



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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Ann Arbor Station Environmental Review Leadership Advisory Group (LAG) Meeting Notes—Meeting #5

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 8am

Location: Ann Arbor Council Chambers

Attendees: 12

Leadership Advisory Group Members in Attendance:

Bill DeGroot, AAATA

Kelley Schwarz, getDowntown

Larry Deck, Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition

Trevor Bryson, SEMCOG

Nancy Shiffler, Sierra Club

Al Johnson, MDOT

The October 11th meeting of the Leadership Advisory Group included a presentation of the alternatives considered and the recommendation of a Preferred Alternative resulting from the Environmental Analysis process. 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>

Questions

- Will the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) hold a public hearing for this project?
Based on FRA procedures a Public Hearing is not required for an EA/FONSI but substantial public involvement has occurred throughout the life of the project as well as the public review of the EA and future FONSI. The City of Ann Arbor is the local public face and is working with FRA to complete the environmental review. FRA will release a draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that is subject to public comment that are submitted to FRA. Comments on the draft EA are accepted to until November 2nd.



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- Who makes the De Minimis decision?
The FRA will make a De Minimis determination and request a concurrence letter from the official with jurisdiction of the park unit, and in this case it is the City of Ann Arbor. The Parks Advisory Committee (PAC) will be considering a position on a de minimis letter this at their next meeting; the PAC input will be forwarded to City Council that may authorize a letter of acceptance to the FRA.

The FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 Federal Register [FR] 28545, Section 12, May 26, 1999 and 78 FR 2713, January 14, 2013) outline the Section 4(f) process for FRA environmental documents. The FRA also looks for additional guidance to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Section 4(f) regulation, codified at 23 (C.F.R. Part 774, and the FHWA's Section 4(f) Policy Paper (July 2012).

- Has Amtrak been involved with the process?
Yes, they have been involved from before the FRA grant application and award. City is working with the end users of the station.
- What will happen to the old station if the site is moved to Fuller Road?
Amtrak would make determination because they own the property.
- When would this go to the University Of Michigan (UM) Board of Regents and/or a public vote?
This would not go the UM Board of Regents because it is a city project. City council has indicated that at or before the Final Design phase, the station would go to a vote to determine if the station should be built or not. No set date of when the vote would occur.
- When would the Fuller Road Intersection Improvements for the preferred alternative be constructed?
It is programmed in the City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for construction in 2020
- The report say there is no impact at the Depot Site but the Appendix says traffic would require widening. Why?
The traffic study takes into account programmed projects and there are no projects currently programmed on Depot Street. The traffic associated with the Depot Street site would require widening to provide access to the station. There are more complexities to overcome existing traffic on Depot St than on Fuller Road.
- Regarding the staging on Fuller Park during construction, not addressed as well for Depot Street.
The EA includes anticipates staging for each Build Alternative.
- Using Fuller as a street that connects to the Station has problems because there is too much demand.
The Traffic Impact Study including comprehensive analysis of both existing and future traffic patterns indicates with current intersection improvements; roundabout, installed the road has capacity to meet future demands.



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- What design options were considered for the Broadway Bridge?
Design options considered were turning lanes, bus loading, and drop-offs near station that meet design standards and minimize the footprint while accommodating traffic.
- Do buses have to go into parking areas for drop off?
Amtrak design guidelines recommend how the drop-off areas are accommodated at each station that is separated bus and private vehicle access areas.
- There are three camps of opinions in Ann Arbor. 1/3 for all transit, 1/3 for no transit, 1/3 that can be persuaded. The persuaded people think that it's a good idea to have transit but don't want city to spend any money. Selling Transit Oriented Development (TOD) rights above station could help pay for 20% match to build the station.
- Any consideration to building parking garage to support a building on top of it?
Not within this project.
- Would all buses stop at the station or would some go past?
Not determined yet. Would be part of the future operations plan.
- Did you look at a right turn loop through Broadway Park?
No because it would significantly impact Broadway Park.
- How does 3A fit the "gateway to the city" concept indicated in the EA?
The gateway concept cannot be determined because no elevations have been created yet. A clearer design will come out of Preliminary Engineering and future public involvement.
- What happened in the last four years of back and forth between the City and FRA?
This is not the purpose of the meeting today.
- Why are there \$8M in acquisition costs appropriated to the Depot Street site but nothing to Fuller Road?
The Fuller Rd site would be built on City owned land and no acquisition costs are needed for land or to widen the road.
- How much funding will Amtrak contribute since they own the current station and why aren't they building the new station?
The City made the decision to build and own the new station, wherever that may be and Amtrak will occupy the space. There have not been any discussions on cost sharing yet because the EA is only looking at the specific site and not the actual design of the building. In the next phase costing and operations will be determined in more detail.
- Regarding the 4(f) Analysis, how would the ownership of land work for the Fuller Road site?
The City would retain ownership of all lands and the land surrounding the station would be managed by the Parks and Recreation department.



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Comments

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