



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Citizen Working Group Meeting Notes—Meeting #1

Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014

Location: Ann Arbor District Library

Attendees: 22 citizen attendees

The first meeting of the Citizen Working Group (CWG) included a presentation that detailed the overall scope of the Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review. 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: www.a2gov.org/annarborstation.

Potential Station Locations

- We should consider the old train station as a viable option for Ann Arbor It's outside the flood plain. If we are talking millions of dollars it could be renovated and used again. It has potential to be a tourist attraction.
- Amtrak owns the current station, does anything preclude building on that same property?
Amtrak is supportive of the project and improvements to improve service and operations. The existing station site is limited in size and may preclude if the station future needs cannot be accommodated.

Buses

- Provide information on the frequency of buses currently at the station and in the future.
- Include AirRide as part of multimodal operations.

Other Comparison Stations

- Of the stations that are being compared, how many have free parking?
Niles and Dearborn
- On the City website it says there are other local rail improvements, but local communities are responsible to those improvements. Has Amtrak mandated that cities have to maintain stations?
No
- How many other stations have paid the 20%.
Most of the other federal capital grants are 100%, planning grants are 80/20. What Troy and Dearborn did was donate city time to the construction project. 100% funding was a special American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provision. This Act was a response to the "Great Recession" and fully granted shovel-ready transportation projects to stimulate the



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economy. 100% federal funding should not be anticipated for future projects. Substantial local planning investments positioned other Michigan stations for ARRA funding.

The Project Process

- Discuss the environmental assessment and the alternatives and which comes first.
The process is concurrent where various alternatives will be assessed environmentally.
- The Purpose and Need has a requirement for access to historic data and projections that rely on assumptions. How will the CWG get access to the current and historical data?
The Michigan Department of Transportation website has historic ridership at Ann Arbor for the past 10 years. The station-specific data for Ann Arbor and other stations represents boardings and alightings—all station activity.
- What about the projections for traffic?
Projections were originally developed a number of years ago as part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative that the State of Michigan participated. The State is currently studying the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac corridor and will update the projected ridership. The current 2040 forecasted ridership for Ann Arbor is 448,704 versus 155,000 in 2013.
- Is there a NEPA as part of the study because there is public land?
NEPA is required because of the federal funding.
- My understanding with NEPA and 4f is that part of it becomes that you have demonstrate a feasible alternatives you have to demonstrate options you have to show no alternatives.
As part of the NEPA process we will be reviewing alternatives with the goal of avoidance of any impacts. If an impact cannot be avoided it will be minimized and efforts made to mitigate.

Environmental Issues

- Will you be considering the floodplain as that station is along the river?
Yes
- I want to make sure this group respects the Huron River and the floodplain issues. I built my house near the floodplain. I was told not to build my house there. We should have a standard that isn't any less than a home. Fuller Park is in the floodplain.
- I think there are restrictions for building in the floodplain.
That will be key to the design criteria.
- One concern I have is security. If it's at the Fuller Road will it be the City or the University. I saw a spill there and the University didn't follow-up. If you put a station at the Fuller Road site, whose rules apply, federal, state or University?
MDOT owns the railroad right of way. There will have to be overarching language and negotiation depending upon where it's located.



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- I'd like to know about the 1.4 dioxin level at the site. Do not let Pall get a third-party person to measure that.

Station Improvements

- When do you anticipate the new improved rail and second rail and 10 round trips?
MDOT is installing double track in many places along the Chicago-Detroit corridor now. They anticipate that 10 round trips and the necessary infrastructure to support these trips will be implemented by 2020.
- Will freight still be allowed to travel when build out is complete?
Yes
- It sounds like there is limited capacity on the trains now. What do you know about that?
There is on certain trips. It is one of the reasons the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is procuring more equipment.
- You might not need more stations, but more trains.
There is an equipment shortage, as well as station capacity constraints.
- The current station closes when the train leaves. I'd like the new station to stay open until after people leave.

