

October 21, 2015

River Road Corridor Terminus Station Options Review

The existing River Road Station is located at the southeast corner of the River Road/Randy Papé Beltline Highway interchange between the eastbound on-ramp and River Avenue (Figure 1). The current River Road Station was built in 1982 as a transit station and park-and-ride lot with 118 spaces, and is served by Routes 51, 52 and 55. Over the past 33 years, the station and site have had minor improvements and its infrastructure is considered outmoded. In 2007, LTD purchased the 1.18 acre site from Lane County.

The River Road/Randy Papé Beltline Highway interchange area currently experiences higher levels of congestion that limit ingress and egress from the current River Road Station site and cause travel time delays in service. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is proposing improvements to the River Road/Randy Papé Beltline Highway interchange that will lengthen and reconfigure the ramps to improve acceleration to/from the highway and reduce queuing and congestion. These improvements could affect the existing site. To meet the growing ridership demand in the River Road Corridor and avoid the impacts of increasing congestion, LTD is planning to relocate the River Road Station to a site north of the Randy Papé Beltline Highway. LTD is seeking a site that would allow for development of housing that meets the needs of senior citizens and/or lower income residents. The site of the relocated River Road Station as the terminus for the River Road Corridor will be determined as a part of the Level 1 Evaluation process for MovingAhead.

MovingAhead has identified three areas for potential River Road Corridor terminus station locations (Figure 1). The project team intends to select a final terminus station prior to completing the definition of alternatives and starting the Level 2 Alternatives Analysis (AA). This memo describes the factors used to evaluate the terminus station options, and recommends a single terminus station location for inclusion in the Level 2 AA.

Factors considered

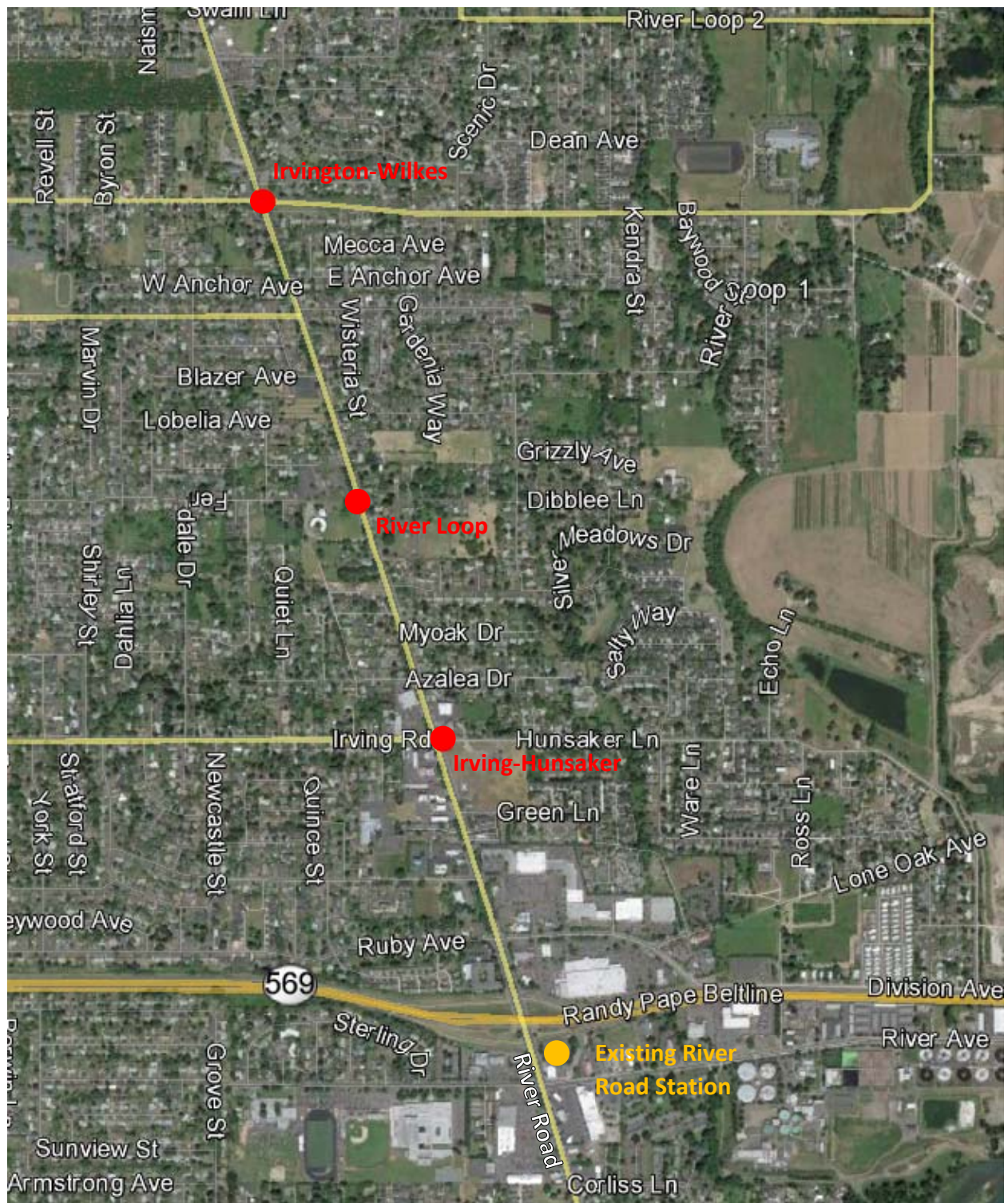
In the following section, we describe each of the factors considered for recommending a terminus for the River Road Corridor, then describe how each terminus performs relative to the factors.

