



# Amtrak Storage and Servicing Location Neighborhood Meeting

Transportation, Energy & Utilities Committee of the Burlington City Council

*January 16, 2020*

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# Amtrak to Burlington Rail Context

- **State & City goal to restore passenger rail service to Burlington**
  - **2015 Vermont State Rail Plan:** “Proposed New Service.... *Extend the Ethan Allen Express to Burlington...VTrans has established extending the *Ethan Allen Express* to Burlington and the *Vermont* to Montreal as first priorities.*
  - **2011 Burlington Transportation Plan:** “The City will pursue several policy initiatives including...supporting improvements to the western corridor rail infrastructure and expansion of passenger rail services to Burlington.”
  - **2019 planBTV Comprehensive Plan:** “Support improvements in the western corridor rail infrastructure and expansion of passenger and commuter rail services through Burlington to aid in traffic and congestion reduction.”

## Amtrak to Burlington Rail Context

- **City goal to activate waterfront around Union Station as a mixed-use area**
  - 2013 [planBTV Downtown & Waterfront](#): “The South Waterfront is truly the workhorse and activated waterfront of Burlington. In many ways this area serves as the front door to the city. The area from College Street down to and including the King Street Dock is envisioned as an active mixed-use area with retail, restaurants and an inn or hotel.”
- **City goal to move Burlington Greenway to west side of railroad tracks**
  - 2012 [Bike Path Task Force Study](#): “Some sections of the path may be considered for realignment to improve safety and user experience...Between Perkins Pier/Maple Street and College Street: the path crosses to the east side of the railroad tracks for this section, resulting in two awkward railroad/road crossings and potential conflict points at King Street and College Street”
  - 2016 [Citizen-initiated Advisory Ballot Item](#): “Should the Mayor of Burlington and the City Council be advised to relocate the Burlington Bicycle Path to the west side of the railroad tracks between College and King streets even if that means utilizing the public trust doctrine or eminent domain to accomplish this task?”

# Amtrak to Burlington Rail Context

## Three Interrelated Efforts

1. Accommodate Amtrak passenger rail service (VTrans)
2. Add a second track generally between King St and College St (VRS requirement)
3. Relocate Burlington Greenway to the west side of the tracks (City)

# Amtrak to Burlington Rail Context

## Rail ownership and operation

### ■ North of College Street:

- Railroad right of way owned and operated by Genesee & Wyoming / Brookfield Infrastructure (red line)

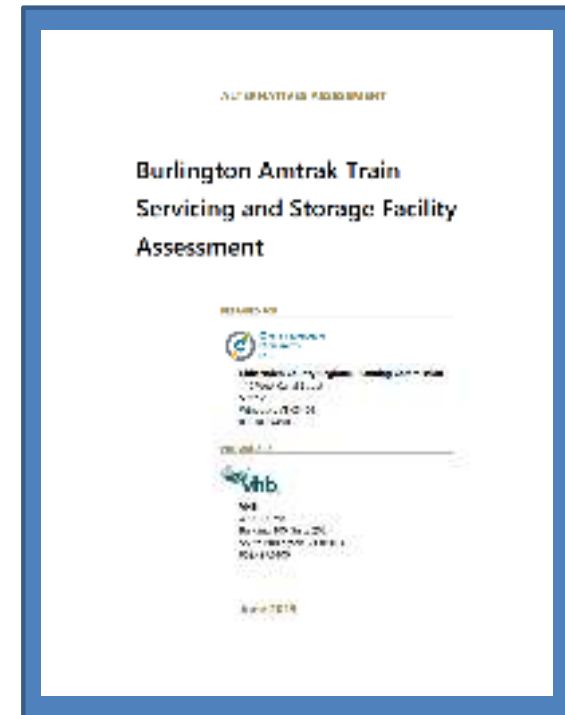
### ■ South of College Street:

- Railroad right of way owned by State of Vermont, leased to Vermont Rail System (VRS) (orange line)
- VRS also has rights to spur on east side of Urban Reserve



