



Project: Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Norfolk Southern) **Date:** Tuesday, October 6, 2020
Merchant Street Bridge Project

Subject: Consulting Party Meeting #3 **Time:** 7:00 PM

By: Michael Baker International, Inc. (Michael Baker)/
 Norfolk Southern **Place:** Calvary United Methodist Church
 971 Beech Avenue
 North Side Pittsburgh, PA
 and Video Conference

Attendees:

Consulting Parties

- Barbara Frederick, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)
- William Callahan, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)
- Frank Stroker, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF)
- Tom Barbush, Allegheny West Civic Council (AWCC)
- Mark Fatla, North Side Leadership Conference (NSLC)
- Glenn Olcerst, Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh (RP3)
- Larry Simms, Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh (RP3)
- Eric Setzler, City of Pittsburgh, Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI)
- Karina Ricks, City of Pittsburgh, Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI)
- Bobby Wilson, Pittsburgh City Council District 1
- Lynne Lehrer, D.L. Clark Building (DLCB)
- John DeSantis, 719 Brighton Road (Property Owner)

Norfolk Southern (NS)

- Rudy Husband, Vice President
- Kevin Hauschildt, Chief Engineer, Bridges and Structures
- Ben Dunlap, Outside Legal Counsel

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

- Mark Young, Environmental Manager, District 11-0
- David Anthony, Historic Preservation Specialist, Districts 10-0 and 11-0
- Keith Heinrich, Historic Preservation Specialist, Districts 9-0 and 12-0

Michael Baker, International, Inc. (Michael Baker)

- Kirsten Bowen, Project Manger
- Amy Pinizzotto, NEPA Lead
- Wendy Berrill, Engineering Design Lead
- Clayton Fisher, Bridge Lead
- Jesse Belfast, Architectural Historian
- Timothy Zinn, Historic Preservation Lead



Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of the Merchant Street Bridge Project is to maintain safe freight and passenger rail operations along the Fort Wayne Line to continue the efficient transportation of goods and people between Chicago and the New York/New Jersey commercial markets, as well as within local markets. The bridge structure has reached the end of its useful life and engineering inspections have identified a need to address these problems in order to maintain safe interstate rail transportation along the Fort Wayne Line. The bridge carrying the Fort Wayne Line over Merchant Street has safety deficiencies that have the potential to create risks to current rail traffic and forecasted rail traffic increases throughout the United States and within Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh region in particular.

Purpose of the Meeting:

The purpose of the Merchant Street Bridge Project Consulting Party Meeting #3 was to discuss potential minimization and mitigation measures for the adverse effect on the Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line Railroad Corridor Historic District.

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic limiting the number of participants at a public event to 25, the meeting was held as a hybrid in-person/video conference meeting. Tim Zinn (Michael Baker) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Tim reminded everyone that the Merchant Street Bridge Project is a stand-alone, on-alignment bridge replacement project involving Norfolk Southern Bridge PC-1.20 over Merchant Street in the City of Pittsburgh's North Side. He thanked everyone for their flexibility with the virtual format of the meeting and explained the features of the video conference for speaking and submitting comments. Following the welcome, Tim introduced the project team and consulting parties in attendance.

Presentation:

Tim Zinn and Jesse Belfast (Michael Baker) presented the slides in the attached presentation. The following meeting minutes record questions and comments from attendees and indicate at which point in the presentation they were received. There were scheduled breaks in the presentation for consulting parties to make comments and ask questions.

PART I—CONSULTATION PROCESS TO DATE

Tim Zinn (Michael Baker) presented the following slides on the compliance process to date, a review of the adverse effect on historic properties finding, and a review of comments received since the last consulting party meeting.

