

MINUTES OF EUGENE STATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

Monday, February 10, 1992

The fifth meeting of the Lane Transit District Eugene Station Advisory Committee was held on Monday, February 10, 1992, at 7:00 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)
Mike Schwartz, representing Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Stafford, representing Eugene Downtown Commission
Phyllis Loobey, LTD General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

Absent: Jesse Maine, representing Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Gaydos called the meeting to order at 7:05 a.m. Committee members, staff, and those in the audience introduced themselves.

MOTION **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Kleger moved that the minutes of the December 16, 1991, Advisory Committee meeting be approved as distributed. The motion was seconded,
VOTE and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

BOARD DESIGN DIRECTION: Stefano Viggiano, LTD Planning Administrator, explained that Mr. Gaydos had presented the Advisory Committee's recommended design guidelines to the LTD Board in December. The Board had agreed with most, but not all, of the Committee's recommendations. The Board preferred to use concrete rather than concrete pavers, and to provide utilitarian restrooms. The Committee had recommended satisfying the transit objectives of the station first, and then considering mixed-use with retail on the site. The Board did not approve of permanent retail structures, but left the door open for vendor carts. The Board also had said that quality materials should be used, and that the station should meet the basic needs of the riders in terms of amenities and a cover, but that additional costs for aesthetic reasons should not be incurred. The Board did not approve of a landmark-type feature, but agreed that the station itself might be a landmark. Mr. Gaydos said he felt the Board got caught up in the issue of a clock tower rather than the idea of a landmark, and it became an issue of money.

PREFERRED TRANSIT STATION SITE: Mr. Viggiano discussed the comparison of Pasta Plus and I-HOP sites, beginning on page 9 of the agenda packet. He explained that these were the two sites selected for further review by the LTD Board of Directors, and that staff had completed an evaluation based on size, location, operational characteristics, cost, and parking displacement/damages. The Pasta Plus site, a full block, had a slight advantage for size. The I-HOP site was about 80 percent of a block, and the Pasta Plus site would have

land left over for future development or possible mixed use. The I-HOP site was seen as being in the better location within downtown Eugene, due to its proximity to employment at City Hall, the Public Service Building, and the Federal Building, and to retail at the three largest retail centers in the downtown area (the Fifth Street area, the Broadway and Pearl area, and the Eugene Mall).

Mr. Viggiano explained that operational characteristics were very important to LTD. This category included bus access to, through, and from the site, in relation to the main corridors in the downtown Eugene area, as well as how the passenger platform operated. The I-HOP site required less travel from the major corridors. This was important to LTD because travel time had long-term cost implications. Mr. Viggiano explained some of the options for use of streets from both sites, and said that the I-HOP site had a slight advantage in the operational characteristics category.

A table on page 12 compared cost estimates for developing the sites, and included the Elections site as a comparison. Some costs had been saved from the original estimate by using a 30-foot-wide shelter instead of the 40-foot shelter at the Election site, by not using concrete pavers, and by designing the station with only one boarding platform, rather than the two needed on the Elections site. Building costs for the Customer Service Center (CSC) were also reduced, by \$.5 million. Construction costs for the I-HOP and Pasta Plus sites were similar. At the Pasta Plus site, however, associated costs would be somewhat higher because of traffic improvements that would have to be made, including street widening at 10th and Mill. Land costs were fairly close for the two sites, but were just estimates at that point.

Mr. Viggiano said that the contingency and damages costs were estimated at 40 percent, because it was early in the process and there were a lot of unknown factors. This category would include parking damages, which were very difficult to determine, and would be affected by what kind of replacement parking might be made available. That cost might be much higher at the Pasta Plus site, where parking displacement would be more significant, but for the time being, was estimated about the same at the two sites.

Mr. Viggiano explained that this was a simple evaluation, which indicated some positive and negative factors about each site. Staff were asking the Committee to recommend to the Board which of these two sites was the Committee's preferred site, if either. Staff believed that the I-HOP site was the preferred site, since location was the key criterion. Mr. Viggiano stated that the criteria were not weighted, but if they were, location would be weighted heavily.

Mr. Viggiano stated that should the Board select one site as its preferred site, there would be further review, and staff would continue to work with the people most affected by the site selection, such as the First Baptist Church, which neighbored the I-HOP site. The final selection of a site probably would not be made until spring.

Mr. Stafford said that a recently-completed downtown resources survey indicated that buildings on the I-HOP site had possible historical significance. Mr. Viggiano said that the southwest corner was owned by McNutt, and the houses were listed as historical resources. That designation did not prevent the buildings from being torn down, but LTD would work with the City and other groups to relocate those houses, instead, if that site were selected.

SHOULD A PARKING STRUCTURE BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PROJECT?:

Ms. Loobey provided some history about the location of the Eugene Transit Station, which had been on the community's agenda three times since 1970. During the last two years, the District had undergone an exhaustive process to try to determine the preferred site. That process had led to the Elections lot, where parking replacement for code-required parking would be required for three-fourths of the lot. The Board had then instructed staff to look at every possible option for three-fourths-block sites in the downtown core. The Eugene Station Advisory Committee had been formed to provide perspective on how to meet the community's goals for the station, keeping in mind cost, convenience for passengers and growth, and the facility's benefit to the community as a whole.