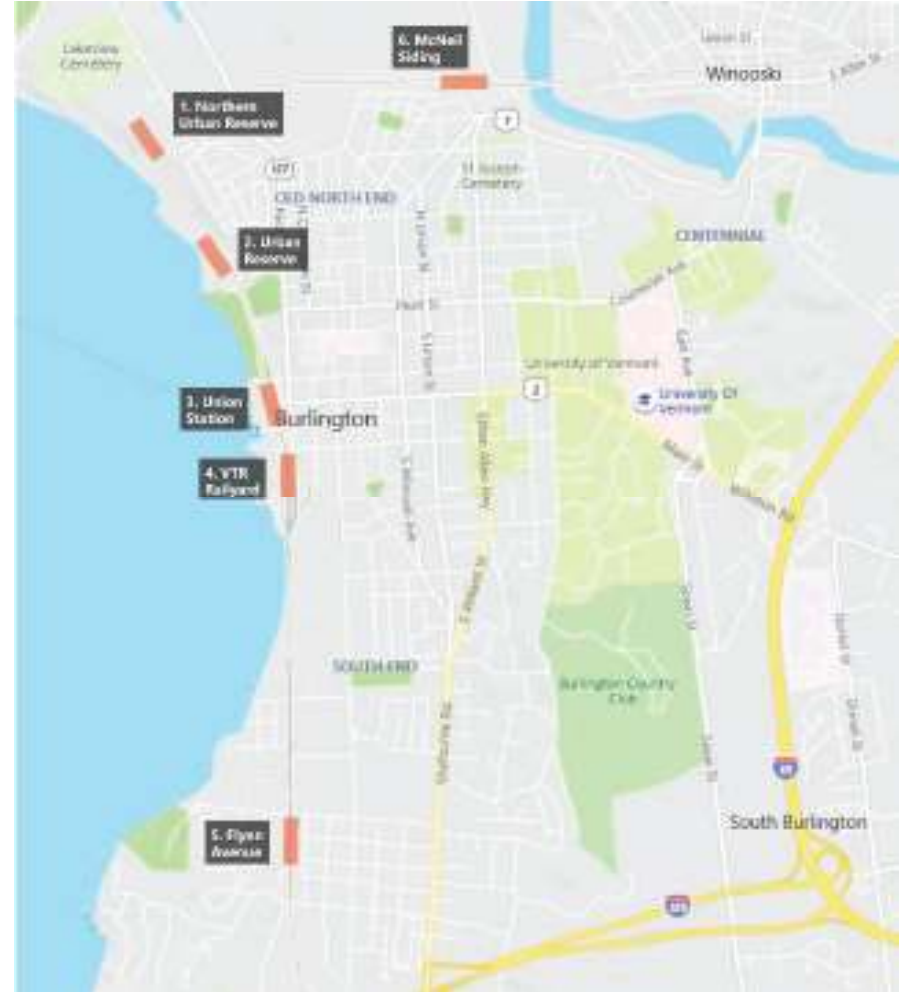
# Amtrak Accommodations

- Station:
  - General understanding and agreement that passenger loading and unloading will occur at historic Union Station. State of VT owns lower floor of 1 Main Street building, the balance of the building is owned by Lisa Steele.
- Overnighting & Servicing:
  - 2016: VTrans begins conversation with City regarding potential location to overnight and service the train in Burlington
  - 2017: City requested CCRPC/VTrans do a study of overnighting and servicing locations given our questions and concerns with the various proposed sites
  - 2017: CCRPC funded and initiated study
  - July 2019: Study completed by CCRPC and received by VTrans



