

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, January 16, 1991

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on January 10, 1991, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, January 16, 1991, at 7:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Peter Brandt, Treasurer
Janet Calvert
Tammy Fitch, Secretary
Herbert Herzberg
Thomas Montgomery
Keith Parks, Vice President, presiding
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: (vacancy in subdistrict 5)

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Vice President Keith Parks.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: The December Employee of the Month, Melody Bartley, was present to be introduced to the Board. Melody was hired as the District's payroll accounting clerk on February 15, 1988. She was nominated by 37 bus operators, who stated that, "Melody took extra efforts and time to efficiently and expediently become up to date on the union negotiations regarding payroll, as well as being courteous, friendly, and a definite asset to the District." Mr. Parks presented Melody's certificate of appreciation to her, and explained that she had received her check in December. Melody said that it was a pleasure working at LTD with all the nice people, and she felt honored to have been selected as Employee of the Month.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Sue Girardeau, of Eugene, stated that she represented the League of Women Voters of Lane County, and would like to make comments regarding the selection of the site for the downtown Eugene transfer station. The League had been following the work of the Site Selection Committee since May 1990, and was pleased that the Committee was willing to consider so many sites in the downtown area and mixed use. The League agreed that there was a need for an off-street site, and League members had been involved in an earlier study which focused on possible use of a site at Eighth and Willamette. The League also agreed with the Committee's assessment that there were many problems with the location of the current station.

Ms. Girardeau stated that the League did not have a preference for a particular site at that time, and needed to know more about the economic and land use effects of each location. However, the League did not believe that the block currently occupied by the County Elections Division was an appropriate transfer station, because it was not centered in the downtown area, a destination point for many passengers, especially Lane Community College students. The League was also concerned about the Elections Lot's proximity to both Sixth and Seventh Avenues, which were major arterial streets. She said that although passengers could get off in the downtown area before the bus reached the station, the return trip would require them to wait on a sidewalk in all kinds of weather, or to cross the two arterials to reach the shelter of the station. Those employed downtown would be crossing the arterials during the afternoon rush hour, and riders going to downtown from north of Sixth Avenue would have to cross the arterials or wait for a transfer south to reach the central downtown area. Because of these concerns, she said, the League did not believe that the Elections Lot fit the criterion for a central downtown location or of being safe and convenient for passengers. However, she said, it seemed that the Elections Lot was the only site being considered by the Board at that time. Ms. Girardeau added that the League did not believe a half-block site to be adequate for the transfer station. She thanked the Board for listening to the League's concerns, and said she hoped some of those concerns could be alleviated. She presented the Board with copies of her testimony.

MOTION **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Ms. Fitch moved that the minutes of the November 14, 1990, special meeting and the December 19, 1990, regular meeting be approved as distributed. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

VOTE

DOWNTOWN STATION: Ms. Loobey stated that the meeting that evening would be a work session on the Eugene downtown transit station. A report, the "Eugene Downtown Transit Station Site Selection Study Executive Summary," dated January 10, 1991, was distributed.

Ms. Loobey said that, for the newer Board members, staff would present a history of events that led to that point in the site selection process. She stated that any time the District had made a sizeable investment, it was made with an eye to the future and long-term use. However, there were problems with the current Eugene Transit Station, which was originally meant to be a temporary station. The question of where to place a permanent station had been discussed several times over the years, but was more urgent now because the station was at capacity and did not work very well for the riders.

Stefano Viggiano, Planning Administrator, explained the context into which the transit station fit. LTD uses a radial system with timed meets downtown, which means that most routes radiate out from a central location like the spokes on a wheel, and the buses meet downtown at specific times to enable riders to transfer without a long wait. This system was determined to be the best system for this community now and during the next 20 years. A key element of the downtown station is that it be located where a majority of riders are; it is the most common destination point for riders, and is where transfers occur. However, the design of an on-street station did not fit well with a radial system. There was not capacity for growth,

and some buses had to leave from different sections because there was not room in their own sections.

