

4.6 Socioeconomics

The Proposed Action and construction of the new rail connections could affect socioeconomic conditions in the Study Area. Under the Proposed Action, CN would acquire control of the EJ&E rail line. Because the location of the EJ&E rail line would not change and the line would continue to be used for railroad purposes, the change in ownership itself would have no socioeconomic effect and is not addressed further in this analysis. However, CN is proposing the acquisition because the company believes it can expand its markets and improve operational efficiencies. As a result of the acquisition, the Applicants would be able to reduce employment, change rail line operations, redistribute rail traffic between lines, and invest resources for double track and connection construction. Potential quality of life and economic effects have been a major issue raised by the public, and many residents and business owners have raised concerns about how the Proposed Action might affect them. These quality of life changes have the potential to affect social conditions and the regional and local economies and are addressed in this analysis.

The Applicants propose to spend \$100 million on double track and new rail connections on the EJ&E rail line (Applicants 2007a). As the potential new owner of the EJ&E rail line, CN proposes to change rail operations to increase traffic on the EJ&E rail line around Chicago and to reduce traffic on the five CN subdivisions that enter Chicago. The Proposed Action and construction of the new rail connections could increase CN's gross revenue by \$14.86 million annually (Applicants 2007a). From a broad societal perspective, the Proposed Action would improve the efficiency of rail operations and reduce the cost of shipping goods through the Chicago metropolitan area. Benefits include improved rail efficiency and construction employment generated while the double track and connections are being constructed. However, other adverse effects—such as property acquisition, increased delays to vehicles and pedestrians at rail crossings, and changes in noise levels—would potentially affect local residents, workers, businesses, and property owners who live or work along the EJ&E rail line.

The owners of Gary/Chicago International Airport plan to improve and expand the airport; their plans call for the existing segment of EJ&E rail line north of the airport to be relocated to allow implementation of this plan. A Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding among Gary/Chicago International Airport, CSX, NS, and EJ&E provides for the expansion of the airport's principal runway. While further definitive agreements will be required, the memorandum sets forth the core understanding of the parties on the elements of the relocation plan and underlying obligations that will enable the airport to proceed with its expansion plans, while protecting and improving rail operation in northwest Indiana. Because none of the proposed connections or double track would be constructed near the airport, the construction associated with the Proposed Action would not affect the airport or its proposed expansion. Relocating the rail line and expanding the airport are not part of the Proposed Action, and the socioeconomic effects have been addressed in *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Master Plan Development Including Runway Safety Area Enhancement/Extension of Runway 12-30 and Other Improvements, Gary/Chicago International Airport, Gary, Indiana* (FAA 2004).

The following is a summary of the findings presented in this section:

- SEA analyzed the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and associated construction on employment, labor revenue, tax revenues, property values, community cohesion, travel patterns, and community facilities and public services.
- The Proposed Action would likely reduce total employment (direct, indirect, and induced) in the Chicago area by 280 jobs, but this would not have a noticeable effect on jobs or employment in the Chicago metropolitan area with its employment base of nearly

3 million jobs. [Section 4.6.3.1] Because the rail transportation sector requires relatively little labor to produce \$1 million of output and each job produces a great deal of business output and value added to the region, the loss of jobs would reduce the gross regional product by \$32.72 million in total. While a large number, this loss would have a minor adverse effect on the economy of the Chicago metropolitan area. The Proposed Action would result in a decrease in employment of less than 1/10th of 1 percent in the Chicago metropolitan area, with no measurable effect on unemployment rates. [Section 4.6.3.2] Construction activities associated with the Proposed Action would generate 708 total jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) during the two-year construction period, and would not vary among the construction alternatives. Construction activities would add a total of \$37.49 million in labor income and \$50 million per year to the local economy for two years. Project construction would temporarily increase employment by less than 1/10th of 1 percent. [Section 4.6.4.2]