- Review of Section 106 Process for compliance with the Pennsylvania History Code and associated studies and reports
- Review of Adverse Effects on Historic Properties from Consulting Party Meeting #2 and Project Finding of Effect
- Summary of Comments from Consulting Party Meeting #2, online Public Meeting, and comments submitted after the close of the Public Meeting comment period

PART I—COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND DISCUSSION PERIOD

Tim Zinn (Michael Baker) asked the participants to provide questions and comments:

Mark Fatla (NSLC): The September 16, 2020, SHPO letter, page 2 reads: “With regard to audible and atmospheric indirect effects, the response/comments document indicates if the Pittsburgh Vertical Clearance Project is constructed, the number of trains traveling through the APE will decrease as the double-stack trains will allow for higher volumes of freight and fewer trains. Overall, the project will result in a decrease in emissions and noise in comparison to the No Build alternative.” My question is, has the railroad, in fact, represented in this process that there will be a decrease in the number of trains traveling through the rail line, and if so, where is that stated? Also, I'm asking about the underlying fact, which the State Historic Preservation Office cites as its reason to conclude

there's no adverse effect, that somehow the railroad has represented that there will be a decrease in traffic through the line. Has that been represented by the railroad, and if so, where?

Rudy Husband (NS) stated that if you look at what the projected increase in rail traffic is overall, you have so much [cargo] that has to move through this area, and without the line being modified, then you're going to have to run more trains. For example, in order to get intermodal traffic into a location not cleared for double-stack trains, we would stop the double stack trains, the top layer of those double-stack trains was taken off and put on another train. So instead of running one double-stack intermodal train, we were running two. Now, theoretically, a similar scenario could happen here. Using an eastbound double-stack intermodal train as an example, we could stop that train at Conway, take the top layer of that train off, connect it with additional railroad cars, and run two trains through this area instead of one. That train, again theoretically, would get to Pitcairn and then we would put the top layer back onto that train to continue east. In effect, we could be running a shuttle service between Conway and Pitcairn or Conway and Altoona to make sure that we were handling all the traffic that needs to go through this line.

As a follow up to this comment, the Merchant Street Bridge Project is a separate project that is independent of the proposed Pittsburgh Vertical Clearance Projects and is being evaluated under an independent compliance process. No additional throughput train capacity is being created as a result of the Merchant Street Bridge Project. The current capacity over the Merchant Street Bridge is 72 trains daily and the capacity over the new bridge will remain at 72 trains daily.

Additional discussion continued and Barbara Frederick (PA SHPO) stated that SHPO will take a second look at it. Barbara noted that she wanted to be clear that the reason that she discussed the potential for visual screening in the letter about Merchant Street is that SHPO had some concern that there might be a need to add walls to the actual superstructure that might affect the design of the Merchant Street Bridge for visual screening associated with the double-stack project.

Tim Zinn (Michael Baker) clarified that the retaining walls separate the railroad corridor from the Allegheny Commons and they are independent of the bridge abutments.

Larry Simms (RP3): Thank you, I appreciate that many of my questions were included in the responses, some were not; I'm not sure why. I have a couple of significant questions that relate directly to Merchant Street. It's my understanding that the stone abutment walls, which are in pretty good shape by everybody's assessment, comprise a significant historical element. They certainly comprise a significant structural element and in March of 2019, JMT consultants to the railroad, said this: "if Merchant Street is lowered, it is possible the abutment footings could be exposed and the stability of the stone wall would be compromised." There's been no comment on that that I'm aware of. I'd like to understand whether exploratory holes have been bored to determine the depth of the footings and their condition and what plans have been made to address the problem if JMT's warning proves correct.

Larry Simms (RP3): Secondly, one of the questions that was raised was about the sight lines under the bridge and the response from the railroad says the new roadway will allow for increased sight distance under the bridge for both vehicular and bicycle traffic. This is 100% contradictory to what JMT reported and what I have seen with my own eyes and measurements. What JMT said is site distance on Merchant Street will be reduced from approximately 120 feet to 90 feet for the roadway lowering option. The existing distance of 120 feet is significantly less than the code minimum of 155 feet and lowering the road will make it worse. I'd like to understand why the railroad is responding by saying it will get better and I'd like to understand the geometry of that. We have not seen the design plan. What we really need is a longitudinal section running the length of Merchant Street showing how the vertical curve is going to change. My suspicion, having walked this afternoon the entire length of Merchant, is that the railroad is thinking or planning on moving the hill so then [the road lowering] starts immediately south of

Ridge Avenue instead of hundreds of feet south of Ridge Avenue as it does now. This would be a significant impact visually to the community and certainly on pedestrians and cyclists. I'd like to understand why all the contradictions here and what is actually being planned.