There had been a 60 percent ridership increase in eight years, but ridership for the future had conservatively been estimated at 3 percent per year. During the last several years, LTD had made capital improvements to prepare the District for the growth which had occurred. More than 100 shelters had been installed at high-use bus stops since 1982, and transfer stations had been constructed in the community, such as the River Road Transit Station, the Parkway Station on the Amazon Parkway, the University Station at the University of Oregon, the LCC Station at Lane Community College, and the Valley River Center and Gateway Shopping Center stations. The downtown Eugene station was not up to par with the rest of the system, but was far more important than all other stations combined, because more riders use the downtown station than all other stations combined.

Eric Gunderson, project architect, presented an analysis of the four finalist sites, with emphasis on the Elections Site, a conceptual design, and a proposed budget. He said that the projections for occupying the station were based on 20-year projections for ridership and bus use. In 20 years, it is projected that about 20,000 riders per day would use the downtown station, that 1,000 people could be in the station at peak times (pulse), and that 23 boarding positions (bus bays) would be needed. It was assumed that transfers would occur every 10 minutes at the station. Currently, 9,000 riders per day and 16 buses use the Eugene Transit Station.

Mr. Gunderson showed the Board a sample layout for a station on a half-block site, found on page 4 of the Executive Summary. The Site Selection Committee had discussed nine diagrams and concluded that a half-block site did not meet the District's needs, especially if larger sites were available. The Committee then narrowed the possible sites to the Firestone and Elections Sites. The Firestone Site would result in the closing of part of 10th Avenue, or rerouting it between Pearl and Oak. There were some objections to closing more streets downtown, and to the possibility of increased traffic at Broadway and Pearl, so the Committee directed staff to concentrate on the Elections Site, which covered about two and a half acres, or a city block. The north half of the property was privately owned by two owners, and included some stores and businesses, with a majority of the land in parking. The southern half of the Election Site was owned by Lane County, and included the Elections building and Lane County parking.

Mr. Gunderson stated that the station required more than one-half block, but did not require a full block. The conceptual design being proposed that evening left part of the block undeveloped. He said the District could either acquire the entire block and sell a parcel, or only buy the portion needed, depending on the result of an investigation of acquisition laws governing LTD purchases.

Ms. Fitch asked about asbestos and underground fuel storage tanks at the Elections Site. Mr. Gunderson explained that studies on those had not begun; the proposals were prepared, but the project was waiting for Board direction regarding the Elections Site. There had at one time been a gas station on one corner of the Elections Site, and the disposition of the fuel tanks was uncertain so a search for underground storage tanks and pollution would

be undertaken. The outcome of those tests could mean a liability, and the site might be less expensive for the District to purchase.

Mr. Gunderson said that parking was a big issue on the design of the site. If the entire lot were purchased, County Elections and Health offices would move elsewhere, so their parking would not be required there. However, the private owners fulfill their parking requirements for their other buildings by owning this land, so taking the land could damage their property. The District could pay damages and they would purchase parking elsewhere, or the District could replace that parking in its design. Mr. Gunderson showed one design which provided an underground parking structure, below the transit portion of the site.

City code required 19 parking spaces for the amount of square footage of the proposed station. It was staff's understanding that the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) would only fund \$800,000 in damages and the 19 code-required spaces. Mr. Herzberg asked if the extra portion could be used for parking, rather than going underground. Mr. Gunderson replied that it could, but he would question the efficiency because of the shape and small size of that property.

Operational issues of the conceptual design for the Elections Site included travel from west to east through the site (from Oak to Pearl); allowing the shortest possible walking distance for transfers, by including as many boarding areas as possible around one boarding island; and allowing buses to pull straight in and leave without backing up if they leave in sequence, on the north side of the station. In order to have the bus doors face the platform on the southern portion of the site, however, buses would have to pull up to boarding peninsulas and would have to back up to leave. Traffic questions for the site included the possibility of making Oak a two-way street, and making improvements to the signals at Pearl and 6th.

