

MINUTES OF EUGENE STATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

Monday, November 18, 1991

The second meeting of the Lane Transit District Eugene Station Advisory Committee was held on Monday, November 18, 1991, at 7:30 a.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, Chairman, representing Eugene Planning Commission
Debra Ehrman, representing Eugene City Council
Jef Faw, representing at-large position (Lane County)
Dave Kleger, representing at-large position (bus rider)
Jesse Maine, representing Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Mike Schwartz, representing Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Stafford, representing Eugene Downtown Commission
Phyllis Loobey, LTD General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. Mr. Gaydos commented that the Eugene Station was not just a Eugene issue, and said he appreciated having representatives from Lane County and Springfield on the advisory committee.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING: The committee scheduled the next meeting for 7:00 a.m. on Monday, December 2, 1991, in the LTD Board Room.

INTRODUCTIONS: Members of the audience were asked to introduce themselves. In attendance were LTD staff Mark Pangborn, Stefano Viggiano, Tim Dallas, Connie Bloom Williams, and Jeanette Tentinger; architect Eric Gunderson of Wilson Bryant Gunderson Seider (WBGS); Lee Shoemaker of the Lane Council of Governments; Bob Hibschan of the City of Eugene; and members of the public, representing Rags to Riches, the Attic Dresser, Rose and Thistle, and Legal Aid.

DISCUSSION OF ROLE OF COMMITTEE: Committee Chairman Gerry Gaydos summarized the previous week's meeting, at which the committee had reviewed a study that looked at 36 blocks in the urban core, for which criteria had been chosen and each site ranked by the LTD Board. Out of that ranking had come a couple of sites which seemed to be appropriate for the District's needs. A previous advisory committee, the Eugene Station Site Selection Committee, of which Mr. Gaydos had been a member, had chosen the Elections Lot as its preferred site. However, costs for the Elections Lot were higher than anticipated, so the LTD Board had asked to look at other sites and compare them with the Elections Site. The Site Selection Committee had also looked primarily at half-block sites, before it was determined that a half-block would not be large enough to meet ridership growth projections for the next 10 to 20 years.

In comparing 3/4-block and full-block sites, it was determined that an L-shaped lot was not a good configuration. The Board directed staff to conduct more research on two additional

sites, the Pasta Plus site, just south of the Register-Guard, and the IHOP site, where the International House of Pancakes was located. Consideration of these two sites, along with the Elections Lot, all of which were close to 3/4-block or larger, would give LTD a greater opportunity for planning and perhaps mixed-use development, and would allow the District to do what was necessary for a successful transit station.

Mr. Gaydos added that almost all of the sites in the urban core had been looked at to some degree. Some were highly developed and too expensive to convert to a transit station; some were too far on the fringe of downtown, or not in the direction of growth in the downtown area. He said it was important to understand that there had been some historical background in looking at sites. It was also important to understand the Eugene Station Advisory Committee's charge, which was to help LTD look at what kinds of items should be included in the transit station (the programming element). He said they might also give some input into what site is appropriate. The important thing, however, was that the committee members were there to act as a "sounding board," or liaison with their respective groups, and then would become advocates for the transit station and assist in getting the area to the point where it could respond to the Transportation Rules for the area. He said the committee members would also need to help develop community consensus regarding the station.

Mr. Schwartz asked if Mr. Gaydos meant that a full-block site was considered better than a 3/4-block site. Ms. Loobey said that a site which allowed a triangular-shaped platform rather than an L-shaped platform was preferable, so that might mean a full square block over an L-shaped 3/4-block site. Mr. Schwartz asked if the committee and the District shouldn't have enough vision to project that in 10 to 15 to 20 years the District might need a square block. Ms. Loobey said that a lot of the analysis that had been done would take the District out 20 years. To construct 23 bus bays and allow for turning radius and lift access would take more than a half-block site and a different configuration than a L-shaped 3/4-block site.

WHAT IS A CENTRAL TRANSIT STATION? (Design and Operational Considerations): LTD Planning Administrator Stefano Viggiano handed out copies of materials he and architect Eric Gunderson would discuss during the meeting. Before discussing the programming questions, staff thought it would be appropriate to look a little more at what comprised a central transit station. To do so, they would use the design developed for the Elections Lot. The site decision would not be made until January, but staff wanted to explain why a half-block or L-shaped lot would not work.

A key element of the station was the need to accommodate ridership growth and customer needs for 20 years, with the number of bus bays as the single most important element. Table 1 in the handout showed conservative 20-year projections for annual system-wide ridership, total peak fleet needed system-wide, daily station boardings, and peak station usage. When making these projections, staff had assumed between a 2 percent and 4 percent annual ridership growth, which was actually lower than the average annual growth during the past eight years. The District did not want to over-build the station, but had already exceeded the 1992-93 projections.

