



Naperville Notice

Proposed Acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad

Overview

In fall 2007, the Canadian National Railroad (CN) announced their proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad, which runs along the western perimeter of the city. In November, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) determined that the proposed acquisition would be classified as a “minor” transaction, as opposed to a major transaction, but would require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The major/minor classification was based on impacts to the railroad industry, not local community impacts.

What’s the Status of the Acquisition Process?

On October 30, 2007, Canadian National (CN) filed an application to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) seeking their approval of the acquisition of control of EJ&E Railroad. CN projects rail traffic to increase from 15.7 to 42.3 trains per day on the rail segment that runs along Naperville’s western boundary. As increased train traffic presents community challenges and may impact our residents’ quality of life, city staff has been engaged in all related processes since the inception of the pending railway transaction.

Following are the current milestones in the process, which staff is addressing and monitoring:

- Comments on the draft Scope of Study for the Environmental Impact Study forwarded to the STB by February 15, 2008
- The STB is scheduled to make a decision on the competitive, transportation, and economic implications of the transaction on the national rail system by April 25, 2008
- The projected completion of the Environmental Impact Study is December 2008

What are the City’s Concerns Regarding the Proposed Acquisition?

Based on meetings and discussions, the city’s top concerns relative to the acquisition include:

- Implications on the city’s proposed Quiet Zone designation and train noise in general
- Proposed increase in hazardous cargo carried along this rail line
- Impacts on the proposed STAR Line system
- Street traffic congestion due to increased train traffic

The city has submitted comments on the scope of the EIS for consideration by the STB.

How does the Acquisition Impact the Proposed STAR Line Project?

Metra’s proposed STAR Line is a 55-mile commuter rail line that will provide connections between the Chicago suburbs, from Joliet to O’Hare Airport. The STAR Line is part of the Federal Government’s New Starts program, which is the primary financial resource for supporting locally-planned, implemented, and operated transit “guideway” capital investments. The commuter rail line is planned to run along the EJ&E railroad and connect to a new rail line that would run along the Northwest Corridor next to the tollway.

Since this is a Metra project, they are taking the lead on working with CN. However, the City of Naperville has a stake in the project’s future as it has already acquired property for the two STAR Line Stations near 95th Street and North Aurora Road. The 95th Street site will be used as a park and ride lot to the Route 59 Metra station until the STAR line has been completed. Additionally, the city has attended meetings to provide comments on the project as it progresses.

What is CREATE?

CREATE is a first-of-its-kind public/private partnership between the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra and the nation's freight railroads State of Illinois, City of Chicago, American Association of Railroads, National Railroad Passenger Corp (Amtrak), and the Commuter Rail Division of the RTA (Metra). The goals of the program are to: reduce rail and motorist congestion, improve passenger rail service, enhance public safety, promote economic development, create jobs, improve air quality, and reduce noise from idling or slow-moving trains.

What does CREATE Mean for Area Residents, Employees and Businesses?

For area residents, CREATE means reduced traffic congestion, shorter commuting times, better air quality and increased public safety. For workers and businesses, it means more jobs and economic opportunity. For CREATE, the proposal by CN to acquire the EJ&E serves the goal to reduce train traffic in the congested downtown Chicago area.

Who is the Surface Transportation Board?

The STB was created by the ICC Termination Act of 1995, Pub L. No. 104-88, 109 Stat. 803 (1995), on January 1, 1996, to assume some (but not all) functions of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), particularly those related to the regulation of freight railroads. The Board is an independent federal regulatory agency with jurisdiction over certain surface transportation matters, including mergers and acquisitions.

What is the Section of Environmental Analysis and What Does it Do?

The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is the office within the Board responsible for directing the environmental review process, conducting an independent analysis of all environmental data, and making an environmental recommendation to the Board.

As part of the environmental review process for this proposed acquisition, SEA will complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Board will consider the entire environmental record, including all public comments submitted during the environmental review process, before making a final decision.

SEA is composed of a highly trained staff of administrative, legal and environmental specialists. SEA is headed by the Chief of the Section of Environmental Analysis.

How Can I Provide Input on the Proposed Acquisition?

An online survey is available through February 25, 2008 on the city's Web site at www.naperville.il.us/eje.aspx. The survey provides interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the EJ&E Railroad and how it impacts them on a daily basis.

This survey is for use only by the City of Naperville. The results may not be forwarded directly to the STB, however they will help the city to continue voicing concerns over the acquisition of the EJ&E Railroad.

Where Can I Find Up-to-Date Information on the Proposed Acquisition?

Up-to-date information is available on the city's Web site at www.naperville.il.us/eje.aspx. The site will be updated with new information as it becomes available.

Contact Information

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