



Place: City of Bridgeport, Conference Room
A, 999 Broad Street, Bridgeport CT

Meeting Notes

Date: October 13, 2016

Re: Barnum Railroad Station –
Technical Advisory
Committee Meeting #3

ATTENDEES

TAC Members

Lynn Haig, City of Bridgeport
David Willard, Metro-North Railroad
Dean Mack, City of Bridgeport
Doug Holcomb, Greater Bridgeport Transit
Jon Urquidi, City of Bridgeport
Frank Croke, City of Bridgeport
Ben Carlson, Goody Clancy
Melissa Kaplan-Macey, RPA (phone)
Tom Stille, Dupont (phone)
Michael Taylor, Vita Nuova LLC (phone)

Consultant Team

David Wilcock, VHB
Theresa Carr, VHB
Ken Schwartz, VHB
Mike McDonough, VHB
Matt Egge, VHB
Tony Sardilli, VHB

The Barnum Station Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met October 13, 2016 in Bridgeport to discuss the project design, including platforms, access, parking, track design, structures, and local roadway improvements. An update on traffic analysis, rail operations modeling, environmental documentation, and coordination with the concurrent Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) effort was also provided. The October 13th meeting was the third in a series of six TAC meetings to be held over the course of the project.

These notes document main discussion items, questions asked during the meeting, and actions. They are organized by agenda item, with the majority of the questions and discussion items located under the site and station layout discussion item. Materials presented during the meeting included the agenda and a presentation providing the background of the Barnum Station project and the efforts currently underway. Both of these items, as well as the sign-in sheet from the meeting, are included as attachments to this meeting record.

1. Welcome and Review of Agenda

Theresa Carr, the VHB Barnum Station Deputy Project Manager, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda with the group. All attendees introduced themselves and identified their agency affiliation.

2. Station Layout and Design

Mike McDonough provided an update of the Barnum Station site and station layout, including:

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- Refinements made to the location of the station platforms to optimize access from the local roadway network and parking lot
- Cross track access refinements
- Parking lot layout and circulation within the parking pods and to and from the local roadway network
- Track reconstruction, including construction of retaining walls and reconstruction of bridges at Seaview Avenue, Hallett Street, and Pembroke Street
- Changes to the local roadway network, including the closure of Crescent Avenue between Pembroke Street and Waterview Avenue and vertical clearance at Seaview Avenue and Hallett Street under the railroad bridges
- Catenary structures and monopoles

The PowerPoint presentation includes several graphics that depict aspects of the station and site layout. Discussion from the group included:

- **Crescent Avenue:** One TAC member asked for more detail about the closure of Crescent Avenue. Mike clarified that with the construction of the project, Crescent Avenue would be closed between Pembroke Street and Waterview Avenue. However, Crescent Avenue would be kept open between Waterview Avenue and Seaview Avenue in both directions, for the primary purposes of accommodating emergency vehicles needing to access residents and businesses west of the Yellow Mill Channel but south of the railroad tracks.
- **Circulation within Site:** A discussion was held on the topic of circulation within the parking area and access to the station. Driveways are anticipated on Hallett Street (one driveway, immediately north of the tracks) and on Barnum Avenue (two driveways, one across from Helen Street and a second at the eastern edge of the parking lot). The easternmost driveway onto Barnum is expected to be exit only, to promote limited vehicle travel out from the main driveway across from Helen Street. The primary reason for this is to accommodate safe passage from across Barnum Avenue and into the station site for pedestrians through this main driveway location. It was noted that the site layout was still in flux as the team looked for ways to optimize pedestrian and vehicle access and safety to the station platforms.
- **GBT Connections:** Doug Holcomb and the group reviewed anticipated GBT connections to the station site. The design team confirmed its intent to keep buses on Barnum Avenue, creating bus pullouts on Barnum Avenue immediately east of Helen Street and the main station driveway access. Doug agreed with this approach, but also said that the transit agency has started to consider bus route termini outside of downtown, and that Barnum Station could be a logical bus terminus for routes serving Boston Avenue, the Bridgeport Hospital, and the area NE of East Bridgeport. He asked that the design team explore the potential for GBT buses to enter and possibly turn buses around within the project site. The group discussed briefly whether the pedestrian plaza area would need to be raised. This could be expected as an aesthetic and pedestrian friendly treatment, but might be less preferable to bus circulation,

