



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Thursday, August 10, 2017, 2:00 PM

Location: The Chrysalis Center, 255 Homestead Avenue, Hartford

Subject: Multimodal Station Working Session

Attendees

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS and MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC | | |
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| Mike Sevino | Journal Inquirer | msevino@record-journal.com |
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| CONSULTANT TEAMS | | |
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1. Meeting Purpose and Format

The purpose of the meeting was to present information to Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members and other interested members of the public on the background, location and initial concept options for a relocated railroad station and bus terminal in Hartford. The event lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

2. Presentation and Discussion

Tom Jost, of WSP, opened the discussion by displaying several historical images and describing the historical land development in the station area. He introduced the Capital Gateway Master Plan effort and its guiding principles, which include improving connectivity, creating a district and strong sense of place in the station area, and setting the stage for economic development.

David Spillane, of Goody Clancy, presented background on station planning concepts, asking, “What should a station do?” and “What urban design principles should be employed?” He noted the following desirable traits to maximize in the station area:

- Iconic design
- Catalyst for urban activity and growth
- Potential for other kinds of desired development (e.g., economic development or active civic spaces/uses)
- Compact and well-integrated

He presented both positive and negative examples in the following case studies:

- Back Bay Station, Boston, MA
- Union Station, New Haven, CT
- Providence Station, Providence, RI
- Portland Station, Portland, ME
- South Station, Boston, MA

Bill Kenworthy, of HOK, presented two initial options for the train station site. He noted that these are preliminary conceptual options to encourage feedback from the public and interested parties. The two options were: 1) a compact development immediately north of Asylum Avenue, and 2) a station site south of Asylum Avenue and stretching south along Broad Street.

An attendee stated that they would like Option 1 to have a greater setback from the street. B. Kenworthy answered that the Option 1 concept has a 30-foot setback, but can be revised. Another attendee asked if Option 1 could be moved farther north. T. Jost answered that it could.

An attendee asked if Broad Street would have higher traffic volumes under Option 2. B. Kenworthy answered that the traffic analysis is yet to be completed. Another attendee asked if this option would impact the YWCA. T. Jost answered that it would, but the Project Team is looking at a modified option that would not impact the YWCA.

An attendee asked if Union Station could continue to serve bus operations. B. Kenworthy said the Project Team tried to develop a very compact transportation center that closely integrates rail, bus, and parking facilities. Other options could incorporate the existing Union Station. Another attendee supported relocating bus facilities from Union Station to the new transit center. They stated that Union Station could become more attractive for economic development once the railroad is relocated.

An attendee questioned if it was possible to move the whole station complex farther north, citing topography as a potential concern. Sandy Fry, of the City of Hartford, answered that the City had originally looked at a station site further north, but found that it did not meet some rail program needs, such as 1,000 feet of straight track to accommodate elevated platforms.

An attendee asked if it was possible to make some local roads one-way in order to manage traffic and maintain vehicular access on Broad Street between Asylum and Farmington Avenues. B. Kenworthy said the Project Team will look at more options based on this input.

Working session participants communicated their preferences for the station's siting and design. These preferences include:

- Toni Gold, of the West End Civic Association, voiced preference for a station location closer to Bushnell Park, and a parking garage to the north and over the highway.
- One attendee noted that legislators are the hardest to convince. This attendee voiced support for a station located closer to the Capitol to help convince legislators.
- One commenter supported a close relationship between rail and bus facilities on the same side of Asylum Avenue, as it is a busy street and difficult to cross.
- Others stated that siting the station on Asylum Avenue is a good idea because it is more central and accessible.
- An attendee voiced general support for a compact design like Option 1, because bicycle and pedestrian connectivity improves with a compact design.
- An attendee from the Frog Hollow neighborhood stated that Frog Hollow prefers the more southern location for the station.
- An attendee voiced preference for siting the station on the north side of Asylum Avenue as the grade is steeper on the south.
- A participant suggested considering conflicts arising from drop-off and pick-up areas. They said Option 1 has too many conflict areas.
- An attendee stated that the iconic station design should be visible from many angles.

Rich Armstrong, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, closed the session by thanking all for attending, and noting that the Project Team appreciates this helpful input. He said that there will be another working session in late September