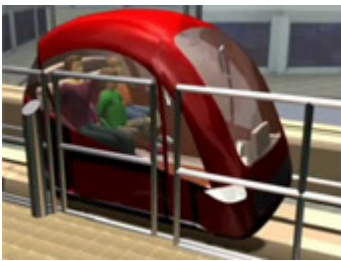




STREETCAR: Streetcar No. 28 rides past Lisbon's cathedral towards Lisbon's, Portugal.

ARMANDO FRANCA, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Video



[The personal rapid transit system](#)

Wednesday, October 4, 2006

Getting around to transit

Irvine planners and consultants let the public in on four alternatives for Great Park transportation.

By SONYA SMITH
The Orange County Register

IRVINE – The Great Park might add a touch of Disneyland.

A monorail similar to the theme park's is one of four transit options considered for the park.

City planners and consultants started talking to residents and nearby business owners Tuesday about a possible 5 1/2 -mile Great Park transportation system that would link to the Irvine Spectrum Center.

Transportation will be studied for one year before a transit system, route and funding plan are suggested to the Irvine City Council. The system could open as early as 2012. Until then, plans

call for a temporary shuttle system – possibly buses or a tram – for the Great Park.

To pay for the transit system, city leaders plan to use the unused state funding once allotted to the CenterLine transit project, which voters rejected in 2003. The amount equals about \$125 million, and the city must find matching money for that without using taxes.

The 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.

Personal Rapid Transit



PERSONAL RAPID TRANSIT: A possible system for the Microsoft campus.
FILE PHOTO, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

What it is: Small cars with two to four people each. Operate without drivers on the ground or an elevated platform – charged by an electrical rail.

Where it is: No operating systems exist. A test track is in Cardiff, England, and a pilot program is to open between London and Heathrow Airport in 2008.

Pros: Offers public transit on demand to users. People could walk up at any access point and get a car without having to wait.

Cons: Not in operation anywhere, which could instantly rule out the possibility for this project. City staff members say a system must be "service-proven," meaning it has been operating for at least two years.

Streetcars



STREETCAR: The ground-level system in Portland, Ore., runs on a loop of track that shares the street with cars.

FILE PHOTO, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

What it is: Cars at ground level or on elevated platforms are charged by overhead electrical lines.

Where it is: Portland, Ore.; Tacoma, Wash.; throughout Europe

Pros: Could be more accessible for people, who could simply walk up to the cars at stops rather than going to designated stations. The project may not need to include right-of-way costs if cars can drive in the same lanes as the streetcars.

Cons: Aesthetics diminished because of overhead electrical lines. Unable to adjust to sudden, peak demands because of reliance on drivers.

Monorail



MONORAIL: The most well-known system is at Disneyland, and there is a similar system in Las Vegas.

FILE PHOTO: YGNACIO NANETTI, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

What it is: Cars without drivers charged electrically as they run on an elevated platform. Options for the cars include rubber tires or steel wheels.

Where it is: The most commonly known system is the monorail at Disneyland. Similar systems operate in Las Vegas, Miami, Detroit, Vancouver, British Columbia, and throughout Japan.

Pros: Could be easily adjusted to accommodate low or high demand because operates without drivers. System could be safer operating without drivers.

Cons: Elevated monorails could obstruct views.

Buses



BUS: The vehicles would operate in a dedicated lane at ground level or on an elevated platform.

FILE PHOTO, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

What it is: Buses would operate at ground level in bus-only lanes or on an elevated platform. The buses could be diesel, hydrogen, gasoline, electric or hybrid.

Where it is: Los Angeles in the Metropolitan Transportation Authority system; Las Vegas; Adelaide, Australia; Trieste, Italy; Caen, France

Pros: Buses could cost less than some of the other systems. Buses would not need any platforms or rails, which could obstruct views.

Cons: One lane would need to be added on the streets on the bus routes. The rights of way required for bus lanes could be expensive. Unable to adjust to sudden, peak demands because of reliance on drivers.

TIMELINE

November 1990 California voters approve a \$1.99 billion bond measure for funding rail systems. Irvine is allocated \$125 million for a transportation guideway.

Early 1990s The Irvine City Council proposes a monorail for the John Wayne Airport business area and in 1998 allocates the bond money to be used for this.

October 1999 The council stops work on the monorail and instead allocates the funds for the CenterLine project – a light-rail line that would have stretched 11.4 miles across Irvine, Costa Mesa and Santa Ana.

June 2003 Irvine residents vote their approval of light rail but reject the CenterLine proposal.

Oct. 3 The first public meeting is held on a Great Park-Spectrum transit line.

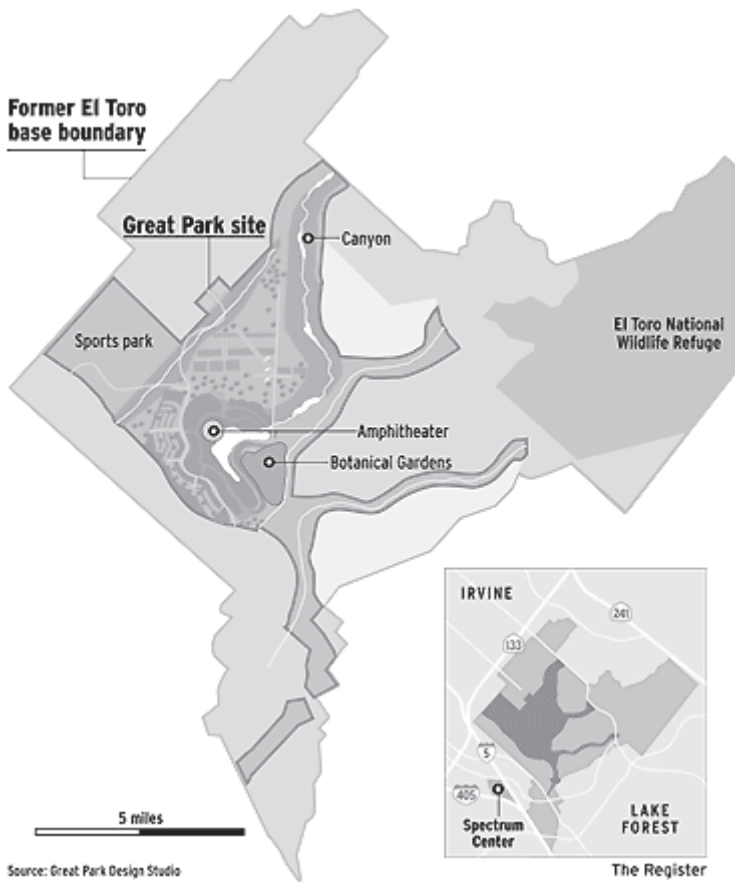
May 2007 The second public meeting will be held, for discussion of the recommended transit system.

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

2007-08 Project's engineering will be studied; environmental impact report will be put together.

July 2010-12 Project to be built and tested.

Summer 2012 Estimated opening day.



TALK ABOUT IT

JOIN THE DISCUSSION