- **Vertical Clearances:** The group had a conversation about the vertical clearances for the three bridges being reconstructed. Mike McDonough stated that at a minimum the design team would be looking to maintain the existing vertical clearances at Seaview Avenue, Hallett Street, and Pembroke Street, but that they were also looking at options to improve vertical clearance at Seaview Avenue. If vertical clearance improvements are not feasible at Seaview Avenue to accommodate trucks and emergency vehicles, the group discussed whether these vehicles could be routed (with adequate wayfinding) to Central Avenue and/or Pembroke Street. Doug Holcomb stated that the existing vertical clearance on Seaview Avenue is at the absolute minimum for buses. He asked that the design team confirm that the intersection of Crescent Avenue and Seaview Avenue would be designed to accommodate turning buses.
- **Minimizing Disruption During Construction:** The construction of the project will require closures of Seaview Avenue, Hallett Street, Pembroke Street, and Crescent Avenue for some duration of time, and construction-related delays at a minimum along Barnum Avenue. Mike reported that the team was now conducting additional analysis to explore ways to minimize the duration of construction-related closures (through alternate bridge construction or construction sequencing) and to minimize the resultant impacts on local traffic congestion. One TAC member requested that Crescent Avenue be kept open for as long as possible.
- **Impacts to Foundation:** The group discussed the potential impacts of the project on the foundation of a former structure located immediately north of the culvert carrying the Yellow Mill Channel creek (unnamed north of the culvert). The impact to the foundation is inevitable from replacing the culvert and widening the tracks at this location. The City commented that the soils in this area are dirty and it is uncertain what is contained by the foundations. The City (Lynn Haig, Frank Croke) took an action to host a discussion specific to this topic, to make certain that the team understands the condition of existing soils and what treatment might be required upon impacting the foundation of the former structure.

3. Traffic Analysis

Theresa Carr presented the findings from the traffic analysis to the TAC. The traffic analysis explored the effect of building the project on the local roadway network, analyzing "peak hour" conditions on a total of 30 study intersections in the vicinity of the station. The analysis explored existing (2016) conditions, a future "no build" analysis for the year of opening (2021) and a horizon year (2040) without construction of the station, and a future "build" analysis for both year of opening (2021) and horizon year (2040). The traffic analysis assumed construction of five developments in the vicinity of the station:

- Crescent Crossing Housing Development
- Harding High School Relocation
- Steelpointe Harbor
- Seaview Industrial Park
- Lake Success

The only developments assumed with the analysis were those that were either under construction, or for which construction funding had been identified and approvals issued. The presentation for the meeting provides details on the traffic analysis findings. In general, some traffic congestion was

observed in the study area, but this congestion was found to occur without the project. However, the duration of delay at some nearby intersections was expected to worsen as a result of the project, in particular at the intersection of Crescent Avenue and Seaview Avenue. The critical move at that intersection is the northbound and southbound through trips.

The Barnum Station project is proposing some traffic mitigation in the vicinity of the station, in particular:

- Left-turn lanes at major station driveways (Barnum Avenue, potentially Hallett Street)
- Wayfinding signage to direct drivers to Noble Avenue from East Washington Avenue
- Restripe existing pavement surface to provide left-turn lanes onto Noble Avenue
 - Barnum Avenue
 - East Washington Avenue
- Install new traffic signal at Seaview Avenue/Crescent Avenue intersection

One TAC member asked about the background developments assumed in the traffic analysis, whether the Transit-Oriented Development that was being studied as a concurrent effort with the station design analysis was considered as background traffic. Theresa clarified that no, the traffic analysis did not include any Transit-Oriented Development as the timing for those developments was too uncertain and far off in the future to be reasonable background growth assumptions. However, she noted that the Transit-Oriented Development study is conducting a traffic analysis that would include both the Transit-Oriented Development (preferred scenario only) and the station. This analysis is underway and expected to be available by the end of 2016.