Mr. Viggiano said staff now believed that the station would need 23 bus bays. When the original projections were made, the assumption was that the station would be constructed in

1993, and projections were for 20 years past that date. The current target date for construction was 1996, so the station would need to be designed for the year 2013. Buses would travel through the station six times an hour, as opposed to the current pulse of four times per hour. Increasing the number of pulses would increase the capacity of the station. The proposed station and the increase in pulses downtown would allow LTD to double the amount of service during a 20-year period. Staff believed the station should be designed with 23 bus bays, three of which would be for lay-over buses, and that three bus bays should be designed to accommodate articulated buses (55- or 60-foot buses which bend in the middle). The articulated bus spaces would be used by standard buses until it became necessary to purchase articulated buses.

Mr. Schwartz asked if 23 buses would go through the station every 10 minutes. Mr. Viggiano explained that some buses would operate every 10 minutes, some every 20 or 30 minutes, and some once an hour, depending on the density of the area being served. Buses traveling along main corridors would operate more frequently than those going to low-density areas. Mr. Kleger explained that currently there was one "heavy" pulse with more buses stopping at the station, and then a lighter pulse at 5 and 35 minutes after the hour. However, the station needed to have the capacity for the heavy pulse. Mr. Schwartz wanted to know the potential number of buses using the station per hour in 2013. Mr. Viggiano said that maximum use of the station would mean that 23 buses would use the station six times per hour, with three of those being 65-foot articulated buses.

Mr. Gunderson summarized key elements discussed at the November 11 committee meeting. One of the goals for the Eugene Station was that it be an off-street transfer station, which meant providing for 23 to 26 buses to travel onto the site, park, and exit the site, so traffic was an important issue. People would be going to the station to take a bus, transferring between buses, or leaving the station to walk to their downtown destinations. The Customer Service Center (CSC) provided a waiting area out of the weather, sales of tokens and passes, and route and schedule information. The CSC would need to be positioned to serve both the customers on the platform and those walking to the station. Consideration needed to be given to how the buses would park on the site, allowing right-hand door entrances and exits, and room for lift boardings and deboardings from the front right-hand side of the bus.

Mr. Gunderson explained that the current station used a stacked linear parking design, in which buses pulled up behind each other and waited for the one in front to leave. He also explained the difference between stacked linear parking and a saw-tooth parking design, which would require greater width but less length in station design. Ms. Ehrman asked if there would be more backing up with the jagged saw-tooth design. Mr. Gunderson replied that there would. LTD is concerned about that concept, but found that many transit stations across the country operate that way. Mr. Viggiano added that the station design would need to ensure that pedestrians were not using the area behind the buses as a pedestrian walkway.

Mr. Faw left at this point in the meeting.

Mr. Schwartz asked how 23 buses could be located around a platform. Mr. Gunderson said a typical Eugene block encompassed a 400-foot grid from the center line on one street to the center line on the next street. That left about 334 feet of usable space. One-fourth of

a block allowed 160 feet, and an alley added 14 feet. He showed how using the half-block Butterfly Lot would necessitate using the alley to the west, as well as one traffic lane on Oak. In order to provide parking for 23 buses, stacked linear parking would be used, and customers on the far platform would be isolated from the CSC and main waiting area. Customers would also have to cross between buses. Mr. Gunderson also showed how buses might park on an L-shaped lot and a teardrop-shaped site. There was some discussion about which design would allow customers to predict the order in which buses would pull into the station, or to allow a bus to have a definite bay to pull into each time, and which would allow customers to transfer without crossing in front of bus traffic.

Ms. Ehrman asked if the disadvantages of the half-block Butterfly Lot outweighed the advantages. Mr. Gunderson said that was correct.

Ms. Ehrman left at this point in the meeting.

Mr. Kleger commented how important it was to have visibility of bus bays from the CSC, especially during snowy weather, when buses were off schedule and customers had to wait an undetermined length of time.

Someone from the audience asked if it would be possible to excavate and have two levels for buses on a half-block site. Mr. Gunderson said it might be possible, but the difficulty would be in the ramping distance plus the height needed above the buses. There would also be the issue of handicapped access between levels.

ELECTIONS SITE: Mr. Gunderson then used information gathered for the Elections Lot to discuss full-block sites. The Elections site involved some operational issues such as designing the site to avoid entering or exiting the station on 5th and 6th Avenues, and the use of two boarding platforms rather than one. It was a little larger than 3/4-block, and left about 23,000 square feet that could be developed separately.

Mr. Schwartz asked about surface parking loss at the Elections Lot. Mr. Gunderson said the lot currently housed dedicated parking for the 5th/Pearl Building (42 spaces) and Station Square (44 spaces). LTD would have to pay damages or replace the parking. The District did look at underground parking, with 215 spaces one level below ground. Mr. Schwartz thought that if the District were looking forward to the next 20 years, maybe underground parking would be the right step to take.

Mr. Maine asked about using the downtown station as a park and ride. Ms. Loobey replied that this might work if someone wanted to park there and go to Springfield or an outlying destination; ideally, however, park and ride lots should be located farther out, in order to intervene in car trips before they enter the downtown core.

