

Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #3

September 28, 2015, 10:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Project Area Tour and Coppin State University (Talon Center, Room 210)



Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)	Amanda Apple, Beth Cole, Tim Tamburrino
Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP)	Lauren Schiszik
Baltimore City Department of Planning (BCDP)	Kyle Leggs, Heather Martin
Baltimore Heritage (BH)	Johns Hopkins, Eli Pousson
Baltimore National Heritage Area (BNHA)	Jason Vaughan
Preservation Maryland (PM)	Margaret De Arcangelis
Amtrak	Jeffrey Abrams (Parsons), Johnette Davies, Amrita Hill, Steve Jurow (HNTB), William Prosser
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	Michelle Fishburne, Laura Shick
Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)	Jaqueline Thorne
Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)	Jean Wolfers-Lawrence
RK&K	Eric Almquist, Elizabeth Fagan, Philip Hayden Christeen Taniguchi

Meeting Agenda:

The consulting parties meeting consisted of a morning tour of the project area and an afternoon discussion at Coppin State University. Agenda items included project updates, review and agreement on identified historic properties, discussions of project impacts on historic properties, and polling of a Preferred Alternative.

Morning Tour of Project Area:

Attendees traveled by bus to view identified historic properties within the project area and better visualize impacts from Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C (since the last consulting parties meeting, Alternatives 11A and 11B have been withdrawn). Discussions focused on the following topics:

Stop 2: Pennsylvania Railroad Viaduct – The project impacts to the Pennsylvania Railroad Viaduct (MIHP# B-5064) under all three Alternatives are limited to track work and ballasting. The project is not expected to directly impact the bridge structure.

Stop 3: West Baltimore MARC Station Area – Mr. Abrams (Parsons) and Mr. Prosser (Amtrak) addressed the reasons for eliminating Alternatives 11A and 11B, which would demolish the American Ice Company (B-1040), and the W. Franklin Street Bridge and the W. Mulberry Street Bridge (both contributing resource to the Baltimore and Potomac [B&P] Railroad, B-5164), and would directly impact a large number of contributing resources to the Midtown Edmondson Historic District (NR Nomination pending). Alternatives 11A and 11B created the most favorable horizontal and vertical railroad alignments, particularly by straightening Curve 381 at the West Baltimore MARC Station, but resulted in significant

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impacts to historic properties and greater construction costs associated with the required cut, south portal, ventilation (vent) plant building, and the construction of new bridges to carry W. Franklin and W. Mulberry Streets over the railroad.

Alternative 3A will have no impact on the American Ice Company, the W. Franklin Street Bridge, and the W. Mulberry Street Bridge, but would leave Curve 381 unchanged.

Alternative 3B will lessen Curve 381 and encroach on the American Ice Company parcel, but leave the building standing. Only the building and its footprint are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Previous calculations suggested that Alternative 3B would clip the corner of the building, but current calculations suggest that the building may be left untouched. Alternative 3B would require demolition and reconstruction of the contributing W. Franklin Street and the W. Mulberry Street Bridges.

Alternative 3C, which shifts the track alignment west, will have no direct impact on the American Ice Company, W. Franklin Street, Bridge, or W. Mulberry Street Bridge, which would remain in place pending the final disposition of the original track alignment. Alternative 3C would also require the construction of two new railroad bridges over W. Franklin Street and W. Mulberry Street.

Both Alternatives 3B and 3C allow for greater railroad speed, as a result of the straightening of Curve 381, thus reducing transit time.

Unrelated to the proposed undertaking, but an additional factor in Amtrak's desire to straighten Curve 381, includes the MTA's efforts to improve the West Baltimore MARC Station by constructing high-level track platforms and related upgrades in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Such platforms are not practical under the existing tight radius of Curve 381. Alternative 3A leaves the curve unchanged. Alternatives 3B and 3C straighten the curve sufficiently to allow for high-level platforms and level boarding. If a curve reduction is not possible, then the MTA is investigating the possibility of shifting the West Baltimore MARC Station platforms to a more favorable location.

Stops 4 and 5: Edmondson Avenue Bridge Area – Discussions addressed recent changes to the Limits of Disturbance to account for the replacement and relocation of the Edmondson Avenue Bridge (BC 2405).

Alternative 3A would utilize the existing track alignment and have no direct impact on the bridge structure or surrounding buildings.

Alternative 3B would require a replacement bridge structure with a corresponding shift eastward into the Midtown Edmondson Historic District to accommodate the new track alignment and under-bridge clearances mandated by double-stack freight car operations over the railroad. The higher elevation of the new bridge would require the adjacent road to be elevated to meet the new bridge.

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Alternative 3C, which shifts the track alignment westward, would require a new bridge and similar construction work inside the Greater Rosemont Historic District. In all cases, however, the road work is expected to remain confined to the current roadway right-of-way.

