

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments – 4th Floor Large Conference Room
99 E. Broadway, Suite 400 – Eugene

May 16, 2005 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, Mike Blommé, Chuck Forster, Anna Morrison, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Jay Bozievich, *ex officio* member; Mike Galvin (for Hal Reed), alternate member.

Steve Dignam (LCOG), Peter Thurston (Lane County), Bob Warren (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department), staff

ABSENT: DeAnn Cherbas, Glenda Poling, Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, Mike Sullivan, Mitch Wilkinson, members; Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, Kari Westlund, *ex officio* members.

GUESTS:

In the cell phonically delayed Chairperson John Tamulonis, Lynette Wikstrom called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:30 a.m. She invited those who were present to introduce themselves. She determined there were no requests to change the agenda.

1. Public Comment and Comments of the Chair

Ms. Wikstrom determined there was no one present wishing to present public testimony and said she had no comments as chair.

2. Staff Comments

Steve Dignam announced that the annual LCOG Open House would be held May 26 and invited everyone present to attend.

Tim Black distributed copies of the March 2005 issue of *University of Oregon Index of Economic Indicators* and said that anyone interested in being on its subscriber mailing list should contact him.

3. Minutes Approval

Anna Morrison requested that the spelling of the name of Board of County Commissioner Faye Stewart be corrected on Page 1 of the draft minutes of the April 18 LEC meeting. Ms. Wikstrom determined there was no objection and the minutes were amended.

John Sullivan moved, seconded by Ellen Teninty, to accept the minutes of the April 18, 2005, meeting, as amended. The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0, Mr. Tamulonis having not yet joined the meeting.

Ms. Wikstrom noted that the person schedule to present an update on local economic development projects in Florence was not at the meeting.

4. Region 2050 Discussion

Mr. Dignam reviewed previous LEC discussions of the LCOG Region 2050 planning project. He said Timothy Duy, author of “Economic Impacts of Region 2050 Growth Scenarios” presented at the April meeting, was unable to attend, but that he had said he would be available to come to the June meeting, if requested. He said Region 2050 staff Carol Heinkel was also unable to attend, but was represented by her supervisor Byron Vanderpool.

Mr. Dignam invited members to discuss the analysis of Mr. Duy, specifically his conclusion that the Compact Urban Growth Scenario best matched preferences of existing and new populations.

Mr. Sullivan said he continued to be struck by the lack of involvement of business community representatives in development of the Region 2050 project. He said he was concerned that the City of Eugene Sustainable Development Initiative described in an April 13 letter from Mayor Kitty Piercy distributed with the agenda of the meeting might duplicate the efforts of the project. He said he was also concerned that recently announced Region 2050 public evaluation surveys would be directed to individuals and might only produce opinions from those with strong biases.

Mr. Vanderpool said he was not aware of whether the Eugene Initiative would duplicate Region 2050 efforts. He said concern about evaluations being biased had been discussed at length by the policy board of the project. He said the surveys would be only one element of feedback sought on the project. He suggested that responses generated at Town Hall meetings, and from specific outreach efforts to the business community would be of equal or more significance.

Mr. Sullivan said it was his experience was that businesses seldom made plans for longer than ten years into the future. He hypothesized that the Eugene Initiative would get better business involvement because it was planning to project only to 2020.

Mr. Vanderpool said long term planning was necessary for development of needed infrastructure such as systems for water, sewers, and roads.

Jay Bozievich said his experience in public utility planning led him to agree that long-range planning for infrastructure and land use potential was essential. He said recent developments such as the impacts of computers, use of the Internet, and cell phones showed it was much more difficult to determine long-range business needs.

Ms. Morrison said she had frequently expressed her belief that 50-year planning decisions were not realistic. She said even the 20-year horizons of Oregon-required Comprehensive Plans needed to be regularly reviewed and were affected by unexpected developments such as passage by voters of Ballot Measure 37.

Ms. Morrison said she had recently submitted a series of questions about Region 2050 and had never received answers.

Ms. Morrison said she was concerned about the cost of the Region 2050 project – currently over \$800,000 and estimated to likely be over \$1 million before it was completed.

Ms. Morrison said she believed the conclusion of the Duy study that the Compact Urban Growth Scenario was more economically feasible was shortsighted because rural areas had thrived in Lane County until 1990 and could do so again.

