

Nancy A. Hamer
1723 N. Second St.
Mankato, MN 56001
January 19, 2001

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Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



Attn: Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Environment Filing

Re: DM&E Expansion Project - Mankato, MN
Impacts to Historical and Cultural Sites in Mankato/North Mankato
Dear Ms. Rutson:

I am writing to support the position of the DEIS that Alt. M-3 (in-city) route is not the environmentally preferred route for the Mankato area. My position is that it should never become the preferred route under any circumstances. Please refer to DEIS Executive Summary, ES-52, first paragraph. Please note that it does not follow that the existence of a negotiated agreement between any parties would have any bearing on the environmental impacts which already have been established in re the M-3 route and which already have led to the proper conclusion in the DEIS that Alt. M-3 is not the environmentally preferred route.

I am also writing at this time to provide information within the public comment period in re adverse effects to Historical and Cultural aspects of the Alt. M-3 (in-city) route, in the event you should find it necessary to revisit that route. I have previously submitted part of this material on July 14, 1999.

I believe it is important to again emphasize that Mankato's location in the Minnesota River Valley is unique. The great Minnesota River flows from the northwest and makes a dramatic ninety-degree turn at the point where Mankato was eventually founded. When the river turned northeast it cut through limestone, leaving on the Mankato side of the river a corridor approximately six to eight blocks wide between the river and the limestone bluff. This is where the City of Mankato developed. The City of North Mankato developed directly across the river in a similarly narrow corridor.

This corridor, including both the Mankato and the North Mankato sides, is like a tunnel with no roof on it. According to a consulting engineer, the sound waves from frequent train horns, wayside noise, and squealing wheels on the sharp curve could bounce off the bluffs causing both the original noise and an echo to reverberate. This would result in steady, uninterrupted train noise as the sound reverberated off the sides of the so-called "tunnel."

In the entire DEIS, particularly Vol. II, no mention is made of the City of North Mankato. This is a significant omission. I request that a new DEIS should include North Mankato, if the M-3 route were to be considered.

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The DEIS Appendix D, p. D-5, states that the projected area of "significant project impacts" would extend 2,230 feet "from each side of the rail line." The distance of 2,230 feet is almost half a mile. Range Street in downtown North Mankato, directly across the Mulberry Street bridge from downtown Mankato, is only .3 (3/10) mile from the tracks. Therefore, it would seem that certainly North Mankato must be considered if the M-3 route were to be used.

Residents of both Mankato and North Mankato share the same situation: Whether they are in the floodplain or at the top or near the top of the bluff, the train noise currently can be heard loud and clear a mile or more away from the tracks, because of the tunnel effect.

All of the Registered Historic Sites in Mankato and North Mankato are in this narrow corridor. Many other locations important to our culture are also in the valley corridor or at the top or near the top of the limestone bluffs on either side of the river.

I was astonished to read in Section 3.2.15, p. 3.2-109, that "no impacts to historic or cultural resources are anticipated during operation of the project."

In Section 3.3.1.13, p. 3.3-36, Alt. M-3, the narrow definition of Cultural Resources includes only archeological sites and railroad structures in or adjacent to the right of way. This definition is inadequate and insensitive to the reality of the situation. I request that the scope be expanded to include the impact on cultural resources which are important to people in their daily lives. These should include the 17 sites (all in the valley) in Mankato and North Mankato which are on the National Register of Historic Sites. Additional important cultural centers in the valley or at the top edge of the bluffs include the following: five major public parks; Reconciliation Park, in memory of the execution of 38 Sioux Indians at that location in 1862; two city government centers; civic center; Blue Earth County Courthouse; two public libraries; YMCA; YWCA; 24 schools; three centers of higher education; and no fewer than 27 churches. See attached lists for more detail.

An alternative route must be found in order to preserve this heritage and to sustain our culture in an atmosphere free from noise and air pollution, for the education and enjoyment of ourselves and of future generations, and for the maintenance of our quality of life. I believe the use of Alt. M-3 (in-city) route would do unmitigable damage to our culture and quality of life. Please do not ever approve the Alt. M-3 route under any circumstances. I urge you to withdraw the M-3 route from any further consideration.

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Attached find:

- (1) List of Mankato Historic Sites - National Register of Historic Sites;
- (2) List of Mankato Cultural Sites
- (3) On one page:
List of North Mankato Historic Sites - National Register of Historic Sites;
and
List of North Mankato Cultural Sites

All sites in the above lists are in the valley corridor (Alt. M-3, in-city route), or at the top edge of the bluff (School Sisters of Notre Dame; MN State U.; and Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary). Also, please refer to large hand-colored map of Mankato which I submitted to the STB, Attn. Elaine K. Kaiser, on July 14, 1999. I do not have a duplicate map to send at this time.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nancy A. Hamer
1723 N. Second St.
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone: (507) 387 2524

Pages 4, 5, and 6 are the above-listed attachments.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LOCATIONS IN MANKATO THAT WILL BE ADVERSELY IMPACTED
BY THE PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN TRAIN TRAFFIC.

All of these Mankato Historic Sites are in the Minnesota River Valley.

