

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION ON
EUGENE STATION

Wednesday, February 16, 1994

Pursuant to notice given to The Register-Guard for publication on February 14, 1994, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, February 16, 1994, at 5:30 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Pat Hocken, President
Tammy Fitch, Vice President
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Kirk Bailey
Rob Bennett
Steve Engel
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Coleen Fox, Minutes Recorder

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Hocken called the meeting to order. She informed the board that, as president, she had set the goal of accomplishing what needed to be done at meetings in an orderly fashion with the full cooperation of all board members. She noted that this required conducting meetings in a businesslike fashion and said that she would try to ensure that all members had a chance to speak without interruption. Ms. Hocken said that she hoped members would make an effort to keep their comments short and to the point. She said that she would try to moderate the discussion with these goals in mind.

EUGENE STATION PROJECT STATUS REPORT AND DISCUSSION: Mr. Viggiano referred to the agenda in the packet and noted that the issues to be discussed were described there. He said the intent of the presentation was to ensure that all board members, especially new members, were up to speed on the relevant issues and processes. Mr. Viggiano said he hoped discussion of parking replacement would be focused on the goal of identifying a direction in which to proceed with that issue.

Conditional Use Permit: Mr. Viggiano explained that a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was required by the City of Eugene because the proposed Eugene Station was not an outright permitted use in any zoning category in the commercial zones being considered for development. He explained that the process involved going before a hearings official who conducted a public hearing where the issue of compatibility between the neighborhood and the project would be addressed. He said that following the hearing a decision would be rendered and that mitigation measures were usually placed on the

project. If LTD did not believe it should abide by the mitigation requirements, there was an opportunity to appeal the decision, first to the Eugene Planning Commission and then to the Land Use Board of Appeals. Mr. Viggiano said that a CUP application had been submitted by LTD to the City, but was not yet official because the City had requested more information about station operation and design. He explained that it was difficult to give the City more detailed information about the design (which was very conceptual at that point) because LTD did not have the grant approval to hire an architect to do such a detailed design. He added that after further discussion with the City, LTD agreed to provide more detail, but would remain fundamentally at the conceptual level with its plans. Mr. Viggiano said that the problem with this agreement was that if the final development plans varied too much from the current conceptual design, LTD might have to get another Conditional Use Permit. He said that the City had the discretion to determine what constituted a significant change in operational or design plans.

Mr. Viggiano referred to drawings of the site and stressed that they were still conceptual. He pointed to one drawing which showed elevations from the north and south as well as a two-story Customer Service Center. He noted that the architect had compiled some goals that he associated with the project. The goals were as follows: define the street edge (how the station would look from the street); explore the potential for commercial uses on the street such as a coffee shop on the small, vacant areas at the corners; provide more pedestrian access onto the site; create wider sidewalks; improve the surrounding pedestrian area; develop the plaza for multiple use with food carts or other commercial uses; develop a "richer, more detailed scale"; address other operating concepts; and consider the location of the Customer Service Center (CSC) with respect to the street.

Mr. Kleger said that if use of the McDonald Theatre building was adopted for the CSC, the opportunity to have the CSC visible from the front desk would be lost. Ms. Loobey noted that it could still be monitored from the front desk by using a video camera. Mr. Kleger responded that this would not necessarily ensure that people would feel safe. Ms. Loobey said that additionally, people at the CSC could not see the buses arriving if the CSC were located in the McDonald Theatre building.

In response to Mr. Bailey's question regarding pedestrian access, Mr. Viggiano said the platform would have a shelter which would be ten to twelve feet off the ground. He explained that the intent was to provide shelter from the rain while allowing buses to pull up underneath. Mr. Viggiano noted that the drawing showed a two-story Customer Service Center and that this would necessitate an elevator costing \$20,000-\$30,000. He explained that with a two-story center, the platform would be visible from the upstairs offices, which would create a sense of security for people waiting there. He noted that to go to a one-story center might trigger an amendment to the Conditional Use Permit. In response to a question from Mr. Bennett, Mr. Viggiano said that anything significantly affecting appearance or operation of the facility could potentially trigger an amendment.

Mr. Engel asked for clarification of the CUP process. Mr. Viggiano explained that once a month a public hearing was held on CUPs. He said that if the application for the Eugene Station was submitted this week, the public hearing

would be held April 13. He added that anyone who wanted to comment on the plan could do so at that time or submit written testimony. After the hearing, the hearings official had 15 days to make the decision. In response to a question by Mr. Engel, Mr. Viggiano explained that the hearings official worked under contract to the City and was considered an impartial party in the decision-making process. He added that if the City requested more information with the application, LTD was obliged to provide that information in order to properly complete the application.

Mr. Bennett asked if the CUP criteria differed depending on location. Mr. Hibschan replied that the process was fairly generalized, but that individual zoning requirements determined what was a permitted use.

Environmental Impact Statement: Mr. Viggiano moved to a discussion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Eugene Station. He said that it would be completed by May 1 and that the consultant was working on completing the final. He said that it would be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which would have 45 days to review the EIS.

