

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

ADJOURNED MEETING -
WORK SESSION ON EUGENE TRANSIT STATION

Wednesday, February 12, 1992

Pursuant to notice given at the January 15, 1992, regular meeting and to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 11, 1992, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, an adjourned meeting/special work session of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, February 12, 1992, at 7:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

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

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

SELECTION OF A PREFERRED SITE FOR A NEW EUGENE TRANSIT STATION:

Ms. Loobey reminded the Board that some months before, after research had been done on the Elections Site, Mr. Montgomery had said that the Elections Site was self-selected, because it was the only one that was large enough. At that time, the Board directed staff to look at other sites downtown for better comparison. The Board subsequently selected two sites to study further, and that evening, the Board would discuss the results of the second tier of research for the transit station.

Planning Administrator Stefano Viggiano used a table the Board had discussed in August to evaluate the original ten sites. The I-HOP site seemed to be the preferred site, and the Pasta Plus site had enough support to narrow the selection to two sites.

Mr. Viggiano discussed an analysis of the Pasta Plus and I-HOP sites. He showed site plans for the two sites. The design was almost identical, in order to compare the sites better and to accomplish what the District was trying to do with the station. According to these designs, all buses would park around a central platform for easier transfers. The Customer Service Center (CSC) would be at one end, facing both the platform and the outside street. For the Pasta Plus site, traffic signals would be needed at 11th and Mill and at 10th and Mill. Mill and 10th was a narrow intersection, and would have to be widened. Those costs were included in the cost estimates.

Ms. Hocken asked if staff had given any thought to widening 10th Avenue between Pearl and High. Mr. Viggiano said that was one option, if some parking were eliminated. He said 10th might be made a two-way street, which might require widening. Those details had not yet been discussed.

At the Pasta Plus site, a strip of land 70 feet wide would be unused. Mr. Viggiano said the District would have the option of not purchasing the land, purchasing it and saving it, or purchasing it and reselling it.

Mr. Billings excused himself at this point in the meeting due to a previous commitment, but said he hoped to return.

Mr. Viggiano said that the Pasta Plus site had been given a little extra advantage based on size. The I-HOP site was closer to more downtown employment and major transit markets, such as the City and County buildings, so the I-HOP site had an advantage with regard to employment and retail.

In reviewing operational characteristics, both the internal operating characteristics of the site and how convenient it was to get to the site were studied. There were not differences between the two sites, with the I-HOP having a slight advantage for being near major corridors.

Ms. Calvert asked how far along the decision on the Ferry Street Bridge redesign was, and if any options would make either site undesirable. Mr. Viggiano said that a draft environmental impact statement on the bridge redesign was due out that summer, and that either site would work with any of the current Ferry Street Bridge design options.

Mr. Viggiano said that the Elections site was included as a cost comparison. Some of the design reductions made in the I-HOP design could also be made at the Elections site. He said that costs for the I-HOP and Pasta Plus sites should be fairly comparable.

Shelter costs had been reduced significantly (by \$1 million) from the original Elections site design. To do so, the shelter would not be entirely glazed; it might have a metal roof, possibly with skylights. The size of the shelter had also been reduced, from 40 feet wide to 30 feet wide.

The Customer Service Center would have the same square footage as at the Elections site, but would cost \$.5 million less. There would be some trade-offs in quality, however. Associated costs for the station included design fees, at 10 percent of construction costs, and environmental assessment costs. The largest differences in the sites had to do with traffic improvements, with the Pasta Plus site costing \$200,000 more than the I-HOP site.