## Train Overnighting Locations Evaluated

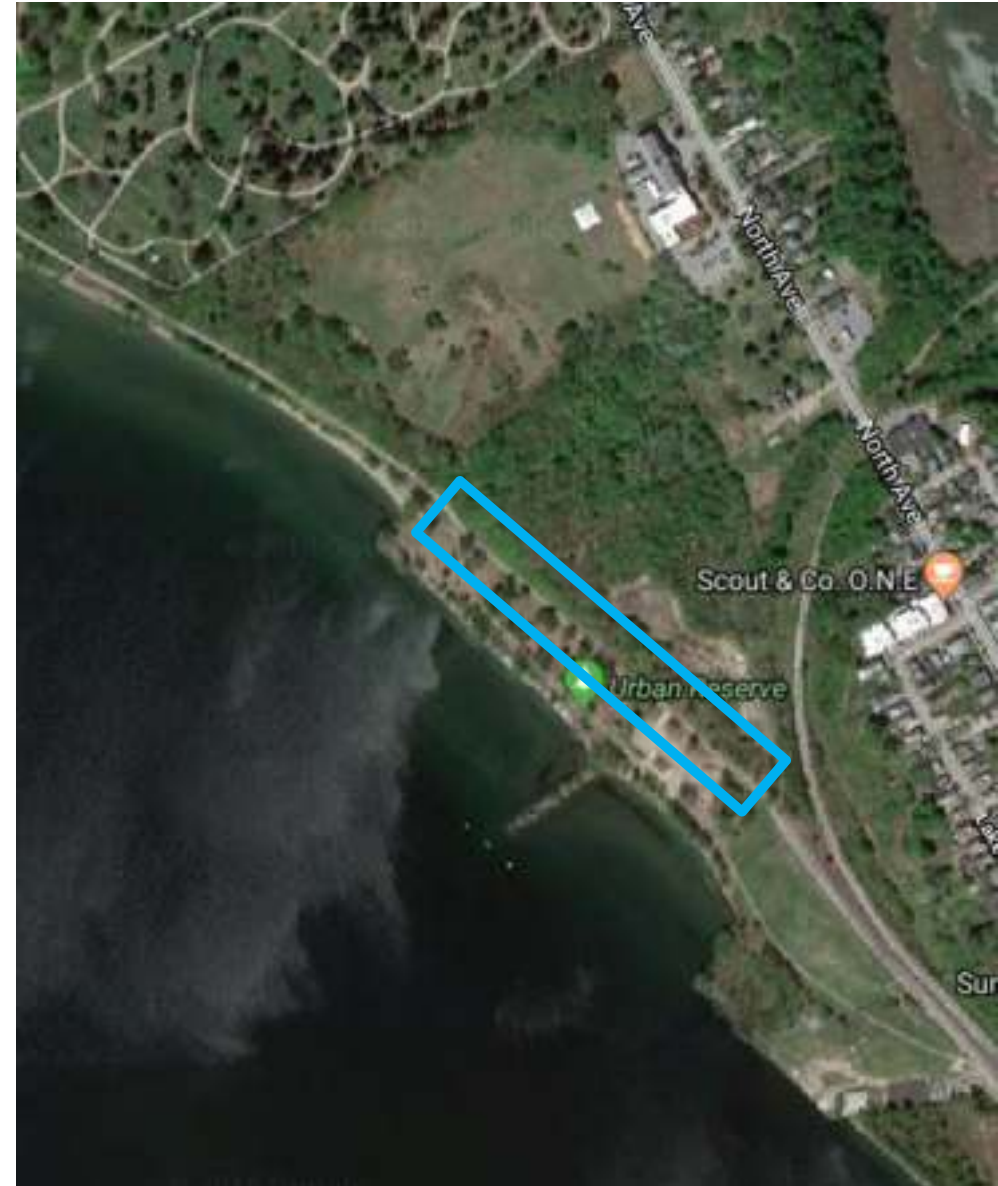
1. Northern Urban Reserve
2. Urban Reserve
3. Union Station
4. Vermont Rail System Railyard
5. Flynn Avenue (City Market)
6. McNeil Siding



# Northern Urban Reserve

## Location #1

- 2018 construction by VRS to extend their current siding is not affiliated with Amtrak overnighting
- Amtrak train would be stored on a new adjacent siding
- Additional crossings and horn blows
- Located downslope from adjacent residences
- Overnight crew accommodations within short drive
- Requires coordination with New England Central Railroad (Genesee & Wyoming)





# Urban Reserve

## Location #2

- Current VRS siding located north of skate park
- Amtrak train would be stored on a new adjacent siding
- Additional crossings and horn blows
- Located down slope from adjacent residences
- Overnight crew accommodations within short drive
- Requires coordination with New England Central Railroad (Genesee & Wyoming)



# Union Station

## Location #3

- Proposed new siding constructed adjacent to Union Station to service Amtrak passengers
- Overnight crew accommodations within walking distance or short drive
- Burlington Greenway to be relocated in coordination with rail project adjacent to the station and the City's goal to move Burlington Greenway to west side of railroad tracks



# Vermont Rail System Railyard

## Location #4

- VRS states railyard does not have the operational capacity to accommodate storage of the Amtrak train overnight (VRS)
  - Amtrak will disrupt freight rail operations
  - The timing of the evening Amtrak Train may be inconsistent
  - Open track space is used for freight storage and train operations
- Overnight crew accommodations within walking distance or short drive



