

Pittsburgh Vertical Clearance Project
City of Pittsburgh, Boroughs of Swissvale, Braddock and North Braddock
Allegheny County
Public Open House #1
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Tuesday, June 26, 2018

1. Why did Norfolk Southern have so little details on the projects at the open house?

The proposed projects (“projects”) are early in the preliminary engineering and PennDOT review process. The projects are in the scoping stage at this point which includes identification of issues, preliminary alternatives, as well as potential resources that may be impacted by each of those alternatives under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 120 of P.L. 356 (Act 120) amended Section 2002, and related requirements. The open house was intended to provide an opportunity for the public to review the project locations and the proposed alternatives identified to date and to solicit comments concerning the potential effects on the environment, historic resources, or other applicable resource areas from the proposed projects and alternatives.

2. When will an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be conducted and made available for public viewing?

The proposed projects are early in the PennDOT/Act 120 Transportation Program Development and Project Delivery Process (i.e., preliminary engineering and environmental review process). Per PennDOT guidance, for projects where there will be no Federal-aid funding (receiving only State funding in both design and construction), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations do not apply. For projects with state funding, a state Environmental Documentation (ED) would be prepared for projects that would be considered categorical exclusions (actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental effect and are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an EIS or EA) under NEPA, and an Environmental Evaluation Report (EER) would be prepared for projects that would be Environmental Assessments (EAs) or EISs under NEPA. Projects completed as EDs and EERs must still comply with PA Act 120 and other applicable state laws, and the ED or EER will be subject to public review and comment.

3. When will there be a town hall meeting for residents to properly voice their concerns?

We plan to undertake future meetings in line with PennDOT’s public involvement guidance for these types of projects. Final meeting formats will be determined by PennDOT in accordance with Act 120 requirements and Publication 295 (Project Level Public Involvement Handbook). Once the projects are more developed, considering the comments received during the June 26 Public Scoping Open House and PennDOT guidance, the team anticipates hosting additional special purpose meetings (neighborhood meetings, focus group meetings) with interested

entities in potentially affected areas to provide more detailed project information, both from an engineering standpoint and an environmental and historical impact perspective.

Also, citizens may access information about the projects on the Norfolk Southern website at www.nscorp.com/pittsburghclearanceproject - available September 2018.

4. Why must the double-stack trains be run on this line rather than around the city as they do today?

The current Norfolk Southern double-stack train route through Pittsburgh is via the Port Perry Branch and the Monongahela (Mon) Line. This route is currently at capacity, and as a result, trains frequently face congestion issues. The infrastructure and geography of the Mon Line create challenges for timely handling the service sensitive intermodal freight that uses it today. The Mon Line has a 3-mile single-tracked segment that includes a tunnel and an adjacent bridge over the Monongahela River. This 3-mile segment is the largest chokepoint on Norfolk Southern's route between Chicago and the New York metropolitan area.

Aside from the capacity constraints on the Mon Line, the topography adjacent to the railroad right-of-way for much of the distance through Pittsburgh is susceptible to landslides from Mount Washington. The slope of Mount Washington continues to shift, and each time it does, the potential exists for soil and rock to be deposited on the railroad tracks, making them unable to be traversed until the debris is removed and the slide area stabilized. Aside from the significant costs incurred for cleanup, the slides create potentially hazardous conditions and routinely cause hours of delay. These landslides range from moderate to severe in nature and the timing of the incidents is unpredictable.

The landslide problem has been such an issue in Allegheny County that Allegheny County officials announced a "Landslide Task Force" on July 3, 2018.

5. Why is lowering the tracks not being considered? What is the detailed cost comparison?

Track lowering is an option that is being considered at each proposed project location. Alternatives analyses will assess track lowering, bridge raising, and reasonable alternatives in accordance with Act 120 and PennDOT guidance.

The adjustment to obtain the required minimum vertical clearance varies from 6 inches to 2 ft 9 inches depending on the specific location. Several of these locations have infrastructure constraints including retaining walls with adjacent sewers, parallel and perpendicular utility runs, and other adjacent building and bridge foundations, that would greatly complicate construction, or even preclude track lowering.

The trough in which the railroad operates adjacent to Allegheny Commons Park presents a particularly complex challenge in this regard. The trough contains four (4) active mainline tracks, which are in daily use by both Norfolk Southern and Amtrak. Temporary (and potentially

permanent) track removal would be required to facilitate any track lowering process in this area and would present very real and ongoing operational challenges. Technically, the location presents significant challenges as the tracks in this area are immediately adjacent to the walls and foundation of the concrete and cut stone retaining structure. Lowering the tracks would require removal of up to an estimated 6 feet of existing roadbed and subgrade material adjacent to these walls and foundations, creating concerns for wall stability, and increasing the potential exposure of the wall foundation zone to the detrimental effects of frost action.