- CN expects to increase revenue by \$14.86 million annually due to the Proposed Action. This is a negligible increase in CN's annual revenue.
- Due to job losses, the Proposed Action would result in a reduction in annual local, state, and federal government tax revenues, but the fiscal impacts for communities in the Chicago metropolitan area would be minor. [Section 4.6.3.3] For associated land acquisition for the construction of connections and double track, only the acquisition of developed property in Joliet for the Original Proposal and the Matteson Alternative – Northeast and Southwest Quadrants would result in small reductions in local property taxes; the land acquisition requirements for the other construction alternatives would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates. [Section 4.6.4.3]
- SEA examined the potential for the Proposed Action to affect property values. Commenters have suggested that proximity to the EJ&E line with increased freight rail traffic would have a negative impact on residential property values due to nuisance effects such as noise and vibration. Based on its analysis, SEA concluded that, while overall property values within the study area generally would not be affected, the Proposed Action could result in adverse effects to some individual property owners adjacent to or near the EJ&E rail line and beneficial impacts to property owners adjacent to the CN subdivisions. Although property values are affected by a myriad of factors, SEA found that some homes within 250 feet of a rail line with 20 additional trains could experience a decrease in property value. [Section 4.6.3.3] With respect to the construction of connections between the EJ&E rail line and CN subdivisions, the Munger Alternative – UP Connection and the Matteson Connection and alternatives would result in rail lines being closer to residences, potentially resulting in a decrease in property values as discussed above. [Section 4.6.4.3]
- Because the EJ&E line has been in operation since 1891 and the proposed rail changes would not close any existing roads or eliminate any highway/rail at-grade crossings, any impacts to community cohesion and interaction as a result of changes in rail operations along the EJ&E rail line are expected to be minor or moderate. [Section 4.6.3.5] Similarly, the proposed physical changes would not close any existing roads or eliminate any highway/rail at-grade crossings, so there would be no direct loss of access to communities or public services. [Section 4.6.4.5]
- Due to the increased frequency of trains, the Proposed Action would adversely affect travel patterns, travel times, and accessibility in many communities. The traffic impact analysis (discussed in Section 4.3.2) indicates traffic delays would increase at the highway/rail at-grade crossings by up to 5.3 minutes per delayed vehicle on EJ&E rail

line segments experiencing an increase in freight traffic; delays would decrease on the CN rail line segments. The additional wait time would result in the consumption of approximately 84,000 gallons of gasoline and 639,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year by 2015 (discussed in Section 4.8.3.3). [Section 4.6.3.6] Construction activities would introduce temporary effects such as delays or slower speeds through the construction areas. [Section 4.6.4.6]

- The level of the impact of increased freight rail traffic on the EJ&E rail line on parks in the study area would depend on their proximity to the tracks. There are 22 parks in Illinois and 9 parks in Indiana that are located within 500 feet of the EJ&E rail line; these areas would experience increased levels of noise and vibration. In addition, there are 25 schools in Illinois and 6 schools in Indiana located within 0.25 mile of a highway/rail at-grade crossing. Students, parents, and teachers associated with the school would potentially experience increased traffic delays up to 5.3 minutes. [Section 4.6.3.6] There are several schools and parks within a 1.5 mile radius of the proposed connections which could be adversely affected by temporary construction activities. [Section 4.6.4.7]

4.6.1 Methodology

A discussion of socioeconomics in an environmental document is intended to provide the decision makers with information about how a project might affect people living or working in the vicinity of the project. Issues of potential concern include:

- Population and demographics
- Economic effects
- Fiscal effects
- Housing
- Communities and community cohesion
- Travel patterns
- Community facilities and public services

SEA assessed potential economic issues (population and demographics, economic and fiscal effects, and housing) by reviewing published data describing the strength of the local economy. This information established the basis for the affected environment discussion in Section 3.6. SEA estimated the project's expected impact on the economy, both beneficial and adverse, by translating the cost of construction into employment and income using the IMPLAN[®] input-output model. The IMPLAN[®] model is discussed in Section 3.6, Socioeconomics. Input-output models are accounting systems that describe commodity flows from producers to intermediate and final consumers. The total industry purchases of commodities, services, employment compensation, value added, and imports are equal to the value of the commodities produced. The estimates of economic effects may appear high, but these numbers are consistent with the economic effects of rail transportation. Because of the large amount of capital invested in the rail transportation sector and the heavy loads that trains can carry, the rail transportation sector requires relatively little labor to produce a million dollars of output, and each job produces a great deal of business output and value added to the region.

Construction activities related to the Proposed Action and changes in rail operations could potentially affect the housing supply. SEA assessed this issue by comparing project employment effects with housing availability in the Study Area.

