

Keeping Downtown Eugene Vital
by meeting the challenge of
Energy-Transportation Convergence
through the development of a combined
Housing and Transportation Center
at the
10th and Charnelton Development Site

Jim Wilcox, Director
BikeLane Coalition

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Dear Review Committee:

On behalf of interested parties, I submit this proposal acknowledging that our design as envisioned lacks many technical requirements contained in the RFP but with the understanding that the City reserves the right to accept proposals even if the respondent has not submitted all information referenced in the RFP. However, we believe our project as described is worthy of consideration and further refinement since the project must include alternative transportation/energy options to meet the developing need for sustainable living. Given that the site is located within the Transit Development Overlay Subdistrict (TOD), our proposal is unique in addressing not only the inclusion of retail and housing, but adds the crucial element of a sustainable transportation infrastructure.

We are proposing a Housing Transit Center (HTC) that combines a variety of established technologies that address the number one threat to livability and the success of downtown businesses: Transportation based on fossil fuels. Though the automobile will forever provide essential services, our proposal presents the opportunity to reduce our dependency on the car, lessen our impact on the environment, improve people's health and reduce our strategically precarious dependency on imported oil. Our nation relies on oil for 97% of its energy needs, yet only has access to 2% of the world's reserves. Our proposal reverses this precarious dependency by shifting the transportation resource to renewable hydro and solar sources.

Roger Duncan, now head of Austin Energy, and recognized as one of the top leaders in world efforts to stop global warming by Business Week Magazine, noted in a 2005 paper on energy and transportation, that electrification of the transportation sector presents the best alternative to meeting the converging challenges of energy independence, resource depletion and environmental concerns.*

In addition, OSPIRG Consumer Associate Matt Wallace noted that the surge in LTD ridership should be supported by increased federal funding for mass transit. We believe our proposal supports alternative transportation and works with LTD to address these challenges.

We propose a combination of seven design elements that meet the looming challenge to downtown development.

1. Electric vehicle parking and charging. To enhance the attraction of alternative modes to the downtown core while protecting the environment, the development of HTC would include an array of solar panels. These panels would serve a charging center for electric vehicles. Available now are Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, while other manufacturers such as Mitsubishi, Miles, and ZENN are nearing final development of better performing electric cars and trucks. During peak charging seasons, it may be possible to "sink" or save excess energy in a fleet of City electric vehicles. This would be an especially attractive option, as net metering, or the selling back of excess energy to EWEB, is not an option in the core area at this time.

2. Electric vehicle sales and service. Because the building will be a nexus for alternate modes of transportation, it will naturally attract those interested in purchasing products in the same market segment. This could include the sale of neighborhood electric cars and trucks, electric scooters, wheelchairs and Segways as well as service for those products. To keep up with innovation in this area, options for custom work and assembly should also be considered. We already have a commitment from Joseph McKinney, President of Oregon Roads Vehicle Sales and Leasing, who intends to lease space in this design for the assembly and sales of electric vehicles.

3. A Bikestation type parking and service system. The proposed structure would include a secure and

attractive method of storing bikes that will encourage cycling for commuting and shopping in the downtown area. It is estimated that 40 % of all trips by car are within 2 miles, and 50% of all commute trips by car are within five miles. A Bikestation would also increase trips to downtown for events, and serve as a parking/storage facility for downtown residents. In addition, the Bikestation could serve the employees of local government agencies, and negate the development of additional storage facilities in planned government buildings. See: <http://www.bikestation.org/> for more information.

Such an option already exists in other localities. The Bikestation franchise has proven successful in large metropolitan areas as well as in smaller communities. These can be developed in existing buildings or in newly created facilities. They range from wholly automated systems with little cost, to larger staffed operations. Building costs start as low as \$25,000 but can escalate depending on complexity. Operating costs for an automated system are estimated at about \$25,000 per year up to \$150,000 per year for a fully staffed operation. Funding sources are private investment, municipalities, transit districts, DEQ, Oregon DOT, etc. Operating costs are also partly covered by membership fees. Our organization, BikeLane Coalition is interested in pursuing the collaboration needed to fund this component.

4. Car Sharing/Zip Car type services. To encourage alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking and bus ridership, including the use of an electric vehicle for short trips around town or hybrid vehicles for longer trips can be a for-charge service in this project. These types of services are popular in many metropolitan areas where Zip Car is successful. Development of this service can include a new Zip Car franchise or an independently operated but similar type services called Eugene Car Share Co-op, currently operated by Oregon Roads. Additionally there could be long term parking for electric shuttles to the airport. <http://www.zipcar.com/>

5. Theater/Community Education Facility. Downtown Eugene has proposed the Downtown Brand Plan to make Downtown Eugene the Arts and Entertainment Epicenter of the Region. Our proposal includes a multifunction space that addresses this goal and serves as a theater for a variety of new and independent movies and live music, as well as a location for continuing education. We envision that the HTC will attract an interest in developing technologies around energy, transportation and ecology, all of which could form a basis for the use of this multifunction area for community education. We believe that Art and Science, as expressed in such events as da Vinci Days in Corvallis, are a natural meld that would thrive in this development.

6. Housing. In accordance with the intent of the City to establish housing downtown, our proposal includes this essential element. In our scenario, the housing would include a number of innovative elements designed to reduce energy use, such as passive solar, as well as high efficiency lighting and appliances. In addition, residents would receive a "credit" for using electric vehicles and alternative transportation that does not rely on fossil fuels while reducing the building footprint devoted to vehicle parking.

7. Retail and office tenants. Such as: First floor A: East side- Car Share Office, Car and Truck rental office and retail space for Zero Emission Vehicle display and retail sales and finance center, bike parking and repair. In addition, the space could house space for classrooms and transportation logistics management and B: West side- indoor-outdoor Farmers Market, including specialty shops such as a cheese shop, fish market, bakery, etc.

A Completely Sustainable Building

We believe the technology exists to create a building with near zero net energy requirements from outside sources. This would be achieved through the use of passive solar design elements, high efficiency glazing and

insulation of the building envelope, solar water heating "sunk" into an indoor pool, water source heat pumps and direct use of electricity for car charging and residential use.

Location, location, location!

There will continue to be housing developments in the downtown area. Our proposal will support such developments by allowing individuals to reduce their dependency on individual car ownership. Residents in developments near the HTC can shed their car, knowing that their transportation needs will be met by the Station's car sharing and secured bike parking. Residents of HTC who choose to not own a car should be given a credit, much like carbon credits but on a personal exchange level. Such an option will also support leasing of office space, as challenges over commuting will be negated for those who occupy the retail space.

This will not be a simple project. It will require participation by the City of Eugene, LCC, LTD, the U of O and OSU, private investors, downtown citizens and business owners. The City can make an investment by procuring an initial fleet of electric vehicles that could be charged in this location.

The timing of our proposal is profound. Rising energy costs, creating a strain on transportation and other energy intensive products and services are headline news as we write. The City of Eugene has the opportunity to meet this challenge and the needs of our citizens who will become more dependent on a vision of development that combines housing and transportation in one project. We believe the Housing Transportation Center is a kind of lifeboat for our time and for the future, as energy and transportation converge requiring a new way of living.

We would be happy to discuss our vision for the Housing-Transit Center in more detail. We would be willing to run these concepts by key players such as DEI, the Mayor, EWEB, and LTD.

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*Source: Report on Transportation Convergence Duncan Roger, Deputy General Manager, & Osborne, Michael J. Osborne. Austin Energy. (March 1, 2005)

See: <http://www.austinenergy.com/About%20Us/Newsroom/Reports/gasOptionalvehicles.pdf>