



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Public Meeting Meeting Notes – Meeting #4

Date: Thursday, October 12, 2017, 6:30PM

Location: Ann Arbor Council Chambers

Attendees: 37 citizen attendees

The October 12th Public Meeting for the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review included two presentations on the alternatives considered and Preferred Alternative recommendations from the Environmental Assessment (EA) process, one at 6:45 pm and a second at 7:45 pm. 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>

6:45 Presentation

Questions

- Who paid for the sewer along Fuller Road and who is using it now?
This is not part of the Ann Arbor Station EA but was part of a larger regional sewer project. It is currently in use.
- What will happen to the old station if a new station is built at Fuller Road?
Amtrak owns the current station and will be responsible for determining future use.
- Why do the Depot Street alternatives require the City to purchase the existing station from Amtrak?
The City will own the new station and any property acquisition costs need to be accounted for in the EA, regardless of the fact that Amtrak will be using the new station. Operations and Maintenance costs or cost sharing may be provided by Amtrak but have not been studied in detail yet.
- What are the traffic implications of the new station?
A traffic study was completed as part of the EA that looked at today's traffic and future traffic without the station, as well as the traffic impacts from the new station. A section in the appendix shows detailed information about how many cars will be added to the roads as a result of the station.
- Would commuter rail and high speed rail be served at one station alternative and not the others?
Potential future commuter rail is accommodated in the design but the study is specifically for intercity passenger rail service. Commuter rail is part of the Regional Transit Authority of



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Southeast Michigan (RTA) plan and could get funded at some point and would serve whichever location at the time of implementation.

- There are 150 additional parking spaces added to the Fuller Road site for park users. What about displaced UM hospital parkers?
The University of Michigan (UM) is leasing the current lot from the City in a year to year lease and the City has no obligation to provide parking following the construction of the station, which is stipulated in the lease. The UM will have to find parking for its employees.
- The roundabout planned on Fuller Road will help accommodate existing congestion and new station traffic but was not accounted for in the total Fuller Road cost. Why?
This improvement is already planned and will happen regardless of the new station. It is already in the City's Capital Improvement Plan. The additional improvements at Depot Street (Broadway Bridge widening, turn lanes, etc.) will not happen unless the station is constructed there.
- How were the parking needs calculated?
150 spaces are to mitigate the displaced park user parking spaces at Fuller Road. The total parking need is determined based on ridership model projections from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that take into account current and future demand. There is a need to provide for the total maximum capacity needed. The parking will be built in phases and may not need to be expanded past the first phase if demand is low.
- Were the long term benefits of economic development to the tax base accounted for each alternative?
The report looks at the amount of developable land near to the station in terms of raw acreage. Both sites have a relatively small amount of developable land and the major impacts of the station will come from increases in value of existing developed property.
- Will the vote for the station be a vote to build the preferred alternative or a vote on which site to build on?
The vote will be for whether or not to build the station at the preferred alternative and will be initiated at or before Final Design work.

Comments

- I am in favor of the Depot Street site location because of the better bike and pedestrian connectivity. I think that there are significant safety issues at Fuller Road for bikes and pedestrians.
- The plan to build a station at Fuller Road is wrong because it is not the right area of town and the cost will be too high. We can expand the current station size and parking area for much less cost. Train travel is the most expensive of travel modes.



