



# CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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## Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Leadership Advisory Group Meeting Notes—Meeting #4

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Location: Ann Arbor City Hall, Council Chambers

### Leadership Advisory Group Members in Attendance:

Sue Gott, University of Michigan  
Jim Kosteva, University of Michigan  
Michael Benham, AAATA  
Trevor Bryson, SEMCOG  
Jane Lumm, Ann Arbor City Council  
Nancy Shiffler, Sierra Club  
Nathan Voght, Washtenaw County  
Therese Cody, MDOT  
John Bender, Amtrak

### Members of the Public in Attendance:

Chris Babuska  
Clark Charnetski  
Chris Crockett  
Ruth Dixon  
Rita Mitchell  
Gwen Nystuen  
Ethel Potts  
Ed Vielmetti

The fourth 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/planning-areas/transportation/Pages/Ann-Arbor-Station.aspx>.

### **Alternative 2B**

- How do passengers get to the other side of the tracks with this option?  
*An overhead walkway is proposed with an elevator option for people to use.*



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- It isn't clear here how buses that need to turn left will turn.  
*At Alternative 3A, the existing Fuller Road turnaround will be relocated. There will be a bus-only lane and passenger vehicles only entrances.*

## Alternative 3A

- How many cars will there be in the garage/parking structure?  
*There will 870 spots for intercity, 200 for commuter, 50 for short-term parking. That need is for the full build-out in 20 years with 10 round trips per day. It will be an incremental build out and will continue to include spaces available to park users.*

## The Environmental Assessment

- When is the preferred alternative going to be released?  
*The preferred alternative will be identified in the Environmental Assessment.*
- Why does the NEPA process affect the old station (Gandy Dancer) option?  
*The FRA is asking us to look at the historic station. The remaining four options are recommended as reasonable alternatives and will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment.*
- How many months with the Environmental Assessment take?  
*As soon as the public engagement is complete and we get all the public feedback, we will begin preparing the Environmental Assessment. The timeline for the Environmental Assessment is relatively short. Federal funds must be utilized by May, 2017. So here we are in September, we expect comments by October and so we will be back fairly quickly, hopefully in October or November. The Environmental Assessment will then be made available for public review.*

## Traffic-Related Topics

- Could you describe more about traffic related to the parking and also about road capacity. Also, when you look at the multimodal nature of our community how are you evaluating transit, pedestrians, non-motorized, etc. How will that be incorporated into the Environmental Assessment?  
*In many ways the parking operates like an airport parking structure. The parking demand spread out over the day. We are preparing a traffic impact study to document what's happening today. We are also looking at traffic patterns over the next 20 years as well. We are also looking at the multimodal impact at least a mile around the station. Working with the City we are evaluating key intersections that would be affected by the improvements..*

*We recognize that a lot of trips are pedestrian, transit and bicycle and those were considered as well. We began by reviewing at proposed ridership and typical Amtrak guidance for parking needs, and adjusted/reduced parking based on those types of users that are more common in Ann Arbor. The parking ramp can be phased, so it can be adjusted to the numbers of passengers using other transportation modes to access the station.*



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- I'm wondering about Uber and taxis. Are buses on Depot Street? Why can't they be on Broadway? For buses on Broadway, why not add a loop under the bridge and avoid left turns.

*AAATA buses operate on both Depot and Broadway. Adding a loop under the bridge would require park land.*

- How tall are the anticipated parking structures?  
*There would be about 250 vehicles per level in the structure at full build out, so approximately 4 – 5 levels at full build-out. If the Fuller site would be selected, the ground level would be for transit interface, so there would be an additional parking level needed. The parking levels can be added as the need arises.*
- In an effort to minimize the use of automobiles we are creating a lot of infrastructure for automobiles. What will the destinations be for people who use these cars? Where are cars coming from that will use the station? Currently there is ever increasing traffic on US Hwy. 23. *The station has the highest ridership in the State of Michigan. There are people coming from the surrounding region and using the site as documented in the Corridor wide Tier I EISI. The Environmental Assessment will include an impact assessment of local traffic. As an Amtrak intercity rail project, the people coming to the station from the surrounding region will access the station via the road network as there are few transit options for accessing the rail service. For the purposes of intercity rail, the travel patterns and the ridership projections bring us to the parking levels we have presented. One of the first things we looked at with the FRA was the parking, and since the start of the project we have reduced it by 50%.*
- We are all excited by rail opportunities and I want to thank you for stewarding this exciting project. On the Fuller site, we have been looking at a high-capacity corridor and I assume that as part of that that there would be increased trip generation. Are you being trip sensitive when looking at parking when it comes to walkability, connections to light rail, etc. Will the EA be more qualitative rather than quantitative?  
*The parking number hasn't changed based on the location. As The Connector project comes online we will be able to look at that more carefully and we can take a better look at that connectivity. We will have considered the multi-modal aspects for parking needs. Some factors in discussed in the EA will be qualitative.*
- I want to know about the transportation studies that are being used to make your estimates. I'd like to know if those studies are available. Is the material about these studies and what you have done for this process available? What data are you using now and can it be made available?  
*The team will prepare a traffic impact study for each alternative. We will share that as part of the Environmental Assessment. Data or studies prepared will be made available as part of the Environmental Assessment.*
- Who will be doing the traffic impact study for the City of Ann Arbor?  
*The City of Ann Arbor's contract with AECOM includes the traffic study.*



