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Cost of extending downtown Tulsa's Fifth Street would be divided among Central Library, street's other facilities

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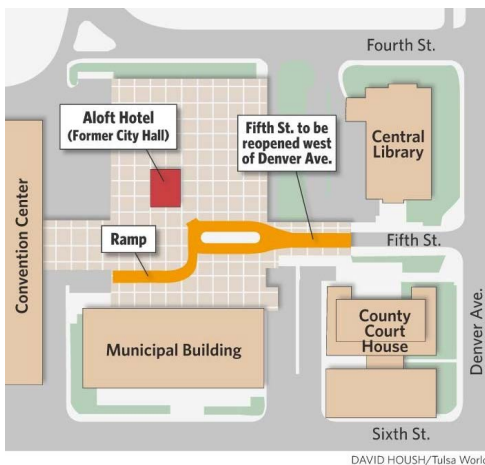
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Posted: Friday, January 30, 2015 12:00 am



By KEVIN CANFIELD World Staff Writer | 0 comments

Stakeholders in the proposed \$5.5 million extension of Fifth Street downtown expressed mixed views Thursday regarding whether they would be able to help finance the work.

The project would extend Fifth Street from Denver Avenue to Elwood Avenue and provide a turnaround in front of the former City Hall building, now an Aloft hotel.

A Tulsa County spokesman said the county does not have the \$126,857 the city identified as the county's possible contribution during a City Council committee meeting Thursday.

"But the Board of County Commissioners would need to discuss and possibly consider any proposal," said Michael Willis.

Tulsa City-County Library officials, meanwhile, said they could provide the \$56,504 the city has identified as the library's possible contribution.

"Whatever we can do to push this forward

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and have a new renovated library and access from Fifth Street, we are willing to help," said Kim Johnson, chief financial officer of the library system.

Under a presentation provided by Paul Zachary, director of Engineering Services, the largest contribution other than the city's would come from TOCH LLC, owners of the Aloft.

They would provide \$524,048, according to the city's figures.

The city has made no formal requests for money, city officials say. Zachary's presentation was simply a possible funding approach.

The city's agreement with TOCH to purchase the old City Hall building includes the following language: "The parties agree to utilize their best efforts in good faith to seek and obtain the reopening of Fifth Street at the plaza level from the west side of Denver Avenue to closed Frisco Avenue with ramping down from Fifth Street to Frisco Avenue utilizing available city of Tulsa street improvement funding."

Representatives of TOCH did not attend Thursday's meeting and were unavailable for comment.

Councilor G.T. Bynum requested Thursday's presentation. He and fellow Councilors G.T. Bynum and Phil Lakin have been working with the mayor's staff to push the first phase of the project forward to accommodate the renovation of the Central Library.

City voters approved \$10 million for the \$50 million library project in the Improve Our Tulsa capital improvements package.

Library officials have said that if the city is not going to extend Fifth Street, they will have to redesign their renovation project.

The renovation is scheduled to be completed in June 2016.

The overall street project has grown in scope and risen in cost since the city signed its deal with TOCH.

In addition to extending Fifth Street and constructing the turnaround, the overall project now includes a one-way ramp from Elwood to Frisco Avenue and improvements to the Civic Center Plaza.

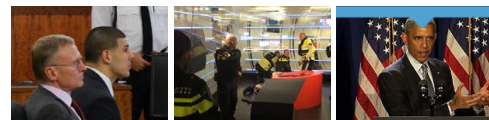
The city's current cost estimate for the entire project is \$9.6 million, but the city has only \$4.7 million in surplus Fix Our Streets funding to spend.

The city would have to come up with \$4.8 million to cover its share of the Denver Avenue to Elwood Avenue phase of project, according to Zachary's figures.

To do the entire project, the city would have to spend \$7 million, with the county adding \$755,757; the library \$685,404; and the Aloft \$1.2 million, according to the presentation provided Thursday.



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Zachary said after the meeting that the estimated cost for each stakeholder was based on what percentage of the project would be done on each of their properties.

City officials did not return a call for comment Thursday. Previously they had said they planned to discuss the proposed cost sharing with stakeholders in the near future.

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