

Developers Put Off Study of Long Beach Monorail

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LONG BEACH — Developers have postponed a \$60,000 study on the feasibility of a people mover or monorail linking hotels and office buildings on Ocean Boulevard to the convention center and the Queen Mary until Walt Disney Co. decides the fate of its Queen Mary project.

Six downtown developers agreed to put off their study about a month ago at the request of Disney executives, who are conducting a long-term examination of whether to build a theme park or some other attraction at the Port of Long Beach.

"The enthusiasm for the study is still there," said Paul W. Stern, executive vice president of the Ratkovich Co., which is co-developing a \$1-billion residential and business project on the site of the old Pike amusement park.

McDonnell Douglas Realty Co., which is planning to build a 35-story office building at the west end of Ocean Boulevard, launched the idea for a monorail last December and contacted other major developers. They envisioned a mass-transit system that would connect Ocean Boulevard's glittering new office towers, hotels and convention center with the light-rail line terminus and the Queen Mary.

The system would allow employers to pool parking spaces, whisk office workers to lunch on Pine Avenue, deliver tourists from the light-rail line to the gangway of the Queen Mary and polish Long Beach's image.

Developers chose the Seattle firm of TDA Inc. to do the feasibility study. TDA President William Eager said in a telephone interview that the delay came just as he was preparing to start work. "We had a general approach for them, but it never got under way."

Eager said that because his firm was hired privately by the developers, he would not disclose details of the mass-transit proposal. He said the study would take into account such factors as potential ridership, other public transit and parking.

"Cost is always the biggest problem. You want to keep it really convenient for the user, which means you don't want to charge a fare . . . or just a nominal one," said Eager, whose firm specializes in transit planning.

City Is Cooperating

City Manager James C. Hankla said his staff is "prepared to work with the developers" on downtown mass transit and said he can understand the need to take time for analysis. He said discussions between the city and Disney are proceeding, and "I don't think either of us has found any major stumbling blocks yet."

Stern said the mass-transit study shows that his firm and other developers are concerned about transportation in the downtown Long Beach area. He said he may ask the four other developers funding the study whether they might be interested in continuing without waiting for Disney's participation.

But one of the others, Stanley Cohen, who built the Sheraton Hotel and Shoreline Square complex along Ocean Boulevard, said he would rather wait for Disney to firm up its plans.

The other original developers in the project are IDM Corp., which built the World Trade Center, and Cushman Realty Corp., which plans to build the Landmark Square office tower.

