



MUNDELEIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Ms. Anne K. Quinlan
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Environmental Filing STB Finance Docket No. 35087

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Dear Ms. Quinlan,

Please find in this correspondence the views of the Mundelein Fire Department as part of the Scoping Evaluation of the CN purchase of the EJ&E rail line and the affects specific to fire department responses.

Clearly, this is a difficult study given very few facts as it relates to the overall proposed activity and is based on at least reasonable levels of speculation. In addition, it encompasses the structure of our automatic aid agreements with our neighboring communities and depending on the time of day, day of week and other operational activities, at any point the answer to many questions has a different message and outcome. With full consideration to both fire and EMS operations we believe we are raising very valid concerns and have at least described a very fair response to this need on the part of the rail system.

With that we offer the following assumptions as well as identifiable concerns related to our operations.

Assumptions:

- We cannot clearly identify the total number of trains and related times of day and loading factors as they relate to grade crossing disruption. Fifteen (15) additional trains have been referred to in our area, but there is no current information provided as to the time of day of operations. We also have no specifics on the types of rail commodities and hazardous materials loading increases.
- Trains potentially could cover more than one grade crossing simultaneously at main intersections such as (Alanson and Hawley), (Hawley, Park and Maple), (60/83 and Diamond Lake Road) creating significant delays in initial responses to calls and in the case of EMS calls, significant delays for transporting patients to our only two main hospitals, Condell Hospital and in some cases Lake Forest Hospital.
- Beyond just grade crossing delays, predictability of the affect on traffic is a monumental concern especially where two-lane thoroughfares are the primary road through the grade crossing area and back up into other response areas. The potential for additional conflicts and further delays is clearly a risk management concern through closed crossings that create fall out traffic delays in each of the respective areas.

- Although viewed as a solution on paper looking at two-dimensional mapping, auxiliary side street use for primary responses is an unacceptable practice. This requires in many cases responses through heavily populated residential areas that are not even part of the call structure or need. Jeopardizing the safety of the neighborhoods to complete our primary response to a call for service is clearly a practice that has only one predictable end and that is a tragedy totally unassociated with the original call for service. In addition, it creates a secondary call and depletes a portion of the response for the initial call for service and now creates a double liability.

Response Area Deficiencies:

- CN to EJ&E crossing issues:
 - Given the need for trains to slow down in southbound travel to negotiate the curve at Leighton Road to transfer from the CN to the EJ&E, lengths of trains will create a coupling of intersections that are blocked at the same time. We have been told of 7,600' train lengths and through analysis it is clear numerous crossings can be blocked by one train, (Allanson and Hawley), (Hawley, Park and Maple).
 - Trains will in fact slow to approximately 25 mph or less to make the transition to the west. This clearly can cause the multiple crossing affect of shutting down access to the area for all public safety operations.
 - Response to the area of Hawley south to Allanson, east to Butterfield Road, east of the CN line will be cut off from our primary station response. This is a large area of both residential and commercial. Our automatic aid response would be altered, but would clearly require additional response time to get initial and secondary units on the scene. Given the time-table specific to fire stage development (time study attached), this can significantly contribute to higher fire losses and the potential loss of life due to delayed responses. NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1710 and 1720 provide the requirements for initial fire response times and personnel loading for fire operations and we believe they may be compromised by this proposal. We anticipate at least a 4-6 minute or more in delays to arrive on the scene of calls in this area. This is in addition to normal response times and is directly in the time frame of the difference of clinical or biological death of a patient both in medical response needs or victims of fires.
 - Responses through the grade crossings depending on time of day and speed of a train will affect any transport of patients from any call west of the CN tracks to the hospital. Because both freight and Metra traffic still run on the north CN line leg, this area is provided no relief from current train traffic loading. In fact, due to the slowing of train traffic for the transfer to the EJ&E. we are concerned it [trains blocking grade crossings] will actually increase over current conditions we work with daily. Transport times to the hospital can anticipate the same delays as fire responses noted above.