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- Will we be looking at Fuller Road, Geddes Road and the impacts to the west?  
*Yes, those roads will be included. The study includes Main Street, Plymouth and Barton, Fuller and Glenn, about approximately a mile around the station alternatives.*
- Are the traffic studies being done at comparable times during the day?  
*Yes, the counts were done during peak hours in the morning and the afternoon at each of the intersections.*
- What time of year was the traffic counted? Shouldn't you do it during the school year?  
*The traffic data was collected in the summer and compared to traffic collected during the school year and calibrated.*
- I haven't heard you talk about traffic impacts from the South and how it might impact the area to the south. I know you looked at the Gandy Dancer area, but did you look at the area south of that in the old fourth ward?  
*A deeper look will be done during the Environmental Assessment. The study does cover the intersections to Barton in the historic districts to the south.*

## Site-Related Topics

- Since this is a very futuristic issue, it's an impact that will last half a century. The gridlock downtown is unbelievable. What kind of square footage do you have in the alternatives for things we don't anticipate? Where is the biggest site that gives us the most flexibility?  
*Based on Amtrak guidelines and anticipated ridership we estimate the station building will be approximately 8,500 square feet to accommodate the required inner city passenger rail program. Each site is limited in available size and in some cases we have to acquire land to fulfill the program needs.*
- Can you speak to the difference to the criteria you used to narrow down to the four alternatives as opposed to the Environmental Assessment? Is it normal to have four alternatives?  
*For the Environmental Assessment the criteria will be those outlined in the NEPA process. For the Alternative Analysis Phase II Report process we used was Location Within the Community, Accessibility and Site Assessment. We originally anticipated having only one alternative evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The decision to include four was based on guidance received from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).*
- Several times you mentioned property acquisition. The present station is not owned by the City. Have you discussed it with Amtrak about acquiring property? If the station was moved, the current property could be reused. It would also allow the DTE site to be enlarged.  
*We have not formally discussed with Amtrak about acquiring their property but they are aware of our efforts and will coordinate once a decision on a preferred alternative is made.*



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## **Amtrak Comments:**

*We have not had detailed discussions about property acquisitions. We have not discussed what acquisitions would look like whether it would be a dollar amount or a partnership. We have not had that conversation yet. We will need to if we move down that road.*

- Most everyone in the room is most likely pleased that rail has been reinvigorated. Stations have a lot of opportunity for economic development. Have you been looking at that?  
*Yes, this was evaluated as part of the Alternatives Analysis Phase II Report.*
- One of the issues around the Fuller Road site is looking at the impact on parks around Fuller. One of the things you brought up in the analysis is that the parking area on one side of Fuller is used by the park users and the University of Michigan. What would be the mitigation if that parking is removed?  
*The intention is that if the Fuller Road site is chosen, park users would continue to have access to parking. The proposed parking would not accommodate University of Michigan users.*
- The preferred alternative will be selected and that one site will be considered for the Preliminary Engineering, correct?  
*Yes*
- I am a little puzzled about the ranking for floodplains, and known hazardous materials, etc. in the Phase II Alternatives Analysis. In general, the ranking and rating process. In some cases like transit, at Depot Street there are 3,000 riders, at Fuller road, 38,000 riders, but they are both ranked the same. The options at each site were compared to one another, not all options for all sites.  
*The FRA directed us to look at each site on its own and alternatives for each site in relation to each other only at that site. Therefore, when we looked at each site, Depot or Fuller Road options, we ranked the alternatives based on that site location only.*