

VILLAGE OF SCHAUMBURG

PROGRESS THROUGH THOUGHTFUL PLANNING

Al Larson
Village President

January 28, 2008

Phyllis Johnson-Ball
Environmental Filing
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

The Village of Schaumburg has identified the following concerns and requests the Surface Transportation Board (STB) include these items in the Environmental Impact Statement Scope for the Canadian National (CN) acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern (EJ&E) railroad. The Village has a long history of supporting the 55 mile Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR Line), proposed by Metra as a regional commuter rail improvement and would like to help ensure the acquisition by CN does not preclude this or other future transit improvements for the region.

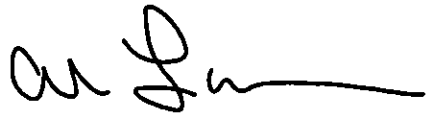
The proposed STAR Line is planned to utilize the EJ&E corridor, providing the first national suburban to suburban commuter rail line. The first phase of the project, currently in the FTA Alternatives Analysis phase is to use the EJ&E corridor from I-90 south to Joliet, connecting with a section that will use the I-90 right of way connecting to O'Hare Airport to the east. There are also future concepts to provide a complete circumferential transit service around the Chicago metropolitan area, using the entire EJ&E tracks from Waukegan to Indiana. The Village of Schaumburg has been and continues to be an adamant proponent of this rail service. It is critical to provide alternate public transportation choices to maintain mobility into the future. The Village is concerned over CN's projected effect on the proposed STAR Line due to the increase of use of the EJ & E portion of this line by freight traffic and submits the following comments regarding the impacts of the acquisition to be studied during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

1. The ability to share track or build additional track for commuter transit within the EJ&E right of way must be preserved.
2. The operation of additional freight traffic on the EJ&E corridor will affect the ability of Metra to implement commuter rail operations when the STAR Line is established.
3. Future congestion at the regional level will increase if the STAR Line is not implemented.
4. A concern on the width of the EJ&E right of way to accommodate the necessary number of tracks for commuter and freight traffic.
5. The CN's long term plans for rail operations beyond the three to five year phase-in period for the EJ&E need to be more completely defined and assessed in the EIS. The Village recommends a longer time horizon for the environmental analysis, such as 20 years which is the typical NEPA standard. If this horizon year is not possible, the analysis should be tied to threshold levels of rail traffic that will create impacts that need to be mitigated.
6. The impacts due to both physical changes, such as double tracking and new rail connections at intersections with other lines, and operational changes associated with the increase in rail traffic need to be fully evaluated and effectively mitigated.
7. The CN states they will schedule operations with consideration given to existing commuter rail traffic. The effect would be to concentrate more freight traffic during the times when commuter rail operations are not in conflict on routes crossed by the EJ&E. In turn, this could result in more freight traffic at night when noise, vibration, and quality of life issues are more sensitive.
8. The EIS should identify funding opportunities to implement the recommended mitigations.

The Village of Schaumburg thanks the Surface Transportation Board for the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of the EIS and looks forward to reviewing the Draft EIS and making comments at that time as well as throughout the balance of the EIS. If Village staff can be of assistance by providing additional information on the STAR Line project, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to receipt of the Draft EIS and the opportunity to participate throughout the STB process.

Sincerely,

VILLAGE OF SCHAUMBURG

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Larson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Al Larson
Village President

cc: Village Board
Village Manager
Director of Transportation