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### **Bush's budget includes funds for Mason Corridor project**

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President **Bush's** record-setting \$3 trillion 2009 **budget** proposal **includes** \$11.8 million in funding **for** Fort Collins' **Mason Corridor** project, the first step of a \$60 million federal commitment to the plan.

If completed, the **Mason Corridor** project will be a 5-mile, north-south byway extending from Cherry Street on the north to south of Harmony Road that would include a bus rapid transit system and bike and pedestrian lanes, as well as a number of transit-oriented development sites.

City planners have called **Mason Corridor** the first step to a new transit system in Fort Collins that would eventually connect to other cities and the Denver metro area.

The project's total estimated price tag is \$74 million, with a lion's share, or 96 percent, coming from federal and state funding grants.

"I think that it is a superb success story **for** Fort Collins," Mayor Doug Hutchinson said.

"This is not transit **for** transit sake, and if the federal money was approved, it's probably because (the) project will enable a much bigger concept in Fort Collins."

The City Council initially approved the use of \$2.5 million in this year's **budget** and gave up some land along the **corridor for** the project. In addition to the \$60 million in federal **funds**, the state would kick in \$8 million.

Republican Sen. Wayne Allard's office called the project "worthwhile," vowing to support the federal funding as it moves through the **budget** process in Washington, D.C.

"Here is this Fort Collins idea that is tied in with a lot of other transportation projects in Northern Colorado serving as a unique opportunity **for** Sen. Allard, a resident of the region, a graduate of Colorado State University and an (advocate) **for** the area in the U.S. Senate to be a part of it all," Allard spokesman Steve Wymer said. "I can even picture the senator and his wife smiling as they ride on a bus through Fort Collins, maybe on his way to work as a professor at the vet school after he is done here."

The **Mason Corridor** project would operate on existing streets from the North Transit Center 1.2 miles to the northern edge of CSU and continue in a 3.8-mile exclusive right-of-way to the proposed South Transit Center, according to Federal Transportation Authority data.

Service would operate at 10-minute peak frequencies.

The \$74.2 million project **includes** construction of the South Transit Center, eight transit stations, eight enhanced bus stops, 250 park-and-ride spaces and five new low-floor vehicles, similar to what is used on the 16th Street Mall transit operation in Denver. It is expected to carry 3,900 daily passengers when it opens in 2010.

As Fort Collins watches the funding go through the federal **budget** process, city officials say they will be in constant contact with Allard and other members of the Colorado delegation.