

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

REGULAR MEETING/WORK SESSION ON EUGENE STATION SITE SELECTION

Wednesday, August 19, 1992

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on August 13, 1992, 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, August 19, 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
Patricia Hocken
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Keith Parks, President, presiding
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Tammy Fitch, Vice President

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Mr. Parks introduced the July Employee of the Month, Bus Operator Don Matney. Mr. Matney was hired on August 3, 1987, and had recently received awards for four years' safe driving and exceptional attendance. He was nominated by 20 riders on his Lowell route, who expressed disappointment that he would be changing to another route. Some of the comments made about him were that he is friendly, courteous, and positive, and that he makes people feel very safe when they ride with him. One rider had, more than once, seen Mr. Matney stop the bus and walk to the back to wake a rider at his or her regular stop. Another rider said that Mr. Matney was more than a bus driver; he was a part of their neighborhood. When asked what makes Mr. Matney a good employee, Transportation Administrator Bob Hunt had said that Don had excellent safety and attendance records, and had driven his schedules correctly since he started to work for LTD. In addition, Don was always helpful and cheerful. His work record and the way he conducted himself on the job reflected his commitment to LTD's goal of customer satisfaction through service excellence.

Mr. Parks presented Mr. Matney with his letter and certificate. Mr. Matney thanked the Board, and said he tried to treat the passengers the way he would like to be treated, and that having his passengers feel that way about him was his thanks.

Mr. Parks then introduced Bus Operator Ken Erickson, the August Employee of the Month. Mr. Erickson was hired on July 31, 1979, and had received awards for 10 years' safe

driving and exceptional attendance. Comments made to nominated Ken were that he is warm, friendly, and personable, and obviously enjoys his job. When asked what makes Mr. Erickson a good employee, Transportation Administrator Bob Hunt had said that Ken also had excellent safety and attendance records, and had driven his schedules correctly since 1985. Ken had always been a positive influence at LTD--in his interactions with his customers, his peers, and his supervisors. His enthusiasm for his work was contagious and served as a fine example for all employees.

Mr. Parks presented Mr. Erickson with his letter, certificate, and check. Mr. Erickson thanked the Board, and said it was wonderful working with the District, and that he enjoyed the people and the management.

FALL SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS: Ed Bergeron, Marketing Administrator, explained that staff had been working on major projects associated with the Comprehensive Service Redesign (CSR) for several months. The CSR service improvements would take effect on September 20, 1992. Staff wanted to show the Board the communications efforts associated with the CSR because major changes to the system were involved, including new hours of service, new routes, and service to new areas. The communication efforts were directed toward making the transition as smooth as possible for the customers.

One aspect of the communications effort was to communicate with LTD employees the reasons for the changes and how to get the message to the customers. Each employee would be participating in a two-hour training class and would receive a manual containing information to help respond to customer questions.

Another aspect of the fall service communications package was a commuter pack to be mailed to area homes. Mr. Bergeron said that LCDC Transportation Goal 12 set forth ambitious commuter habit changes. All those changes could not be done by bus alone, so staff had worked with the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the City of Eugene to communicate alternatives to automobile use, such a bike riding and carpooling, and to provide information on pollution.

To provide information to help customers with this transition, employees would be working at the Eugene Station to answer questions and distribute a new "Eugene Station Rider's Guide." Timetables would be available two weeks before the change, and the commuter pack would be mailed ahead of time. The on-bus newsletter, "Bus Talk," would also be on the buses two weeks before implementation of the new service.

Mr. Bergeron said that there would be some changes in the look of the Eugene Station. The current layout of the station no longer worked efficiently, so the station sector route designations (such as Ferry Street Bridge or Springfield) would change to letters (A, B, C, etc.). Mr. Bergeron explained that staff had worked with trainers of persons with disabilities, and learned that color was very important in helping people with cognitive disabilities learn where to board their buses. The color of the shelters would change from blue to white, and, although the letters used to designate the shelters would all be the same color, each shelter would have a special color on one panel. These changes were to be phased in during the first three weeks of September.

