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To: **Chairman Martin J. Oberman**
Surface Transportation Board 395 E Street
SW Washington, DC 20423

From: Prospect Park Association Land Use Committee
Date: October 14, 2022
Re: Midtown Greenway Letter to the Surface Transportation Board

Dear Chairman Oberman and the Surface Transportation Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on docket number FD 36500, the proposed CP/KCS railroad merger.

You have received testimony and comment letters from both Rep. Ilhan Omar, who represents Minneapolis, and also Rep. Betty McCollum, who represents Saint Paul—just to the east of our neighborhood in Minneapolis. These Congresswomen also shared a letter from many local elected officials from the Twin Cities area.

We concur with the points made in those three letters, and we specifically implore you to push Canadian Pacific (CP) to agree to a reasonable shared use agreement or easement which would allow for a bicycle and pedestrian path to be constructed on the Short Line Bridge L5733 over the Mississippi River. This bridge links our Prospect Park neighborhood with the majority of Minneapolis located on the west side of the Mississippi, so we are painfully familiar with the missed opportunity for connectivity it embodies.

That bridge was originally constructed for two sets of railroad tracks, but only one set of tracks still exists today. There is ample room for a walking and bicycling trail on the bridge's vacated track alignment. We know this project has been studied and found feasible by the engineers hired by the Midtown Greenway Coalition.

We are told that CP claims it is getting “adequate use” out of the bridge. But you will see in two attached photos the missed opportunity of this vacant right of way. In the first photo you can see the approach (looking westward) towards the bridge, where CP fenced off access roughly 15 years ago.





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A second set of tracks once existed on the left side of the photo, but that set is long gone. In the second photo (which was taken through the holes in the fence), you can clearly see there is plenty of space on the bridge itself (more space than on many other bike trails) where the original tracks have been removed.

What you can also see in these photos is that pedestrians and bicyclists can be accommodated with no impact on CP's ability to serve its customers.



In the distance of these photos lies the west bank of the Mississippi and the Midtown Greenway, the most popular bike/ped path in our State of Minnesota. If that alternative transportation amenity could be connected over the Mississippi to our neighborhood in Minneapolis, and to all the neighborhoods in Saint Paul, it would provide a crucial zero-pollution transportation linkage, increase low-cost access to jobs, help combat climate change and deliver huge benefits to public health.

Please help us overcome intransigence and let Minnesota seize this rare opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration,

Eric Amel, AIA
Chair, PPA Land Use Committee
Prospect Park Association

CC: All Parties of Record