As information, a cost analysis was done for the replacement of the West Ohio Street Bridge in this same area, and it was estimated the cost of lowering the track would be 7 times greater than modifying the roadway structure above the trough.

At several locations where track lowering presents technical or operational challenges, the overhead structures have been deemed to be structurally deficient. It is important to note that with or without this project, these structures will ultimately need to be replaced.

6. What is the expected increase in frequency of train traffic?

The line can accommodate more than 70 trains per day as it currently exists. Today, Norfolk Southern averages approximately 34 trains per day through the Northside area, of which approximately 21 move between the Central Business District and Braddock/North Braddock. Under the proposal, Norfolk Southern anticipates that it would operate approximately 56 trains per day through the Northside area, of which about 43 would move between the Central Business District and Braddock/North Braddock.

7. What are the anticipated noise impacts to the community? Is there a noise mitigation plan (e.g., provision of barrier walls, etc.)?

The proposed projects are early in the preliminary engineering and PennDOT/Act 120 process including input from the public on issues and resource areas appropriate for analysis. At this time, only preliminary qualitative screening assessments have been performed. This analysis indicates the potential for a minor impact in certain project areas.

Additional noise analysis is being performed in the normal course of the environmental evaluations. If the results show that a noise mitigation plan is needed, one will be developed along with any other environmental mitigation.

8. What are the expected effects on air quality from increased train traffic?

The proposed projects are early in the preliminary engineering and PennDOT/Act 120 process including input from the public on issues and resource areas appropriate for analysis. At this time, only preliminary qualitative air assessments have been performed. The projects were evaluated for emissions impacts, which were found to be below de minimis levels as defined under the general conformity rule, and as such would not be subject to a conformity determination.

Qualitatively, the projects will have positive impact on regional emissions as the proposed route is shorter than the current alignment with greater capacity and more reliability. Rail can move one ton of intermodal freight an average of 468 miles on a single gallon of fuel, and one intermodal double-stack train can remove up to 300 trucks off congested highways. Federal regulations on locomotive emissions govern the locomotives that will be used for these trains, and the intent of those regulations is to protect human health and the environment through emissions regulations. As regulations have been tightened over the years, they are intended to reduce emissions over time as locomotives are purchased or upgraded. Given these facts, it is not expected that the proposed projects would lead to new or worsened air quality issues.

Additional air quality analysis will be performed in the normal course of the environmental evaluations.

9. Is it possible for double-stack trains to run on non-diesel alternatives?

Freight railroads operate with diesel-electric locomotives that comply with USEPA emission standards. Non-diesel motive power with a capacity to effectively and efficiently propel and control freight trains of the type operated by Norfolk Southern in this corridor are not available or operated by the Class I rail freight carriers on the national freight network. Even if available, changing the type of motive power for brief line segments would require enormous investment in infrastructure and equipment, and would cause substantial service disruption and delay to this segment of the national freight rail network.

10. What types of cargo will be on the double-stack trains?

A typical intermodal train carries primarily consumer products, such as clothing, food, and electronics. Less than 4 percent of the material on a typical intermodal train could be considered hazardous. These materials are often simply items that are typically found in retail use (e.g. paint, lubricants, etc.). The type of cargo transported will not change with the operation of double-stack intermodal cars.

11. Why has there been no collaboration with PWSA regarding the state of old pipelines beneath the tracks? Are the old pipes strong enough to withstand increased train load and frequency?

The proposed projects are early in the Act 120 environmental analysis stage. The team has identified locations of sewer, water, storm water and combined sewer in the vicinity of the proposed projects. Norfolk Southern has been meeting and has had discussions with the City of Pittsburgh on these projects since December 2015. Norfolk Southern has met with or plans to meet with PWSA and other utility companies that may be affected by the proposed projects or any alternatives, as well as other affected stakeholders as part of the alternative selection process.

To the extent there are PWSA or other pipes under the current rail alignment, those pipes currently withstand the weight of a locomotive, which weighs around 240 tons. A double-stack rail unit weighs less than 100 tons, and has axle loading that is equal to, or lower than, other types of rail equipment currently routinely operated on the route. While the frequency of

loading may increase due to increased train volume, the point loadings imparted on the track and roadbed will not increase.

Lowering of the tracks (as suggest by Question 5) would reduce the existing physical separation between the railroad's track and roadbed and the City's aging infrastructure.

12. Will communities along the tracks be impacted by traffic disruptions due to construction?
How will continual emergency vehicle and public transportation access be ensured?