Consulting parties expressed specific concern for potential direct impacts to historic properties and contributing resources here, in particular the individually eligible Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Warehouse Complex (B-5188-2), the Ward Baking Company building (B-5112-2), and the Baltimore Fire Department Engine House No. 36 (B-5112-4). Because the fire station is active, it would need to be relocated.

Alternative 3A would have no direct impact on the three individually eligible historic properties or nearby contributing resources.

Alternative 3B would demolish the Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Warehouse Complex and several nearby resources contributing to both the Greater Rosemont Historic District (B-5112) and the Midtown Edmondson Historic District. The alternative would also clip the parcel lines of both the Baltimore Fire Department Engine House No. 36 and Ward Baking Company, but leave the buildings on both properties intact.

Alternative 3C, which shifts the track alignment west, would have no direct impact on the Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Warehouse Complex, but would demolish both the Baltimore Fire Department Engine House No. 36 and Ward Baking Company, as well as numerous nearby resources contributing to the Greater Rosemont Historic District, Midtown Edmondson Historic District, and NRHP-listed Edmondson Avenue Historic District (B-5187), including rowhouses along Laurretta Avenue.

Stops 6, 7, and 8: W. Lafayette Avenue Bridge Area – The individually eligible Lafayette Bridge (BC 2410; B-4553), would require alterations or demolition under all three Alternatives (3A, 3B, and 3C). In addition, nearby resources contributing to both the Midtown Edmondson Historic District and the Edmondson Avenue Historic District would be affected.

Alternative 3A would demolish the Lafayette Avenue Bridge (BC 2410), and potentially clip the American Stores Company (ACME) Warehouse and the Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street. All three resources contribute to the Midtown Edmondson Historic District. The project may also produce visual, atmospheric, or audible effects to the Midtown Edmondson Historic District and the Edmondson Avenue Historic District.

Alternative 3B would alter or demolish the Lafayette Avenue Bridge (BC 2410), demolish the Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street, and demolish many contributing rowhouses to the Midtown Edmondson Historic District.

Alternative 3C would demolish the Lafayette Avenue Bridge (BC 2410) and American Stores Company (ACME) Warehouse.

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Ms. Apple (MHT) raised the possibility of unanticipated indirect audible effects on contributing resources subject to federal housing subsidies and regulations under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Noise and soundproofing requirements may render nearby HUD-subsidized housing ineligible for HUD funding. Ms. Apple will investigate further and report back to the B&P Tunnel Project team and consulting parties. The area is currently 60 percent occupied.

Stop 9: Mid-Tunnel Vent Plant Area – Much discussion focused on questions concerning the practical and technical reasons for siting the proposed vent plant in a parcel of open space currently used as a community garden. The proposed location satisfies the purpose and need for all three remaining Alternatives (3A, 3B, and 3C). The lot is located inside the NRHP-listed Reservoir Hill Historic District (B-1379). With respect to impacts to historic properties, the proposed site avoids demolition of contributing resources to the Reservoir Hill Historic District and can be designed in a context-sensitive manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s *Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Ms. Martin (BCDP) noted that the local community felt strongly about the value of preserving open spaces such as the community garden, and the importance of balancing Amtrak’s needs and engineering requirements with the needs of Baltimore’s citizens and their desire to maintain and enhance neighborhood greenspace. This area was described as the heart of the community. Suggestions for alternative approaches included 1) shifting the vent plant site to other vacant locations north or south of the proposed site; 2) dividing the facility into two separate buildings to lessen its impact on the community garden; and 3) sharing the parcel with the community garden by incorporating setbacks and building the vent plant higher to reduce its overall footprint. Ms. Martin will provide a list of possible alternative locations and suggested coordination with Baltimore City to identify properties that may be slated for clearance and/or redevelopment under other programs.

Mr. Abrams (Parsons) and Mr. Prosser (Amtrak) explained that under current and future service requirements, the calculations for train numbers and spacing (“heading”) at any one time require two ventilation zones for two trains operating inside the proposed tunnel. The proposed vent plant location reflects the mathematical ideal for engineering purposes. As the site of the vent shaft moves further away from its mathematical ideal, the speed and capacity of the tunnel decreases. The facility will be equipped with louvered openings for the natural exchange of air moved by passing trains. Seven standby electric fans will introduce or draw away air as required during emergencies. The fans will otherwise remain idle except during routine testing and maintenance. Sound levels are expected to reach around 45 decibels with all seven fans running at the same time, which approximates the same level as a quiet urban street at night. The air coming out of the vent plants would be diluted by the ventilation system. The vent plant, as well as other kiosks yet to be located, would serve as egress points during emergencies.

Attendees asked if decreases in tunnel speed and capacity could be made up elsewhere along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Mr. Prosser (Amtrak) reported that the NEC to the north and south of Baltimore City already accommodates high-speed operation, and that Curve 381 (at the West Baltimore MARC Station) and the existing B&P Tunnel are now the single greatest impediments to speed.