SEA based its analysis on a visual inspection of the areas where construction is proposed (refer to Figures 2.4-1 through 2.4-13 in Chapter 2), overlaid on county assessor parcel maps. A potentially affected property is listed as a full acquisition if any of the following criteria would be met:

- A structure on the property would be acquired

- More than 50 percent of the property would be acquired
- After undeveloped property is acquired, the remainder would not be large enough to meet applicable zoning code size requirements
- All access to the property would be denied

The property acquisition estimate in this Draft EIS, shown below in Table 4.6-7, is only for purposes of evaluating environmental effects and comparing alternatives. Property acquisition would not be finalized until the Applicants complete engineering design for each of the six new connections they propose and conduct negotiations with affected property owners.

Social issues are addressed in environmental documents by focusing on disruptions of existing communities. SEA estimates the potential for disruption to existing communities by examining the location of the Proposed Action and nearby residences to see if the Proposed Action or related construction activity would divide any communities, isolate any areas, or negatively affect access to or from the adjacent communities. For example, social effects would occur if a project divided a church parish, a self-identified community, or made it difficult or impossible to use local businesses.

4.6.2 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, train traffic would not shift from the CN subdivisions to the EJ&E rail line, and CN would not reduce EJ&E's workforce. Therefore, the elements of this socioeconomic analysis—population and demographics, economic and fiscal conditions, housing, community cohesion, and travel patterns—would change only according to current local, regional, and national dynamics brought about by other social and economic forces in the region.

4.6.3 Proposed Action

4.6.3.1 *Proposed Changes in Rail Line Operations*

Two aspects of the Proposed Action would potentially affect socioeconomics in the Study Area. As discussed in detail in Section 2.2.1.1 in Chapter 2, the Applicants would shift train traffic off of five CN subdivisions and increase train traffic along the EJ&E rail line. The Applicants estimate that they would reduce staff levels by 114 EJ&E office and general administration jobs (Applicants 2007a). Other EJ&E rail line jobs would continue, although some jobs and work sites would be relocated within the Chicago metropolitan area.

Population and Demographics

The Applicants propose to reduce EJ&E staff levels by 114 office and administrative jobs. The IMPLAN[®] analysis of this reduction in employment indicates that these staff reductions would reduce total employment (direct, indirect, and induced) in the Chicago metropolitan area by 280 jobs. Because of the robust employment base of nearly 3 million jobs in the Chicago metropolitan area, the elimination of 114 jobs would not have a noticeable effect on jobs or demographics. These effects are outlined in Table 4.6-1, below.

Table 4.6-1. Estimated Economic Effects from Changes in Rail Operations				
	Employment	Business Output (millions)	Value Added (millions)	Labor Income (millions)
Direct Effects	(114)	(\$32.00)	(\$19.06)	(\$10.90)
Total Effects	(280)	(\$56.78)	(\$32.72)	(\$19.25)

Economic Effects

Business Output and Value Added. The Proposed Action would result in reduced staff levels of current EJ&E office and administrative jobs. An evaluation of the loss of these jobs using input-output analysis based on the IMPLAN® model estimated a direct annual loss of \$32 million in business output (sales) within the economies of Illinois and Indiana and a total annual loss (direct, indirect, and induced¹) of \$56.78 million in sales. The loss of jobs would reduce the gross regional product directly by \$19.06 million and by \$32.72 million in total.² Given the size of the economies of Illinois and Indiana (manufacturing companies in Illinois generated a gross output of \$77.6 billion in 2005), this loss would have a minor adverse effect on the economy or economic climate of the Chicago metropolitan area (IDCEO 2007). This loss of business output would, however, be permanent. The results of the IMPLAN® analysis are included in Appendix H.

SEA has received comments from owners of local trucking firms expressing concern that the Proposed Action would mean a loss of business as manufacturers ship products by rail instead of truck. CN estimates that the Proposed Action would enable the company to increase its revenue by \$14.86 million per year. However, the majority of these gains would be derived from increased efficiency and additional business from existing rail customers. Therefore, there would be no effect from the Proposed Action on local trucking firms.

Labor Income.³ An IMPLAN® analysis of job effects of the Proposed Action found that the loss of office and administration workers would reduce annual income in the Chicago metropolitan area by an estimated \$10.9 million. This estimate includes direct wages and total benefits, as well as proprietor income effects. The total loss of income to Illinois and Indiana as a result of the Proposed Action would be \$19.25 million per year.

Unemployment Rates. The Proposed Action would directly reduce permanent employment in the railroad industry by 114 positions and by a total of 280 jobs in Illinois and Indiana. As shown in Table 3.6-1 in Chapter 3, 4.4 million jobs, including 770,000 office and administrative jobs, are currently located in the Chicago metropolitan area. The Proposed Action would result in a decrease in permanent employment of less than one-tenth of one percent in the Chicago metropolitan area and would have no measurable effect on unemployment rates. The loss of jobs would be minor and would not warrant mitigation.

