



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Leadership Advisory Group Meeting Notes—Meeting #3

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Location: Ann Arbor City Hall, Council Chamber

Leadership Advisory Group Members in Attendance:

Steve Dolen, University of Michigan
Jim Kosteva, University of Michigan
Michael Benham, AAATA
Trevor Bryson, SEMCOG
Paul Ganz, DTE
Andrew Selinger, Oxford Company
Sabra Briere, Ann Arbor City Council
Jane Lumm, Ann Arbor City Council
Chuck Warpehoski, Ann Arbor City Council
Nancy Shiffler, Sierra Club
Martha Valadez, Wake Up Washtenaw
Therese Cody, MDOT
Craig Hupy, City of Ann Arbor

Members of the Public in Attendance:

James d'Amour
Clark Charnetski
Laurence J. Krieg, PhD
Larry Deck
Rita Mitchell
Gwen Nystuen
John Nystuen
Ethel Potts
Alice Ralph
Don Salberg

The third meeting of the Leadership Advisory Group included a presentation on the overall scope of the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review and the Alternatives Analysis process. During the presentation, and after, 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: <http://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/Transportation/Pages/Ann-Arbor-Station.aspx>.



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Michigan Central Depot

- You mentioned all the difficulties with using the old station. Are you saying it's off the table?
It's not off the table at this point. It's being reviewed by the City, State and the FRA and in 30-45 days we will present our recommendation.

- When you evaluated the Michigan Central Depot did you engage any historical experts? You also said there wouldn't be any business advantage to using the Depot either and I'd like more detail about that.

We worked with our project architect who has historic preservation experience, to look at how the station could have worked. More detail will be in the Alternatives Analysis.

It's important to recognize that the experts we have are doing the detailed work we need. We worked with files that the City had from the past that included locations of kitchens, restrooms, etc. There are other challenges that need to be overcome and to meet the needs of that station. In the future the station needed a larger footprint. We also wanted to sensitively add space without damaging the historic value.

- The layout of the current station is not designed for a modern station. In the past more staff were needed and they had separate offices. I can see problems using it as a station. Kalamazoo is still used but it has a more open design.

When we looked at the floor plans and looked at where we would put things, locate restrooms, etc. We actually went so far as to design a station that could work and we tried to create a station that was viable. Keeping in mind that there is viability, there isn't necessarily a preference. We are still working through that and will include that going forward.

Cost of the Station

- When can we expect a cost to local taxpayers and will there be design choices along with cost?
We will include a range of costs for each site, but the details on cost will be provided during the design phase. We will be looking at the footprint, and some design choices. We are in the Environmental Review. We need the environmental clearance and then there will preliminary engineering design and then finally building the station. The costs won't be detailed until we get into the design process. This is the front end that will be followed by more details.

- Aren't you risking the fact that the voters will reject the project based on cost?
Ann Arbor is a community that makes appropriate investments for the needs. We have to make a compelling argument to the community that we need the right location, and design and financial particulars that are acceptable to the community and meet our needs. That's one reason we took the time to look at parking, size, etc. The ridership and service is incremental and we would want expandability. The process here is to environmentally clear the footprint.



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- When will we be presented with the estimated costs for each option? It's hard to peel off aspects of each project without seeing the design. I would encourage us to provide the community with a ballpark idea for cost for each site and the parking estimate costs. Could we have an estimate of other locations with a similar amount of parking?
A range of costs will be presented when we meet in 30-45 days. Forecasting out you can look at structured parking being \$30,000-\$40,000 per stall. So that's a \$30-40 million station including intermodal operations so \$30-\$50 million in total. We believe that the historic grant ratio of 80-20 (20 local) is what we are looking at. It's premature to estimate how much would be born by the users of the facility. Currently the project is included with the City of Ann Arbor FY2016 - 2021 Capital Improvements Plan with an estimated construction cost of \$44,500,000 and programmed for construction in 2018. http://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/capital-improvements/Documents/FY2016-2021/FY2016-2021_Project%20Revenues%20Summary%20AlphaRev.pdf
- It sounds like the biggest cost will be the parking structure.
Yes, given the costs outlined, the provision of parking and intermodal operations will outweigh the costs for the station building.