The purpose of the conceptual design was to develop a budget and test and evaluate the site. The design included a two-story Customer Service Center (CSC) of 8,500 square feet. Attached would be a passenger shelter with a transparent roof, to make it light and airy. The character of the design was to try to fit in with the 5th Street area of downtown, which included historic designs.

There were a number of strategies for pedestrian flow, including crosswalk improvements; design improvements to make the corners more inviting; a clock tower, to tie in with a traditional transit theme, but also to create a landmark for the station; and the possibility of building a tunnel under 6th Avenue to the County offices. Because many trips originate or have destinations downtown, there would be a lot of pedestrian activity to and from the station.

ECO Northwest had reviewed whether some type of joint development or mixed use would be appropriate, and concluded that the costs did not justify building above the station, and that it would be better to allow private development on the excess land, without LTD's direct involvement. ECO Northwest also said that, economically, it would be better to not construct the underground parking.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Viggiano explained that when the District first moved into the station, mainly the north portion would be used, and growth would occur in the south portion, for buses that did not arrive and depart as often as buses in the north section. No parking for support vehicles was included on the station platform, so if there were no underground parking, the design would have to be changed to include the 19 code-required spaces. Ms. Loobey said that there were other parking issues in addition to those of the 5th Pearl area, including the Hilton, the County, Centennial Bank, etc. She thought the District, the City, the County, and property owners should meet to discuss parking issues in that area. How those issues were resolved, she said, had to do with code requirements and what kinds of partnerships could be made. She said it made sense to her to put additional parking in the County parking structure, because it was originally built to be able to add another level or parking on top. She said it was not the District's responsibility to build 110 spaces for someone else and not be reimbursed for doing so. Mr. Gunderson said that the parking element seemed to be a popular part of the design with others, and that including parking would add to the value of the land, so LTD would receive some of the value back if the extra land were sold. However, the cost of replacing parking would be more expensive than paying damages.

Mr. Gunderson said there had been some preliminary discussions with the City traffic staff about two-way traffic on Oak, and although they seemed to think it would not be a problem, there was no official response. He added that development of the station would not significantly increase traffic on 5th Avenue, but traffic there was expected to increase anyway, due to other issues.

Mr. Gunderson then discussed the time line and budget, beginning on page 13 of the Executive Summary. He said the plan would be to purchase the land next winter and begin design work in the fall. Two major pieces of the budget were the station construction costs and the associated station costs. Included were an 8,500 square foot Customer Service Center, plus 3,000 square feet of glass awning, 25 plumbing fixtures, a three-story elevator from the parking garage, and furniture for the office space. There would be about 33,000 square feet under shelter. Construction costs were estimated at \$6.3 million.

A professional estimator had estimated high and low costs to purchase each of seven different tax lots. Staff had used the high range to purchase the Elections Site (\$2,035,000) in the budget, rather than the low figure of \$1.6 million.

Ms. Fitch wondered if looking at the Eugene Station as a two-phased project, with the southern shelter along 6th Avenue being constructed at a later date, would mean that costs of \$1 million could be taken out of the current budget. Ms. Calvert and Mr. Herzberg, however, cautioned that costs would be much higher to finish the project later.

Mark Pangborn, Director of Administrative Services, stated that UMTA normally only builds parking if it is required as part of a development, and would also pay damages in order to acquire property. He was not sure whether UMTA would authorize the District to build a parking structure instead of paying damages. He thought there was a possibility of working out a compromise, such as a situation in which LTD might pay damages, and the damaged properties would return the money in exchange for guaranteed parking spaces.

Mr. Pangborn said that the proposed project budget did cost out with the District's other capital needs. Mr. Brandt thought that nothing else should be done on the project until the Finance Committee reviewed the proposed budget. However, Ms. Calvert said that although she was usually supportive of the subcommittee process, she would have to feel very comfortable with all the assumptions that go into the financial package, and thought the Board should consider these questions as a committee of the whole. Mr. Parks agreed.

