

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, October 16, 1996

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on October 14 1996, 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, October 16, 1996, at 5:00 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 East 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Kirk Bailey, Vice President, presiding
Rob Bennett
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Mary Murphy
Roger Saydack
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Patricia Hocken, President

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Board Vice President Kirk Bailey. Ms. Loobey stated that Ms. Hocken was not present because she was performing an audit in Portland, and the next day would be meeting with the committee that had been established as a part of the Governor's Oregon Transportation Initiative.

STATE POLICY TO LOCATE OFFICES IN DOWNTOWN AREAS: Ms. Loobey stated that there was a policy requiring state agencies to give preference to downtown sites when buying, renting, or leasing office space. Staff had read in the newspaper that the Eugene Branch of the Adult and Family Services (AFS) division was considering renting in the Chad Drive area, so planned to write a letter to the district manager encouraging them to remain downtown and offering to help with the transportation component for their clientele and employees. Ms. Loobey said there had been mixed results working with the State on location of their facilities, and she wanted to inform the Board that staff would be following up with the State.

WALKABOUT MATERIALS: Staff handed out sample materials to be used during the Board's community walkabout process.

WORK SESSION ON WEST 11TH PARK AND RIDE PROJECT: Planning & Development Manager Stefano Viggiano began by discussing Park and Ride facilities in general. He discussed the reasons people use Park and Ride facilities; different types of facilities; a map of proposed LTD Park and Ride facilities, and how that fit with long-range planning; important considerations in developing Park and Ride facilities; a survey of River

Road Transit Station users, with a map showing where those riders began their trips; and the results of a 1994 Park and Ride report. He stated that there were two main reasons people used Park and Ride lots: to save money and to save time. Most people considered only their out-of-pocket costs, such as for parking or the cost of the transit fare. The time savings included not only the bus or car trip, but it also included walking or driving to the bus and time spent waiting for the bus. In fact, people tended to view the time spent waiting at a bus stop as relatively more important than travel time.

The research indicated that there were three types of Park and Ride facilities. Local Park and Ride lots usually were lease arrangements to use a business's parking lot, accommodating a minimal number of cars. LTD had 20 of those around the community. The second type was the remote Park and Ride, such as LTD's River Road station. Those usually were owned by the transit agency or public entity, were larger, and offered express service. The third kind, which the local community did not have, was a peripheral Park and Ride, just outside the urban area. People would drive most of the way by car and park before they entered the more congested central business district. A shuttle route usually connected them with downtown. Remote Park and Ride facilities cut out more of the car travel and helped with VMT reduction more than peripheral facilities, which tended to reduce congestion, pollution, and the need for parking in the downtown area.

LTD's plan was to build more of the remote Park and Ride facilities. Ideally, staff would like to have a Park and Ride lot at each of the major arterials going into the central business district. In addition to the current River Road and Parkway stations and the planned East Springfield and West 11th facilities, there might be others along Coburg Road, Delta Highway, and Highway 99, and in the Gateway area. Autzen stadium also had been mentioned as a peripheral-type of Park and Ride facility.

In discussing LTD's recent survey of Park and Ride use at the River Road station, Mr. Viggiano showed where people came from to use the station. The express service on Beltline Road was an incentive for people to go a little out of direction to use the station rather than catching the regular route along River Road. This survey found that, although most of the Park and Ride users were from the River Road area, people also accessed the Park and Ride from Junction City, Monroe, and the Bethel/Danebo area. Most of the people using the Park and Ride lots were going to the UO, Sacred Heart, and downtown Eugene, with some going to Lane Community College (LCC), and very few going anywhere else. Of those, LCC was the only destination without parking costs, so those riders probably were saving wear and tear on their automobiles, or possibly bicycling to the bus. All but 1 percent were going either to work or school, so it was an exclusively commuter population. For the system as a whole, there was a much wider range of trip purposes. Most of the shopping destinations had free parking, so people were less apt to use Park and Ride lots to go shopping.

The survey also asked what people found most important about a Park and Ride facility and what needed improvement. People found express bus service to be very important, as well as parking availability, access to the bus, and bus frequency. Most people traveled less than three miles to the bus stop.

