

ly bought the Williams Bakery site down the street for three times more money per acre. "The EWEB property is too valuable an asset to sell at a fire sale price," he wrote.

The offer also won't cover the estimated \$38.5 million cost of building a new EWEB headquarters and utility yards. Several commissioners have said they won't raise utility rates to fund a move. "Our primary concern is running a utility, not locating a hospital," Bishop says. "I'm not going to raise EWEB customer's rates to move this utility."

EWEB is now spending about \$1 million for a more exact estimate of its relocation costs and the costs of possibly splitting its industrial maintenance facilities from it's

courthouse and river. But in the current plan, the great street "goes down a hole," Diethelm says, pointing to the ditch drop-offs and concrete retaining walls apparent in a city road study last year. "It isn't going to be so great, I don't even think it's even going to be pretty good."

The city study for the site envisions a Patterson Street underpass that will descend under adjacent 50-foot-wide and 20-foot-wide highway and railroad bridges to reach the riverfront. Three sloped trenches will extend hundreds of feet out to lower the roadways under the surface-level bridges. Getting water out of the trenches near the river will require continuously running pumps.

'We need to have a public, natural riverfront.'

— Friends of Eugene President Kevin Matthews

administrative headquarters building. Results of the new study are due in September.

Bishop says its crucial for EWEB to keep its administration building downtown. "As a public utility, it's absolutely essential that we be at a central location."

Even if it doesn't move, EWEB says it will need to spend roughly \$10 million renovating its older maintenance buildings. Hinkley says it would make good sense for the utility to split its operation, moving its maintenance yard to recently acquired industrial land in northwest Eugene and leaving its headquarters downtown.

Orr says Triad's offer could help EWEB raise the money it needs to upgrade its maintenance facilities. Triad's offer "is a great help to them." The amount of Triad's offer remains an "open issue" for discussion, Orr says.

The trenching will rule out any possibility of putting the popular millrace envisioned in earlier city plans into the area. "You put that trench in there, and there's no way to put a millrace in," Diethelm says.

Bettman says she's talked to Diethelm about his concerns. "He brought up some very good issues." Bettman says she's seen attractive underpasses with arches and rock faces and she hopes the city will move in that direction in building this project.

Diethelm says the city can make the underpass work, but probably not without a major redesign that prioritizes attractive river access over-roads. The highway the city envisions for along the railroad tracks should be moved to 8th Avenue to provide less of a barrier, and the underpass should be moved west

Natural Cost

Critics of the Triad deal say that it will cost citizens more than just money — the city will lose the opportunity to return to the river with a beautiful, easily accessible natural riverfront.

Retired UO landscape architecture professor Jerry Diethelm says the city's preliminary designs for a railroad underpass to access the hospital could create a long ugly trench blocking river access. "I think it's going to be a big mistake."

The city earlier designated 8th Avenue as a "great street" connecting downtown to the



Triad wants to buy this land from EWEB.



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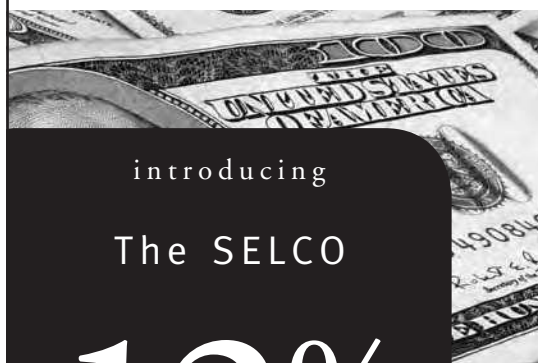
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