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Public weighs in on intermodal train, bus station in Rochester

Brian Sharp and Gary McLendon

An open house Thursday all but ended the public comment phase of a planned intermodal train and bus station in Rochester.

Plans, combining functionality and grandiose design, drew comments from dozens of residents during a four hour information session at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

"What we want is something with durable materials that is going to have a lasting impression for many, many years," said city Senior Structural Engineer Thomas C. Hack.

Hack noted that the existing Amtrak station was designed to be temporary when it was built in 1978.

Under consideration are the existing Amtrak site, the existing Eastman Kodak Co. parking lot on State Street by Frontier Field, an Andrews Street lot west of the Genesee River, and the former U.S. Post Office on Cumberland Street.

Rochester resident Harvey Botzman weighed in during the open house.

"I have no use for going back on old designs. I think Rochester concentrates much too much on old designs," he said.

Mark J. McAnany, of the architectural engineering firm Bergmann Associates, said they have nearly "100 percent consensus" that the existing Amtrak site is the way to go. "There's a lot of potential at this site. There's enough room to do something significant," said McAnany.

The initial phase calls for construction of a 20,000-square-foot building at a cost of \$10 million.

The entire plan calls for merging Amtrak, Greyhound and Trailways bus service, taxicabs, local buses and shuttles, car rental agencies and bicyclists. The space might include restaurants, newsstands, gift shops and wireless work stations.

The scoping study is expected to be completed by May or June 2012; the preliminary engineering stage then would begin in late 2013. If funding falls into place, ground could be broken in 2014.

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