Mr. Gunderson discussed the model station that had been prepared for the Elections Lot. He said the District saw this site as an opportunity to make an important linkage with downtown; such amenities as lighting, trees, street furniture, etc., would enhance how inviting it could be to cross from downtown to this block. He said that where the pedestrian amenities were placed would have a lot of power in enhancing the streets the station was on.

Mr. Gunderson compared the IHOP site with the Elections site. In the preliminary design for the IHOP site, all of the buses were around one central island, with no crossing of roadways to transfer between buses. The design would reinforce Broadway as a gateway to downtown, and would reinforce the pedestrian aspect of High Street. Mr. Gunderson thought there would be a lot of exciting architectural opportunities, with a different look but a similar approach as the Elections site.

In response to a question from Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Gunderson said that measuring half-way onto Coburg Road east of the IHOP site would be a full block. He said there was some excess land, which was shown as a park area, which the District thought would be a good buffer for the busy Ferry Street Bridge ramp. Mr. Gaydos wondered if the station could be moved over on the site to include the buffer area, leaving room for retail development on High Street. Mr. Gunderson said that would leave less than 30 feet for development. However, another layout on this site, similar to the Elections site, would allow more room for development.

Mr. Schwartz asked where the buses would enter the IHOP site. Mr. Gunderson showed primary access off and onto Broadway, but the site could have ingress from 8th or exit to 8th. There was some discussion about proposed Ferry Street Bridge options. One would make Coburg in this block a local street like Broadway, which would mean that this area would seem more a part of downtown. That could enable the redesign of the site for retail. The problem was that Ferry Street Bridge construction was so far off that the District was hesitant to design the station around the Ferry Street Bridge project.

Mr. Viggiano stated that the design of the site depended on the actual site chosen, and cost estimates could then be developed. When staff discussed the design for the Elections site with the LTD Board, the Board members were very concerned about the cost estimate. Staff developed options to reduce the cost from \$10.6 million to \$8.2 million, and made some inquiries to other cities which had completed projects of this type. Staff used a cost per bus bay as the comparison, and found the average for all the other facilities to be \$504,000. However, two of the projects were very expensive, due to an underground station and a bi-level station, both in Denver. Removing those two projects from the comparison, the average cost per bus bay was \$352,000, which was fairly close to the preliminary facility designs LTD had developed.

DISCUSSION OF SITE SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA: Mr. Viggiano reviewed the site selection process, saying that during the initial cut of the 36 blocks in the downtown core, all but ten sites were found to have "fatal flaws," such as being highly developed or including historical buildings. He briefly discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the remaining sites, and said that siting factors were developed to reduce the number of sites. Those siting factors included size, location, operational characteristics, cost, and parking and compatibility with adjacent uses. The ratings for each site by factor were included in the packet handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Schwartz asked about parking replacement on the IHOP site. Mr. Viggiano explained that the northwest corner of the site was owned by the Baptist Church and leased

to the City Monday through Friday. LTD would have to pay damages or provide replacement parking.

Mr. Viggiano said that, after discussing the ratings for the individual sites, the LTD Board agreed that IHOP was its preferred site, and selected the Pasta Plus site as a second site for further review. The Pasta Plus site was chosen because it was close to the University of Oregon, downtown, and the future Riverfront Research Park, and was largely undeveloped. If, after further review, the IHOP or Pasta Plus sites appeared to be feasible and attractive for a transit station, the Board would likely move ahead with the project. If not, the District would gather additional information on other sites. This further information on the IHOP and Pasta Plus sites would not be available until January.

Mr. Schwartz asked if money was a consideration in the selection of the IHOP site as the number one site, and if the Elections site would be the preferred site if money were not a consideration. Mr. Viggiano said he could not second-guess the Board, but there were some concerns about the Elections site that were not related to money, including that it was isolated from the rest of downtown by 6th and 7th Avenues, and the need to cross busy streets to get to the Elections site. Mr. Pangborn added that half of the site was owned by the County, and involved code-required parking and an office building. The issue of taking an office building and trying to find another near the County offices was only one of the unknowns about the site.

Ms. Loobey said the Board could have directed staff to examine all of the remaining sites, but since it would cost about \$15,000 to examine each site, the number was narrowed to two. The Elections site was considered a back-up site and would be compared with the others. Another component of examining these sites was the issue of parking which would have to be replaced. The question of where to put any parking, underground or overhead or on a portion of the lot, would have to be addressed.

Mr. Gaydos asked about the impact of the Ferry Street Bridge redesign on the design of the IHOP site. He wondered whether a local street versus a major arterial would cause concerns for operations or visibility, etc. Mr. Viggiano said that it would improve the IHOP site if the Ferry Street Bridge off-ramp became a local street in that area, because the area would then seem closer to downtown. However, staff were assuming that would not happen, because it was expensive to move traffic further to the east. In the worst case, the street design would stay the same and would act as a pedestrian barrier, as it currently did.

Mr. Viggiano added that LTD and City staff were continuing to discuss parking issues, and more information could be provided at the next committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Gaydos suggested that the meeting end at that point on the agenda, and continue at the next meeting at 7:00 a.m. on December 2. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.



Committee Chairman