Mr. Viggiano introduced John Brown, who had prepared the land cost estimates and could answer questions about parking damages. Staff had assumed 40 percent for contingency and parking damages. There were a lot of unknowns about the costs because it was still early in the process, and parking damages were still unknown. The total was a little over \$9.1 million for the I-HOP site, and \$9.6 million for the Pasta Plus site. The cost of the Elections site was corrected for construction in 1994 instead of 1993, and amounted to

\$12.8 million. Mr. Viggiano stressed that these were rough estimates, but staff believed that the I-HOP and Pasta Plus sites would cost roughly the same amount of money. At the I-HOP site, there was a quarter-block of code-required parking. The Pasta Plus site included three-fourths of a block of code-required parking, so parking damages for that site would probably be higher.

Mr. Brandt asked if code-required parking was required by the City. Mr. Viggiano said that it was, but there would still be damages based on the market need for parking so businesses can thrive, so a business could make an argument that taking away parking damaged the business and the business should be compensated, regardless of whether or not the parking was code-required. Ms. Hocken asked about the use of the spaces at the Pasta Plus site. Mr. Viggiano said that the lot was used mainly by employees of The Register-Guard, but there was also some excess parking. The net loss of parking spaces that could not be replaced on or near the site would be about 120 spaces.

Mr. Viggiano said there were probably three options with regard to parking. The District could pay damages, whatever they were determined to be; it could negotiate with the businesses and buy them comparable land somewhere else; or it could pay damages and put those funds toward building a parking structure.

Mr. Brandt asked why there were damages for parking. Mr. Viggiano explained that the District was buying the parking but not the business in this case. The business would still be there, as would its demand for parking. Mr. Brown added that at the I-HOP, the only damage consideration would be for one of the businesses. The amount paid in damages would be the difference between the whole property before taking it compared with the property after taking it.

Mr. Parks asked if there were questions from the audience about this item. There were none.

Parking Displacement and Damages: Mr. Viggiano said that about three times more parking would be displaced at the Pasta Plus site than at the I-HOP site. He used an overhead projection to show a simple evaluation of the site. The same information had been discussed with the Eugene Station Advisory Committee on February 10, and the Committee had chosen not to make a recommendation. The Committee would probably meet again in March, and with Board direction, staff would provide additional information for the Committee.

Mr. Brandt asked what it would mean to select the I-HOP site as the preferred site. Mr. Viggiano said that staff would continue to research the site and work on it with the City and affected property owners. He said this would not be a final selection of the site, but would allow for a concentration of efforts. If all aspects of the site worked out, staff would come back to the Board with a final recommendation in the spring.

Ms. Calvert asked a question about the Advisory Committee. Mr. Viggiano explained that the Committee probably would have a couple more meetings. The Committee had raised questions about going back to the Elections site, phasing in parking structure levels, etc. Ms. Calvert was concerned about the possibility of having an advisory committee but not

following the committee's advice. Mr. Viggiano said that staff's recommendation at that time would be to do some of the research the Advisory Committee had recommended. He said that the Pasta Plus site could be eliminated because there was no sentiment for it among the Advisory Committee members. In response to a question from Ms. Calvert, Mr. Viggiano explained that the Advisory Committee had not had the opportunity to look at the Elections site in detail.

Mr. Brandt wanted to clarify whether or not the District was required to be concerned about replacing parking. Mr. Viggiano said that the other option would be to choose to pay damages. Mr. Brandt said that LTD was not in the business of building parking structures, and he saw that process as a total waste of time. Mr. Viggiano said that staff were not suggesting that the District pay the entire cost.

Ms. Loobey asked the Board members if they thought a parking structure should be incorporated into the project. She said that Mr. Brandt was absolutely right that the District was not in the business of building parking garages. However, the District would not be building a parking garage, but there would be an opportunity for the District to play a role that would benefit the community at large. In discussing the Elections site, the Board had talked about underground parking. However, the District would not pay for a parking structure; that was the City's responsibility.