Mr. Bergeron also discussed advertising being done to get the community's attention and show the benefits of riding the bus. The District was using posters for the first time, with an environmental theme, to show that LTD was part of the solution to the pollution problems. The posters would be placed in high-traffic locations, and the same theme would be carried out on the sides of the buses and on billboards. Mr. Bergeron played the radio and television ads being used, explaining that the "Madame Zorba" radio ad used humor to get the listeners' attention, and the television ad theme was to show LTD as part of the solution, and used the slogan, "Do the ride thing."

MOTION **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Ms. Calvert moved that the minutes of the June 10, 1992, special LTD Board/Eugene Station Advisory Committee meeting; the June 17, 1992, regular Board meeting; and the June 25, 1992, public hearing be approved as distributed. Ms. Hocken
VOTE seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

WORK SESSION ON EUGENE STATION SITING: Ms. Loobey provided an introduction for the work session, and stated that the Environmental Assessment process had begun, to measure the impacts that the Eugene Station would have on the surrounding neighborhood. At the September meeting, the Board would select its preferred and back-up sites. An Environmental Assessment on each site would be completed by December, and would suggest the impacts and mitigations of a station in those locations. The Board was scheduled to select its final site at the January 1993 meeting.

Staff Recommendation: Mr. Viggiano then presented the staff recommendation, which was the same presentation given to the Eugene Station Advisory Committee at its last meeting. To the two key decision points mentioned by Ms. Loobey, Mr. Viggiano added a third, which was the final site decision and approval of the grant application in May, following the reviews and granting of a conditional use permit.

Mr. Viggiano explained that the staff and Eugene Station Advisory Committee recommendations for preferred sites were different, yet very similar. They agreed that the Pasta Plus site was the least desirable, the Elections site was ranked third, and two sites, the I-HOP and McDonald sites, should be considered further. Staff had ranked the I-HOP site first, and the Advisory Committee had ranked the McDonald site first. Staff and the Advisory Committee agreed on the strengths and weaknesses of the sites, and the difference in first choice was really a difference in opinion in the weighting of the site selection criteria. From the staff perspective, rider proximity and operational analyses were the most important. The cost factor was important, but there was only about a 10 percent difference in cost from the lowest to the highest estimate for the sites. The impact on adjacent land use was also very important, and was where the difference in weighting occurred.

Mr. Viggiano stated that the District was not yet working with all the information it would need to make a final decision. The Environmental Assessment might play a key role by showing concerns the District was not aware of.

Mr. Viggiano then reviewed the sites' strengths and weaknesses, as discussed in the agenda packet, beginning on page 28.

Eugene Station Advisory Committee Recommendation: Gerry Gaydos, Chairman of the Eugene Station Advisory Committee, was present to discuss the Advisory Committee's site recommendation. He said that most of the Committee members had attended the public hearing on June 25, and had attended the joint work session with the Board. Mr. Gaydos said that the Committee members were in agreement and committed to the need for a transit station in downtown Eugene, and that it should be off-site. This limited the search to a 36-block area, and it was understood that political concerns would be expressed about almost any block in the downtown area. There was no perfect site; there was always some disadvantage from an operational or political standpoint, so there had to be compromises.

Mr. Gaydos said that five members were present at the last Advisory Committee meeting; Mike Schwartz and Jesse Maine, the Eugene and Springfield Chamber of Commerce representatives, were absent. Those present reached consensus in recommending that the McDonald site be selected as the District's preferred site, and the I-HOP site as the back-up site. The Committee recognized the constraints of the McDonald site, including necessary street changes, but also that the buses were located there, to some extent, already. The Committee believed that the McDonald site provided the best combination with the potential of the library being located nearby, and the Eugene Clinic also nearby. One Committee member, Jonathan Stafford, had mentioned that the southeast corner of the McDonald site should provide urban retail space, because it was on such a high-traffic corner. The minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting were included in that evening's agenda packet, for the Board's information.

Mr. Gaydos said that the Committee recognized the political realities of selecting a site, as the Board would have to do. He reiterated that the Committee members believed there should be a transit station in downtown Eugene, and recommended the McDonald site. He added that he had not talked with Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Maine following the Advisory Committee's recommendation. However, staff had sent a copy of the recommendation to them and asked them to forward any concerns they might have, but received no feedback.

