provided to the Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC) to assist in their efforts with planning and design of the MMC and streetcar.

Existing Conditions

- Traffic volume levels and circulation patterns on the study section of 10th Street were observed and found to vary by time of day as follows:
    - Weekday a.m. peak period - Traffic volumes were lightest during this period. There were a proportionately large number of northbound right-turn vehicles at the Bannock Street/10th Street intersection, with most entering the parking garage on Bannock Street.
    - Weekday midday peak period - Traffic volumes were heaviest during this period. Delivery and drop-off traffic was heaviest during this period. Volumes in and out of the alley between Main Street and Idaho Street were heaviest during this period.
    - Weekday p.m. peak period - Traffic volumes heavier than weekday a.m. peak period, but lighter than weekday midday peak period.
- Currently, the intersections that are expected to be impacted by the closure of 10th Street operate at LOS A and LOS B

Traffic Conditions with the Proposed 10th Street MMC

- The closure of 10th Street will have a minimal impact on intersection traffic operations in the vicinity. Some minor signal timing changes will likely be needed.
- The traffic circulation for southbound traffic on 10th Street is much less impacted by the closure of 10th Street.
- Northbound through traffic from Front Street will be impacted the most. This traffic will have two options, both of which present potential concern for drivers:
    - Turn left on Grove Street to utilize 11th Street to continue north.
    - Turn right on Main Street and go east three blocks to Capitol Boulevard to continue north.

10th Street Access & Circulation Considerations

- The most significant direct impact will be on the local parking and access driveways between Main Street and Bannock Street.
- Physical improvements on the south leg of the Bannock Street intersection and on the north leg of the Main Street intersection should be considered to distinguish the entryway to the MMC and discourage vehicles from entering this section of 10th Street.

Idaho Street to Bannock Street

- The primary issues identified between Idaho Street and Bannock Street are the impacts to delivery traffic that currently uses the mid-block alley and the ease of access to the parking garage on the southeast corner of the Bannock Street/10th Street intersection.
- Consideration should be given to conversion of the alley between Idaho Street and Bannock Street to a one-way eastbound alley.

Main Street to Idaho Street

- Two design alternatives were provided for this section of the proposed MMC
    - Alternative 1: Complete closure of this entire section of 10th Street to all vehicular traffic. Consideration should be given to signing the alley to one-way westbound and closing the bank drive-thru egress and accommodating this traffic by providing capability for u-turns.
    - Alternative 2: Closure of 10th Street to vehicular traffic from a point north of the alley to Idaho Street. This alternative would require alley traffic and bank drive-thru traffic to access 10th Street and proceed one-way southbound to Main Street.

ACHD Comments and Recommendations

- Closure of 10th Street creates a situation where Main Street drivers may have to pass 3 intersections before their first opportunity to turn north. Need to look at alternatives such as turning 11th Street to two-way and swapping the direction of 8th Street from Main to Bannock Street. Subsequent analysis will identify impact of these recommendations
- The MMC may impact the bicycle route on 10th Street and may need to be relocated to a two-way 11th Street. The issue will need to be worked on collaboratively between ACHD and the MMC team.
- Keeping the alleys open will create a challenging situation to maintaining business access while providing for safe operations. The issue will need to be worked on collaboratively between ACHD, property owners and the MMC team.

VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT

Memorandum

TO: Boise Mayor and City Council
Board of Ada County Commissioners

FROM: Kelli Fairless, Executive Director

RE: Sketch Design of 10th Street Multimodal Center Alternative

DATE: February 5, 2009

Attached are two sketch level designs related to the 10th Street alternative for the downtown multimodal center. The sketch designs were created by Paddy Tillett of ZGF Architects, LLP.

The sketch designs were completed to determine whether the transportation functions could fit in the right-of-way. They are not intended to depict the final concept design. There is a technical and project team joint meeting scheduled for Monday, February 9 to advance the design elements to a more conceptual level. A higher-level concept design can be completed before the public outreach effort kicks-off on February 18.

There were two designs considered, one with the transit facilities located on the adjacent sidewalks and one with the transit facilities located in the center of the right-of-way (ROW). The transit and traffic analysis concluded that the center loading option would not be the preferred option. That option is enclosed as Option E for your information.

Option D was determined by the project team as the most feasible because it allows for buses, automobile traffic, pedestrians and bicycles to continue to move through the facility safely. It also allows for enough room on the sidewalk to design for integration of the adjacent businesses, pedestrian and transit functions.

Again, the attached are not intended to reflect architectural elements of the facility. Those will follow in the next week or two.

