



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Citizens Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes—Meeting #6

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 6:30pm

Location: Ann Arbor Council Chambers

Attendees: 18 citizen attendees

The October 11th meeting of the Citizens Working Group included a presentation on the final recommendations from the Environmental Analysis process. After the presentation attendees had numerous comments and suggestions for the project team. This report summarizes the main areas that were commented upon during the meeting. Responses are in italics.

Additional information about the project can be found here:

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/planning-areas/transportation/Pages/Ann-Arbor-Station.aspx>

Questions

- How many car trips are projected in and out of the Fuller Road sites?
Detailed information is located in the Environmental Assessment. The total number of trips is based on the total train trips and ridership modeling from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for future demand. Parking patterns are different for commuter rail and passenger rail. 150 spaces in the garage are dedicated for park users.
- How many park user parking spaces are allocated for the Depot Street sites?
Zero park user parking spaces are being allocated. There are also zero University of Michigan (UM) parking spot allocated at the Fuller Road site, all parking besides the 150 park user spaces are for Amtrak customers. UM has a lease for the current parking lot but there is a provision in the lease to accommodate the train station, if and when the station is constructed. The UM will be responsible for finding a new parking area for those users.
- What is the design standard for parking needs at the stations?
Parking needs are based on Amtrak standards.
- The size of the parking lot is out of line with other stations along the line. Why?
Ann Arbor has the highest ridership along the Wolverine Line and requires more parking than other stations. The forecast need is based on Amtrak standards for new stations. The parking will be built in phases and may not need to be expanded. The parking garages are designed to meet long term parking needs, short term parking for pick-ups and drop-offs, and park users (at the Fuller Road site).



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- Parking requirements are the same at both sites, but Alternative 3A has better transit access. Why is there a need for more parking spaces at 3A?
The parking needs are based on the net migration numbers for rail ridership. A potential reduction in parking would need to be sourced and there is currently no good source for determining a reduction in parking based on the site. Building the parking garage in phases will help determine how much parking is needed and the later phases may not be needed if demand does not materialize.
- Will building the parking garage in phases increase cost?
It is too early to tell because the costs are estimated at the concept design level. Preliminary engineering phase will determine more accurate cost estimate, but there could be an additional cost associated with building in phases.
- How will the site deter employees or visitors to the UM hospital be mitigated at the Fuller Road site?
This has not been determined yet but will be looked at in the future design phases. There will likely be a cost increase to discourage people parking in the garage who are not Amtrak riders similar to the approach being taken for the new station in East Lansing.
- Even though there are greater intermodal opportunities at the Fuller Road site, how many UM students actually want to stop at Fuller Road on their way to North Campus?
This has not been determined yet and could be mitigated with specific bus routes.
- Did FRA and the City take into account the greater station needs like development potential around the site?
Yes, the development potential related to vacant land available
- Did you take into account the current use of the long term Amtrak parking lot?
Yes, the parking needs are based on MDOT and FRA figures for future demand along the rail corridor.
- How will the station accommodate people who are currently parking for free in the long term lot?
Current users will have to find a different place to park, but will likely be mitigated in new garage by charging for parking. This is also an operations problem and was not studied as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.
- The criteria for the De Minimis ruling seem to be wrong. Wouldn't all of the little things together add up to cancel that out?
The cumulative impacts do not negatively affect Build Alternative 3A. De Minimis impact generally defined as an impact that will not adversely affect the characteristics of a property that qualifies it for protection under Section 4(f).
- Were there counts of bike and pedestrians at each site as part of the EA?
Yes, bicycle and pedestrian counts at the study area intersections only were included as part of the traffic study.



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- Thousands of additional parking spaces would be built as a part of these stations. Was the impact to air, traffic, and ambiance looked at?
Yes, these items were evaluated in the EA.
- The parking garage seems to be oversized based on the idea of an intermodal hub.
The parking garage will be built in phases as demand grows. If the garage is never fully utilized in phase 1, then no additional parking will be added. FRA requirements for parking needed to be met as a part of this study and in order to qualify the station for federal funding.
- Battle Creek and Kalamazoo are intermodal hubs also, but don't have large parking areas. Is this a requirement for new stations?
The parking requirements are based on current Amtrak guidelines using projected ridership developed by MDOT and FRA. Ann Arbor has the current and future greatest ridership in the state.
- Will parking still be leased to UM on the north side of Fuller Road?
No
- Are pick-up and drop-offs a bigger use than long term parking especially with rise of Uber/Lyft and Autonomous Vehicles?
The EA cannot account for future or emerging technology for which there is not publically available data. It can only use existing transportation modes. The percentage of trips that will not require parking has been factored into the analysis based on data from the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Kiss and Ride traffic is also accounted for in the traffic analysis and design of the parking area.
- How much funding will Amtrak contribute since they own the current station and why aren't they building the new station?
The City made the decision to build and own the new station, wherever that may be and Amtrak will occupy the space. There have not been any discussions on cost sharing yet because the EA is only looking at the specific site and not the actual design of the building. In the next phase costing and operations will be determined in more detail.
- Could someone be dropped off on East Medical Center Drive for Alternative 3A?
Yes.
- Is there a listing of all the ratings for each Alternative that can be used to easily compare the alternatives to each other?
There are no numerical ratings for the criteria, only the data used for each alternative. These can be used to compare alternatives to each other.



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- Where do things stand with the track updates and double tracking through Ann Arbor?
Amtrak will be updating the schedule to reflect the new sections of 110 mph along the route. Double track through Ann Arbor is not anticipated unless commuter rail service is initiated. The single track was determined by the FRA to be sufficient for the 10 daily round trip Amtrak trips planned for. The Alternatives are designed to accommodate a 2nd track if commuter rail does come to fruition.
- Where does commuter rail stand?
Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail was part of RTA master plan and the failed vote in November 2016. At this point, there is not program outside of the RTA to support commuter rail from Ann Arbor to Detroit.
- Has there been any consideration of building on top of the Fuller Road parking garage to accommodate residential or office space?
No
- What was the federal grant awarded used for?
Grant money was used to fund the EA and the Preliminary Engineering (PE) work. PE will continue again once site has been selected. Some very early engineering work has been completed for all four sites, but was suspended until a final site is selected in order save budget.
- Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) and UM buses do not stop at Fuller Road currently. It is easier for people, buses, and vehicles to enter and exit at Depot Street.

Comments

- The Fuller Road site is the best location because of transit access. It is the best place for an intermodal hub because of the lack of space constraints. Half of Amtrak ridership is related to UM students and it is easier for students to access at Fuller Road.
- Things have changed in the past 35 years since the current site was selected. Officials thought parking would materialize near the station, which never happened. Development was supposed to happen around the station as well. Time to move the station to Fuller Road and put it where the modes are located.
- Depot Street is the better site because of the development potential surrounding the site. There will be too much traffic associated with the Fuller Road station and the fact that there are multiple streets around Depot Street means that traffic won't be as bad. Depot Street is more walkable and closer to downtown and could be a second downtown. Need to think of this as a 100 year project.