

Meeting Summary

Event: City of Manchester Stakeholder Meeting (Manchester Layover Facility)

Date and Time: Thursday, September 23, 2021, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Zoom Online Meeting Platform

1. Attendees

City Attendees

Peter Chiesa, Risk Manager

Kristen Clark, Traffic Engineer

Tim Clougherty, Deputy Director of Public Works

Joyce Craig, Mayor

Robert Gagne, Assessors Office Chairman

Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning and Community Development

Patrick Long, Ward 3 Alderman

Jodie Nazaka, Senior Planner

Lauren Smith, Chief of Staff

Kevin Sheppard, Director of Public Works

Other Attendees

Nate Miller, Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

Ryan Renaud-Smith, MTA

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)

Patrick Herlihy

Shelley Winters

Consultant Team

Rachel Burckhardt, WSP

David Derrig, AECOM

Jay Doyle, AECOM

George Katsoufis, AECOM

Laura Parete, FHI Studio

2. Presentation Summary

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) hosted a follow-up stakeholder meeting with the City of Manchester, and other Manchester stakeholders invited by the City, on Thursday, September 23, 2021, at 2:00 PM via the Zoom online meeting platform. Patrick Herlihy of NHDOT welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the stakeholder meeting was to have a follow-up discussion about the Manchester layover facility options.

Jay Doyle of AECOM introduced members of the project team who participated in the meeting and reviewed the meeting agenda. He stated that the project team would provide background on the project, discuss the preferred alternative, address the City of Manchester's concerns, the layover scoring matrix, and the next steps.

J. Doyle reviewed the layover facility operational requirements and design considerations. Operational requirements include overnight train storage in the yard, plug-in power to enable the engine to shut down, and accommodation of mid-day trains at the facility. The layover facility will need to store approximately 4-5 train sets. Design considerations include compatibility of surrounding land uses, existing conditions of the site, potential noise impacts and mitigation, and utilities, roadway access, and earthwork. Noise modeling would be conducted to determine the location and criteria for sound walls.

J. Doyle stated that NHDOT's preferred alternative for the layover facility site is Pan Am South. He shared a map that showed an overview of where the site would be located. Pan Am North is no longer a viable option, as that is being considered as a station site. J. Doyle shared a map of the Pan Am South superimposed over the City of Manchester's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) full build street grid taken from the City's September 2020 TOD Plan. He reviewed the localized modifications to the TOD street grid that would be needed to accommodate the layover yard at Pan Am South. J. Doyle shared the other alternative sites that were considered but not advanced for this option. J. Doyle asked if there were any questions or comments, which are noted later in the document.

J. Doyle reviewed a preliminary Scoring Matrix and discussed the scoring of each potential layover facility option and how each met or did not meet the criteria. The Scoring Matrix listed effectiveness, environmental, and cost indicators that help to provide guidance on the best option to progress. The Pan Am South layover facility location scored the highest in all criteria, which is why the project team identified this option as the preferred alternative.

J. Doyle concluded the meeting by stating that the Project Team will distribute the presentation to the City of Manchester following the Stakeholder Meeting. Additionally, the Project Team expects a decision from the City of Manchester in mid-late October regarding the layover facility.

3. Discussion

Questions

Q – Who is responsible for maintaining the sound wall?

A – This will be determined at a later time and outlined in the operations and maintenance agreement.

Q – What type of lighting will be at the layover facility?

A – The lights will be cobra style lights that are focused downwards. They will not shine above the wall.

Q – Is there an option for the locomotive end of the train to face north or south?

A – MBTA's rail operations are push-pull operations. Locomotives are on the outbound side of the train. Trains are pushed into Boston by the locomotive, and they are pulled out of Boston. The layover yard needs to store the trains in this orientation. Therefore, the locomotive would be at the north end in this layover facility.

Q - How many trains are anticipated for the Manchester-Nashua service?

A - The number of trains will depend on the need. Currently, it's anticipated to be 3-5 trains.

Q - Is this the only option that is being considered for the layover facility?

A - Multiple alternative sites were identified, screened, and evaluated in the planning process and the Pan Am South location is the preferred alternative.

Q - Is there consideration of this line being expanded to Concord?

A - Currently, this isn't a plan to expand rail service to Concord. The layover facility needs to be located where the end of the line is for the project that is being advanced, which is Manchester.

Q - Do you take into consideration the value of the land where trains are stored?

A - Yes, this is evaluated in the scoring matrix.

Q - Pan Am owns this parcel now. Would the layover facility impact Pan Am rail operations or the City's planned bypass road bridge over the rail tracks?

A - The layover facility does not adversely impact freight operations or preclude the planned bypass road bridge.

Q - Has MBTA been involved in this process?

A - Yes, they have been updated about the operating plan and the potential location of the layover facility. MBTA prefers a layover facility at the end of the line.

Q - When does the Project Team need the Board of Alderman's approval?

A - The Project Team needs a recommendation as soon as possible to develop the Environmental Assessment (EA) document. One of the Board of Alderman indicated that a recommendation could be made in mid-late October.

Q - Can you provide a breakdown of which portions of the proposed layover site are owned by Pan Am and which are owned by the City or other private parties?

A - The Project Team shared a map to show the overall breakdown of property ownership within the footprint of the proposed layover facility to show that all the property, except for approximately 1.2 acres is currently owned by Pan Am.

Comments

- Mayor Craig stated that the Pan Am South site is not the best location for a layover facility because the land is valuable. The City believes that utilizing this property to store trains is not the best use of this land.
- The City of Manchester expressed that they hoped there would be a compromise about the location of the layover facility. They stated that examples of existing MBTA layover facilities shown by the project team are generally in areas that don't have a lot of activity. The proposed site for Manchester is active and the land is valuable.
- The City inquired about the distance of the other layover facility options from the proposed Manchester Station.