



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Leadership Advisory Group Meeting Notes—Meeting #2

Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2014

Location: Ann Arbor City Hall, Council Chamber

Leadership Advisory Group Members in Attendance:

Jim Kosteva, University of Michigan
Michael Benham, AAATA
Nancy Shore, GetDowntown
Trevor Bryson, SEMCOG
Nathan Voght, Washtenaw County
Eric Tuomey, McKinley Properties
Bill Milliken, Milliken Realty Company
Andrew Selinger, Oxford Company
Laura Rubin, Huron River Watershed Council
Paul Krutko, Ann Arbor SPARK
Maura Thompson, Main Street Area Association
Jane Lumm, Ann Arbor City Council
Christopher Taylor, Ann Arbor City Council
Margie Teall, Ann Arbor City Council
Chuck Warpehoski, Ann Arbor City Council
Roy Townsend, Washtenaw County Road Commission
Anne Brown, Office of Representative David Rutledge
Nancy Shiffler, Sierra Club
Representative Gretchen Driskell
Andy Hodges, MDOT
Therese Cody, MDOT
John Bender, Amtrak
Annika Doner, Office of Senator Rebekah Warren

RSVP, but did not attend:

Jesse Gordon, Malletts Creek Watershed Group
Jennifer Hall, Ann Arbor Housing Commission

Members of the Public in Attendance:

James d'Amour
Laurence J. Krieg, PhD
Larry Deck
Rita Mitchell



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The second 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: www.a2gov.org/annarborstation.

General Comments

- Has there been any consideration for adding office space at the station? At the Dearborn station do they have office space use?
The Dearborn station is partnering with The Henry Ford to provide exhibit space. As far as office space, they don't have that now. There is the potential to add office space to the Ann Arbor Station.
- You're saying that the existing Ann Arbor Station building is inadequate, but does that assume that the size is inadequate.
The building itself is inadequate now in terms of size and facilities available. The site as it is configured today is inadequate for parking, pedestrian access, and multi-modal connections (train-to-bus connections, etc.). The integration of the existing site with the local area is poor as well. This is measured in terms of barrier-free walking and biking routes and roadway connections. The site may be sufficient if additional land is acquired and connections to and through the site are improved.

Evaluation Process/Segments

- I'm struggling with the "public transit connection potential" category. If you locate at any of these stations they would adjust the route to go to that station, right?
Public transit access potential is measured in terms of how many existing or planned transit routes and facilities travel near the track segments. Existing land uses and zoning were also considered, since a dense concentration of jobs or residences are more supportive of sustainable transit than sparse development. Extending or diverting bus routes to reach a new area adds operating cost to each of those routes. A station in the right place will naturally draw transit trips without burdening transit operator budgets.
- What's the definition for "suitable land for station facilities?" Was the square footage considered?
Ridership dictates the size requirements of both the station building and site. The Project Team's current ballpark square footage estimate for a station building accommodating only essential railroad functions is 10-11K square feet for intercity rail, or around 12K square feet if commuter rail is added. The Team's initial estimate was that sites with less than about three developable acres would not have enough land to meet the station program. That land estimate will likely increase.



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- If you are including parking in your look at suitable land, there are a lot of cities, like Denver, where little parking is provided near the main railroad stations. How much are you considering parking in your suitable sites?
Looking at the ridership projections, the parking requirement that Amtrak shared with us is more than 2,000 spaces. Now, that's not what would be built immediately, if ever. If the project advances there would be phased construction. We would want the flexibility to expand if needed.
- To me there is a big difference between convenient access to downtown and major activity centers.
The graphic shared at the June project meetings shows the proximity of alternative track segments to both Downtown and other activity areas, and distinguishes between these. Ideally, the station would offer convenient access to Downtown and other areas as well. Ideally, the station would be located within a half-mile or so of activity centers (including Downtown) to promote walking trips and convenient access for all travel modes. The Phase II analysis will consider how many jobs and residences are in proximity of each alternative station site. Connections to Downtown will be considered in detail.
- Is the assumption that the industrial locations can't be changed at segment #3?
That could change, but it would require land purchases and displacing many businesses. Yes, the land use could change though.
- When looking at segments #3 and #4, I am reminded of the idea of the connection between a North-South and East-West rail line. I know it's on a curve, but was that factor considered?
Yes, and that was brought up during the initial public meetings. The issue with that is that in order for this to function for Amtrak, the east-west line needs to have 1,000 feet of straight track where a station would be located. As noted, where the tracks cross both lines pass through sharp curves. The crossing point is relatively near both Segments 3 (North Main Street) and 4 (Depot Street/Existing Amtrak). Should AAATA determine that it can locate a WALLY station along the curve, it may be possible to facilitate a walking transfer between WALLY and an east-west line station at either Segment 3 or Segment 4.
- You say that Segment 4 (Depot Street/Existing Amtrak) has suitable land for the station, but it's in a flood plain, etc. When looking at other sites you mentioned that businesses would have to be displaced. In order to move into the land at #4 would have to move into DTE land?
Site #4 is vacant right now; at other locations there are currently businesses occupying the space.
- Can some of the limitations of sites be addressed in site design for Segment 4 (Depot Street/Existing Amtrak)? Can you move some of the ratings from 1s up to 2s?
The rating system used for the Phase I Alternatives Analysis was a rough measurement used to screen out sites that are disadvantageous for a new station. Those ratings represented the best professional judgment of the Project Team for the three segments recommended for Phase II analysis.