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Stops 10 and 11: North Portal Area – A short discussion of the north portal area included an update on the locations of the four tunnels emerging out from the bored section of the tracks underneath the Reservoir Hill Historic District. The tunnel openings are located underneath the ramp off of the Jones Falls Expressway/I-83 and the North Avenue Light Rail Station. Once the tracks emerge from the tunnel, all construction work will be confined within the existing right-of-way. Under Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C, there is a potential for a supporting pier to be removed from the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Belt Line Railroad (B-5287) and B&O Railroad Belt Line Bridge (B-5288). The nearby North Avenue Bridge (BC 1208; B-4521) and Howard Street Bridge (BC 1405; B-4529) would not be directly affected. All four are NRHP-eligible individual historic properties.

Afternoon Discussion:

The afternoon session opened with a general introduction and review of meeting handouts (listed at bottom). Mr. Almquist (RK&K) led the discussion, which included project updates, a recap of the three remaining Alternatives, revisions to the area of potential effects (APE), and the findings of additional NRHP evaluations. The final treatment/disposition of the existing B&P Tunnel remains undetermined.

Attendee comments focused on the following topics:

North Portal and Vent Plant – Adjustments to the north portal location were necessary to avoid cut-and-cover construction and associated disruptions to the North Avenue Light Rail Station facility. The new design allows for direct boring beneath the station. Mr. Almquist (RK&K) noted that community concerns have been raised regarding the proposed location of the north portal vent plant in the BDOT property.

Mid-Tunnel Vent Plant – Ms. Cole (MHT) asked about the methodology used for selecting the community garden at Whitelock Street for the proposed mid-tunnel vent plant site. Assuming that the construction of a new building within the historic district constitutes an adverse effect, she asked if an additional study can be made to identify alternative locations, including those outside the Reservoir Hill Historic District. For example, could the vent plant location change, depending on the final alignment, and could this influence the ultimate selection of the Preferred Alternative? In explaining the methodology used in selecting the location, Mr. Almquist (RK&K) described a study area extending approximately 1,750 feet in all directions from the ideal location. For the purposes of Section 106, the study looked only at cleared lots without extant buildings, in order to avoid building demolition. Ms. Martin (BCDP) suggested possible alternative vacant sites for consideration. When Ms. Cole (MHT) asked about the definition of a park under Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) compliance, it was defined to be a publicly used recreational space. The proposed mid-tunnel vent plant location is currently not a Section 4(f) property. Ms. Martin (BCDP) asked what would happen if this community garden became a park recognized under Section 4(f). Ms. Fishburne (FRA) and Mr. Almquist (RK&K) noted that the agency would then also need to address the park as part of the Section 4(f) study, which considers feasible and prudent alternatives and least overall harm. In response to a question from Ms. Davies (Amtrak) about the height of the proposed vent plant, Mr. Almquist noted a planned height of 40 feet, in keeping with the surrounding architecture. Ms. Martin encouraged trading a setback of 20 to 40 feet for a taller structure in order to preserve open space, and Ms. Fishburne will look further into a reduced footprint.

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W. Lafayette Street Bridge Area – Adjustments to the bridge are required under all three alternatives. Amtrak expects to coordinate with Baltimore City on concurrent plans to shift some of the bridge piers as part of; the city’s plan to replace the existing bridge. Regarding noise, under all three alternatives, the track will be depressed inside an open cut, thus limiting audible effects to surrounding areas. Ms. Apple (MHT) restated the potential for unanticipated indirect and/or cumulative effects beyond the current APE resulting from noise rules and soundproofing requirements under HUD grant guidelines, and the corresponding impact on subsidized housing in the area. She will investigate and provide her findings.

South Portal Area – Discussions focused on possible options for the treatment and use of the area on top of the cut-and-cover portions of the south portal. Amtrak indicated that a wide range of uses was possible within certain load, safety, and security limits. The purpose of the cut-and-cover structure is to facilitate ventilation and the transition from open cut to bored tunnel.

Miscellaneous Comments – Ms. Fishburne (FRA) expressed her hope to get as much engineering done as possible during the Section 106/NEPA/Section 4(f) process. Preliminary Design to identify adverse effects and mitigation commitments will be covered by the Record of Decision (ROD) and under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Programmatic Agreement (PA).

In response to a question to clarify why Alternative 11B had been eliminated, Ms. Fishburne responded that FRA eliminated this alternative based on the recent combination of the impacts and input received from the public, consulting parties, and other agencies, including MDOT and MTA. FRA eliminated this alternative because of the high impacts to the community, businesses, and the short-term and long-term construction impacts associated with a temporary track and bridge reconstruction at higher elevations. In addition, even with all the additional cost and impacts to the project area, this alternative provided less operational flexibility to MARC services than the other alternatives.