Construction will be temporary and a traffic plan is being developed in coordination with the City of Pittsburgh to provide for coordinated detours utilized during construction to minimize traffic disruptions. These detours will be provided to emergency services to minimize or eliminate delays associated with the construction activities. These projects will not affect or impair access to public transportation. Any traffic disruptions will be approved by the City of Pittsburgh and PennDOT. Ultimately where bridges nearing end-of-life are replaced the proposed projects will provide a net improvement to vehicular traffic, emergency vehicle and public transportation through extending corridor lifespan.

13. Has there been any investigation into the effect of these projects on nearby property values?

The proposed projects are early in the PennDOT/Act 120 preliminary engineering and review process, and potential for impact to property values will be evaluated during that process.

14. Will residents of the senior living center, and other individuals with impaired mobility, be able to easily navigate the new sidewalks and raised bridges?

Where the proposed projects contemplate modifying the walkways on bridge structures, we will account for ADA compliance as a part of the overall design process. In addition, ADA compliance will be a consideration in choosing the preferred alternative.

15. Will reduced sightlines along planned roadways decrease the safety of pedestrian crossings?

The proposed projects' location alternatives are still being developed. Pedestrian safety was a key concern as part of the responses to the June 26 Public Open House comment forms and will be addressed as part of design. All projects will be designed in accordance with the applicable ASSHTO and PennDOT design manuals.

16. Is Norfolk Southern aware of the historic significance of Allegheny Commons park?

Norfolk Southern is aware that Allegheny Commons Park is the oldest public park in Pittsburgh and is considering impacts to historic resources in the environmental and historic reviews it is undertaking for the projects and their alternatives. One of the benefits of the proposed project is that Norfolk Southern plans to restore the pedestrian bridge in the park that was closed in 1999 and removed in 2013.

17. Why are tax dollars being used to fund this project?

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has determined that reinforcing its transportation infrastructure is a key priority. In 2013, the legislature passed Act 89 (HB 1060), which, among other things, provides funding annually for projects in all modes of transportation, including railroads. The legislature determined that Act 89 had significant public benefits, including job creation, improving roads and bridges, ensuring economic competitiveness with neighboring states, and avoiding crippling service cuts. By approving funding for these proposed projects, the Commonwealth has determined that they will advance steps it has already taken to improve the efficiency and reliability of the Commonwealth’s surface transportation system at the regional and national level, as well as increase the Commonwealth’s economic competitiveness. It will certainly improve the connectivity between freight modes vital to national commerce by facilitating faster and safer freight movement. Indeed, the Pittsburgh Clearance projects will complete the final segment of the public-private partnership that began in the mid-1990’s between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Conrail to create a high-speed double-stack intermodal corridor.

18. What precautions will be taken to mitigate the risk of derailment and other accidents?

The table below is a compilation of accident/incident information every railroad in the U.S. is required to report to the Federal Railroad Administration on a monthly basis. The numbers in the calendar year columns in the table below reflect the absolute number of train / on-track vehicle incidents or derailments on each railroad’s system during that calendar year. The ratios reflect the number of train/on-track vehicle incidents or derailments per million train miles operated. The lower the ratio, the better the safety record. As shown, Norfolk Southern has historically been one of the safest Class I railroads operating in the U.S.

Railroad	2013	2013 Ratio	2014	2014 Ratio	2015	2015 Ratio	2016	2016 Ratio	2017	2017 Ratio	2018*	2018 Ratio*
NS	193	2.01	228	2.38	213	2.21	190	2.08	197	2.09	59	1.95
CSX	196	1.99	249	2.47	248	2.62	234	2.89	243	3.37	84	3.91
UP	501	3.02	504	2.91	521	3.22	474	3.21	468	3.09	151	3.03
BNSF	407	2.48	409	2.46	424	2.61	354	2.43	344	2.43	114	2.42
KCS	43	3.99	38	3.32	48	4.39	27	2.62	39	3.59	11	3.19
CP	39	2.92	15	1.25	19	1.7	14	1.61	14	1.56	3	0.99
Class 1s	1,428	2.32	1,487	2.40	1,507	2.53	1,293	2.35	1,329	2.38	431	2.38
Industry	1,853	2.48	1,887	2.46	1,932	2.62	1,669	2.43	1,696	2.43	556	2.42

* Through April 2018

Norfolk Southern invests more than a billion dollars annually to maintain and improve its infrastructure. This includes frequent track inspections in accordance with FRA regulations and operating rule enforcement with employees. In addition, over the past ten years, NS has spent \$1.4 billion to install Positive Train Control (PTC), which will, among other things, prevent train collisions and overspeed derailments. NS will be installing PTC on this route.