Available land

EmX route termini require a minimum of approximately 2.5 acres of available land to accommodate bus layover facilities (i.e., bus parking, bathrooms for drivers), room to turn buses around, and land for park and ride stalls. Additionally, LTD is seeking a site that will accommodate additional transit-supportive development. The following analysis is based on a review of aerial imagery in the vicinity of the termini options and discussions with LTD staff.

- Irvington-Wilkes: there is one vacant, undeveloped parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of Irvington Drive and Wilkes Drive. The land is wide – running along the south side of Wilkes Drive – but narrow in depth. The land is likely public right of way and is less than 2.0 acres in size.

Figure 1. River Road Corridor Termini Under Consideration



Source: CH2M. 2015.

- River Loop: several large, developed and privately owned parcels are located near the intersection of Ferndale Drive and River Loop. The parcels range in size from about 2.5 acres to 5.0 acres. LTD previously considered one of the 2.5 acre parcels on the west side of River Road that was for sale. The parcel was developed for church use. LTD determined that, although the parcel was large enough to accommodate a terminus station it was not large enough to accommodate additional transit-supportive development such as affordable housing, and that ingress and egress could be difficult.
- Irving-Hunsaker: one large (8.24 ac), mostly vacant lot at the southeast corner of Irving Road and Hunsaker Lane would provide enough land to accommodate terminus facilities and additional transit-supportive development. The parcel was on the market for several years.

Existing and future land use

Current zoning and future land use in the termini option areas are both important factors in determining the most appropriate terminus station location. Zoning and land use plans that support dense station-area development, like commercial and multi-family zoning, are one of the keys to developing a successful transit corridor and terminus station location. Envision Eugene, the City's comprehensive plan, identifies River Road as a key transit corridor and the land adjacent to River Road from the south side of Beltline to the Irving-Hunsaker intersection north of Beltline as a core commercial area and an expansion area for jobs and multi-family homes. Areas along River Road, north of the Irving-Hunsaker intersection, have not been identified as a key transit corridor or as an expansion area for jobs or multi-family housing.

- Irvington-Wilkes: existing land use is predominantly single family residential. One small commercial development exists at the northwest intersection of Irvington and Wilkes. Current zoning is low density single family residential with an area of agricultural, historic, and commercial zoning at the northwest corner of the intersection. A proposed terminus station co-developed with multi-family housing and other transit-supportive uses is inconsistent with Envision Eugene and the City's vision for the area.
- River Loop: existing land use in the vicinity is predominantly single family residential, with three churches on large lots at three of four corners of the intersection. Current zoning is primarily low density single family residential with some agricultural zoned parcels on the east side of River Road. A proposed terminus station co-developed with multi-family housing and other transit-supportive uses is inconsistent with Envision Eugene and the City's vision for the area.
- Irving-Hunsaker: land use in the vicinity is presently medium-density residential and commercial properties, including low-rise apartments, a grocery store, and strip commercial development. Zoning in the vicinity of the intersection is a mix of neighborhood and community commercial, medium-density residential, and low density single family residential. A few agricultural zoned parcels exist on both sides of River Road. A proposed terminus station co-developed with multi-family housing and other transit-supportive uses is consistent with Envision Eugene and the City's vision for the area.

