

Community

# Tower fuels debate on city development

By Hon Walker  
Emerald Associate Editor

The debate over the proposed Pankow office tower has brought suggestions that downtown development could be better accomplished if the public was more involved in deciding where the money should go.

In particular, some say the city may be better off pursuing alternative forms of local transit than creating more parking space downtown.

The Pankow Development Co. will build an 11-story office tower at the corner of Eighth Avenue and Willamette Street, and the city of Eugene will pay for a \$6 million, 450-space parking garage.

A local group, Coalition for the Fair Allocation of City Taxes, plans to submit a referendum for the May 1990 city ballot that would prevent city council-approved expenditures such as this one without approval of the public.

Paul Nicholson, chair of the CO-FACT publicity committee, said the city should not commit to "irrevocable, misguided long-term projects before the public can have a chance to look at those projects and see if they are worthy of their tax dollars."

The City Council last month approved a 20-year plan to continue using money from a downtown taxing district for public improvements.

He said the group's platform calls for public input on the use of money for major expenditures in the downtown urban renewal area.

Beyond that, he said, group members hold different points of view on how the urban renewal money could be used.

Randy Prince, a member of CO-FACT, charges that too

much money will be used to accommodate automobile-oriented development. With public input, he said, more funds could be used to continue exploring other urban transportation options.

Prince said the Pankow project illustrates a planned use of money that may be different with public input.

"The objection is that this takes away too much tax money for an undemocratic process," he said.

"Most of the expenditures for this program are for downtown parking," Prince said. "The money is not doing anything to help the University community and the community of people who ride bikes and buses."

"The University is using alternatives to building more parking, while the City of Eugene perceives the problem but is not (pursuing) any of the alternatives," he said.

City councilor Shawn Boles, who in February proposed installing a cable car line in the city, said the attitudes of the council and downtown developers are shifting.

Boles said a number of options exist besides automobile-oriented transportation. However, "up until a year and a half ago you had a city council that thought that was the way to go," he said.

The city now is in active pursuit of moving toward a transition to alternative transportation modes in the downtown area, Boles said.

Two possibilities are park-and-ride lots at the Lane County Fairgrounds and Autzen Stadium.

A year ago, University planning, public policy and management professor David Povey drafted a proposal of possible connections between the Aut-

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