General Comments

- For each of the options did you consider the amount of parking needed and will that be released to the public?
Yes, each option is being considered including the number of parking spaces. The Alternatives Analysis document includes effects on traffic and that will be included in that document.
- Did you look at how traffic would be affected by each of the alternatives?
Yes, traffic was looked at and each alternative requires something a bit different as part of the site planning.
- Are you including the fact that the transit operations will be relocated from the Blake?
This study is looking at passenger rail. We haven't looked at relocating the Blake, rather what we are studying is the need of locating local bus operation with rail operation. The details about the number of buses will be determined later. If AAATA wanted to move their operations that would be discussed, but there have been no discussions like that.
- You mentioned that two sites are still under consideration. What is the status of Site #3?
That site is still in the mix, but there wasn't a great deal of work done since we last. It will be part of the Alternatives Analysis document.
- I have a concern about the assumptions about the number of jobs in the area. For the site by the hospital you said 17,000 people. But we know that there are about 20,000 people working at the medical complex. If your no-build alternative doesn't take into account the additional job growth it won't take into account the cost of doing nothing.
The information presented there is from census data, but we also are getting information from the University and others. It's part of the evaluation. As we move into further phases we may enhance that data. Over the course of the last decade there has been a movement to show that



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there is more growth. We are required to use the federal processes to show the local area growth.

- What sorts of variables are being factored in as you are considering the other alternatives? *We are using the environmental criteria as outlined by NEPA. We are looking at inner city passenger rail and including that in our considerations, but we aren't necessarily including commuter rail in our numbers.*
- When you talked about parking and the 870, is that exclusively for intercity? *Yes, that's just for intercity passenger rail. That's 10 roundtrips, today we have three. We wouldn't build the full 870 at once, but if commuter rail comes we would have to work with the City and State to consider that. There are agencies that fund these projects including the FRA, FTA, and FHA. Commuter rail falls under FTA. If we were to seek application to the FRA it would be for inner city rail. Local funding can come from a variety of sources. The level of match might raise your chances of receiving grant funding.*
- I don't believe there will be a seven-fold increase in ridership over the time period you are thinking about. What will be the driving force for all these new riders? *The primary basis is that in the next few decades the airport and highway capacity is going to be consumed and rail will become more attractive in terms of travel time and cost. The number of trips back and forth and those calculations are what the federal government asked us to use.*
- For the local match, as you look at each site are you looking at how likely they might bring a local match with land and how much they meet those needs? *We're looking at each location and evaluating who pays for each site. The Environmental Assessment is an evaluation of each location. We won't have the detail about what those costs would be at each location, rather a range of costs. We need federal authorization for the locations before we can move forward.*

Next Project Steps/Funding

- For the June public meetings, what are the alternative modes for people who cannot attend meetings? When is the public hearing and what will be happening? *We have these meetings (the Leadership Advisory Group), Citizen Working Group meetings, and public meetings. There is information on the dedicated website as well. People can also contact Eli Cooper directly as well. In 30-45 days we will present our preferred alternative. We will have another round of meetings and a public meeting. We will then prepare our environmental document which will be approved by the city and state and federal government. That will be prepared over the summer. We will then post the Environmental Assessment for everyone to review. The public hearing will be in early fall. That's our tentative schedule.*
- For some stations the match is different depending upon a variety of factors. In a number of cities on the coast they don't need all of the parking we are talking about. People with UM passes don't just use them to park just during their working hours. There may be spaces available that aren't being used on weekends.



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I want everyone to be cautious about the 20% match. In a competitive application process a city or county that offers a 25% match may be looked upon more favorably. The ownership of stations varies. Down the road, there is no set in stone way to fund stations, but anytime a local community can provide buy-in, it's better.

- What kind of environmental analysis is going into the decision-making for the preferred alternative? Are we going to have access to that analysis before the next meetings so we can read them and comment on them?

All of the environmental criteria that are part of the NEPA process. It also includes socioeconomic factors. The information will be available in advance of the meeting. The Alternatives Analysis document will be provided a week prior to the next round of meetings.

- Can you tell me who will be operating the station and will they be responsible for the station operations?

Amtrak operates the service now. As far as the station, most likely Amtrak will operate it, but maintaining it would be the City. It's premature to think about how that may play out. We still need to get to a preferred alternative.

Comments from MDOT

You are going to see some activity at the current station. It's an ADA project. A grant was received from the federal government to build a modular platform that can go out to the train and then come back. It's a two-year demonstration. They are aiming for late July for a ribbon-cutting.