

Lompoc City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: February 16, 2010



TO: Laurel M. Barcelona, City Administrator

FROM: Richard L. Fernbaugh, Aviation/Transportation Administrator
r_fernbaugh@ci.lompoc.ca.us

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE SITE FOR THE NEW TRANSIT CENTER FOR PURPOSES OF PREPARING ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council and Redevelopment Agency Board approve, for purposes of preparing environmental studies, the site on the northeast corner of Cypress Avenue and "I" Street as the project location.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Preliminary Planning Work

City of Lompoc Transit (COLT) currently serves the City with 5 fixed-routes and ADA service. The City is also served by The Breeze Bus, Clean Air Express, Wine Country Express and Chumash Casino Bus. Currently, transfers primarily occur at a small curbside facility within the Mission Valley Plaza Shopping Center.

While minimally functional, the current site is deficient for a number of reasons. The facility:

- ✓ ... is too small to accommodate more than 2 buses at a time;
- ✓ ... has limited amenities for passengers, offering only a minimal overhead shelter;
- ✓ ... has inherent conflicts between passenger vehicles and transit vehicles;
- ✓ ... does not accommodate all transportation services, such as Clean Air Express;
- ✓ ... is not centrally located; and,
- ✓ ... provides limited opportunity for expansion.

Moreover, although COLT has been a welcome tenant in the Shopping Center, this situation is an inhibiting factor in transit planning and the service expansions necessary to meet growing demand.

City staff and the City's consultant, Dokken Engineering, has conducted a thorough assessment of potential sites for a new facility. As part of this assessment, the following steps/documents have been completed.

1. Completed new long-range ridership forecasts to determine the number and size of buses that will be simultaneously present at the transfer center;
2. Identified Possible Transit Center Locations (Attachment 1);

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3. Identified criteria to evaluate sites (Attachment 2); and,
4. Evaluated and ranked potential sites using the identified criteria (Attachment 3).

Stakeholder and Community Participation

Great emphasis has been placed on involving all interested stakeholders early in the planning process. Stakeholder groups that have been included are the following:

- ✓ City staff representing the Public Works Department, the Community Development Department, the Finance Department, the Redevelopment Agency, the Parks and Recreation Department, and City Administration.
- ✓ Transit riders and representatives of transit-dependent groups.
- ✓ Neighborhoods and community-based organizations.
- ✓ Business leaders.
- ✓ Property owners and tenants.

In addition to regular meetings with City staff, the Dokken Engineering team has:

- ✓ Conducted two general community workshops that were noticed in the Lompoc Record and that were noticed in direct mailers to existing databases of persons interested in transit matters;
- ✓ Sent letters to property owners and tenants of businesses in the downtown area, and met with all interested parties that responded in one-on-one meetings; and,
- ✓ Met with the Chamber of Commerce's Development Task Force.

The project and site has been strongly supported by all stakeholders who have participated. The project is generally recognized as having both immediate, obvious benefits, and is also seen as a significant piece of new infrastructure that can be incorporated into future Downtown redevelopment projects. Immediate, obvious benefits include bringing more customers to existing Downtown businesses, stimulating growth of existing businesses and increasing tax revenues from Downtown businesses. The facility will make the downtown area more accessible to all residents of the City and has the potential to bring patrons who are currently not visiting downtown.

There is no known opposition.

Designation of Project Alternative for Purposes of Environmental Study

After an extensive review and evaluation of sites throughout the City of Lompoc, it was determined the ideal location for the transfer center is the existing City of Lompoc public parking lot at the northeast corner of Cypress Avenue and "I" Street.

The other top-ranked sites that were evaluated were as follows:

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- ***Along E. Laurel Avenue, between "E" Street and "A" Street***, at the former rail station location. The most significant advantages of this site were the size and potential for expansion, the location next to the existing rail line, and capacity to expand to other uses. Disadvantages of the site were limited continuous sidewalk access, the potential in compatibility with residential uses on the north side of Laurel Avenue, and some concern about the site not being as central to existing Colt service lines as other sites.
- ***El Camino School along "H" Street frontage***. This site scored very well on its central location, opportunities for future expansion, and good access by all modes of transportation. Disadvantages included the process of working with Caltrans on permits and agreements and the lack of interest from the school district.
- ***Within the "G" Street right-of-way, between Pine Avenue and North Avenue***. This site was also attractive for its size, potential for future expansion, and ability to accommodate all modes of transportation access. The success of a project at this location, however, would be dependent on redevelopment of the commercial property between "G" Street and "H" Street to increase access, visibility, and compatibility with existing land uses. There was also some concern about compatibility with the church complex on the east side of "G" Street.

Some of the reasons the Downtown site is deemed superior are access by other transit services, economic development catalyst, total cost of development, and park and ride accommodation.

The proposed project would create a centrally located transit transfer center that has the capability of accommodating four transit buses at one time within the proposed project site and simultaneously allows for the continued use of the existing transit stops on Cypress Avenue. Additionally, the project proposes to construct 10 new parking spaces adjacent to the existing Redevelopment parking lot west of South "I" Street.

Attachment 5 shows a preliminary site plan. Although many preliminary concepts have been developed, only the basic configuration of the bus circulating areas is roughly set by the dimensions of the proposed site. There will be substantial opportunities for community input into the details of the shelter/structure and plaza, and other aesthetic treatments to ensure that the project compliments and enhances the downtown experience.