Attachments (2)
MMC Center Design D-ZGF
MMC Center Design E-ZGF

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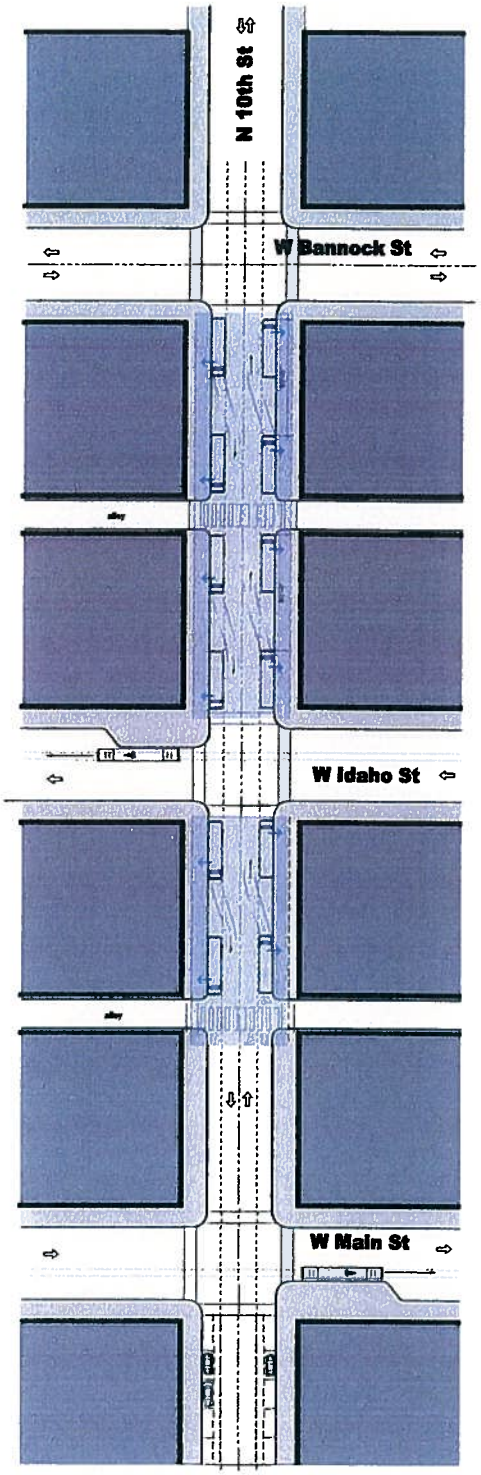

PLAN: 1" = 40'-0"

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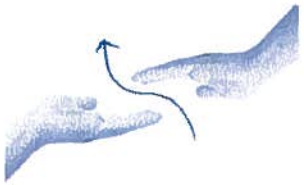
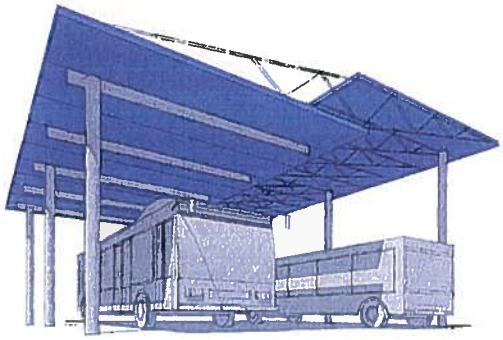
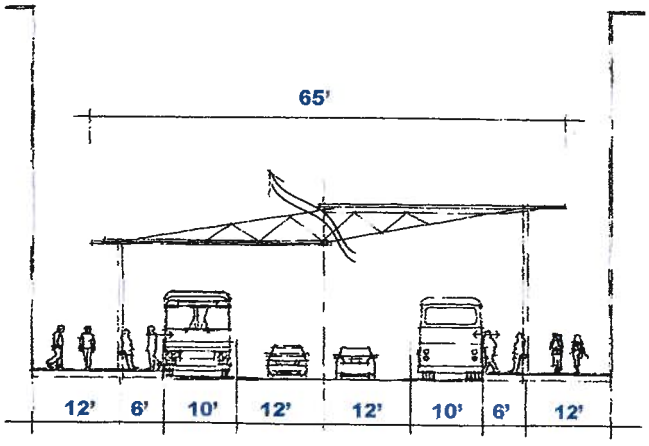
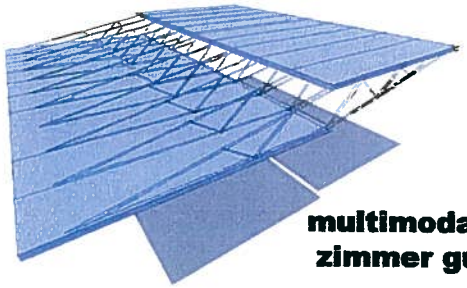
(CONVENTIONAL APPROACH)







SECTION: 1" = 8'-0"