Ms. Calvert expressed her thanks to Mr. Gaydos and the other Advisory Committee members for their work on a difficult task. Mr. Parks added thanks on behalf of the rest of the Board of Directors.

Eugene Station: Citizen Involvement: Mr. Viggiano discussed the citizen involvement process, brought to the Board as an information item. The District had received a copy of a letter from the City of Eugene's Citizen Involvement Committee to the Eugene City Council. The letter expressed concern about the extent of citizen involvement in the site selection process for the new Eugene Station. Staff had prepared a summary of citizen involvement. Mr. Viggiano said that the involvement by citizens in the site selection process had exceeded any state or federal regulations for citizen input, and staff believed it to be extensive. The best indication that those who were interested in the process knew about it was the amount of written communication the District had received, including the number of names on petitions, as well as the attendance at the District's public hearing on the site selection process, held in June.

In response to a question from Ms. Calvert, Mr. Viggiano said that staff approached the Citizen Involvement Committee in 1989 and presented the District's citizen involvement plan. The committee made suggestions, and the plan was changed, approved by the Committee, and implemented. From staff's perspective, the current citizen involvement activities were a continuation of the 1989 plan. Mr. Viggiano said that the committee possibly could see them as two separate activities, with the newer activities requiring a new plan. However, the staff believed the current process to be extensive and appropriate.

Mr. Viggiano said that the public would be able to submit comments again during the Environmental Assessment process, and there would be a public hearing, required by federal regulations, before the Board approved the grant application to purchase the site. Staff had encouraged people to submit written comments at any time, and would continue to forward those comments to the Board.

Board Discussion: Mr. Viggiano explained that the current design for the McDonald site was in the shape of a triangle, and the 11th and Willamette intersection, the southeast corner of the lot, was what Mr. Stafford considered to be a prominent corner of Eugene. He would like to see some development on that corner. Mr. Viggiano was not sure that the size of the corner space would work for retail development, but said that the design was only a preliminary design and could be reviewed with that kind of development in mind.

Ms. Hocken asked if another building with historical significance was on the site. Mr. Viggiano replied that there was a small building attached to the McDonald Theatre, but it was a separate building and was not considered to have historical significance. However, the entire quarter-block was on the national registry of historic places. Staff had talked with City staff about that, and City staff believed that this was not necessarily a "stumbling block" for this site, but would require additional procedures in order to use the site.

Mr. Montgomery commented on all the street and other changes necessary to make the McDonald site work for a transit station. He wondered if the District would be guaranteed that all those changes could be done, before the Board made its final site selection decision. Mr. Viggiano said that staff were suggesting that the Board talk with the City Council about that question at the joint work session on August 24. A section on major issues and tasks was included in the draft packet for the meeting with the City Council. Mr. Viggiano thought the City Council could direct the public works staff to look at these issues and make a recommendation, and this should be done by the time of the Environmental Assessment.

In following up on Mr. Montgomery's question, Mr. Billings said that the Board decision on its preferred site was to be made in one month, so that gave the Board only three weeks to find out the Eugene City Council's commitment to the McDonald site. He wondered if staff had discussed this with City staff to know if this issue could be put before the City Council. Mr. Viggiano said that staff had talked with the Public Works department staff, and received a fairly favorable response; however, they would not make a commitment to the street changes without further research. The District would not have the results of the Environmental Assessment in September, either, so there were a number of issues which could have a significant impact on the site selection.

Ms. Hocken said that the Environmental Assessment would be performed on the top two sites, so the sites would actually be ranked first and second in a tentative decision. She did not think the Board would be locked into any action by selecting a preferred site in September.