HISTORIC SITES - National Register of Historic Sites
(from Minnesota Checklist, State Historical Society,
provided by Blue Earth County Historical Society)

<u>Site</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Present Use</u>	<u>Approx. Distance from RR Tracks</u>
1. Charles Chapman House	418 McCauley St.	Private res.	2 blocks
2. William Irving House	320 Park Lane	Realtor office	1 block
3. Mankato Union Depot	S. Riverfront & Main	Ch. of Commerce Other offices	Immediately next to RR
4. Jean R. Brandrup House	704 Byron	Private res.	7-8 blocks
5. Adolph O. Eberhardt House	228 Pleasant	Private res.	7 blocks
6. Lincoln Park Residential Historic District	Byron, Second & Parsons between Shaubut St. West and Liberty St. East	Private res. Many restored	6 blocks
7. Loren Cray House (Victorian Mansion)	603 S. Second St.	YWCA Latch-Key/Preschool	5 blocks
8. Rensler O. Hubbard House (Victorian Mansion)	606 S. Broad	Blue Earth Co. Hist. Society - public tours	5 blocks
9. United States Post Office (Native limestone)	401 S. Second St.	Post Office	3-4 blocks
10. First National Bank Building	Civic Center Plaza	Part of Civic Center	1 block
11. Blue Earth County Courthouse (Native limestone)	204 S. Fifth St.	Court House Prominent landmark	5 blocks
12. First Presbyterian Church	220 E. Hickory	Presby. Church Prominent landmark	5 blocks
13. Old Main, Mankato State Teachers College	301 S. Fifth	Residence apts. Prominent landmark	5 blocks
14. Carnegie Library	120 S. Broad St.	Art center	4 blocks
15. North Front Street Commercial Historic District	301-415 N. Riverfront	Commercial Many restored	1 block

Mankato has no other registered historic sites outside of this area.

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Submitted by Nancy Hamer, 1723 N. Second St., Mankato, MN

CULTURAL SITES in Minnesota River corridor and at top of bluff.*

<u>Site</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Present Use</u>	<u>Approx. Distance from RR Tracks</u>
1. Revitalized Downtown Completed 1998; new streets; brick side- walks; Victorian-style lampposts; flower planters	Approx. Cherry St. to Main; Broad St. to Riverfront	Commercial Banking Offices Government	0-4 blocks
2. Intergovernmental Center (Completed 1998)	Civic Center Plaza	Government	1 block
3. Civic Center	Civic Center Plaza	Events/Entertainment	Across street
4. Land of Memories Park Named by Dakota Sioux; used for annual Powwow	At Bird Ave. Confluence of MN R. and Blue Earth R.	Park Campground	Immediately adjacent; Only land access i by crossing tracks
5. Reconciliation Park Dedicated 1997 in reconciliation of hanging of 38 Dakota Sioux Indians on December 26, 1862.	Riverfront & Main	Park	Immediately adjacent
6. Library	Riverfront & Main	Public lib.	Across street
7. Sibley Park Great lawn; summer concerts; zoo; baseball; rose garden	Park Lane/Mound Ave. Confluence of MN R. and Blue Earth R.	Oldest park	Adjacent
8. Tourtellotte Park and Pool Olympic outdoor pool; restored WPA Bathhouse	Broad & Mable	Second oldest park	6 blocks
9. Bike trail	Along riverfront	Biking/walking	Adjacent
10. Many schools; for ex. Mankato West Sr. High Fitzgerald Middle School	1351 Riverfront Dr. 110 N. Fifth St.	Public Parochial	3 blocks 6 blocks
11. Many churches; for ex. Sts. Peter and Paul's First Presbyterian	105 N. Fifth St. 220 E. Hickory	Church Prominent Landmark Church Prominent Landmark	6 blocks 5 blocks
12. School Sisters of Notre Dame	Good Counsel Dr.	Education center Religious center Cultural center Retirement home	8 blocks
13. Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary	734 Marsh St.	Education center Religious center Cultural center	6 blocks
14. Minnesota State Univ., Mankato	Ellis Ave.	Education center Cultural center	1/2 - 3/4 mi Point to pnt
15. Maud Hart Lovelace Locale for <u>Betsy-Tacy</u> books	E. Lewis & Center Lincoln Park Area	Local history Children's lit.	Approx 9 blk Point to pnt
16. Blue Earth County Hist. Soc.	415 E. Cherry St.	Museum/Archives	6-7 blocks
17. Summit Center	518 S. Fifth St.	Sr. Citizens Ctr.	6-7 blocks
18. YMCA (under expansion)	1401 S. Riverfront Dr.	Rec/fitness/ swimming lessons	2 blocks

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* Not an official list; not all-inclusive.

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HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LOCATIONS IN NORTH MANKATO THAT WILL BE ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN TRAIN TRAFFIC IF ALT. M-3 WERE USED.
All of these locations are in the Minnesota River Valley.

HISTORIC SITES, NORTH MANKATO, MN - National Register of Historic Sites

<u>Site</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Present Use</u>	<u>Approx. Distance from RR Tracks</u>
1. William E. Stewart House	733 Range St., NM	Private res.	6 blocks
2. North Mankato School	442 Belgrade Ave., NM	Apartments	8 blocks

CULTURAL LOCATIONS, NORTH MANKATO - not an official list; not all-inclusive

1. North Mankato Downtown	Range St. to Lake St.	Commercial Banking Offices Residential	3 blocks
2. North Mankato Government Center	1001 Belgrade Ave.	Government	10 blocks
3. North Mankato Public Library (new; dedicated 2000)	1001 Belgrade Ave.	Library	10 blocks
4. Spring Lake Park	Between Lakeview Ave. and Webster Ave.	Picnic Playground Swimming pool Sliding	9 blocks
5. Wheeler Park	Between Garfield Ave. and Page Ave.	Playground Picnic	5 blocks
6. Many churches; <u>for ex.</u> Belgrade Ave. United Methodist	325 Sherman	Church	9 blocks
Holy Rosary Catholic	546 Grant Ave.	Church	7 blocks
7. Many schools; <u>for ex.</u> Monroe Elementary	441 Monroe Ave.	Public	10 blocks
Holy Rosary School	546 Grant Ave.	Parochial	7 blocks
Headstart	407 Belgrade Ave.	Preschool	4 blocks

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