Ms. Loobey said that the District would be responsible for 19 parking spaces required by City code, and for 86 parking spaces as replacement for the Station Square and 5th Pearl buildings. She thought the District should not pay for the other 110, but that possibly the City or a consortium of property owners who were currently restricted from development because there was not enough parking should be responsible. She said that these were the kinds of questions that LTD needed to start investigating.

Mr. Brandt said he felt strongly about the proposed project and budget. He said he was shocked and embarrassed at the proposed \$10 or \$11 million dollar budget, and at the idea of the District suggesting to the community that this amount of money be spent. He thought the proposed budget was totally out of proportion with what the Board had intended when moving the station was first discussed. He said the financial models could probably tell the District that it could afford the project, but he thought it was a ludicrous expenditure. He thought the Site Selection Committee meetings had been a total waste of time, to result in a project which cost so much. He said he thought the Board ought to start all over again and rethink where it wanted to go with this project. He said he had always thought that the original estimate of \$3.5 million used in the Capital Improvements Program was too high to begin with.

Ms. Loobey said that any of the sites would have problems and cost money for property acquisition, demolition, excavation costs, etc. She wasn't sure the associated costs of any other sites would be much less than for the Elections Site. She said there are aspects of the project which could be changed or deleted, such as not building the plaza or the southern shelter, which might bring the costs down to \$5 or \$6 million in construction costs, but the other associated costs would still be there. She said that this would be a big investment for the District if the decision was made that LTD did need a new, permanent transfer station.

Ms. Calvert said that the Site Selection Committee had been unanimous that the site should be off-street, which meant that there would be land costs. She added that she thought there was value in getting that kind of consensus from that group. Even with the Butterfly Lot, which was no longer considered to be adequate in size, the District would have to demolish a parking structure and pay damages for about 200 parking spaces.

Mr. Herzberg wondered if the general public really wanted a new station, or if it were really the City and the merchants along 10th Avenue. He asked if the people who ride the buses were willing to pay any of the costs.

Mr. Brandt said that it was fairly clear that something needed to be done about relocating the station since Willamette Street had been reopened. That made the current site unwieldy, and the District had been "driving" this issue because it was obvious that a new station was needed. When the City and County became involved, everyone talked about what was

desirable in a new station. However, he thought the District had misinformed itself, because he never would have supported the station if he had known it would cost \$10 million. He thought the District should have known earlier that this was what the cost would be.

Ms. Loobey said that the Site Selection Committee's only charge had been to assess the sites, and the budget had not been discussed around that table. Mr. Brandt said he had brought up the question of cost during Committee discussions, and Ms. Calvert added that it had appeared during Committee discussions that the costs would be approximately the same, no matter which site was chosen.

Mr. Brandt was concerned that the community would not be pleased that an \$11 million bus company was planning an \$11 million downtown transfer facility, and also was concerned that the District did not know what the annual maintenance costs would be.

Ms. Calvert asked about the "double teardrop" plan considered for Olive and Charnelton several years ago. Ms. Loobey said that plan was based on off-street and on-street parking, and would involve damages for taking parking. There was a building on that site, and the City was still talking about opening Olive between 10th and 11th Avenues, so there would be a split station if that site were to be considered again. Ms. Calvert wondered about using that concept somewhere else. Ms. Loobey thought that any station which relied on on-street parking would be vulnerable for the future. Mr. Brandt said he would guess the District would end up on-street, because that was what it could afford.

Ms. Fitch thought that some initial cost-cutting could reduce the cost for the station to about \$6.2 million. She suggested that the District could not purchase the corner of the Elections Site not needed for the transit station, could postpone building the southern station and put parking there, could design some kind of "landmark" besides the clock tower, and could possibly reduce amenities at the CSC, such as putting in restrooms but not a drivers' lounge, etc.