Project Issues

Although the Downtown site has been determined to be far superior to other potential sites in the City, a number of issues were carefully considered.

Impact to City Downtown Redevelopment plans Significant time and effort was expended by City staff and the consultant team to investigate and consider the impact of locating the transit center in the downtown area. The project team studied options for redevelopment around the downtown site, and found that the project does not preclude redevelopment in the general vicinity of the project. Even with construction of the transit center, there is still ample room for redevelopment options including a hotel and parking structure in the vicinity of the project site.

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A strong argument has been made that constructing the new bus transfer facility downtown will actually stimulate additional investments and might help the City more-quickly achieve its long-term plans. A centralized transit transfer center will bring additional transit patrons to the downtown area that would not otherwise be accessing this location. The addition of these transit patrons will result in more customers for local business and more activity downtown. This will make the area more attractive for redevelopment and investment in the near future.

Short-term parking supply. The proposed project would construct the new bus transfer facility on an existing City parking facility. Careful consideration was given to the total existing parking supply and demand. This analysis was performed considering the differing demands during weekday daylight hours, weekday evenings, and weekends. The clear conclusion was that there is a substantial over supply of parking downtown at all times during all days of the week. The current users of the parking lot, that the project would propose to displace, will likely park at the parking lot on the west side of "I" Street or at the lot on Ocean Avenue. This displacement may create a slightly longer walk, of approximately one block, to their end destination.

To further ensure adequate parking, it is proposed to add ten (10) parking spaces adjacent to the existing parking lot on the west side of South "I" Street. This additional parking is shown in the preliminary site plan (Attachment 5).

Existing and future special events. The final consideration was the benefit and impact of the proposed project on events such as the Farmer's Market. This was a primary focus of discussions with downtown property owners, the Chamber of Commerce and its members, and City staff. Although there would be some impact and in some cases alternatives would need to be considered, the prevailing consensus is that the opportunities for growing downtown events by having enhanced transportation access, and improved aesthetics, greatly outweigh possible impacts.

Maintaining access to businesses east and north of the project site. The project will be located completely within the existing Redevelopment Agency-owned parcel. No right-of-way will be needed from private property, and there is no anticipated impact to the alley or property on the eastern edge of the project.

Agency transfers. The project will be located completely within the existing Redevelopment Agency-owned parcel. No right-of-way will be needed from private property, and there is no anticipated impact to the alley or property on the eastern edge of the project. The Agency must comply with Health & Safety Code 33445, before the property can be transferred from RDA to City of Lompoc. This is the only provision that needs to be met prior to transfer of ownership to the City.

Project Budget

Previously, the City has designated the new transit transfer facility as its top priority of the public transportation element of Proposition 1B, the major statewide transportation bond approved by California voters in November 2008.

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Revenues from the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Program (PTMISEA) element of Proposition 1B are apportioned to regions and transit operators based upon a set formula and are being made available incrementally as part of each annual State budget and subsequent bond sales.

Over the life of the PTMISEA program, the City of Lompoc is expected to receive approximately \$3,100,000. To date, the City has received approximately \$860,000. In the current Fiscal Year 2009/10 State Budget, the City of Lompoc's apportionment would be approximately \$350,000. In remaining years, the City would receive an additional \$1,890,000.

The preliminary planning and engineering services to date have totaled approximately \$98,000 and it is estimated that the costs to complete environmental studies, civil engineering, architectural plans, and complete bidding and construction support will be \$210,000.

The construction estimate for the proposed facility is \$1,050,000. This estimate includes approximately \$600,000 for site, utility and landscape improvements and \$450,000 for the transit center building and plaza. It is anticipated that the property will be transferred at no cost to the City.

Project Schedule

If City Council approves the recommended site, staff will agendize a contract for environmental studies at a future date. The project could begin construction in late 2010, and depending upon weather, could be complete by February 2011.

Staff has prepared a project schedule showing key milestones.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with approving, for purposes of preparing environmental studies, the project site as the preferred project location.

Richard L. Fernbaugh
Aviation/Transportation Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO CITY ADMINISTRATOR:

Larry A. Bean, P.E.
Public Works Director

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Laurel M. Barcelona
City Administrator

Attachments: [Attachment 1, Possible Transit Center Locations](#)
[Attachment 2, Criteria Used to Evaluate Sites](#)
[Attachment 3, Evaluation of Top-Ranked Sites](#)
[Attachment 4, Existing site](#)
[Attachment 5, Preliminary site plan](#)
[Attachment 6, Project Schedule](#)

Attachment 1

Possible Transit Center Locations

Attachment 2

Criteria Used to Evaluate Sites

Attachment 3

Evaluation of Top-Ranked Sites

Attachment 4

Existing site plan

Attachment 5

Preliminary Site Plan

Attachment 6

Project Schedule

February 2010	City Council approves preferred site for further environmental study
March 2010	City Council approves contract amendment with Dokken Engineering for environmental planning and engineering services
July 2010	Completion of environmental studies and adoption of CEQA document and project approval
July 2010	Redevelopment Agency transfers parking lot to City.
September 2010	Completion of 100% plans, specifications and estimates
October 2010	Publish Notice to Bidders
November 2010	Construction Contract Award
December 2010	Begin Construction
February 2011	Construction complete