Transit-supportive development opportunities

LTD is seeking opportunities to partner with affordable housing interests to meet the needs of senior citizens and/or lower income residents and foster other transit-supportive uses at EmX route termini stations. Joint development opportunities require (1) ample available land (more than the minimum 2.5 acres described above); (2) supportive zoning and consistency with Eugene’s long-term vision for the area (mixed-uses, medium to high density residential, key transit corridor, employment area); and, (3) housing market demand identified by potential housing development partners. This analysis is based on a review of aerial imagery of the vicinity around termini station options, City of Eugene zoning and discussions with potential housing development partners.

- Irvington-Wilkes: there is little vacant land available in the vicinity. Single family zoning in the area and the City’s long-term vision for the area does not support joint development. Potential housing development partners have not identified a need in this area.
- River Loop: several large, developed and privately-owned parcels at this intersection may provide enough land to facilitate a joint development project. However, underlying single family zoning and the City’s long-term vision for the area are not supportive. Potential housing development partners have not identified a need in this area.
- Irving-Hunsaker: a large vacant, commercial-zoned property adjacent to this intersection would be conducive to joint development. Underlying zoning allows for multi-use, medium-density development and the City’s long-term vision for the area includes commercial and multi-family housing. Potential housing development partners have identified a need in this area.

Capital costs relative to ridership

The project team considered the additional cost of extending EmX service northward from the southernmost terminus option at Irving-Hunsaker. This cost is compared to the estimated additional ridership gained by extending the corridor further north. Capital costs are estimated using LTD’s per-mile general estimate for construction of EmX in Eugene of approximately \$12 million per mile. This cost is inclusive of construction, right of way purchase, buses, and other equipment needed to operate the route. The project team used travel model data to estimate the additional ridership on the corridor that would be gained by extending the corridor north of Irving-Hunsaker.

The points below compare the two northern termini to the Irving-Hunsaker terminus.

- Irvington-Wilkes: this terminus is 0.89 miles north of the southern proposed terminus station at Irving-Hunsaker. The estimated cost to extend the corridor to this terminus is \$10,000,000. Travel model data shows that the corridor would gain an additional 700 daily weekday riders by extending the corridor to Irvington-Wilkes.
- River Loop: this terminus is 0.39 miles north of the southern proposed terminus at Irving-Hunsaker. The estimated cost to extend the corridor to this terminus is \$5,000,000. Travel model data shows that the corridor would gain an additional 300 daily weekday riders by extending the corridor to River Loop.

Discussion and recommendation

The project team recommends eliminating the Irvington-Wilkes and River Loop terminus options from further consideration based on the following:

- Both terminus options are inconsistent with Envision Eugene, the City's long-term planning vision, which does not identify River Road north of Irving-Hunsaker as a key transit corridor nor does it support more intensive land use development north of the Irving-Hunsaker intersection.
- Currently, there are no parcels on the market that are of the appropriate size and zoning to accommodate additional transit-supportive development along with a transit terminus station and park-and-ride facilities.
- Potential affordable housing developers have not identified a housing need for senior citizens and/or lower income residents around the Irvington-Wilkes or River Loop sites.
- Nearby land uses are primarily comprised of low density single family residential uses with few uses that would generate greater transit demand. 2035 average weekday ridership estimates indicate only 700 additional riders for the Irvington-Wilkes terminus station option and only 300 additional riders for the River Loop terminus station option.
- The estimated increase in ridership that could be gained by extending the corridor further north would result in significant capital construction costs. The capital cost to extend service north of Irving-Hunsaker is approximately \$14,000 to \$17,000 per additional rider, which is almost 10 times the average capital cost per additional rider to extend EmX service in other corridors.

The project team recommends that the Irving-Hunsaker terminus option be carried forward as the preferred terminus for the River Road corridor based on the following:

- This terminus option area has existing land use and zoning to accommodate transit-supportive development and would support higher transit ridership.
- This terminus option area is consistent with Envision Eugene which identifies this location as an area for more intensive commercial and multi-family development.
- There is an existing parcel at this location that is of the appropriate size and zoning to accommodate affordable housing and additional transit-supportive development.
- Potential affordable housing developers have identified a need for housing for senior citizens and/or lower income residents in this area.
- In addition to single family residential uses, existing nearby land uses include grocery, medical, commercial, and multi-family residential, all of which create transit demand.
- The cost to extend service to the Irving-Hunsaker site is consistent with LTD's average construction costs per rider.