Ms. Calvert thought it would be unwise to concentrate on cutting the costs when this facility was really for the whole community, and maybe the costs could be shared, instead. She thought the District could not do this project on its own, and needed some cooperation from the community. For instance, she said it would not make sense to build an underground parking structure when there was a County structure with underpinnings to go three stories up. However, Mr. Parks thought the District would not receive any assistance from any local units of government. He added that he agreed with Mr. Brandt that the cost was too high.

Mr. Montgomery said it seemed that the District had started with a bottom line that asked what LTD needed to function as a transportation provider. He said it appeared from what Mr. Parks and Mr. Brandt said, and he agreed, that perhaps the Board members should have started with what they as a Board were comfortable spending, and they might have known that they would not get the space they needed for 23 buses. Mr. Parks said the design concept grew from one-half to a full block. Mr. Montgomery thought the District might not even be comfortable spending enough to build on-street or on a double-teardrop site.

Mr. Brandt said he thought the District ought to start over completely, discuss the issues within stricter parameters, and possibly even form a new site selection committee. Ms. Calvert said she wasn't sure she wanted to go back to the very beginning. Mr. Parks suggested looking at a basic design and seeing how much the Board would be willing to pay for the facilities.

Mr. Brandt was concerned that the County and City might not participate, and that the District might have to pay to construct a new building to replace the Elections offices. That cost was not included in the current budget. He said LTD was trying to limit the need for parking spaces downtown, and he thought there should be better cooperation from the City and County regarding parking replacement. He suggested not going ahead with the project unless the District received that cooperation. He said that the District had not talked with anyone with the authority to make those kinds of decisions at the City or the County, and that the one meeting each with the City Council and the County Commissioners had not produced any results. He was also unhappy that the response from the City had been that they wanted to reserve the City Hall Site for their own use, rather than considering multiple use with LTD.

Ms. Calvert said she thought the District did need a better transfer station, and commented that things do not get cheaper as you wait. However, she said she was not suggesting that the District needed to go all out, either.

MOTION Mr. Brandt moved that the District not spend any more money, other than staff costs for continuing discussions with the City and County or researching Board questions, on the Eugene Station project until the Board could get together to talk about the Eugene Station and other ideas and alternatives. Mr. Montgomery seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

VOTE

Mr. Brandt said that in considering alternatives, staff needed to be creative and think about what was realistic, not just what was ideal. He said he would like to hear every kind of possible idea, and thought that somewhere there was a solution that would work.

Ms. Loobey questioned the Board about their agreement that the District needed to look at a new station; that an off-street station was desired; that the station should be sized for a capacity of 23 buses at the pulse; that there was some kind of recognition of the kinds of functions that would happen at the Customer Service Center; that public restrooms should be provided; that the station should include design elements which fit the site and its surroundings; that the District should go to the City and County and surrounding property owners and say that the station was a facility that was a benefit to downtown and the surrounding property owners; and that LTD was not responsible for providing parking other than that required by code. Mr. Brandt said the only thing he disagreed with in Ms. Loobey's questions was that he thought the Board should consider on-street sites.

Mr. Herzberg said he liked the concept, but there were changes that could be made that would save a lot of money, such as eliminating the glass awning, since people at the current station were not able to be under cover. He thought the cost of a parking structure would be very high. He liked the design to allow transfers within a small area, which would help the

senior citizens or others who cannot get around very fast. Ms. Fitch thought that phasing the project would give the Board some options.

ELECTION OF BOARD PRESIDENT: Mr. Parks stated that a new Board President needed to be elected, since Mr. Andersen had moved out of his subdistrict and could no longer be on the Board of Directors. Mr. Brandt nominated Mr. Parks. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Calvert. Ms. Fitch moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, that the nominations be closed and the Board cast a unanimous ballot for Mr. Parks. The motion carried 5-0, with Mr. Parks abstaining. With Mr. Parks' election as President, the office of Vice President became vacant. The Board decided to fill that office at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Parks stated that the Board needed to get back on track with its regular business, since the regular December meeting had been cancelled due to snow and ice. It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned to Wednesday, January 23, 1991, at 7:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room. There was no further discussion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:55 p.m.


Board Secretary