Ms. Loobey said that one of the concerns of the First Baptist Church was that the church not only needed the parking on the quarter-block to support the activities of the church, but on Sundays they used parking in several locations. In discussing the transit station with affected property owners, they expressed pressures for development that could not go on because there would be no parking available to them. Even if the parking code were changed, some parking would be necessary. One option would be to pay for the property and the church would try to buy other property near the church. Another option would be to build parking underneath the station, with the City providing funds and the District contributing the payment for damages as seed money. A third option would be to build parking above the station under the same arrangement. Ms. Loobey said that her preference was not to have parking underneath or above the station. It would be very expensive to replace those 92 spaces. Parking above the station would require a high ceiling, with the back ends of the buses outside the structure, to prevent fumes from being in the station.

Ms. Loobey said that another option would be to build a parking structure on the Eugene Retirement Hotel and Greyhound lot. The District would only contribute the value of the damages in order to replace the 92 spaces. Such an arrangement would provide for development to occur in that area, because the structure could satisfy parking requirements.

Ms. Fitch asked who owned the half-block at the I-HOP site. Ms. Loobey said that the Eugene Retirement Hotel owned one-fourth of the block, and there was another owner for the other fourth-block. It was not City-owned. Ms. Loobey added that concentrated parking would lead to a denser downtown core area, which would in turn lead to more transit ridership. Ms. Fitch asked if there had been any discussions with the City about the parking structure idea. Ms. Loobey said that staff had discussed the idea, and had developed some comparison

costs for building a structure. She said they had also talked with some major property owners, who were intrigued but wanted more information.

When discussing the Elections site previously, the Board had mentioned the County parking lot. That lot was built to add several more stories, and the Board had briefly discussed building up there. Ms. Loobey said she thought the District should do whatever made the best sense in the long run for the health and welfare of the transit district and the Community.

Mr. Brandt thought the City and the property owners ought to be paying for the legwork on this idea, rather than LTD. He wondered how the District would justify spending the time, money, and effort. Ms. Loobey said that the partnership would be found in the District's contribution. She said the Board could decide not to replace the parking, and just pay for damages. However, if the Board instead saw the opportunity for the District to build and replace parking, the District might buy a quarter-block and deed it to the property owner, or could look at the greater parking needs for the City. This kind of investigation involved some conversations with the City. However, the District would not design or own the parking structure.

Mr. Brandt thought the Board should look at buying a lot to replace the parking at the bare bones cheapest dollar, and not spend any more money than it had to. Ms. Loobey said she did not think the District would spend any more money; it would only provide that money as the seed money for the City to build a parking structure. She said this idea was simply a way for the two agencies to talk about whether or not this was an opportunity they wanted to consider. The amount of money would not be affected.

Ms. Hocken wondered how the current property owners could or could not influence the decision about how the money would be spent, and suggested that maybe the discussion should be between the property owners and the City. She wondered if LTD could make a decision without the property owners. Ms. Loobey said that if the Board decided it wanted to build the station on the I-HOP site, that would set in motion a number of actions. She said staff had conversations with representatives of the First Baptist Church regarding their concerns. Actions include negotiating how ownership would be transferred to the District. There could be face-to-face negotiations, with both parties agreeing upon the terms, or the church could take the issue to court, which would affect how much the District would pay to the church, not whether the District could own the property. Ms. Calvert thought there might be more than money involved, such as where they go, as part of the negotiations. Ms. Loobey said that since the church used the lot on a daily basis, the negotiations might also include what would happen while the station was under construction.

Ms. Calvert wanted to clarify that the retirement center used the proposed site for its parking, so the number of spaces in a parking structure would include replacement spaces for the retirement center. Ms. Loobey replied that this was true. Ms. Fitch asked if it would be less expensive to build onto an existing parking structure than to build a new structure. Ms. Loobey said she wasn't sure of the answer to this question.

Ms. Calvert said that one of the issues in terms of working with the City was whether they would make the decision in a timely manner that would suit the District's schedule.

Ms. Hocken asked where the City would get its money. Lew Bowers of the City of Eugene staff said that the City Council would answer those questions. He said the Urban Renewal District could be modified to include this area, and bonds could be sold. He said that the Parade had been constructed by the City with a mixture of funds, and the contribution of funds from LTD would make the idea more attractive.