Wendy Berrill (Michael Baker): The profile design is designed to current standards for PennDOT and city standards for the speed on that roadway. We have checked site distance lines along that profile, and they meet the current site distances and are even improved from what they are currently.

As a follow up to this comment, the existing calculated sight distance is 113'; the proposed sight distance is 147', which is just shy of the design requirement of 155'. The new profile is a significant improvement over the existing conditions.

Clayton Fisher (Michael Baker): Regarding the street lowering and the abutments, we looked at the bottom of the footing as shown on historic documents and did propose some adjustments to strengthen the abutment. So that is incorporated in the plans that are being proposed for Merchant Street.

As a follow up to this comment, we have analyzed the abutments as part of our design plans and the bottom of the footing is not expected to be exposed with the road lowering. The lowering of the Merchant Street roadway under Norfolk Southern's bridge will increase the exposed height of the existing masonry abutments. A series of test pits were dug to confirm the depths of the existing footings and this data was used to check the stability of the existing abutments with the proposed roadway lowering and superstructure replacement. Steel struts will be incorporated into the new superstructure to brace the tops of the abutments and improve the stability. Aside from the new cast-in-place concrete seat and backwall to support the new superstructure, the rest of the abutment down to the roadway will look the same.

Kirsten Bowen (Michael Baker): The JMT report was not done as part of this project team; it was a separate report commissioned by PennDOT to have JMT take an independent look at various alternatives. JMT's alternatives analysis was based on a cursory review of the project, not based on survey or geotechnical information. The design that we did for Merchant Street and subsequently for the preliminary engineering for the alternatives for the other projects have all been based on actual survey, geotechnical analysis, structural engineering, and geometric design. All of the calculations have been done and checked by various entities, and that's what is put forth in the design plans and is the basis of our design for the Merchant Street Bridge Project.

Glenn Olcerst (RP3): The topic for tonight's meeting is resolving of adverse effects. We're going to be moving to mitigation but it's somewhat premature at the moment, because what your slide showed was that the Preservation Office has determined that there is no impact on the [Allegheny] Commons, only the rail corridor. Yet in their April 30th letter, they said that increases in noise and emissions need to be considered both in connection with whether there was an impact on the [Allegheny] Commons and whether there was a need to revise the area of potential effects. Now our organization has had calls from neighbors about Norfolk Southern installing noise and vibration and atmospheric monitoring and we would like the results of all of that shared as part of this process. Next in the Preservation Office's September 16th letter they said that increases in the height of the walls could result in the need for a change in design of Merchant Street Bridge and adversely affect the [Allegheny] Commons Historic District. Well, RP3 is already on record calling for raising the retaining walls in the trough in mitigation of the direct and indirect impact on the [Allegheny] Commons of visual and noise pollution, and we have 95 physicians and medical professionals who signed a request for a health assessment impact indicating that noise is a health issue. Next in connection with that very point of the Preservation Office's [September 16, 2020] letter said that elevating the retaining walls will necessitate a reassessment of the potential effect of the project on both the historic corridor and the [Allegheny] Commons.