Mr. Tamulonis joined the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Mr. Dignam said previous LEC discussions of the Region 2050 project had concluded that broader involvement was necessary and had proposed the economic impact study provided by Mr. Duy. He said he believed the study broadened and improved the viewpoints available to the project. He recommended that further discussion concentrate on the Duy study.

Mr. Sullivan said he agreed that the economic impact study was a positive contribution to the Region 2050 project. He said he believed it emphasized the “business-friendly” nature of compact urban development and did not forecast that rural areas had no potential for growth or valuable development. Ms. Morrison responded that she believed restrictions such as those placed on business development in Enterprise Zones made urban areas inimical to business.

Robert Scoggin said his experience in Cottage Grove led him to give more positive importance to the value of the Satellite Community Growth scenario than was recognized in the Duy study.

Mike Galvin said his reaction to the Region 2050 project was that it pointed to forces at work in development of areas in transition. He suggested its insights were valuable and could be used in planning growth throughout Lane County to avoid negative outcomes like those that had occurred in other areas. He said the scenarios identified opportunities and pitfalls and should not be seen as alternatives to be chosen between and forced upon any area.

Mr. Galvin said he was concerned that there was a bias against the rural lifestyle in the Duy study. He said it suggested that those following it had caused ecological mayhem.

Mr. Black said he believed the Duy study was not implying that a specific development scenario should be chosen, but that it was most likely the Compact Urban Scenario would develop and that preparations should be made for its economic impacts.

Mr. Bozievich said he was concerned that all factors involved in the decisions of business about where to locate were not taken into account in the Duy study. He said “hop-scotch” development surrounding Washington D.C. and other urban areas was an example of what he meant. He said the study properly concluded that economic market forces needed to be understood as part of economic development planning. He said he believed the study recognized that central economic planning was problematic and that it was best to maintain flexible development alternatives.

Ms. Morrison said she was concerned that flexibility could result in individual communities choosing different development scenarios and that implementation of differing Comprehensive Plans would be problematic.

Mr. Vanderpool said the Region 2050 project did not advocate changing statewide land use planning goals, but was intended to be a way of dealing with regional planning concerns.

Mr. Tamulonis said he believed the Duy study properly pointed out that there were economic forces involved in development that were not easily controlled.

Mr. Dignam asked if it would be helpful to invite Mr. Duy to the next LEC meeting to continue discussion of his study.

Mr. Bozievich said the Duy study provided helpful analysis, but that he believed feedback was most appropriate to the 2050 project. Mr. Sullivan said he agreed, but that he was concerned the

LEC response could be overlooked because it was redundant to that of other groups with economic interests.

Members engaged in extended discussion of the implications of varied growth development styles.

Mr. Sullivan said he believed it would be important for Region 2050 public response surveys to be “test driven.” He said careful examination of potential results in advance through a process such as the use of focus groups could result in understanding that skewed results could gain an inordinate influence on political decision making.

Charles Forster suggested that a formal response to Region 2050 be crafted based on discussion of LEC members. Mr. Tamulonis said he believed preparation of such a statement would be good because it could include divergent and ambivalent opinions.

Ellen Teninty said she was not convinced that a response would have influence on the outcome of the Region 2050 project, but that it might be helpful to convey that the purpose of the scenarios was unclear. She said she was interested in discussion of the assumptions of the Duy study and in inviting Mr. Duy to return for an additional conversation.

There appeared to be agreement to request that staff prepare a statement of LEC response to the Region 2050 project that would be submitted to members for final approval at the June meeting.

5. City of Eugene Sustainable Development Initiative

Mr. Dignam asked members for opinions about LEC involvement in the proposed Sustainable Development Initiative of the Eugene Mayor.

Mr. Bozievich said he believed the letter regarding the Initiative indicated that the Mayor had already gathered a broad-based feedback group and that focusing on a single municipality would be outside the primary purpose of the LEC to provide input to LCOG on countywide economic issues.

Mr. Tamulonis said it might be most appropriate for the LEC to ask its City of Eugene representative to keep the membership informed of the progress made in the Initiative.

Ms. Teninty said she did not believe the Initiative was related to the Region 2050 project and that it was not yet adequately focused for a role for the LEC in it to be identified.

Peter Thurston reported that the Board of County Commissioners would discuss the Initiative as part of a report from its Standing Economic Committee at a forthcoming meeting.

Mr. Dignam reported that the next LEC meeting was scheduled for June 20.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)