Comments Regarding Previous Studies

- With the study that was conducted in the past, parking space was altered, trees were taken down. How does that affect this study?
The improvements that were made at the Fuller Road site were approved by Council for the sewer system. This is a clean slate, and our first meeting. URS was not a party to the previous study
- Apparently we are starting from scratch. So someone should remind you that the former site being considered was on Fuller Road. Most of the land along the river the parkland. There is a parking lot, but it was supposed to be temporary. If you use that parcel it is landlocked.

Other Partners

- How much is the University of Michigan involved?
They are a stakeholder and an important transportation provider in our community. The Environmental Review is a City study. UM is one of many stakeholders. They are invited to the Leadership Advisory Group meeting next week.



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Accessibility

- We haven't talked about accessibility. We need to discuss this.
Accessibility is an important issue with that site. It is a significant Federal and Amtrak requirement. They have people who work on just those issues. That's a high priority.
- To ease accessibility other stations have a platform that can fold back for freight.
That's part of the design criteria and an MDOT consideration for all new stations along the line.
- I'd like to reiterate the ADA issue. Ann Arbor-ites are getting older. I'd like to see bicycle access on trains. I think we need to look at the carbon footprint. We're going to be asked by the federal government to step up. We can increase ridership.

Decision-Making/Voting On The Station

- At the end result it says that it will be voted upon on by the voters or their representatives. Which is it?
The City Council resolution is for a vote of the people. If all parties agree that station improvements are a good idea and don't require a vote, then the investments would be up to Council. The decision to put it to a vote is made by elected officials.
- Before getting to the point of a vote it sounds like there will be a lot of decisions. How will those be made?
As the project team we will review the data. We will test against the Purpose and Need, the criteria. There will be constant input along the process.

Other Comments

- Who owns the right of way in the old Michigan Central line? My understanding is that Amtrak doesn't own it.
Amtrak owns Kalamazoo to Porter, IN. MDOT owns Kalamazoo to Dearborn.
- Who will be the owner of the facility when it's completed?
Right now it's a City project, so it depends on who is the landowner. It depends on property acquisition. The City isn't always the one who has to assume the costs. The station owner will work with station operators to recover costs.
- I was wondering about Wally and The Connector.
Those are other studies that we need to be aware of and coordinate with other projects. As part of the federal regulations we need to provide information on other studies underway. The impact they would have offers an opportunity for collaboration.
- Since the federal government will only cover part of the costs for the station, local money will have to be found. Is there any chance that if Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) funds were uncommitted these could they be used for the station?
Once we identify who the partners are, the City will try to recapture costs. Anyone providing service to the facility would be asked to share costs.



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- I'm concerned about AAATA money going to the station and not being able to meet their needs. *As a stakeholder they can identify their role during those discussions.*
- If Wally happens I'm not supporting it, but we should build a station that supports North South and East West. We could put it at a location that will be compatible. *Straight track is required for new Amtrak stations. At the location where the two lines cross, both lines are on sharp curves.*

Additional Written Comments (Please note that written comments are transcribed verbatim)

- “The following should be provided: 1. Continuity of the Border-to-Border Trail and the existing and planned trails that connect to it. 2. Access from the trails to the station by people on bicycles, on foot, and in wheelchairs. 3. Ability for passengers to roll their bicycles onto trains.”
- “There seem to be a lot of people with very specific agendas in the room. This does not look like an easy project—several do not seem to be approaching this with an open mind.”
- “URS was very fortunate that people asked questions because the presentation was limited in content. Thank you for providing the info online soon.”
- “I am concerned that if it is built at the “Fuller Park” location that who will administer security? Near that location an unsolved environmental spill occurred and the U of M police failed at solving it. They didn't bother bringing in the DNR/EPA/state police as they exercised their authority, autonomy and failed at solving that crime. If the Fuller lot is built, security and environmental laws must fall under the city and state officials, and not the autonomy of the University. Also, wherever they build it, I'd like to know the 1,4 Dioxan level at that spot. Do not let Pall Corporation calculate this level. It is a carcinogen spreading in A2.”