Ms. Hocken asked if LTD would have an opportunity to see what the EIS contained with respect to parking replacement. She asked how the information received from the public on parking replacement would be incorporated, given that LTD received comments about its data being inadequate and might choose to do something differently as a result of the feedback. Mr. Viggiano said the EIS was being prepared by a third party and that the process could not be influenced by LTD at this point. He noted that the consultant had used the City's most recent data to determine impacts. In response to Ms. Hocken's question about whether the new data altered the conclusions of the EIS, Mr. Viggiano said it would not alter impacts in the short term. However, he noted that, depending on other developments, the long-term impact of parking loss could be significant. He added the LTD still had the opportunity to review the document for accuracy. Ms. Hocken asked why the LTD Board had held public hearings on the issue if the process could not be influenced at this point. Mr. Viggiano explained that the public hearing was important for resolving issues related to the site and that the consultant had to consider all public testimony when putting together the EIS. He emphasized the fact that this was a technical document and not a policy document.

Mr. Viggiano said that, with respect to air quality, the EIS indicated that there would be no significant impact resulting from the proposed station, but there would be some noise impact beyond the minimum standards. In response to Ms. Fitch's question, he said that board members could get a copy of the draft of the final EIS. He noted that it was not significantly different from the Draft EIS.

Parking Replacement: Mr. Viggiano moved to a discussion of parking replacement. He noted that this was the most significant concern with respect to the McDonald site. He referred to the letter from Lane Community College (LCC) in the packet and noted that the LCC Board wanted to meet with the LTD Board. Ms. Hocken asked if it was productive for the entire LCC and LTD boards to meet at this time. She noted that the LTD must first agree as a board on its official position.

Mr. Montgomery questioned why the LTD Board should meet with LCC at all. He said that LTD could not solve the problem for LCC and that LCC should deal with the City. Ms. Hocken noted that as an interested party in the CUP process, LCC could not be ignored. She also said that she wanted to have a fair resolution of the issue.

Mr. Bennett said that his opinion differed from Mr. Montgomery's. He said that replacement of parking was important for the reasonable development of the downtown area. He said that he did not believe LTD had sole responsibility for mitigation of this issue, but that the parking issue had to be resolved somehow. He proposed renewing the effort to work with the City to replace every one of the 176 spaces to be lost in the process of building the Eugene Station. He added that, as members of the community, LTD had a moral obligation to see this issue resolved fairly.

Mr. Montgomery responded that he agreed with the need to resolve the parking issue, but noted that LTD could not force the City to create more parking spaces. He added that LTD was powerless to do more than urge the City to alleviate the situation through the building of more spaces. Ms. Hocken stated that LTD was not completely powerless in this respect because it could legally buy land and build parking spaces. She noted that it would be preferable to encourage the City to resolve the problem in cooperation with LCC. Ms. Hocken noted that as stated in 6.3 and 6.4 of the Option Agreement for Purchase of Real Estate, LTD had committed to resolving the problem of loss of parking. She noted that it said that LTD would provide not less than \$865,000 for the construction of a facility to mitigate the loss of parking.

Mr. Viggiano gave an overview of the options for mitigating the loss of parking. He said that there were two primary options with respect to expansion of the Overpark. The first option would entail adding one level and 130 parking spaces at a cost of \$1.4 to \$1.8 million. The second option would be to add two levels and 260 parking spaces at a cost of \$2.4 to \$2.8 million. He noted that along with these options there would be a possible need for a skybridge costing \$40,000 to \$75,000 or an outside elevator costing \$300,000. Mr. Viggiano said that there was also an option to build a separate garage with 600 parking spaces for \$5 to \$6 million. He said that other no-build options included Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies such as downtown bus passes to be distributed by downtown employers at cost of \$150,000, or running a shuttle from outlying parking lots at a cost of \$170,000 to \$340,000. He said that the City Council had also discussed raising the parking rates for downtown. He noted that the challenge lay in convincing people to shift their mode of transportation while not shifting employment away from going downtown.

Mr. Bailey said that he agreed that LTD ought to be involved in the effort to replace lost parking spaces, but that he did not appreciate the confrontational tone of the LCC letter. He would like to work on solving the issue together and not be threatened into doing so.

Ms. Fitch asked if LCC owned the building it now occupied. Mr. Viggiano said that it did.

Ms. Hocken observed that 20 parking spaces would be freed when LTD moved its buses off the street and into the new Eugene Station and asked if LTD still needed to replace all 176 lost spaces. Mr. Viggiano said that there were actually 183 parking spaces on the proposed site. He said that while LTD would be taking out six spaces on Willamette, it would be putting back 24 on 10th Avenue. He said that this would result in a gain of 18 spaces on the street. He added that LTD would be taking out a number of buildings with a net demand for 57 spaces and that therefore, the net loss of parking around the site would be 108 spaces. In response to a question, Mr. Viggiano said that LTD would be responsible for returning 10th Avenue to its original condition. Ms. Hocken said that with the most expensive option (the parking garage) there would be a cost of \$10,000 per parking space to replace the lost spaces. Mr. Viggiano noted that LTD was committed to contributing a total of \$1.4 million dollars: \$865,000 plus \$600,000 for the cost of the land.

