

Scoping Meeting Minutes

Project: Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS)
Pittsburgh Vertical Clearance

Date: Monday
March 19, 2018

Subject: NEPA Scoping Meeting

Time: 9:30 to 11:30 AM

By: Michael Baker International/ Earth and Water Group/
Norfolk Southern

Place: Norfolk Southern Office
Pittsburgh, PA

Attendees: (See attached sign-in sheet, Attachment A)

Michael Baker International, Inc. (Michael Baker) is conducting environmental review under Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 120 of P.L. 356 (Act 120), as amended Section 2002, and engineering design for nine (9) clearance projects along the Pittsburgh Rail Line and Fort Wayne Rail Line, a Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSRC) freight rail line in interstate commerce.¹ NSRC is authorized under the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF), 74 Pa. C.S. § 2102 and Rail Freight Preservation and Improvement Act, Act No. 119 of 1984, P.L. 587, 55 P.S. §§ 696.1-696.11 to implement track clearance. PennDOT District and Central Office Environmental, Historic, and Bureau of Rail Freight, Ports and Waterways staff attended. Michael Baker staff from engineering, environmental, and historic resource departments attended. NSRC counsel from Earth and Water Group, LLC attended. This meeting was held as part of the environmental review process, this meeting to conduct scoping, identify issues, and discuss approach for the Act 120 process.

Presentation:

The team presented the project using PowerPoint which showed the scope of each bridge along the railroad corridor through Pittsburgh (from east to west) including: Pedestrian Bridge, PT-342.73; Overland Street Bridge, PT-343.65; Braddock Avenue (Kenmawr) Bridge [being advanced by PennDOT]; Washington Avenue, PT-344.91; Negley Bridge (being advanced by the City of Pittsburgh); AMTRAK Station; Merchant Street Bridge; West Ohio Street Bridge / Ridge Avenue Bridge (being advanced by the City of Pittsburgh); North Avenue Bridge, PC-1.60; Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, PC-1.82; Columbus Avenue Bridge, PC-2.17; and OC Railroad Bridge, PC-3.38.

Purpose and Need:

The following draft purpose and need was presented and discussed by Earth and Water Group and Michael Baker:

Modernize the nine locations along the Pittsburgh rail corridor to accommodate freight rail in interstate commerce integrating modes of travel (intermodal), improving clearance, safety, transportation optimization and efficiency to meet modern rail traffic requirements.

- minimizes future maintenance costs
- improves safety
- integrates modes of travel
- applies a sound engineering approach of appropriate scale to address the transportation needs of the project
- consistent with the goals and objectives of the Smart Transportation initiative.

¹Certain state and local approvals and conflicting requirements are preempted as applied to rail facilities operating in interstate commerce under the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995 ("ICCTA"), 49 U.S.C. § 10501, and Federal Railway Safety Act of 1970 ("FRSA") 49 U.S.C. § 20101. NSRC does not waive and expressly preserves any claims or defenses related to such ICCTA or FRSA preemption related to the subject matter of this memorandum.

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Merchant Street Bridge

Proposed is the replacement of the Merchant Street, a NS structure over Merchant Street, to accommodate double stacked traffic

- The bridge structure will be replaced.
- Initial review of Act 120 considerations indicate possible effects to historic resources if the bridge is eligible or a contributing element to an eligible historic resource. No sensitive environmental resources were identified in the vicinity of this project (water bodies, wetlands, protected species)(no discussion of beneficial effects, e.g. transportation, safety, energy).
- PennDOT commented on the NRHP status of the bridge in that it may be a contributing element of the a railroad corridor SHPO determined in 1993 to be potentially eligible as a historic district. and should be investigated.

West Ohio Street Bridge / Ridge Avenue Bridge (being advanced by the City of Pittsburgh)

No discussion of this project was offered as the City of Pittsburgh is advancing this project and will complete its own environmental clearance for the project.

North Avenue Bridge, PC-1.60

Proposed is the replacement of this bridge to provide the appropriate vertical clearance over the railroad. No ROW acquisition (permanent) is anticipated; however, temporary construction easements (TCE) may be required.

- The bridge will be replaced/raised.
- Initial review of Act 120 considerations indicate possible effects to aesthetics, historic resources, and the bridge is located adjacent to the Allegheny Commons Park. Design plans are being developed now with the goal of avoiding or minimizing any effect on the Park. Aside from the park property, no sensitive environmental resources were identified in the vicinity of this project (the park does not include water bodies, wetlands, protected species near the project area)(no discussion of beneficial effects, e.g. transportation, safety, energy).
- An overview of the historic resources (historic districts and individual resources) was presented. The bridge is a contributing element to a railroad corridor SHPO determined in 1993 to be potentially eligible as a historic district. The crossing is within close proximity to NRHP listed historic districts and possible additional historic properties.
- PennDOT inquired how raising the vertical profile of the bridge would not require ROW acquisition from adjacent historic resources. Michael Baker relayed that a traffic study conducted for this bridge is under review by the City of Pittsburgh that indicates that the 4-lane section of Brighton Rd may not be required. If the study is approved, it may be possible to reduce the number of lanes and thereby minimize any effect of raising the bridge.
- PennDOT inquired how sidewalk adjustments would be conducted. The team indicated that existing sidewalk access could be maintained via a bifurcated approach where the grade/elevation of existing sidewalks that provide current street level access could be maintained and a new parallel sidewalk at the proposed elevated street level would be constructed meeting the lower elevation sidewalk.
- PennDOT mentioned if applicable, Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations / Act 120, Section 2002 could be discussed with PennDOT in more detail as project plans are further developed and the the potential for impacts are more clearly identified. At this point, impacts subject to 4(f) are not certain and this issue will be revisited as the design progresses.

Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, PC-1.82

Proposed is the raising of the bridge's vertical profile to provided appropriate vertical clearance over the railroad.

- The bridge will be raised.
- Initial review of Act 120 considerations indicate possible effects to historic resources. No sensitive