Glenn Olcerst (RP3): I'd like to move to another point, which is to pick up on the conversation we had before about the Preservation Office concluding that there is no adverse impact on the [Allegheny] Commons, and based on Norfolk Southern's response that the no build alternative will result in more trains than a build alternative and that the Preservation Office accepted that based on what Norfolk Southern phrased as a preliminary analysis, and we'd like to have more of that analysis because the no build is 62 trains in the year 2045 and the build is 58 trains in the year of 2045, and Norfolk Southern is asking all of us to believe that they can determine now that there will only be four fewer trains if they go through the city, 25 years from now with this project over four tracks, each with a capacity of 72 trains per day.* Now if that's accepted by PennDOT and the Preservation Office, and you move on, then this is another example of just checking the box on a sham process. Accepting that response defies logic and does not take into account idling. An increase in train traffic will be immediate given the time savings and the routing computers. Since filing for the PVCP double stack, Norfolk Southern will be doubling the length of their trains that means more locomotives and allowable car weight has increased to 284,000 pounds per car and that means more locomotives. They've also moved to a new business model involving precision scheduling, which means that lower priority trains will be sidelined at Manchester and kept idling on tracks 5 through 11, while higher priority trains run on tracks 1 through 4. The [Allegheny] Commons shares the same airshed and that black carbon diesel 2.5 particulate matter is a known Group One carcinogen pollution, and it will envelope the [Allegheny] Commons and the surrounding historic neighborhoods. Carnegie Mellon analysts have determined that for every 10 trains, there's six pollution deaths per year; for every one hour of idling, there is one pollution-related death per year. We have examples of trains idling in the [Allegheny] Commons in prior years for four days and four nights. Recent peer reviewed scientific studies show that 2.5 black carbon diesel severely affect child development. We have playgrounds in the park and in the [Allegheny] Commons and we have an aviary visited by children in the [Allegheny] Commons. This is an issue that needs to be dealt with in connection with this whole process, and for you to preliminarily determine that there's no adverse impact on the [Allegheny] Commons without taking any of this into account and without sharing any of the detail in the reports is just very hard to comprehend.

***CORRECTION: It should be noted that there are four tracks but the capacity of all four tracks combined is 72 trains per day.**

As stated previously, the Merchant Street Bridge Project is a separate project that is independent of the proposed Pittsburgh Vertical Clearance Projects, which are being evaluated under independent Pennsylvania History Code and Section 2002 of Act 120 compliance processes.

PART II—DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Jesse Belfast (Michael Baker) presented the following slides on minimization and mitigation ideas relative to the adverse effect on the Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line Railroad Corridor Historic District.

- Review of Proposed Minimization Measures
 - Rehabilitate and Reuse Existing Masonry Abutments
 - Paint outer girders to match new W. Ohio Street Bridge
- Guidelines for Mitigating Adverse Effects
- Review of Potential Mitigation Measures
 - Clean and Re-point Sandstone Retaining Walls
 - Clean, Repair, and Reset Stone Pylon
 - Repair and Paint Wrought-Iron Fencing
 - Landscape Plan for Railroad Right-of-Way
 - Improved Lighting
 - Interpretive Signage on Pennsylvania Railroad

PART II—COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND DISCUSSION PERIOD

The following is a summary of comments related to mitigation:

Barbara Frederick (PA SHPO): One thing that we might want to consider because I don't believe it's up to date is an inventory of the contributing bridges along the Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line. I'm not 100% certain what level of documentation exists in our files but as far as I know, we do not have a complete inventory. So that's an idea that would involve photographic documentation and completing at least abbreviated survey forms on the bridges or other features that might contribute to the line, and that would be relevant to the line that the Merchant Street Bridge contributes to (from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh and from Pittsburgh to the Ohio State Line). We have been working on updates to our railroad inventories and I would have to ask. Our staff has been dealing specifically with that for more input and feedback. But if that's an idea, I can certainly get you that information.

Tom Barbush (AWCC): A simple question about the fencing, my recollection of the fencing is that it begins at the Clark Factory and ends at Ridge Avenue and in your statement, you mentioned that the fencing will be repaired and painted, only where replaced.

Jesse Belfast (Michael Baker) clarified - Where repaired or replaced, it would be a consistent treatment (painted black) for that whole corridor from Martindale Street to Ridge Avenue.

Karina Ricks (DOMI): This is not a fully fleshed out thought but this is for mitigating the effect on the historic main line of the railroad, which was my understanding based on some of the historic documentation that the neighborhood and Mr. Olcerst have presented, that part of the historic character of this grade separation effort was that the railroad was recessed so that the trains could not be seen from the surrounding areas.* So, I don't know if one of the mitigation ideas can be continuing to preserve that character of the historic main line that trains will not be visible to view from the neighborhood.