Ms. Loobey explained that the station along 10th Avenue no longer worked well for the District, since it was at capacity and people were missing their transfers. The Clean Air Act required the community to think about density and land use, and encouraging more people to ride the bus could result in fewer parking spaces. Having more lots available might encourage people to build in the downtown core, which they could not do currently because of code-required parking.

Ms. Loobey said it had been difficult for her to talk about parking cars and transit in the same sentence, but she understood that there had to be some parking downtown, and suggested that the City and LTD could work together to find a solution. In Portland, an alliance between public and private businesses put a lid on the number of parking spaces in downtown Portland ten years ago, and almost 50 percent of the morning peak trips to downtown were being taken by bus or on MAX, the light-rail system.

Ms. Loobey said that the District had an opportunity to help solve the parking issue for more than just the First Baptist Church. The money for the project could be leveraged to mean more to the community; a transit station and parking mixed-use development could provide greater benefit to the community by encouraging more development, and would enhance the District's ability to serve its customers. The transit station project was very important for LTD, especially since ridership had grown 60 percent during the last seven or eight years. Two-thirds of those riders went through downtown Eugene. Forty percent of those were students, and one-third were going to work or shopping downtown. Ms. Loobey commented that she would like to know about any other business that brought more than 10,000 people into the downtown area.

Low Bowers, of the City of Eugene Planning staff, said he was present in a supportive role, to assist with the project on a conceptual basis. City staff had looked more closely at what might be parking alternatives in downtown. For the I-HOP site, they looked at the cost for parking above and underneath the station, or replacement parking off-site. Alternate sites for parking included the Greyhound lot, where the half-block east of the Eugene Hotel and Greyhound was currently used for surface parking. Architect Eric Gunderson had prepared a design and some very rough costs for a parking structure beneath or above the transit station. Parking above the station would be more expensive, resulting in 419 spaces for \$10-\$13 million. Providing natural light for parking under the station would add some costs.

Mr. Bowers said that City and LTD staff were not talking about replacing code-required parking with this mixed-use station; rather they were talking about reasonably-required parking for additional development in the downtown area. By replacing surface parking with a parking structure, the City would have a long-term model for downtown, in cooperation with LTD.

Mr. Schwartz wondered who owned the Greyhound lot. Mr. Bowers said that the parking was owned in conjunction with the Eugene Hotel and by another owner. The City and LTD had not had extensive discussions with those owners, because the concept was still at the preliminary discussion stage. Mr. Stafford commented that this concept, a parking garage in relation to either the Pasta Plus or the I-HOP site at the Greyhound lot, would cost more, because the City would only be gaining 292 additional spaces. He thought the City should be considering net new spaces, because that was what the downtown needed. Mr. Bowers said that could be accomplished by adding another level on the parking garage, but that would also increase costs.

Ms. Ehrman wondered if LTD would lease the parking to others, since parking was not the District's mission. Ms. Loobey explained that the parking garage would be a City project, and LTD would have nothing to do with the parking. LTD would just provide the parking damages as seed money for the project. Mr. Kieger added that LTD's participation would be to mitigate the loss for the station land, and encourage other people to get involved. Mr. Schwartz asked how the parking structure would be funded. Mr. Bowers said there was no definitive answer at that point. If the concept made sense to the LTD Board, the next step would be to present the idea to the City Council. Options for funding could include expansion of the renewal boundaries and use of renewal development funds.

Ms. Ehrman asked about a comfortable net number of spaces, and how that could be accomplished with a parking garage over the station. Mr. Bowers said that five stories above the station would be necessary to provide 400 spaces, since the garage would need to be smaller in width to allow the backs of the buses to be out in the open air. Mr. Bowers said that 92 spaces would be needed for I-HOP replacement. If 500 spaces were built, he said he would predict that there would be additional construction on several sites, which would use the structure for parking. He said there would not necessarily be more spaces over time, but the parking would be consolidated and more building would be possible, which in turn would support mass transit.

Mr. Schwartz said he thought the parking idea was "perfect," and that it would work. However, knowing the budgetary issues the City would soon come into, it would have to be careful about how it put these two issues together. He thought that parking issues could take years, and might delay the transit station's time line. Ms. Ehrman thought, however, that if the structure were off-site, there could possibly be an agreement or understanding with the City to go ahead with the station and expect parking to be a part of the project, with LTD's contribution to the project. However, the 92 spaces would be necessary before a parking garage might be built.

Mr. Faw recommended that the District de-couple the issues of siting the transit station and the long-term parking needs of the City. He said the present need for downtown parking

was near the Elections lot, and that Centennial Bank was still serious about building in that area. On other sites, the need for parking was speculative, based on future building.

Mr. Kleger wondered if the District had considered building overhead parking to meet the District's requirements for replacement parking, but engineering the structure to permit construction later, and what those cost implications might be. Ms. Loobey said the District had not looked at that, and wondered how and where the District would operate during the second phase of construction. She said the costs would increase by doing a two-phase project, but staff had no estimates at that time.