Ms. Calvert asked if staff were concerned that the I-HOP site was more or less complicated from a traffic standpoint than the McDonald site. Mr. Viggiano said staff had talked with the City Engineers, who initially said that 8th Avenue access from the I-HOP site could be worked out, but later said they were not sure that could be done. One lane of the Ferry Street Bridge moved onto three lanes, so it probably would not be difficult to have one bus-only lane. A bigger problem was that a lot of cars came off the bridge and merged left to turn left onto Pearl Street. The buses, however, would need to exit the site and merge into the right lane to start serving bus stops, so this was not an ideal situation. During certain times of the day, the traffic would be fairly concentrated. Mr. Viggiano said there might be a possibility of allowing bus priority by changing the signal times at 8th and High.

Ms. Hocken asked about a comment in the Eugene Station Advisory Committee minutes regarding the use of the alley behind the Register-Guard building. Mr. Viggiano said staff had not explored that possibility in great detail. The initial reaction of City staff was that it was not a good idea, because the alley was narrow and there would be conflicts with other traffic. The normal route to go south would be on Broadway to Pearl, but to minimize the impacts on the Eugene Hotel Retirement Center, LTD could avoid that block by traveling on 8th Avenue; however, that would be costlier for the District. If the Register-Guard vacated the building and improvements were made to the alley, use of the alley might be an option.

Mr. Montgomery asked about the number of buses projected for the future at the new station. Mr. Viggiano said that the station design would include 23 bus bays. There could be 23 buses on the site at any one time, and the system was designed to allow six pulses per hour. It was conceivable, but not likely, that there could be 23 buses on the site every ten minutes. The current Eugene Station had about 20 bus bays.

Mr. Montgomery asked about expansion room if the District needed more than 23 bays. Mr. Viggiano explained that, as the system grows, buses can be added more times per hour, and timed meets become unnecessary. Currently, LTD had to make sure that people did not miss their buses and have a half-hour wait, so buses for all major destinations needed to meet at the station at one time. Staff believed that 23 bays would be sufficient into the future, with a similar system to the current one.

Mr. Billings said he perceived that Franklin Blvd. was a barrier at the I-HOP site, and wondered what the Ferry Street Bridge improvements would be like. He said he would be interested in being as realistic as possible about when changes to the bridge might occur, and asked if the configuration on Franklin would change in a way that might provide an opportunity to serve the downtown area to the east of the I-HOP site. The I-HOP site was currently at the far-eastern extreme of downtown Eugene, but that could change if Franklin Blvd. changed. Mr. Viggiano stated that where the Ferry Street Bridge ramp became Broadway and then Franklin, it also became a pedestrian barrier. The District's three-block analysis of the I-HOP site did not include the area to the east. One of the Ferry Street Bridge options was to have the majority of eastbound traffic follow the railroad track to the east of the current bridge, which

would mean that Agripac and businesses in that area could become part of downtown Eugene. If those streets were part of the regular downtown street pattern, they might be more attractive for office buildings. He said this option made sense; however, his understanding was that it would cost about \$20 million more than not changing the street configuration. Two of the options showed a second bridge, but there would always be a bridge where the current bridge was. The key question was whether to enlarge the current bridge or add a second bridge near Autzen Stadium.

Ms. Hocken asked if data showing the security and safety issues around the Eugene Station had been collected. Ms. Loobey said that staff were in the process of collecting that data, and could bring the most updated report to the Board in September.

Mr. Brandt asked if the Board would be hearing from the people in the audience that evening. Ms. Loobey replied that the meeting was a work session with no opportunity for public testimony, and had been advertised as such.

There was no further discussion about the Eugene Station, and a five-minute break was called at 8:35 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board returned at 8:45 p.m. Mr. Parks said that District Counsel Bryson and Bryson had hired attorney Allen Johnson to work with the Board on Eugene Station site selection issues. Mr. Johnson had suggested that the Board meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(e), ORS 192.660(1)(f), and ORS 192.660(1)(h), and was present to meet with the Board.

MOTION Mr. Billings moved that the Board move into Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(e), to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions; pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(f), to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection; and pursuant to ORS 192.660(1)(h), to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed. Mr. Brandt seconded the motion, and the vote carried unanimously.

VOTE

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION: The Board returned to regular session at 9:30 p.m.

MOTION **ADJOURNMENT:** There was no further discussion. Mr. Brandt moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

VOTE


Board Secretary