****CORRECTION: From a factual perspective, it is worth noting that the railroad grade through Allegheny Commons was set as part of a corridor-wide grade separation project that extended from Union Station to Woods Run in Pittsburgh in the early 1900s. The grade was lowered through the park only sufficiently to provide an overhead crossing for W. North Avenue/Brighton Road. The railroad's setting in a park likely had no effect on determining the grade at this location. Prior to the ca. 1905 grade separation project, the tracks were partly depressed and partly at grade through Allegheny Commons. Following completion of the grade-separation project, the main pedestrian path through the West Commons portion of the park was along the north retaining wall of the railroad corridor from W. Ohio Street to W. North Avenue. The walkway was separated only by the wrought-iron fence and provided a completely unobstructed view of the railroad corridor.***

Mark Fatla (NSLC): Who currently holds the maintenance responsibility for the abutments and retaining walls?

Tim Zinn (Michael Baker): The maintenance responsibility of the bridge, fence, and walls is still being determined.

Additional discussion continued related to the maintenance responsibility and if it is the railroad's maintenance responsibility, it shouldn't be considered mitigation.

Mark Fatla (NSLC): The last thing I would like to do is I'd like to find out from the community what the attitude is on cleaning the walls. There's some, and we've seen this for example with bridge projects where sculptural work some people liked it in the original green copper verdigris and some didn't like it once they were cleaned and restored to their original appearance. That's happened as well with the stone buildings, where they were blackened with soot, which would have been from the coal burning trains in the very first decade of operation. So, in some regards the blackened walls are as historic as the stone itself in a sense. I'm not offering that as a position. I'm



saying I think that's a question we need to ask this community. Is it better to keep the stones black or is it better to clean them, and is there a preference? So, I think that needs more exploration.

Frank Stroker (PHLF): The S. Highland Avenue Bridge Project has two interpretive signs, "Portal of Industry 1857" and "Suburban Catalyst 1890," and suggested a continuation of the history as it relates to Allegheny City may be an appropriate overall corridor theme that might be developed along the line if future mitigation is anticipated.

NEXT STEPS

Jesse Belfast (Michael Baker) presented a summary of the consultation process moving forward and reminded consulting parties to submit any additional minimization/mitigation ideas relating to the Merchant Street Bridge Project by October 20, 2020. Once ideas or comments have been received, a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be prepared for review by PennDOT and PA SHPO. The MOU will present agreed-upon minimization and mitigation measures. Once the MOU is deemed to be satisfactory, it will be signed and posted for consulting party review.

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND DISCUSSION PERIOD

Additional discussion occurred clarifying that the mitigation pertains to only the Merchant Street Bridge Project.

It was requested that the draft MOU be shared with the consulting parties.

Tim Zinn (Michael Baker): I would like to ask that consulting party organizations that may have both primary and alternate representatives participating this evening to please consolidate your comments into one submission rather than send multiple submissions from the same consulting party.

Karina Ricks (DOMI): These mitigation measures require long-term maintenance. Will those responsibilities be established? For example, the interpretive sign may be offered as mitigation, but it does entail long-term maintenance. So, we would ask that we clearly establish responsibility.

John DeSantis (Property Owner): In light of the fact that the State Historic Preservation Office is going to be reviewing its finding of no adverse effect related to the increase or no increase of traffic on the tracks, it occurs to me that Rudy's answer this evening was perhaps not as clear as it might be. I would ask that prior to the SHPO making a further review, that there be a document generated by Norfolk Southern that articulates mathematically what level of traffic increase will be and at what point but not using the measurement of trains because a train can have one locomotive and five cars, or can have seven locomotives and 150 cars. So I would like to say that the document generated for SHPO and shared with all of the consulting parties should include numbers of locomotives, numbers of cars and relative weight of cars, and then frequency, so that it is comprehensive as to what the current level of traffic is and what the proposed future level of traffic would be at various time points and if that could be shared with all of the consulting parties, and of course with SHPO so that they can make a reasonable decision about whether or not there is adverse effect.

No additional throughput train capacity is being created as a result of the project. The current capacity over the Merchant Street Bridge is 72 trains daily and the capacity over the new bridge will remain at 72 trains daily.



Contacts

The information presented in these minutes represents the author's interpretation and understanding of the discussions during the meeting. Any clarifications or corrections to these minutes should be provided to the author at NSPghMerchant@gmail.com by November 13, 2020. No response implies that information presented is an accurate representation of the meeting proceedings and recipients have no objection as written.



ATTACHMENT A
Consulting Party Meeting #3 Presentation