Mr. Bennett commented about meeting the time frame and schedule of people who wanted to shop for a short period, and the fact that even the Park and Ride locations for Valley River Center during the Christmas shopping period were not well used. He asked if any systems offered the right kind of vehicle every eight to ten minutes on an exclusive route to attract this kind of rider. Mr. Viggiano said that Portland's Lloyd Center was served by MAX (light rail), and offered to see how much MAX was used for shopping trips. Mr. Kleger stated that almost the entire schedule of buses was packed during the holiday season, and people were always wondering where they were going to put their packages. Mr. Bennett said that a different kind of vehicle was needed, in terms of size, shape, storage space, how people get on and off, etc. He said that maybe that was not as efficient as packing buses full, but it would appeal to a different market.

Mr. Saydack wondered if staff had considered a Park and Ride to Valley River Center from South Eugene High School, since it was more difficult to get to Valley River Center from South Eugene than it was from River Road. Mr. Viggiano said they had not, but could consider that. In response to Mr. Bennett's comments, he said that if buses are in the same traffic as the cars and there are no parking costs or restrictions on parking, there is not much incentive to park and ride and get there at the same time.

Mr. Viggiano said that what the District was trying to do with BRT was to speed travel, and often that was measured in the number of seconds saved at different points. If a Park and Ride lot required circuitous travel, that would offset the other savings. For the West 11th Park and Ride lot, having the bus stay on West 11th at the facility would eliminate the out-of-direction travel on the site and would be a big advantage. That made a site right on West 11th more attractive.

Mr. Viggiano said that there had been questions about the environmental assessment for the West 11th Park and Ride at the last Board meeting. He explained that the District followed an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) Rule from 1979, which was still in effect. It outlined the types of things that had to be considered in an environmental assessment (EA). They included land acquisition and displacement, land use and zoning, air quality, noise, and water quality. The EA was a requirement for using federal funds, and there were no waivers for Park and Ride facilities.

Mr. Bennett asked if any of the information needed for the EA already might be available. Mr. Viggiano said that it was fairly site-specific information, but sometimes it was possible to obtain base data without using an engineer. However, engineers were needed for certain types of analysis, such as traffic impact studies or air quality analysis.

Mr. Bennett wanted to make a comment for the record. He said that it was not that some of the issues were not important, but that someone from the private sector generally could get the crux of the important information without going to an engineer. His sense was that the information would already be there, and would be reviewed during the permit process. To him, this was an example of spending another 10 to 15 percent on the site, which he thought was a shame.

Mr. Saydack asked if the District would have to go through the environmental assessment if it built the Park and Ride without federal funds. Mr. Viggiano said that it would not.

Mr. Viggiano discussed a project schedule. Staff were recommending that at the November meeting the Board take action to select one or more sites on West 11th for further study. That study would include a Level I site assessment to review the history of the site and receive a risk assessment regarding possible contamination. Staff would proceed with an appraisal estimate, and thought it might be appropriate to hire someone with a development expertise to assist with the site study, as had been suggested during the tour of the West 11th sites. At the December 18 Board meeting, the appraisal information would be available and the Board would be asked to approve proceeding with an environmental assessment. In May, staff would ask the Board to take action on a grant application for the project. The application and the draft EA would need to be forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by June 1, 1997, because the money was in the statewide Transportation Improvement Program for the current fiscal year. If the funds (\$435,000) were not transferred to FTA by September 30, 1997, they would be lost to LTD. The time pressure would ease once the money had been transferred. At that time, the design process and land acquisition could begin.

West 11th Park and Ride Site Tour: Transit Planner Micki Kaplan discussed the sites visited by the Board the previous Monday. She had obtained more information since that time, in response to Board questions.

Site M: This 2.5-acre site included Arby's, Lanz Saw Shop to the west, and Coles Furniture and old houses to the south. Ms. Kaplan discussed different combinations of these parcels. Mr. Viggiano said that one option for Site M would be to keep the bus on West 11th rather than circulate it on the site, which would take less space and decrease travel time. Two acres was about the size of the River Road Transit Station, which contained about 150 spaces. Mr. Bennett commented that there already was a signal at Conger, which Ms. Kaplan said would save about \$100,000 in development costs.

Mr. Bennett asked about criteria for frontage. Mr. Viggiano said that staff would look at how much space would be needed for a bus shelter, and Mr. Bennett mentioned the need for a pedestrian way to the parking area, as well as room for cars going in and out.

