

WHAT IS THE ANN ARBOR STATION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW?

The purpose of the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review study is to take a closer look at the current Amtrak station and create a vision for the future. This project was outlined in the City's adopted 2009 Transportation Plan Update, and gives the citizens of Ann Arbor an opportunity to shape that vision.

The City of Ann Arbor, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Federal Rail Administration are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA), as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA requires that for projects using federal funds, a thorough evaluation of the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the proposed action be undertaken and presented to the public for comment.

The EA document includes three essential elements:

- The purpose and need for the project.
- An evaluation of alternatives that address the purpose and need for the project.
- Documentation of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with each alternative.

PURPOSE AND NEED

During the initial public meetings in March and April we will be discussing draft the purpose and need statement, and taking comments on the factors included. In general, the purpose defines the objective to be achieved by the proposed project, and the need outlines that the problem exists and provides the data to support the purpose.

ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION

Over the next several months, the evaluation in the EA will include several alternative sites for the station and the impacts associated with them. The alternatives will be presented at public meetings throughout the study where comments will be encouraged. As the study progresses, the station site criteria, documented impacts, and consideration of agency, stakeholder and public comments will be factors in determining the chosen, or preferred alternative for the Ann Arbor Station site. The selection of the preferred alternative is scheduled to take place in late 2014.

Public input and comments are critical to the development of these documents. All comments that are communicated to project team members, mailed, emailed, or called in to the City of Ann Arbor will be reviewed.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Several factors will be considered as the alternative sites for the station are evaluated:

- Does the alternative meet the defined purpose and need?
- Does the alternative meet the defined design criteria? Examples include:
 - The station will be located next to the Amtrak Wolverine service tracks.
 - The station site will include space for parking.
 - Bus service in Ann Arbor will connect passengers to the train station.
- What are the environmental and socioeconomic impacts (positive or negative) resulting from this alternative?

We are asking for your input on these factors as we move through the process. These factors will guide the team in determining which alternative sites will be eliminated from consideration and which sites will be carried forward in the study, ultimately leading to the chosen station site, or the preferred alternative. We will have detailed information on these factors at the public meeting, and we are asking for your comments to help shape the criteria that will be used to select the location for the station.

A SNAPSHOT LOOK AT OTHER PROJECTS UNDERWAY

The Ann Arbor Station is an important gateway to the City of Ann Arbor, and any changes from the existing station will need to be based on local input and decision making. At the same time, the station is part of a broader network of transportation facilities that has links both within the state and throughout the Midwest. The concepts for the Ann Arbor Station will be informed by the significant plans and projects for upgrading intercity rail service, including the recent or ongoing efforts discussed below.

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI)

The MWRRI is a group consisting of participants from several Midwestern states (Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri) and in partnership with the FRA and Amtrak to increase the level and quality of passenger rail service in the Midwest, emanating from Chicago. The MWRRI prioritized several corridors in the Midwest, including the Detroit/Pontiac-to-Chicago corridor.

Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac Rail Corridor

Consistent with the MWRRI, MDOT and its partner agencies in Indiana and Illinois have been working to improve the speed and reliability of intercity passenger rail along the Amtrak Wolverine service corridor. Numerous portions of the rail line, including the portion through Ann Arbor, have been purchased by the state in order to make the necessary infrastructure improvements and to ensure that passenger rail service is prioritized in the long-term infrastructure planning. Complementary improvements have been made to station facilities throughout the corridor, including recent upgrades to the facilities in Dearborn and Troy/Birmingham.

Dearborn Intermodal Passenger Rail Station



This station property is almost three times bigger than Ann Arbor's. The existing Dearborn Station serves about half as many passengers as Ann Arbor. The station will have several bus bays for bus/rail transfers and abundant space for passenger loading, shuttles and taxis. A large surface parking lot is designed for future consolidation in a structure to enable station-oriented development. A sustainably designed building will feature free Wi-Fi for customers and food concessions. The station will connect directly to the Greenfield Village/Henry Ford Museum property.

Troy Transit Center/Birmingham-Troy Amtrak



This new station and bus transfer facility is located a few steps from a regional shopping center. A new 2,400 square foot station building includes space for concessions. Over 100 parking spaces are immediately adjacent to the station building. A pedestrian bridge over the tracks has elevators for barrier-free travel. Regional buses will connect directly with the station at four bus bays. The existing Birmingham-Troy Amtrak Station served about 23,000 passengers in 2013*, or 15% of Ann Arbor's passengers.

Grand Rapids Amtrak



This new station has been constructed immediately adjacent to the city's multi-modal transportation center. It is located on Amtrak's Pere Marquette route between Grand Rapids and Chicago. The station served nearly 52,000 passengers in 2013*, less than one-third of Ann Arbor's passengers.

(*Source: Amtrak Fact Sheet, Fiscal Year 2013)



GET INVOLVED

Join the conversation and provide your thoughts and opinions about the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review. The City of Ann Arbor encourages you to get involved by providing your feedback throughout the study. Your input is especially valuable at key study milestones linked to the environmental review, such as the purpose and need and evaluation of the alternatives. Project updates also will be available through the project website: www.a2gov.org/annarborstation.

PUBLIC MEETING—JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

Plan on attending our Public Meeting where City of Ann Arbor staff and consultants will be available to answer specific questions. Presentations of current study information will occur at 4:30 pm and 7:00 pm. The remainder of the meeting time will be an open house.

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

4:00-5:30 pm AND 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown, Lower Level Multipurpose Room
343 South Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

CAN'T COME IN PERSON? SHARE YOUR COMMENTS DIRECTLY WITH
THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR BY VISITING THE PROJECT WEBSITE AT
WWW.A2GOV.ORG/ANNARBORSTATION

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

In addition to the three public meetings scheduled throughout this project, a Citizen's Working Group (CWG) is also being formed. The CWG is a group of citizen stakeholders that meet regularly to discuss issues related to the project. The goal of the CWG is to gather direct feedback and input on the project from the community on an ongoing basis. Over the next year the CWG will meet at least five times to provide input and comment on various aspects of the project.

Citizen Working Group Meetings

Wednesday, March 19 AND Tuesday, March 25, 2014

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Fourth floor meeting room, Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown Branch, 343 S. 5th Ave.