Mr. Schwartz thought that the District had to go back to the Elections lot if considering what a parking structure meant to downtown, such as what Sacred Heart Hospital did. He thought the District should also look into Mr. Kleger's suggestion to see if two floors of parking could be added later. He also thought that, in the long term, the Pasta Plus site was not where the District would want to be.

Mr. Gaydos asked if the Committee was ready to take action that day, or needed another meeting. Mr. Schwartz said that if the Committee was going to help for the long-term future, it would take more work for the right analysis. He thought the Committee did not have enough information for the long term.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Leonard Witt introduced himself as a lay person and Chairman of the Council of the First Baptist Church in downtown Eugene. He said the Council members agreed that there were too many issues that needed to be addressed to take action that day. He said the church had been in the downtown area longer than the City had been chartered (140 years), and had made a conscious decision to stay downtown. The council members were concerned about the parking issues because the church owned part of the I-HOP lot. Mr. Witt said the church representatives were impressed by the research done by LTD, but added that the study lacked the positive and negative aspects of the impact on the areas where the station could be located. He felt there would be a serious impact on the First Baptist Church, and had sent a letter which touched on some of the issues. He said they had not had sufficient answers to some of their concerns, and wasn't sure that some of the I-HOP site's other neighbors had been contacted about the impact of the station on their businesses.

Mr. Witt said that the First Baptist Church had 2,000 members, and 3,000 people attended church. He said the church's representatives were adamantly opposed to the I-HOP site because some of their issues had not been addressed.

Mr. Schwartz asked for specifics about the issues and negative impacts. Mr. Witt said that their issues were those of safety, pollution, noise, and parking, with parking being the extreme issue for them. They had added a third service on Sundays, and 1,500 people attended on Sunday mornings. The loss of 92 spaces could set the church back for a year, especially with the elderly people who needed close access. The church was an old building and was not air conditioned. The buses would enter and exit the station right in front of and to the side of the church, and it would be impossible to have services with the buses going by.

Mr. Witt said that an article in *The Register-Guard* had documented some of the concerns about the station at 10th and Willamette. Whether those perceptions were true or not, other people read that paper and may decide not to go to church at First Baptist because of the nearby transit station. He said the church felt that LTD had to know how to deal with that perception before the church could buy into the idea of having the station at the I-HOP site. He said that these were only some of the church's concerns, and that the church would like to meet with a Board subcommittee or the whole Advisory Committee. He thought that others who were also affected by this proposed site would like to discuss it with the Committee.

Ms. Ehrman asked Mr. Witt if his concerns might also be concerns wherever the station would go. Mr. Witt said that was absolutely correct, but that the church had 2,000 to 3,000 people who would be impacted by the station at the I-HOP site. Ms. Ehrman said that a substantial proportion of the church's membership was elderly, and wondered if Mr. Witt saw the advantage of the bus system for the elderly, and whether he would encourage people to ride the bus. Mr. Witt said he would be in favor of any way for people to get to church. He added that he knew LTD could take the property if it wanted to, but the church was opposed to the location.

Mr. Kieger said he knew of half a dozen people who walked from the bus to the church, even though it was difficult for them to walk the five blocks. However, he said, moving the station would make a longer walk for people who took the bus to St. Mary's.

Mr. Witt was asked how many days a week the church needed that lot. Dr. Kimball Hodge, III, Senior Pastor of the church, replied that the parking spaces were needed every day. On Wednesday evenings, when spaces were available, church activities required 150 to 200 spaces in the area. There was also a full-time staff, and things went on at the church continuously, such as basketball, meetings, weddings, etc. There were 370 outside uses of the facility last year, which was more than one per day. He said that, as for any business, parking was of major importance to the church, and the church had greatly benefited from empty spaces near the church. He said he was not against LTD at all, but that location would leave the church without parking spaces of its own. He said that the church used 150 spaces on that site, and rented the lot behind Greyhound and used many of those spaces. During construction, the church would lose its spaces, and half the people wouldn't be able to go to their church.

Dr. Hodge expressed his appreciation to the Advisory Committee, Ms. Loobey, and the staff for meeting with the church representatives and allowing them to express their concerns.

A person from the audience asked who to contact at LTD in the future. Mr. Viggiano said that people were welcome to contact him or Ms. Loobey.

NEXT MEETING: The Advisory Committee scheduled its next meeting for 7:00 a.m. on Monday, March 9. Ms. Ehrman asked staff to consider the possibility of a small parking structure, and reconsider the Elections site. Mr. Gaydos summarized that the Committee would like more information about whether or not parking should be coupled with this project, and if it were, whether that should be done at the Elections lot; if the station should be built

with the ability to add parking above in the future; and what the possibilities would be to alleviate the impact on the church members during construction. Mr. Schwartz added that, if the renewal district were to be expanded, he would like to know how the City staff thought a \$9 million structure could be paid for over time and not affect anything else scheduled in the budget already. He said this kind of project might make sense for the City. Mr. Gaydos asked to hear about other financing options, as well.

ADJOURNMENT: There was no further discussion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Committee Chairman