The Board discussed several options for Site M, including different combinations and sizes of property. The Aqua Serene property would add the issue of higher cost, but would allow access to Oak Patch Road. Ms. Murphy suggested that this access would make it easier for many to get into the site, since West 11th would be a more difficult access. Mr. Viggiano said that there would be natural access from Conger, which could be made into a four-pronged intersection. Tax lot 200 probably would have to be included in order to do so.

Mr. Kleger wondered where an express bus to downtown and the UO would turn around. Ms. Kaplan said that it could let people off on the corner of Conger, and they could cross the street on west-bound trips. Mr. Kleger suggested an enhanced shelter on that

side of the street, because of weather, traffic, and the time people might have to wait to cross the street.

Mr. Saydack asked how much room the site would need in five to ten years, assuming that the typical riders would travel to the UO and Sacred Heart Hospital. Ms. Kaplan discussed demand estimates. The research had pointed out that every community was unique. Since the River Road Transit Station was functioning well, staff used data from that facility. They developed demand forecasts based on the River Road Transit Station and West 11th Avenue. Mr. Montgomery thought that the north side of the parabola was comprised mostly of commercial and industrial areas, so he wondered where the ridership would come from in that area. Ms. Kaplan said that Mr. Branch had used transportation analysis zones, which follow population. Mr. Viggiano said that the ridership would be almost all from the south side of West 11th Avenue.

Mr. Saydack asked, assuming that some of the Board's planned initiatives were successful and more people would be in the community in the next five to ten years, how many parking spaces the District would need to be successful. Ms. Kaplan said that if assuming a 5.5 percent ridership growth rate, a 150-car parking lot would be at 96 percent capacity by 2010.

Mr. Saydack asked about growth due to bus rapid transit (BRT). Mr. Viggiano replied that the beauty of a Park and Ride that did not require a bus deviation was that after it reached capacity, it could still serve as a Park and Ride for that number of cars, and another Park and Ride could be built along the BRT route to handle increased capacity.

Mr. Saydack wondered if the District should buy land for 250 cars now, because that would be needed ten years in the future. He said it presumably would be cheaper to buy the land now. Mr. Bennett said he thought the District might find that within ten years the community would grow within the urban growth boundaries and property would be more fully developed. To purchase a site later might be much more expensive. Mr. Viggiano mentioned the political implications of buying more land than was needed at the time, using the River Road Transit Station as an example, since it had taken several years for the site to be well used. However, a site could be developed incrementally, as needed.

Mr. Saydack asked if the District could purchase the Aqua Serene site now and let them use it until it was needed. Mr. Viggiano said he would like to get an attorney's opinion as an answer to that question.

Mr. Bennett asked what staff would consider doing differently with the River Road Transit Station, if anything, knowing what they now knew. Mr. Viggiano said he would not recommend anything different because of the way the site was being used. Mr. Bennett said that purchase of the land really was not a political issue; it was an issue of making good business decisions. He thought that Mr. Saydack made a good argument for at least seriously considering what would happen if LTD was successful. Mr. Viggiano thought that if a 150-car parking lot were developed, it probably would be half-utilized within two years, and grow from there. He thought the option of having the property and not tearing down buildings and displacing businesses was a good one, if it was a legal option for the District.

Mr. Bennett wondered about the time frame the District really was talking about. He thought they should be talking about 25 years. He wondered if staff discussed transportation projects in terms of less than 25 years. He said he was talking about the ability to utilize and increase the market share and the ability to compete with the automobile.

Mr. Viggiano said that staff would like some direction from the Board on whether or not to continue to look at other sites.

Ms. Murphy mentioned Site E by Fred Meyer, and thought that it merited further consideration because it already was a destination for the theaters and Fred Meyer. Mr. Viggiano said that the land owner's preference was to lease the site. To purchase it, the District would have to reach an agreement or use eminent domain. He discussed the funding constraints. He explained that the District had \$435,000, which probably would not buy the land. LTD also was asking for \$1.2 million as part of the Surface Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) funding for the area. That probably would not be enough for the new facility and to purchase Site E, but staff could look at that possibility if the Board members were interested.

Mr. Kleger asked if the catchment area studied so far extended beyond the railroad tracks to the north. Given that Seneca was one of the connections between the West 11th area and the Highway 99 area, he thought staff might want to look at the housing developments on the south side of the Danebo area. He said it was extremely easy to get from those places down Seneca to West 11th, so the catchment area should be larger to the north. Ms. Kaplan added that about 10 to 13 percent would come from the rural areas. as well.