Fiscal Effects

Property and Other Taxes. The Proposed Action would not affect property taxes because EJ&E railroad property would change from EJ&E to CN ownership and remain in use as a railroad. Therefore, the property type would not change.

An IMPLAN® analysis of the effects on tax revenues (other than property taxes) under the Proposed Action indicates that the acquisition-related job losses would permanently reduce annual local and state government tax revenues by \$2.6 million and annual federal tax revenues by \$5.11 million.

¹ Direct impacts refer to those financial transactions occurring as the result of direct spending. Indirect economic impacts refer to off-site economic activities that are directly attributable to the project. Induced impacts represent the increase in business output over and above the direct and indirect impacts, generated by successive rounds of spending (often referred to as re-spending) in the economy.

² Because of the large amount of capital invested in the rail transportation sector and the heavy loads that trains can carry, the rail transportation sector requires relatively little labor to produce a million dollars of output and each job produces a great deal of business output and value added to the region. Therefore, the estimates of economic effects may appear high, but these numbers are consistent with the economic effects of rail transportation.

³ Labor income includes employee compensation (wage and salary payments as well as health and life insurance, retirement payments and any other non-cash compensation) and proprietor income (the income earned by the owners of a private, non-incorporated business, i.e., the self-employed).

Based on the IMPLAN analysis, SEA projects that the Proposed Action would reduce business and personal taxes going to Federal, state, and local governments by \$107,000 directly, and by a total of \$313,200 with indirect and induced effects included. Indirect and induced effects are addressed in Section 3.5, Socioeconomics.

Accordingly, fiscal impacts from the Proposed Action for communities in the Chicago metropolitan area are expected to be minor and would not require mitigation.

Property Values. Homes and businesses are often the biggest investment people have and the primary source of their wealth. Anything that might adversely affect the value of these investments is a serious concern for people and often times the subject of strong or emotional reactions. During the scoping process, residents, business owners, and other property owners adjacent to the EJ&E rail line frequently expressed concern about the potential for the project to adversely affect their property values, as well as their quality of life. The following analysis summarizes the existing, published research on the question of how freight rail might affect property values and objectively discusses the potential for the project to adversely affect the value of nearby or adjacent properties. Because there are few studies on the subject, SEA expanded the research review to include studies of passenger rail that separated the effects of the passenger rail line from the benefits on property values of being near a passenger rail station.

Because the Proposed Action does not include development of a new rail corridor and would lead only to the construction of short segments of new track, no new residential or commercial areas would be exposed to potentially adverse air, noise, or vibration effects that could reduce property values. The environmental analysis, therefore, focused on the potential for increased freight rail traffic to adversely affect property values as a result of traffic, noise, or vibration effects. In assessing the effects of the Proposed Action on property values, SEA's analysis focused on freight rail and did not address potential changes to property values arising from commuter or passenger rail traffic. Commuter rail is often perceived as a valuable residential amenity for properties located within one-half or one-mile of a station; freight rail lines do not provide a similar public transportation benefit to nearby residents, although they can benefit local rail customers.

A recent study by Simons and El Jaouhari examined the effects of increased freight rail traffic on property values of nearby residences in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and found a statistically significant⁴ adverse effect for smaller homes (see Table 4.6-2 below) (Simons and El Jaouhari 2004). In this study, property values for small homes near an existing rail line went down by 4.69 percent to 7.16 percent compared with similar homes not located adjacent to the rail line. However, the study did not find a statistically significant decrease in property values for medium-sized or large homes, except for medium-sized residences between 251 and 500 feet from the existing line. It is unclear if residential property values in the vicinity of the EJ&E rail line are depressed due to their proximity to the EJ&E rail line. However, the EJ&E rail line predates most of the adjacent residential or commercial developments; therefore, properties are assumed to already reflect any reduced property values.

⁴ In statistics, a result is statistically significant if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. A "statistically significant difference" means that there is statistical evidence that there is a difference and does not mean that the difference is important. If there is no "statistically significant difference," one cannot say that the variance is not the result of chance. In this case, significance is a statistical term and does not mean significant as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Table 4.6-2. Property Value Effects from Proximity to an Existing Rail Line

House Size	Change in Property Value by Distance from Rail Line (%)		
	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.
Small (<1,250 sq. ft.)	(5.31)	(4.69)	(7.16)
Medium (1,251-1,700 sq. ft.)	n/a ^a	(4.80)	n/a ^a
Large (>1,700 sq. ft.)	n/a ^a	n/a ^a	n/a ^a

Source: Simons and El Jaouhari, 2004.

