June, 2009 – City Council approved a City Budget which included $8 million to further advance the streetcar design.
August 24 – the Mayor vetoed City Council's approval of the $4.5 million design services contract with URS Corporation.
September 14 – City Council overturned the Mayor's veto and awards the contract to URS.

Project Schedule

Work on advancing the design will be completed in the fall of 2010.

Project Scope

City staff and URS will advance the previous 10% design to a 30% design level. The scope is intended to validate previous major recommendations, begin preliminary design of key elements that influence costs and refine the overall project cost estimate. Project tasks to be completed as part of the 30% design Rosa Parks Place to Eastland Mall include:

- Surveying and Mapping
- Geotechnical Investigations
- Subsurface Utility Investigation
- Design Criteria
- Utility Design and Relocation
- Track and Civil Work
- Public Involvement
- Streetcar Stop Validation and Design
- Propulsion Technology Assessment
- Alignment Validation
- Plan Production
- Operations Planning
- Update Cost Estimate

Major Cost Variables

Subsurface Utilities

Conflicts with subsurface utilities are of primary interest considering the high cost and time associated with moving them. Once specific track and stop locations are determined, City staff will be able to coordinate with the private and public sectors to establish a protected area to keep future utility and other development from occurring in these areas. The long term result will save the project considerable time and money by not having to relocate future private or public improvements, regardless of when the project goes to construction.

Technology

An overhead power system similar to that on the Blue Line can account for approximately 25% of construction costs. The project will study emerging alternatives for vehicle power, such as battery, hydrogen and hybrid technology. This could lead to construction cost savings by not having to install 10 miles of overhead wire, poles, substations, etc.