

Mitigation Working Group Meeting #2

May 31, 2016

5:00 pm to 6:30 pm (Project Overview/Newcomers Orientation)

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm Meeting #2

Perkins Square Baptist Church

Meeting Summary

Attendees

No Boundaries Coalition	Ray Kelly
Rosemont Homeowners and Tenants Association	Anthony Pressley
Mt. Royal Improvement Association	Steve Howard, Michael Marcus
Mt. Royal Community Development Corporation	Jacob Green, Michael Crowley
Residents Against the Tunnels (RATT)	Laura Amlie, Remington Stone
Western District Community Relations Council	Elaine Greene, Inez Robb
Whitelock Community Farm	Justin Kuk
Bikemore	Liz Cornish, Jed Weeks
Druid Heights Community Development Corporation	Roscoe Johnson
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	Michael Johnsen, Rhonda Dews
Amtrak	Amrita Hill
Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)	Jaqueline Thorne
Baltimore City Consultant, Assedo Consulting	Odessa Phillip
Amtrak NEPA Consultant, RK&K	Henry Kay
Maryland Transit Administration Consultant (MTA), STV	Mike Good
Federal Railroad Administration Consultant, Booz Allen	Matthew Mielke
Amtrak NEPA Consultant, RCI	Melissa Bogdan

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this Mitigation Working Group meeting was to identify potential mitigation measures for the proposed B&P Tunnel Project. The meeting was held in two parts – the first to give representatives who were unable to attend the first meeting an opportunity to catch up on the mitigation discussion and the second part to continue the conversation on mitigation with the full group.

Introductions

Odessa Phillip welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the project team staff members. Michael Johnsen was welcomed as the new Federal Railroad Administration representative replacing Michelle Fishbourne. Henry Kay introduced the framework the Working Group is using for mitigation discussions and provided a project overview for newcomers. Copies of project background materials

were distributed. The current study will evaluate environmental impacts as well as collect input from the community.

Odessa reiterated that there were 16 alternatives including the No Build alternative under consideration. She indicated that a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), including mitigation measures, will be published this fall to be followed by a Record of Decision (ROD) in spring 2017. The Record of Decision will include mitigation measures that must be implemented along with the project. Preliminary engineering to support the evaluation of impacts is ongoing. As part of the evaluation process, the project team is responsible for identifying measures that Avoid, Minimize or Mitigate impacts.

The summary notes from the first Mitigation Working Group meeting held on May 10, 2016 were distributed for reference and further group development.

Community participants introduced themselves and the communities they represent, and described their interest in the mitigation discussion. The following concerns were raised:

- The neighborhoods that border Druid Hill Park need more active transportation options – trails, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings. A participant would like “road diets” on Druid Park Lake Drive and Auchentoroly Terrace to better serve the Reservoir Hill community. **Note:** *A road diet is a transportation planning technique whereby the number of travel lanes and/or effective width of the road is reduced in order to include systemic improvements such as bike lanes, sidewalks, roadway lighting, landscaping, and other features within the right-of-way.*
- A participant felt that communities surrounding the West Baltimore MARC station need to be more informed about the project.
- A participant asked for assurance that the economic, physical, and health aspects of having a vent plant facility will be appropriately considered, and would like the team to evaluate the possibility of moving the vent plant facility to Druid Hill Park. Was the vent plant incorporated in the redevelopment plan for Madison Park?

Ventilation Plant Discussion

Odessa discussed the vent plant location selection process. There are three vent plants as part of this project. A plant will be located at each tunnel portal, and the third plant is at an intermediate location that has been under thorough evaluation. Ten alternative locations were considered as a part of this process and eliminated due to engineering constraints, legal restrictions, structural footprint requirements, and community concerns. The Whitelock vent plant site was recently eliminated as an alternative following community feedback and further consideration of its compatibility with adjacent land uses. As a result, sites on North Avenue (850, 900, 920) were identified. North Avenue is described as an existing transportation corridor with commercial and industrial uses which makes it a more favorable than a residential area to accommodate a multi-story structure of this nature.

The existing B&P Tunnel is only 15-20 feet below grade. Openings allow natural, free flowing air circulation as the trains move through the tunnel. The new tunnel will be at depths up to 150 feet

below grade so air flow and ventilation must occur mechanically through the use of fans and other equipment housed in a ventilation plant.