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multimodal center - BOISE
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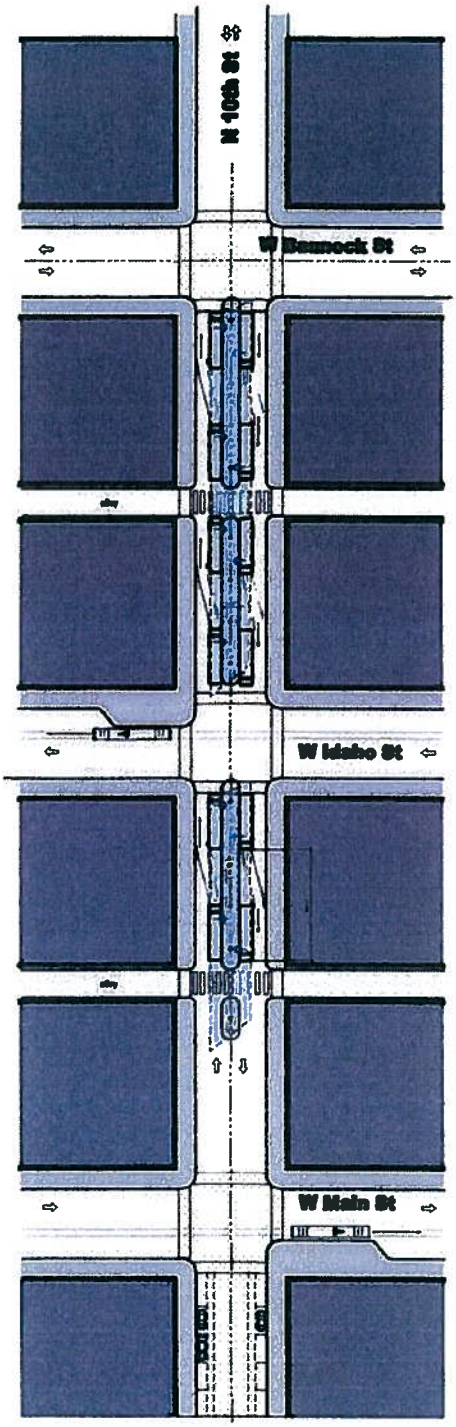
jan 28 - 2009



PLAN: 1" = 40'-0"

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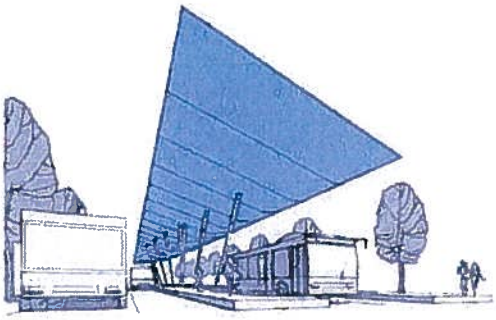

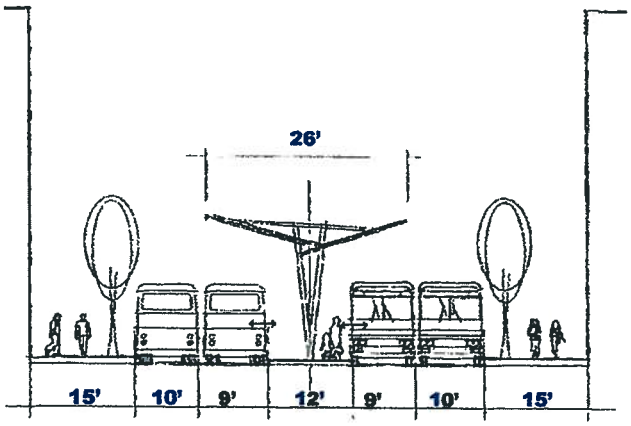

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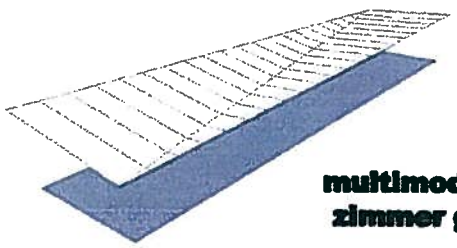

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multimodal center - BOISE
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jan 28 - 2009

Schedule of Activities: 10th Street On-Street Transit Center

Jan 30	Complete the initial project conceptual definition / Area of Effect Prepared for submittal to FTA / draft project fact sheet and open house invitation
Feb 4	Initial traffic assessment completed / transit operations completed
Feb 4	Briefing meeting with ACHD Board of Commissioners
Feb 12	Joint meeting with ACHD and Boise City
Feb 13	Complete one-on-one contact of adjacent businesses
Feb 16	Project plans and illustrations completed
Feb 18	Downtown business community business meeting
Feb 20	Public Open House mailings & notices
Feb 26	FTA meeting – Seattle • Review DCE-EA question • Review a preliminary list of issues with FTA • Discuss APE/Cultural Resources approach
Mar 4	Downtown public Open House
Week of Mar 8	Review and consideration of alternative location • DTAC & DPAC recommendation of preferred MMC alternative • ACHD Board of Commissioners and Boise City Council • VRT Management Committee
Mar 18	Continue next level project NEPA document preparation
Mar 25	Project design refinements and cost estimates completed
Mar 30	SHPO Document submitted to FTA
Apr 30	Initial NEPA document draft progress review
May 22	Final NEPA draft review by VRT/COMPASS
Jun 1	Draft NEPA document submitted to FTA
June 22	FTA comments on Draft NEPA Doc.

July 3	Final NEPA Doc to FTA
July 10	Publish NEPA Doc or FTA signature on EA
August 10	End of 30 Day EA Comment Period
August 13	Draft FONSI to FTA
August 27	FTA signs the FONSI – Completes the NEPA process