Mr. Bennett reminded the board members that if this site had been sold to a private developer there would have been no parking replacement requirement because a tax increment would have been created. He explained that the tax increment would have helped fund the district and would have gone towards parking development. He said that he had heard a site this size could generate \$225,000 a year. Mr. Viggiano said that he heard it could bond \$2 million dollars.

Ms. Fitch asked how LTD, with its limited power as a board, could convince the City that LTD should not be responsible for all parking problems downtown. Mr. Bennett responded that LTD was not being asked to assume full responsibility for all of the parking problems, but that LTD needed to be a strong part of the solution. Mr. Bennett added that LCC was convinced that it would be in serious trouble if the parking spaces were lost.

Mr. Viggiano noted that the \$865,000 was from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and that it was Federal money. Ms. Hocken said that these funds were distributed annually and that LTD had accumulated funds from past years.

Mr. Kleger said that he also did not like the tone of LCC's letter, but that this obviously would not be solved without the participation of all three parties. He said that a meeting was necessary to bring the groups together. Mr. Kleger added that it was important to be clear on LTD's outside financial limits prior to going to any meeting with the City and LCC. He said that he did not want to shut down bus routes to pay for parking.

Ms. Hocken said that she thought it was a good suggestion to bring all three boards together, but in her experience in trying to schedule a meeting with another public body, the other parties wanted all members to be present, and this was difficult to arrange. Mr. Kleger said that this seemed an unmanageable number for the kind of discussion that needed to take place.

Ms. Loobey said that she appreciated the comments about the tone of the LCC letter and noted that LCC was only one of many interested parties in the parking replacement issue. She said that LTD staff had met with City staff on Monday and had a productive discussion of TDM strategy and parking replacement. She said that staff had come up a new option: that LTD provide funding

for one level of a new parking structure. She said that the \$865,000 and the \$600,000 would be credited toward the cost of replacement and that the City could put a new level in the Overpark or build a new structure. She added that the difference of \$300,000-\$400,000 would not be local LTD money, but would be Federal money. She said that it may be possible to use some of the Section 3 money for replacing parking. She noted that this provided an opportunity to obtain funds and to make up the gap between the \$1.4 and \$1.8 million. Ms. Loobey explained that one level would provide 130 parking spaces and that the net loss would only be 108 from the building of the Eugene Station. She said that providing 130 spaces would take care of LCC, the downtown merchants, and contribute to the goal of a dense urban core. Ms. Loobey said that she felt this was a clean solution that would give LCC no reason to become involved in the CUP process. She noted that LTD also had to be aware of the deadline for rescission of Federal funds for this project if it did not go forward. In response to Mr. Engel's question about who had been involved in the discussion of this option, Ms. Loobey said it was a staff-to-staff discussion. He also asked if LTD would receive the funds if it was not building a station. She said that it would not receive the Section 3 money.

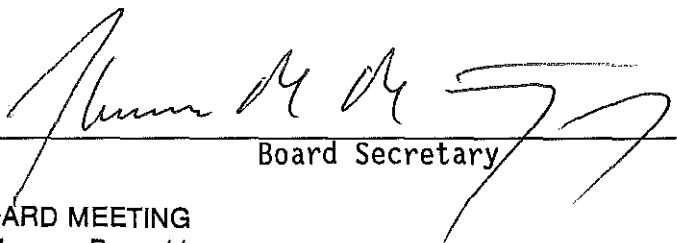
Mr. Montgomery said the proposed compromise seemed viable, but wondered how long LCC could go without parking. He noted that it could be years before the parking is replaced, given current LTD and City time lines. Ms. Hocken said that the parking would not be destroyed for 15-16 months and that there might be extra spaces available for parking for the short term. Mr. Viggiano noted that during construction a shuttle could be run from an outlying parking lot.

In response to Mr. Kleger's suggestion that the boards meet and share ideas, Ms. Fitch said that she thought the LTD board should meet not only with LCC but with other concerned merchants and interests from Olive Plaza as well. Mr. Bailey noted that he would like to see how this option worked for the City before meeting with LCC and agreed that LTD had a duty to meet with everyone.

Mr. Engel said the interested parties had already met with the LTD Board at a public hearing and said that he was not ready to meet with them again.

Ms. Hocken agreed and suggested that Ms. Loobey meet with LCC staff. Ms. Loobey said that she would contact LCC President Jerry Moskus and discuss compromises and options before arranging for the boards to meet. Ms. Hocken said that she would contact the chair of the LCC board and inform him of this process. Ms. Fitch said that she would like this to be added to the next meeting's agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.


Board Secretary