Mr. Bennett said he was convinced that being on the south side had specific benefits, so he had concentrated on that for a main Park and Ride facility looking to the future. Mr. Bailey and Mr. Kleger agreed that the south side of West 11th was better for a Park and Ride facility.

The Board members agreed that the District should look at one of the variations of Site M.

Mr. Bailey reiterated Mr. Saydack's question about what the District could do about buying all that land and leaving the buildings there. Mr. Viggiano replied that this was both a legal and a funding issue. Mr. Saydack said he viewed it as a strategic issue, and a very important decision. This would be a landmark type of facility that would show the community what BRT would be. It was a straight shot to the UO and Sacred Heart Hospital, and the area was growing and expanding. There already was a lot of traffic congestion, and LTD could show the community the impact BRT could have. He thought it was a great opportunity for the District.

Mr. Kleger agreed. He suggested looking at a long-term option on the Aqua Serene land in order to have the potential for expansion and keep that property from being

developed further in the meantime. Mr. Viggiano said that Aqua Serene was assessed at \$600,000 and the other lots combined were assessed at about \$300,000. Mr. Bennett was not sure that an option would work, but it might. Mr. Saydack said he feared that the threat of condemnation could be a compensation issue. Mr. Pangborn said that it was a problem with using federal funds. The District would have to be able to make a good argument that in 20 years it would need the property, with a plan showing that the best way to develop it would be over that period.

Mr. Saydack asked if local funds could be used for part of the property, and suggested that buying all of parcel M might be just as good. Ms. Murphy thought that Arby's should be included in the purchase because its value would increase with more traffic. Mr. Bennett said that this was a good point, but the Arby's building was not very old. He wondered if the District would have to tear it down. He thought it was a reason for people to stop at that site.

Mr. Bennett asked if looking at both the Aqua Serene Site and the Coles/Saw Shop site would amount to \$1 million. Mr. Viggiano said it probably would, which would leave too little money for site development. Mr. Bennett asked staff's sense of additional funding. Mr. Viggiano replied that funding would likely need to be reallocated from other projects, such as the \$300,000 allocated for the relocation of the Springfield Station.

Mr. Saydack said he would be interested in seeing a financial overview, a feasibility study, of what the District could do. He would like to see if what the Board wanted to do could actually be done right now. He asked to see a site plan for the different options and how those could be funded. Mr. Viggiano asked if the Board would like staff to proceed with more accurate land costs. This would mean spending some additional resources to look at the appraised value.

Mr. Bennett said he would like to see the original Site M in its totality. He wanted to look at tearing down the Arby's building or leaving it. He did not want it to end up looking like a converted Arby's, or have a space layout that did not work.

Mr. Saydack and Mr. Bennett thought that having the appraised value, although maybe not the full appraisal, would help a lot in the decision. Mr. Saydack added that the District could then do a feasibility test based on the appraised values.

Mr. Viggiano said that in November, staff would bring to the Board site plans for the four different options for Site M, and how those could be funded.

Mr. Bennett added that it would be helpful if someone could say whether there had been service stations on those sites.

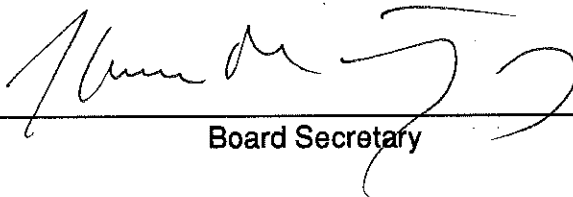
Mr. Saydack reviewed the four options for Site M: tax lots 300 and 200; tax lots 300, 200, and 100; the original Site M with Arby's; and Site M2, excluding Arby's.

Ms. Murphy asked if the appraisals included land as is; that is, who would be responsible for hauling trash off the sites, etc. Ms. Loobey said that this might be handled

through negotiations. She was concerned about old vehicles leaking fuel on the site. Mr. Viggiano said the appraiser would not get into contamination issues. The District would receive an appraisal assuming that there was no contamination, and that would be investigated separately.

Mr. Saydack asked also for a general idea of how the site would be used, including some analysis of whether the bus would go onto the site or stay on West 11th.

ADJOURNMENT: There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.


Board Secretary

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