Ms. Loobey said that the Eugene Station Advisory Committee had raised some of the same questions. They found the idea intriguing and wanted more information. They wondered whether it would be better to build at the Elections site or the I-HOP site, given the level of development. They asked for more information about costs to build below and above a station and at the Elections site. Mr. Parks said that any decision by the Board at this point would be out of timing with the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Parks stated that parking had been a the problem all along, and would be a major problem wherever the District decided to build the station. Mr. Brandt agreed, saying that he did not think the District had yet found the preferred site if it had to pay 40 percent of the cost for damages. He thought that \$2.6 million was too much to locate in that area. Mr. Parks asked how much the contingency would be. Mr. Viggiano said that since the parking damages were unknown, it would be hard to say, but staff thought that at least half of the 40 percent would have been pledged for contingency and the rest for damages.

Mr. Montgomery said that the Board went through this process, and now someone wanted to look at the Elections site again because the District might mitigate parking for the City. He thought the District should pick the site that was best for LTD rather than handing over money to build a structure. Ms. Loobey reminded the Board that it had never dropped the Elections site; rather, it had asked staff to make comparisons with other sites. Mr. Montgomery wondered if looking at the Elections site again would result in new costs for that site. He commented about the traffic problems at that site, and said that if the Elections site were to be looked at again, it should be looked at in comparison with the I-HOP and Pasta Plus sites. He thought that the Board should either say that the Elections site was out or have more accurate comparison costs.

Ms. Loobey said that in examining these sites, the I-HOP site rose to the surface and was preferred by staff. Ms. Calvert said that for the Elections site to be considered, parking would have to be under the station or on the County structure, and the District would need to contribute parking damages money to the County. She recalled that the Board had recognized that any possible new site might have fatal flaws and the District might have to revert to the Elections site, so that site was not dropped, but the Board had been very interested in investigating other sites.

Ms. Hocken wondered if it would be possible to use the County parking structure on 6th for the I-HOP or Pasta Plus sites. Mr. Bowers said that the County parking lot would be too far to legally meet the code requirements for replacement parking, and would require negotiations with the affected properties, which had not been done at that point.

MOTION Ms. Fitch moved that the Board direct staff to come back with comparison across the Board of the I-HOP, Pasta Plus, and Elections sites, using the five categories (cost, parking,

etc.), and also bring into play the cost per space in seeking a structure built from the ground up versus adding onto existing structures, for the Eugene Station Advisory Committee and the Board. Ms. Hocken seconded the motion.

Ms. Calvert asked staff what kind of cost investigation had been done on parking structures. Mr. Viggiano said that staff had estimates for adding on to the County structure, and for an underground structure at the Elections site. Ms. Calvert asked about traffic work. Mr. Viggiano said that staff did some of that analysis for the Elections site, and would have to pull that information back together. Ms. Calvert asked if that would be done anyway for the Advisory Committee, but Mr. Viggiano said that would be done only after Board direction. However, Mr. Parks thought that if the Committee was advising the Board, the Board should not tell the Committee what information it could or could not have. Mr. Montgomery asked if the Advisory Committee would discuss this information before the Board would discuss it again. Ms. Loobey said that the current plan was to bring the information back to the Board at the March meeting, after discussion by the Eugene Station Advisory Committee. Ms. Calvert said she would like to urge the Committee to make a recommendation rather than asking for more information again.

Ms. Hocken said that she realized that parking damages were hard to get a handle on, and staff wanted to leave room for negotiating, but she would still like to discuss a range of damages. She said that, otherwise, it was hard to get a sense of the cost.

Mr. Brandt reiterated that the District still did not have a preferred site if it would have to pay 40 percent in parking damages and contingency.