Regarding a question about speed, Ms. Fishburne indicated that Alternatives 3B and 3C alter Curve 381 and therefore offer faster travel times of between 30 and 45 seconds. The curve proposed would also provide a curve capable of providing high level platforms at the existing West Baltimore MARC Station. Alternative 3A does not touch Curve 381 and provides no such time savings or opportunities to provide high level platforms at the existing West Baltimore MARC station location. Other questions and comments included the following:

- Can the north and south portal vent plants move?
- Can future graphics label the north and south portal vent plants?
- Can future graphics accurately depict the full demolition of all buildings and structures resulting from the three alternatives?
- Can future tables summarize the effects to each historic property according to the three alternatives?
- Can the consulting parties receive a table of time savings according to the three alternatives, as well as information on expected savings through wider improvements elsewhere along the NEC?

Concurrence on the Identification of Historic Properties – MHT comments on the eligibility determinations of 12 additional historic resources were received on September 24, 2015. MHT agreed with the determination recommendations, adding that the Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Company Warehouse

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was eligible under Criteria A and C (originally recommended eligible under Criterion C only), and the Ward Baking Company was eligible under Criterion A (originally recommended not eligible). The other three properties found to be individually eligible are Fire Department Engine House No. 36, Western Maryland Railroad, Owings Mills Division (B-5293), and Carver Vocational-Technical High School (B-5294). Because the NRHP-eligible Monroe-Riggs Historic District (B-5118) is located entirely within the Midtown Edmondson Historic District, the former has been removed from the list of historic properties within the APE. Hearing no further questions or comments concerning the identification of historic properties within the APE, the identification phase of the Section 106 process was deemed complete.

Effects to Historic Properties and Preferred Alternative – Discussion turned to potential impacts to historic properties and preliminary thoughts on a Preferred Alternative. Ms. Fishburne (FRA) noted that all three alternatives remained under consideration and that the FRA had no opinion on a Preferred Alternative at this time.

Mr. Hopkins (BH) was pleased that the American Ice Company would now be retained, although Alternatives 3B and 3C would take a number of different district contributing rowhouses. He would like to look closely at the specific direct impacts (isolated buildings vs whole blocks) and percentages of losses to historic districts based on each alternative. In addition, Mr. Hopkins noted that the loss of the Fire Department Engine No. 36 and the Ward Baking Company would be significant losses, while buildings such as the Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street are not as important.

Mr. Tamburrino (MHT) noted that the MHT would like to hear from all consulting parties regarding effects to historic properties before making any adverse effect determination.

Ms. Davies (Amtrak) recommended quantifying the numbers/percentages of contributing resources affected by each alternative within the respective historic districts.

Ms. Schizik (CHAP) will check on the percentages of owner-occupied verses vacant buildings which already may be slated for demolition or redevelopment as a way of measuring relative impacts to historic properties.

Ms. Martin (BDP) restated her request for further consideration of alternate locations for the mid-tunnel vent plant.

Mr. Vaughan (Baltimore National Heritage Area) indicated that Alternative 3A was the least desirable, chiefly because it would prevent ADA improvements to the West Baltimore MARC Station. He also expressed concern for affects to the individually eligible Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Warehouse Complex, Ward Baking Company, and Fire Department Engine House No. 36, under Alternatives 3B and 3C.

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Next Steps:

The Architectural Historic Properties Effects Assessment Report will be distributed within two weeks to the consulting parties meeting.

Attendees agreed to meet again in mid- to late October 2015 to discuss effects to historic properties, make recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating adverse effects, and offer their final views on a Preferred Alternative.

Meeting Adjourned, 3:15 p.m.

List of Meeting Handouts:

General:

- Meeting Agenda
- Section 106 and NEPA Timeline, Updated September 28, 2015

Tables:

- Table 1: Section 106 Historic Properties Within the Historic Architectural APE, Alternatives 3A, 3B, and 3C
- Table 2: Section 106 Historic Properties Within the Historic Architectural APE and Direct Impacts of Alternatives
- Table 3: Historic Properties Within the Historic Architectural APE and Direct Impacts of Alternatives
- Table 4: Additional Evaluated Properties Within the Historic Architectural APE

Maps:

- Consulting Parties Meeting #3 Bus Tour Route
- Alternative 3 Options A, B & C Historic Properties Overview, Area of Potential Effects
- Alternative 3 Option A South Portal Vicinity Historic Properties
- Alternative 3 Option B South Portal Vicinity Historic Properties
- Alternative 3 Option C South Portal Vicinity Historic Properties
- Alternative 3 Options A, B & C Mid-Tunnel Vent Plant Location
- Alternative 3 Options A, B & C North Portal Vicinity Historic Properties