



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Wednesday, June 28, 2017, 2:30 PM

Location: Union Station, Hartford, CT

Subject: Transit Technical Committee Meeting #3

Attendees

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Meeting Purpose

The Transit Technical Committee (TTC) provided an overview of the Open Planning Studio (OPS) workshops, stakeholders interview results, station programming planning, and conceptual designs of the Station. The purpose of the meeting was to narrow down number of concepts for further development.

Summary of Meeting

Gina Trimarco of TranSystems (TSC) provided an agenda for the meeting, along with print outs of the proposed concepts, proposed bus routes per transit type, and concept evaluation criteria for originally proposed four multimodal stations (A-D) and three newly developed concepts (E-G).

TSC followed with key aspects of the design principles and evaluation criteria that should be used for each concept. A physical 3-D model along with plan view for each of the concepts was presented. Plans were made for each concept, with phases included if the project would be built in stages. Each level in the concept was shown in both the model and plan with the purpose (parking, transit type, Kiss-n-Ride drop-off, waiting area, etc.) delineated by color.

During the presentation there were several questions and comments on the layout and general programming questions. These are sorted by those that were general questions/comments and those specific for each concept:

General

- All concepts with Kiss-n-Ride spaces on Asylum should be redesigned and moved into multimodal station; there should not be any pickups or drop offs on Asylum. Also need to clarify what the appropriate number of Kiss-n-Ride spaces are; the number of existing spaces at Union Station are inadequate.
- On the evaluation criteria, when it says “Union Station is supported,” what is meant? It is meant that it is supported for transportation purposes.
- Traffic volumes (passengers, buses, rail, and vehicles) generated by each concept needs to be identified on the surrounding roads.
- Future parking needs need to be defined; what number of people will be parking and riding transit? What is the projection? Greyhound pointed that their Casino route will attract parkers.
- Have cost estimates been prepared? Cost estimates have not been prepared for the concepts; varying costs can be implied based on the requirements of the design, including the additional safety/security enhancements on those concepts built over the lowered highway.
- Provide more room for TOD along major streets – aside from the station, hide all other structures behind TOD.
- Any grades of 10% on ramps/driveways are undesirable and should be reevaluated to reduce steepness. Be mindful of ADA compliance (road, ramps, sidewalks).
- The drawings should include the track section.
- The City expressed concern that the platforms will be able to accommodate the number of projected riders; TranSystems replied that staff has prepared an analysis that indicates the platforms are of a sufficient width. This information will be shared with the City.
- Ventilation is an issue if the tracks are covered by the multimodal station; TranSystems replied that ventilation is an evaluation factor.
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Concept A

- There appear to be ventilation issues with this concept as the tracks are covered by the multimodal station. Response by TSC: There does not need to be a wall dividing the rail platforms from the highway which will help alleviate the ventilation issues. Also, the columns could be offset so that the sound from the highway will be buffered.
- There is no covered area for bus riders. Response by TSC: The bus parking will be under the first level of the parking garage.
- Can the bus bays be stacked on top of the station and not just over the platforms? Response by TSC: The bus bays can be stacked on top of each other as in similar concepts, but are not shown on top of the rail station.
- TSC noted that the track access will be identical on all concepts.

Concept B

- Mingling taxis with the kiss-n-ride/drop-off location may be a problem in this concept.
- How are people going to go between the modes? The slope between Cogswell and Union Station is pretty steep. Response by TSC: The sidewalk along Asylum is the connection. That sidewalk could be covered, or there could also be an interior walkway through the TOD. Greyhound expressed concern that the walk between Union Station and the parking “up the hill” would be too far.

- Does CT*fastrak* pull into the station? Where is the stop? Response by TSC: On this, and all concepts other than G, it is assumed that CT*fastrak* would stop on Asylum or Farmington where the local buses stop.
- Keep the local bus stops on Spruce Street.
- Spruce Street is not active enough in this concept.

Concept C

- No specific comments

Concept D

- Significant problem with the kiss and ride being located on Asylum. There are going to be significant backups on Asylum which the City will be unable to police. This element should be eliminated for all options.

Concept E

- Why are local buses and intercity buses shown on different levels in this concept? Response by TSC: It is a more direct path of travel from the interstate for intercity bus to use Cogswell and the local bus to use Spruce.
- Provide designated lanes for buses on the ramps. Response by TSC: A revised version where passenger vehicles are separated from the buses into a separate helices has been prepared; TSC showed this version to the TTC.
- Replace helix with other form of moving thru levels.

Concept F

- The fact that bus passengers don't need to cross bus lanes in this concept is an asset.
- Why can't the garage go "below" two levels, rather than up? TSC: The station mezzanine and tracks are in the way unless it is a partial floor.
- Can the Spruce Street ramps be combined so there will be more room for TOD?
- This concept reduces the development possibilities on Spruce Street.
- The idea of "horizontal" orientation is good in order to "direct" riders to Union Station even if it no longer has a transportation purpose.

Concept G

- Couldn't the parking garage "pop up" here, rather than be submerged (better ventilation). TSC: It could, but this would block the view from Bushnell Park to the station.
- Can the green roof be a public space?
- This option constrains development of the "best" land created by lowering I-84.

The TTC meeting included a workshop where teams provided their input on the design concepts. The following was stated:

- Group 1: CRCOG (Capital Region Council of Governments) and City: Concepts B & C could be "tabled" as they would like the station to be a multimodal station. Concept F: The "L" shape of F and utilization of over the highway space is desirable, as well as the fact that

pedestrians do not have to cross bus lanes. The group was also intrigued by concept G, as it is located south of Asylum. A mezzanine level allowing passengers to cross Asylum Street below grade is favored by the City for all the concepts. More information is needed for concepts A, D and E to make decision: (Kiss-n-Ride, how it works with traffic development, ingrate with TOD, quantitative measures, visibility of station, etc.). For these concepts, they especially wanted a traffic analysis done on the impacts.

- Group 2: Peter Pan and Greyhound: Concepts A & B are their favorites because there is no phasing to the design and any there is always a huge risk that only one phase will ever get done—for those concepts, the intercity buses may remain isolated in a subpar location. Concept A is a favorite from a convenience standpoint, and the shared costs (operational & capital) as well as easy access to EB /WB ramps also make it attractive. Concept B is the second favorite as it splits the modes but keeps the buses together. Concept F & G seem costly.
- Group 3: Amtrak (phone): Concept A should be redesigned and pushed to the west to better provide a direct link for transit and buses can be stacked so the space requirements are reduced. Concept D from a rail perspective is best for ventilation purposes; the locomotives on long trains would be outside the cap section in most situations.
- Group 4: CTDOT: From the “rail” perspective, ventilation is a major concern with each concept that locates the station facility over the tracks. There are also security concerns where parking is above a highway. The group recommends depressing any parking. They also feel that a 10% grade for accessing parking levels is too steep; they never go over 8% in Connecticut. Another recommendation is that there should a large TOD area for any concept selected.

The meeting was concluded; no concepts are eliminated at this time. The date for the next TTC meeting will determined at a later date.