# Flynn Avenue / Briggs Street

## Location #5

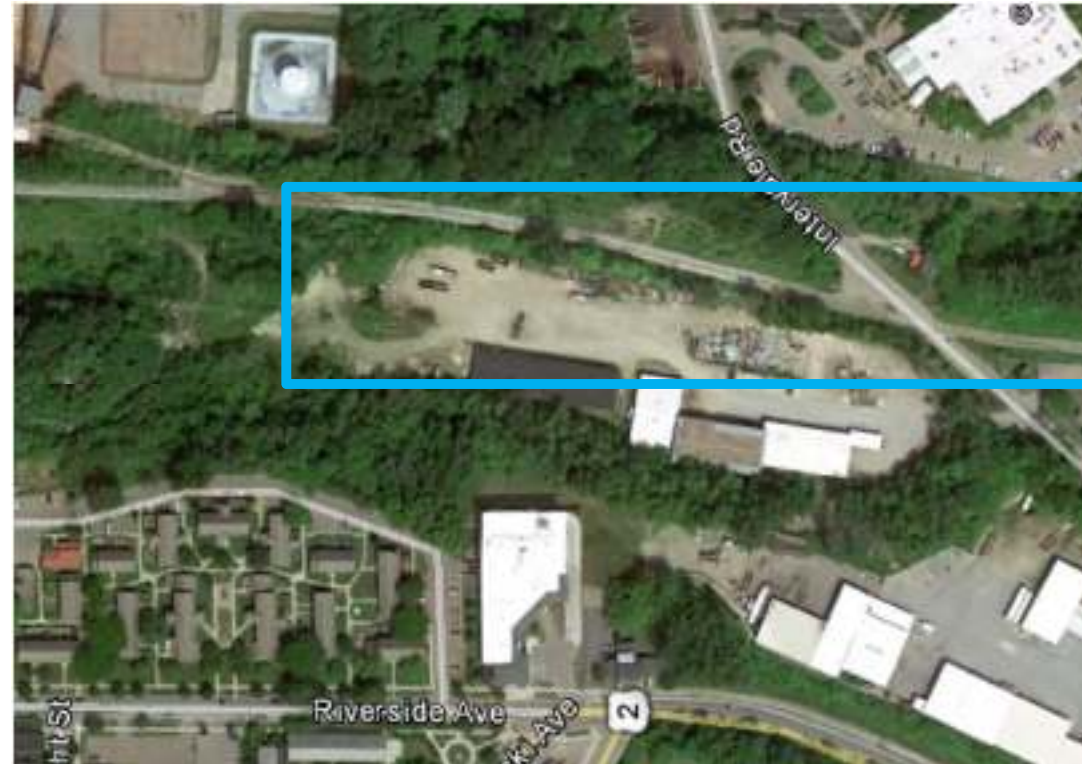
- Use existing VRS siding and construct additional siding to replace storage capacity for VRS
- Adjacent to residential neighborhood and new City Market
- Approximately 1.5 miles from Union Station
- Overnight crew accommodations within short drive



# McNeil Siding

## *Location #6*

- Amtrak train would be stored on a new adjacent siding
- Additional crossings and horn blows
- Located downslope from adjacent residences
- Approximately 2.3 miles from Union Station
- Overnight crew accommodations within short drive
- Requires coordination with New England Central Railroad (Genesee & Wyoming)



# McNeil Siding

## Location #6

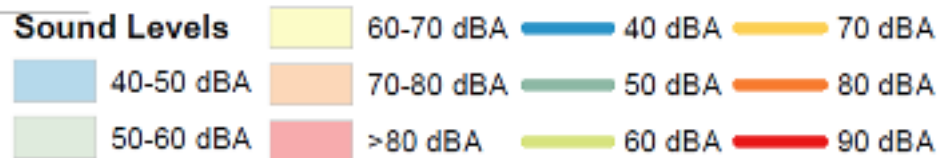
- Siding will be Adjacent to Existing Track (14'-0" Centerline of Track to Centerline of Track)
- 12'-0" Wide Access Road will be Located Next to Track for Servicing Amtrak (Septic and Water)
- Lighting will be Installed for Servicing and Security
- Engine Will be Plugged in to "Shore Power" Overnight, but will Idle up to 20 Minutes Each AM



# McNeil Siding

## Location #6 - Noise

- Amtrak Engine Noise Similar to NECR Wood Chip Train Engine
- Noise Level is 50 to 60 Decibels (Circled in Red)
- Noise Level is 40 to 50 Decibels for Remaining Riverside Ave. and Interval Ave. Residents.