VOTE

Ms. Calvert called for the question on Ms. Fitch's motion. The motion then carried by unanimous vote, with Mr. Billings not present.

Ms. Calvert said she would direct staff to strongly encourage the Eugene Station Advisory Committee to come to some sort of recommendation before the March Board meeting.

Mr. Montgomery asked staff for a very concrete assurance that, whether the District decided to pay for parking or do a joint venture, the money would be equal in all cases--that it would not cost more one way or another. Mr. Parks said that the District could not pay more than the cost for damages. Mr. Montgomery asked what would happen if the City asked for less seed money than the damages would cost. He said he would like to see a realistic assurance or realistic figure that the Board could grasp. He said he would prefer to go with the City if it were cheaper per space than paying damages.

Mr. Brandt asked if any Board members were interested in looking for a site where parking would not be a problem. He thought there was a big difference if the parking was publicly owned rather than privately owned. He said he did not know if it was best for the community to put federal money into a parking structure for the community. He still thought it was too much money for the station, with too much of the cost to pay for parking. He said that buying an entire lot for \$1.6 million and then paying \$1.6 million for a few parking spaces was totally out of proportion.

Ms. Calvert said that the District still did not know the costs for replacing the County's facilities on the Elections lot. Mr. Parks said that the District could not condemn County property, so he wasn't sure the District could even obtain that site.

Mr. Brandt asked if the District could use eminent domain to take a block across the street and give it to the damaged properties. Mr. Montgomery repeated that if the District could find a quarter-block replacement site that was cheaper than paying damages, he would like to see that. Ms. Loobey said it may be possible to replace the lost parking with another quarter-block site.

Ms. Calvert and Ms. Hocken asked who owned the houses across 8th Avenue from the church parking lot. Mr. Brandt thought that would probably be a larger area than the existing parking lot. Ms. Loobey said that staff would check on this for the Board.

Mr. Brandt said that the Board needed to think about all of this, especially the cost, before it could vote on a preferred site. He wanted to see staff attack this issue from the perspective of how it could be accomplished with the least amount of money. Ms. Loobey said that staff were sensitive to the area of cost, shown by the decrease in the cost of the Elections site by \$2 million. She said that the District had the least amount of control and experience in parking replacement. However, there was also an issue of greater benefit to the City as a whole, with no additional cost to the District.

Ms. Hocken said she liked the idea of building over the station because it would cover the platform, as opposed to paying \$1.6 million for the shelter. Although the cost would probably be more than the shelter cost, the District would be getting more than just a shelter. Ms. Loobey commented that the cost per space would be increased, and that there were long-term operational costs in adding room for ramps to the station design. This kind of parking replacement would definitely cost more than paying parking damages.

Mr. Brandt said that rather than helping with downtown revitalization and helping the City obtain more parking, maybe the staff should spend less time on things that were not pertinent to a downtown bus station. Mr. Parks commented that a parking structure would require permission and approval from the Planning Commission and the entire governmental structure.

Ms. Loobey explained that a major part of staff's interest in working with the City on a parking structure was that the District had a stake in downtown. Mr. Montgomery thought that goodwill was worth a certain amount, as long as the District was not giving away money.

There was some discussion about a five-level above-ground parking structure, and the need for the backs of the buses to extend beyond the structures floors for ventilation. Mr. Bowers talked about the light wells designed to provide light to the bottom level. He said it was not the most efficient way to build a structure, but was designed to enhance the station.

Ms. Fitch asked if the cost for a five-level structure was proportionate per level; if anyone else were to build on top of the station, they would pay, and the District's responsibility would be for the first level. Mr. Bowers said that staff could provide that cost information. Ms.

Calvert said that the next question would be whether a "lid" over the station was an optimum station, or whether the money should just be used to buy property somewhere else.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Mr. Parks asked for participation from the audience on any of the discussion that evening. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Brandt moved, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, that the meeting be adjourned. There was no further discussion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Board Secretary