- Diamond Lake Road – Rte.60/83 issues:
 - The same concerns develop for the transporting of patients from the southwest side of Mundelein and the north and west service areas of the Countryside Fire Protection District with respect to ambulance transport times of patients to the hospital. Significant delays occur with the need for alternate routing going further north to move east to get to Condell and Lake Forest Hospitals. Loss of the 60/83 intersection for any period of time will be devastating.
 - The same standard applies for “alternate” response plans in this area as in the reference above. This is heavily populated with residential exposures that have rural road structures without curb and gutter. These are typically smaller roads in width and are more difficult to travel due to the very nature of their design. This however is clearly only adding to the problem of clear risk management of not sending emergency apparatus into neighborhoods not even affected by a call.
 - Based on current staffing and response by automatic aid we receive from Countryside Fire Protection District with both EMS and fire responses, our exchange of service is greatly diminished based on disruption at this crossing. We both provide fire apparatus to adjacent response districts and would be directly cut off from assisting each other as we currently do. Areas directly east of Diamond Lake to the CN tracks east, north to Allanson Road will lose the response of the second due fire apparatus from Countryside to Mundelein for fire calls and delay initial fire attack and properly staffed back-up companies. Additional fire companies can be requested from neighboring communities, again with the knowledge of significant delays in initial response. We are bound by the federal OSHA “two-in, two-out” standard (29 CFR 1910.134) for interior firefighting and the delay of second arriving units will clearly affect initial fire attack in all circumstances, jeopardizing lives and property.
 - There is a potential with the slowing of trains that both the crossing and 60/83 – Diamond Lake Road and Allanson could be blocked at the same time. That can totally cut off service to a myriad of areas and quickly strangle our response capabilities.

Solution:

- In reviewing our structured responses by industry standards we would propose that the rail industry be responsible for staffing one additional fire apparatus in a jump company format coupled with one ambulance at Mundelein Station #2 in an effort to support this rail proposal. This would translate to three (3) personnel per shift for a total of nine (9) firefighter/paramedics in total. This clearly would support some of the deficiencies identified with the proposed amount of rail traffic loading in the area.

In addition, it would be the requirement of the rail line to provide training for the certification of six (6) additional hazardous materials technicians for assignment to Station #2 (two per shift). This would provide for the immediate response and early mitigation strategies for the anticipated additional accident projections for the grade crossings in the area.

The general area that receives the most in vulnerability is the area west of the CN line to Diamond Lake and south to Route 60/83. Because of the grade disruptions, this area can only be supported through “internal” resources for the area we do not have at this time. This would also provide additional support in volume, not necessarily in time to the areas just east of the CN line identified in the first section of this memorandum. There is no reasonable resource potential for that area in increased staffing and apparatus.

Currently only one fire or EMS vehicle responds on initial alarms from Station #2 to its service area, so the increase of another fire or EMS vehicle provides “options” to the response by going in different directions with the hopes of avoiding grade crossing disruptions. Time again is not improved, it simply provides greater volume of resources to the area on initial responses.

This proposal is thoroughly supported with the some of the statistics we have been provided as follows:

- The proposed train traffic will create a fourfold increase in exposure
- Absent grade separation strategies, we are faced with increased response times with coupling affects of high loading of back up traffic in the areas of the grade crossings and beyond
- IL 60/83 crossing associated with Diamond Lake Road is projected as one of the top ten highest exposures from 116,500 to 466,600 units
- There is an identifiable increase in hazardous materials traffic creating increased exposures in highly populated areas warranting faster responses to incidents

As can be seen, there are serious concerns and life safety factors that are critical to the citizens and emergency service providers in the area.

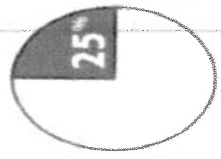
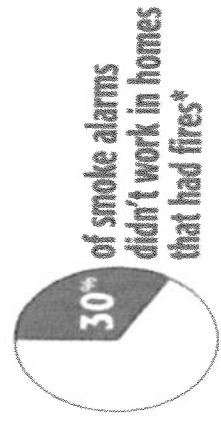
Respectfully,



T.E. Sashko
Fire Chief

cc: John Lobaito, Village Administrator
Michael Flynn, Assistant Village Administrator
Chief Ray Rose, Mundelein Police Department
Chief Jeff Steingart, Countryside Fire Protection District
Attachments (1) – fire growth chart
(1) – map of area of concern

PRODUCTS OF COMBUSTION



Without fire sprinklers, odds of escaping decrease significantly

SMOKE ALARM ACTIVATES

RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER ACTIVATES

COMMERCIAL SPRINKLER ACTIVATES

FIREFIGHTERS OPEN HOSE NOZZLES

FIRE GROWTH UNRESTRICTED

FIRE GROWTH RESTRICTED

FIRE GROWTH RESTRICTED

DETECTION OF FIRE

REPORT OF FIRE

DISPATCH

RESPONSE TO FIRE

SETUP

FIGHTING FIRE

TIME VARIES

TIME DIRECTLY MANAGEABLE BY FIRE DEPARTMENT





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