# McNeil Siding

## *Location #6 – Air Quality*

- Air quality impacts were modeled using the AERSCREEN Dispersion Modeling framework
- The model uses worst case meteorology to conservatively estimate pollution concentrations
- The model evaluated one locomotive idling for 40 minutes at each location
- For structures adjacent to the modeled locations, building height was taken into consideration
- The Study air quality modeling revealed the following:
  - Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) was the only emission determined to approach the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the one hour averaging period
  - The only location which may have the potential to approach or exceed the NAAQS 1-hour averaging levels for NO<sub>2</sub> are the second story position(s) of the Union Station/Wing Building, if the train engine were parked within 50' of the structures and idling
- A more detailed air quality assessment will be considered following the finalization of site selection



# McNeil Siding

## *Location #6 – Air Quality*

### Analysis Results

The results of the dispersion modeling for the Storage Facility show pollutant concentrations from the idling locomotive for all criteria pollutants and averaging periods are below the NAAQS criteria at all receptor locations at the McNeil site. The potential to exceed the NAAQS for each site is summarized in Table 3.

• **Table 3 Potential for Air Quality Impact by Site**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Site Description</b>	<b>Potential to Exceed NAAQS?</b>	<b>Potential Exceedance Location</b>
6	McNeil Siding	All Pollutants: No	N/A

# McNeil Siding

## Location #6 – Comparison to Chip Train

- Length of Idle Time
  - Amtrak – 20 Minutes AM, 5 Minutes PM
  - Chip Train – Unloads for 3 Hours +/-
- Time of Idling
  - Amtrak – +/- 7:00 AM, 7:30 PM
  - Chip Train – 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
- Distance from Housing to Tracks
  - Amtrak – 396 feet
  - Chip Train 410 feet
  - Chip Train Unloading 560 Feet
  - 100 feet Vertical +/-



# Evaluation Matrix – Final Scoring

Each site was scored 0 – 3 for each criterion  
0 being the worst and 3 being the best.

Location	Estimated Costs	Electrical Power	Crew Hours	Property Acquisition	Natural Resources	Lighting	Train Visibility	Noise Impacts	Horn Impacts	Air Quality & Emissions	Proximity to Residences	Impacts to VRS	Total Score	Ranking
	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score			
Northern Urban Reserve	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	2	24	3
Urban Reserve	2	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	23	5
Union Station	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	3	0	0	3	26	1
VTR Railyard	0	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	0	24	3
Flynn Avenue	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	0	1	3	2	1	21	6
McNeil Siding	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	1	1	3	3	2	25	2

# Amtrak Overnighting Other Considerations

*Why not extend the Ethan Allen to St. Albans? There are several unknowns...*

- What would the capital and operating expenses be?
- What is potential ridership with an expansion in the route?
- Would our partner states (NY, MA & CT) support this change? If so, what would the cost and revenue splits look like?
- What conflicts if any does this pose for other uses (freight service and the Amtrak Vermonter) on the route?
- Would the host railroad allow an additional passenger train to operate on the track?
- Would additional passenger service trigger the need for positive train control (PTC) safety upgrades, and if so, who would be responsible for the installation, maintenance and operating costs?
- If an extension of service were feasible what would the operating schedule look like and how would it fit with the Vermonter?
- Would additional train crews be required to complete the trip?
- The complexities of future expansion to St. Albans is outside of the Scope of the current project

## Amtrak Overnighting Decision Process

- Study completed by CCRPC and accepted by VTrans – July 2019
- Final Report is posted on VTrans website: [vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/amtrak-burlington](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/amtrak-burlington)
- VTrans will be making the final selection on the preferred storage site for the Amtrak train taking into consideration:
  - Results from the CCRPC study
  - Public and stakeholder input including City, Vermont Rail Council, Amtrak and VRS input
- VTrans plans to make a decision on the train overnighting location by the end of February 2020
- VTrans is expecting to complete designs for the project elements this winter and start construction in the Spring 2020
- Public input can be sent to [daniel.delabruere@vermont.gov](mailto:daniel.delabruere@vermont.gov)

## Amtrak Overnighting Ongoing Communications

- VTrans project website: [vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/amtrak-burlington](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/rail/amtrak-burlington)
- The Agency will issue quarterly project updates through email
  - To receive updates - Go to the VTrans Project Website and Submit your email address (At the bottom of the website page)
- VTrans and City Staff will continue to meet on a monthly basis to coordinate the Amtrak project and the Greenway project
- At the invitation of the City Transportation, Utilities & Energy Committee the Agency will provide biannual updates on the project



# Amtrak to Burlington Rail Briefing

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*January 16, 2020*

## *Questions & Comments*

Public input can be sent to [daniel.delabruere@vermont.gov](mailto:daniel.delabruere@vermont.gov)