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- One thing not in the criteria is transit-oriented development. It seems that Segment 4 has that as a plus.
Yes, Segment 4 offers many opportunities for infill development in the immediate and surrounding area. Transit-oriented development potential at the remaining alternative station sites will be considered in Phase II.
- Does the Project Team assume a vertical parking structure at the selected station location?
Yes, a vertical structure approach will be used for both parking and the station building.
- If you are including transit-oriented development in your consideration, Segment 5 (Fuller Road—West) is surrounded by parkland. You don't have any nearby area for that kind of expansion. I'm also not sure it's that convenient to downtown.
The Segment 5 area already includes concentrated development and has further development potential in surrounding non-park areas. The Project Team feels that there are enough positives to include Segment 5 in the Phase II analysis.
- The Phase I analysis doesn't adequately consider that Segment 5 (Fuller Road—West) is adjacent to parkland on its north side.
The June presentations and meeting handouts depict park areas in green. The Project Team is aware of Segment 5's proximity to parkland and will consider that in the Phase II analysis.
- Are there discussions at the University for connecting the medical and central campus?
The Connector study is evaluating a fixed-guideway/semi-exclusive right-of-way transit connection between the UM Central and Medical campuses. During Phase II, the Project Team will consider existing and potential future transit connections and the implications these have for the passenger rail station location.
- Most people would avoid the Medical Campus unless they need to go there. So to give Segment 5 a score of 2 (best possible) for access to Downtown and activity centers seems high.
- The University of Michigan's estimation is that 35,000 people travel in and out of the Medical Campus every day.
- I think there's the potential that if someone works in Detroit, they could live in Ann Arbor and have convenient access to transit.
- What makes Segment 5 (Fuller Road—West) positive for the "accessed by existing roadways" rating?
The roadways near Segment 5 facilitate higher traffic volumes than roads at some of the other locations. They also have the capacity to expand.
- Right now the differentiation between Segments 4 and 5 is exiting roadways and transit connections. Is it fair to say that traffic generated by a station would be more easily accommodated Segment 5 than Segment 4??



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A concern with the existing Amtrak site (Segment 4) is the ability of these roads to absorb station traffic. Site access challenges and traffic impacts for each of the remaining sites will be evaluated in detail during Phase II of the analysis.

- If you look at the traffic patterns, whatever happens on Fuller Road will cause traffic jams on Depot Street. Either place you put it there will be traffic impacts.
Yes, for the remaining locations there needs to be careful consideration of traffic impacts.
- I think it's critical that you look at the traffic levels today and the impacts of additional traffic at Segment 5 (Fuller Road—West).
The Project Team will sit down with City traffic staff, document traffic conditions today and project future traffic growth.
- I think you could potentially give more points to Segment 3 (North Main Street). That area holds redevelopment potential and transit connectivity could work there. I wound up with a score of 4, 5, or 6 for Segment 3. Maybe you shouldn't dismiss that one yet.
- Access to existing roadways has the best potential at Segment 3. Our biggest traffic problem is on US-23. We have data at SPARK that shows that over 60,000 people come to Ann Arbor from outside the county.
- I think you might be missing a scoring item related to solving some of the City's traffic problems. If you could show us what traffic problems might be solved by each location it might help evaluate the sites. I think the numbers for Segment 3 are low.
One of the concerns with Segment 3 is that it is a further from Downtown and activity areas that Segments 4 and 5. Also, it lacks some pedestrian and bicycle advantages that Segments 4 and 5 offer.
- Consider Segment 3 for transit oriented development and as a gateway to the City.
- Consider how a station at Segment 5 (Depot Street/Existing Amtrak) can support redevelopment along North Main Street.

Ridership/Parking

- What are the "ons" and "offs" at the existing station?
Rail ridership often considers only individuals boarding trains. Station volume, or station activity, considers boardings and alightings: people getting on and off trains at a station. There were about 150,000 ons and offs at Ann Arbor Station last year. Ann Arbor is the busiest Amtrak station in Michigan.
- Do we have data on the intermittent traveler?
MDOT can request that data from Amtrak. The City wants the station to be walkable and the State and FRA support this. FRA also recognizes that intercity travelers often want long-term



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automobile parking at stations. We have to find the right balance of station parking so that travellers don't avoid use of the station.

- You can't necessarily say that a station at one location would have the same number of ons and offs as another location. If we want an environmentally sound approach we should maximize the use of the station for a positive impact.
- We should have a transportation management plan for the station that includes information about where people will be coming from, how that station will be marketed, what displays will be there, etc.
- One thing I don't see on the maps are underground facilities (gas pipelines) at these locations. The Phase I graphics showed City water, sewer, and some other utilities. During Phase II, segment-area utilities will be documented in further detail.

Other Comments

- Will there be any additional meetings?
Yes, there will be a site tour, two more Citizen Advisory Group meetings, another of these Leadership Advisory Group meetings and a public meeting.
- Will we have access to the Alternative Analysis document?
The Alternatives Analysis memo will be included in the final project report.
- Could you provide us with case studies of peer stations?
Yes, we can do that.
- Why is 1,000 feet of track required?
That is an Amtrak regulation to avoid gaps between the trains and station platforms. It meets ADA guidelines for train access.