Michael Johnsen explained that emissions are strictly regulated and they all fall below the Clean Air Act emission standards. These emissions are comparable to what is normally found in a street used by delivery trucks and SUVs. In no way is the vent plant emissions equivalent to an industrial facility. The task at hand is to look at the mitigation option to build the plant in a way that “fits” in to the development scheme which is being proposed in the area.

In response to questions about placing the vent plant in Druid Hill Park, Michael Johnsen explained that federal law states that you cannot put a transportation facility in a park, recreation area, or historic resource if there is a viable alternative. This information was provided to explain the limitations and restrictions of placing the vent plant facility in environmentally and historically protected areas such as Druid Hill Park. Odessa further described the engineering grade and elevation problems associated with eliminating tunnel build alternatives near Druid Hill Park.

Mitigation Measures Brainstorm

Henry explained that the rest of the meeting would be spent discussing specific ideas the group had about mitigation. The group reviewed the May 10, 2016 summary notes which represented the initial mitigation options to be considered for project impacts. From there, the participants provided comments as well as new and expanded ideas about mitigation as follows:

- Consider re-use of old tunnel so it is beneficial for the community
- Consider additional alternative alignments
- Design vent plant to “reduce ugliness”
- “Wrap” the vent plant in multiple uses so it contributes to the vibrancy of the community
- Leverage the project to bring resources to communities as well as improve access and public health
- Given the scale of this project, neighborhoods should “ask for a lot” [as mitigation]
- Reconfigure streets to improve economic and public health
- Provide trails, transit, and safer streets
- Reconfigure the 28th Street Bridge to be safe for bikes and pedestrians
- Revise federal law to allow vent plant to be built within Druid Hill Park
- Using commercial property on North Avenue for the vent plant reduces the amount of developable land and reduces the opportunity for a “critical mass” of development
- Focus on the former American Ice Company property and former grocery store near the Lafayette Avenue bridge for redevelopment
- Rehabilitate every school building in the corridor: “every school in corridor gets a makeover”
- Re-institute community police substations in neighborhoods
- Use excess right of way for development or a community land trust
- Dampen noise at portals. Currently, neighbors can tell the difference between freight and passenger trains
- Improve [West Baltimore] MARC Station so it’s not the “ugliest station on the line”

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- Improve street lighting at [West Baltimore] MARC station and elsewhere
 - Complete and respond specifically to air pollution dispersion study
 - Implement Bus Rapid Transit on North Ave
 - Track outcomes for residents (e.g. % of local residents who benefitted; have local businesses benefitted?)
 - Build the Red Line
 - Establish large scale fund to incentivize development (better retail). Act now to mitigate tendency for developers to wait
 - Re-route freight line through an industrial area
 - Create an “Economic Development Zone” incentivized by favorable financing
 - Implement a “home value guarantee” program
 - Direct government economic development
 - Use Public Private Partnerships for economic development
 - Eliminate the city’s backlog of tree planting
 - Fund home rehabs to help seniors and people with disabilities stay in their homes, i.e., “ramps and grab bars”
 - Implemented targeted training for project jobs and long term opportunities
 - Druid Heights CDC could be developer of vacant property
 - Implement protected bike routes to Penn Station and West Baltimore Station
 - Create “Live Near Your Commute” home buying incentives
 - Support neighborhood retail (e.g., supermarket, hairdressers/barbers).
 - Build a first class aquatics/ recreation center
 - Provide after school activities for kids
 - Build the “Purple Line” (from the 2002 Regional Rail Plan) using the existing tunnel
 - Investigate “Educare” (state of the art early childhood education)
 - Study the impact of tunnel on existing homes
 - Create independently managed fund for damage claims
 - Use existing organizations like Healthy Neighborhoods to implement mitigation programs, e.g., Community Legacy Funds
 - Consider equity -- all organizations should have an opportunity to benefit from mitigation
 - Produce educational material to ensure communities understand the project

Next Steps/Assignments

Project Team – Email vent plant information to all participants.

Project Team – Receive comments on May 10th meeting notes. Email and post final notes on website. Email notes from May 31, 2016 meeting for review and comment then post on project website

All – Continue to raise community awareness of the project.

All – Send other possible organizations or programs that can be resources for mitigation efforts to project team.