4. Rail Operations Analysis

David Wilcock presented an updated on the rail operations efforts which looks, from a *rail capacity* standpoint, at what effect the project would have on train service along the corridor. It is a guiding principle for this work that the project cannot impact the schedule of arrivals at Grand Central Station, and therefore that the analysis would be exploring the extent and duration of delays upstream of Barnum Station. The analysis includes programmed infrastructure projects and operational improvements planned for the New Haven Main Line. Work completed to date includes the construction of an existing conditions and a future “no build” model, which takes into account all planned improvements and service changes but does not account for the Barnum Station Project. The team is currently developing, in conjunction with CTDOT and Metro-North Railroad staff, a possible service schedule for Barnum Station to complete the future “build” model and analysis. This work is expected to be completed this fall.

5. Environmental Analysis

Matt Egge provided a brief update on the environmental analysis for the project. The major update from TAC Meeting #2 was that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had made a determination that the Barnum Station project would fit within a Categorical Exclusion Class of Action. This finding confirms that the project is not anticipated to have individual or cumulative significant environmental effects in any resource category, and negligible or minor impacts on historic resources, wetlands, and

floodplains. The class of action provides guidance to the environmental team in relation to what kind of document to prepare this fall for FTA review. The team is still working towards publication of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) by early 2017.

6. Ridership Estimates

Due to time constraints, Theresa Carr gave an abbreviated overview of the updated ridership estimates. This included:

- Assumptions of MNR and Shoreline East train service, with Amtrak service being analyzed as a scenario (Northeast Regional service only, not Acela)
- Parking supply assumptions of between 500 and 550 spaces for Year of Opening, and with supply unconstrained for the Horizon Year (2040)
- Year of Opening build analysis projects a slight dip in ridership at the adjacent Stratford and downtown Bridgeport, with up to 600 passengers in total switching to Barnum Station
- By 2040, ridership at Bridgeport and Barnum Stations are projected to increase over existing and Year of Opening levels. The Stamford station ridership continues at the same levels as Year of Opening (2021) without Barnum Station
- Over half of the Year of Opening boardings at Barnum Station are projected to arrive on foot (walk access)
- Parking supply directly informs the number of boardings that arrive by car and park at the station. When parking supply is constrained for Year of Opening, parking access is limited to that available number (550 boardings/day); when parking supply is unconstrained for the 2040 Horizon Year, park access increases to 1,100 boardings/day.


One TAC member asked why the Stamford station ridership would decrease over existing conditions, with and without the introduction of Barnum Station. Theresa responded that the modeling is not an exact science, but that this was likely due to the constrained parking at Stamford station. Existing ridership counts probably capture drivers parking on nearby residential streets or in other areas not included in official parking supply numbers, whereas the future conditions look at this official parking supply. Stamford has an extremely long waitlist for parking spaces at its station.

7. Next Steps and Adjourn

The TAC will regroup in December 2016 to discuss refined findings from the environmental analysis in advance of publishing the EIE.

Statement of Accuracy:

We believe these minutes accurately describe the discussion and determinations of this meeting. Unless notified to the contrary within 5 business days, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of these notes.

Notes Submitted by: 

David C. Wilcock, P.E.

Notes Approved by: 

Lynn Haig, City of Bridgeport

Distribution: Attendees
Project File 42157.00

ATTACHMENTS:

- Meeting Agenda
- Sign-in Sheet
- Copy of Meeting Presentation