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- 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.
- I would like to make the point that the station serves the entire county and the region, not just Ann Arbor. Housing is isolated from Ann Arbor on the east side of the county and, as a result, traffic is increasing and commutes are becoming longer. Putting the station at Fuller Road will help connect the east side of Washtenaw County to a major job hub at the UM Hospital. Fuller Road is preferred to the other sites.
- I can see the benefits and needs of a new station and I think Fuller Road is better for transit access, while Depot Street is closer to downtown. It seems like you could make a deal with Amtrak for the property at Depot Street. National politics might not lead to an increase in service like it is planned.
- This study needs to look closer at economic development potential. Convenience and development potential for the stations needs to have a higher weight than it currently does. There is no talk about walkability in the analysis and this criterion also needs to be weighted higher. I think Depot Street is a better site because of the proximity to downtown, the potential economic impacts, and the walkability factor.
- Economic development is going to happen on the Depot Street site, regardless of if there is a train station nearby or not. There is very little vacant land left in the City. Fuller Road is the best option because of the ease of implementation compared to Depot Street.
- I am in favor of the Fuller Road site, but I am annoyed with some of the metrics used, in particular, not including the cost of the roundabout in the Fuller Road site. It was not honest.
- How many people will be using the station and how many people are using the sewer at Fuller Road? Cutting down the trees to build the sewer may have been in violation of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. Ridership on Amtrak may not be growing so we shouldn't build a new station until ridership is up.
- The Broadway Bridge was built with six lanes. It always looks cheaper to build on a greenfield site but there are lots of hidden costs that haven't been looked at. I don't think the EA is well written and it needs better analysis. I have not seen enough detail that convinces me that Fuller Road is the better option.
- 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



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walkable and closer to downtown and could be a second downtown. Need to think of this as a 100 year project.

7:45 Presentation

- How was Transit Oriented Development impacts factored in for each site?
Economic development was part of 20 different criteria analyzed for each of the station sites. The Report says that as a primarily developed community and the relatively small amount of vacant land surrounding both the Depot Street and Fuller Road sites, the major impacts will be on the existing developed property in Ann Arbor.
- How many spaces will be constructed in the Fuller Road parking garage?
About 1300 total spaces will be built at full build out. 870 will be reserved for long term parking, 250 for future commuter rail users, and 150 spaces would be reserved for park users. An additional 50 spaces would be used for short term parking and pick-up/drop-offs. The garage would be built in phases as demand grows.
- Who will pay for the new station?
This was not studied in this phase of the station development; the EA was responsible solely for selecting a site to build the station on. The Preliminary Engineering phase will look closer at the costs and funding mechanisms.
- In the presentation, it was mentioned that there is the “perception” that the Fuller Road site is farther away from downtown.
Both sites are outside of what is considered Downtown Ann Arbor, but the Depot Street site is closer to Downtown than Fuller Road. This will be corrected in future presentations.
- When will the project go to the voters?
The project will go to the voters at or before completion of Final Design work.
- How would the proposed Connector interact with the preferred alternative?
The Connector, currently under reconsideration, would travel along the south side of the rail corridor, in between the existing rail right-of-way (ROW) and the UM Hospital property. It would connect directly with the potential new station.
- Is UM a stakeholder and are they financing part of any other station studies?
It is assumed that UM may be a stakeholder in future phases, but they have not been involved in this phase beyond intermodal bus/rail opportunities. The EA has been a purely City of Ann Arbor project. There have been no conversations with UM or any other stakeholder or land owners about the development of the property. As part of the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase, various stakeholders will be more involved.



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- Does the Intermodal Hub part of the station need to be phased in and is it being held up by the decision making for the station site?
The physical constraints at the current location make it very hard to increase the number of modes serving the station and Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) will not bring more buses there because of those constraints. The phasing at the new station will apply to bus bays, in addition to parking, and additional bus bays may be added to accommodate more passengers as rail service increases.
- What is the status of The Connector?
The Connector is being re-scoped and re-defined based on costs. AAATA, UM, City of Ann Arbor, and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) were all partners in the initial phase of the project. Even though it is speculative to include as a future mode serving the station, it is required by the FRA to be included in the EA report as an ongoing planning project.
- Aren't ride-hailing services and autonomous vehicles just as speculative as The Connector?
Perhaps, but there is no publicly available data for ride-hailing and autonomous vehicles to determine what the impacts would be for those modes.
- The Depot Street site has limitations, but is there an alternative that was studied that would upgrade the existing station to better accommodate people?
Yes. The No-Build alternative would be upgraded to address some of the current deficiencies, but things like station capacity and parking would require new facilities.