Notes:

^a Not statistically significant.

The Simons and El Jaouhari study also evaluated potential property value effects of increased freight traffic on the value of nearby residential properties. The results were mixed. As shown in Table 4.6-3, below, according to the Simons and El Jaouhari study, property values for small and medium-sized houses were adversely affected for each of three bands (less than 250 feet, between 251 and 500 feet, and between 501 and 750 feet) within 750 feet from the rail line, but the values for large homes were affected only if the homes were within 250 feet of the rail line. The adverse effect on property values resulting from one additional train per day was estimated to be up to 0.27 percent for a medium-sized house within 250 feet of the rail line. Extrapolating this effect to an increase of 20 trains per day found a maximum adverse effect of 5.35 percent for medium-sized homes within 250 feet of the rail line. Properties beyond 250 feet could be expected to experience no more than a 2.32 percent decrease in values (Simons and El Jaouhari 2004).⁵

Table 4.6-3. Property Value Effects from Increased Train Traffic on a Nearby Existing Rail Line

House Size	Change in Property Value by Distance from Rail Line (%)								
	1 Additional Train			10 Additional Trains			20 Additional Trains		
	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.
Small (<1,250 sq. ft.)	(0.24)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(2.40)	(1.05)	(1.16)	(4.79)	(2.10)	(2.32)
Medium (1,251-1,700 sq. ft.)	(0.27)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(2.68)	(1.09)	(0.74)	(5.35)	(2.19)	(1.47)
Large (>1,700 sq. ft.)	(0.19)	n/a ^a	n/a ^a	(1.91)	n/a ^a	n/a ^a	3.81	n/a ^a	n/a ^a

Source: Derived from Simons and El Jaouhari, 2004.⁶

Notes:

^a Not statistically significant.

Two other factors noted in the Simons and El Jaouhari study should be considered in assessing the potential effects of the Proposed Action on property values. First, the study evaluated the effect of freight railroad tracks and increased train traffic on property values during 1996 and 1999. The existing conditions in 1996 reflected property values before the increase in train traffic that resulted from the Conrail merger. In 1999, an increase in train traffic resulted from the highly publicized Conrail merger. Simons and El Jaouhari suggest that the publicity associated with the increased freight train traffic due to the Conrail merger “did have a substantial effect” on property values. The

⁵ Simons, Robert A, Ph.D. and Abdellaziz El Jaouhari, Ph.D. 2004. “The Effect of Freight Railroad Tracks and Train Activity on Residential Property Values”. The Appraisal Journal, Summer 2004, Volume LXXII Number 3.

⁶ Simons, Robert A, Ph.D. and Abdellaziz El Jaouhari, Ph.D. 2004. “The Effect of Freight Railroad Tracks and Train Activity on Residential Property Values”. The Appraisal Journal, Summer 2004, Volume LXXII Number 3.

research did not study whether property values would rebound over time, however. Rather, it assumed that the new operational scheme would become the permanent condition. Second, the study showed that the adjacent houses' average age was 60 years. The study did not address if a newer neighborhood would experience different changes to property values if additional freight trains were to be routed on an existing nearby rail line (Simons and El Jaouhari 2004).⁷

Some observers have found that freight rail lines and freight train volumes have less effects in urban settings. For example, developers in Milwaukee have found that "people are attracted to housing by railroads if it is near places like the 3rd Ward [Milwaukee], with its trendy shops, theaters and restaurants" (Fontelera 2003).⁸ Even in cases where freight rail lines run on two sides of a building, developers in Milwaukee did not encounter lower rents or increased difficulty in finding tenants. The research concludes that proximity to services, amenities, and unique or unusual spaces attracts urban residents and that proximity of rail lines does not deter those residents (Fontelera 2003).⁹

While the literature addressing potential effects of freight rail on nearby property values is limited, there are additional studies that address the potential effects of passenger rail on property values. Where it is possible to separate the amenity values of passenger rail stations from the potential nuisance effects of trains and rail lines (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2001),¹⁰ these studies provide additional information about the potential effects of additional freight rail traffic on property values. Amenities associated with passenger rail stations and service include greater access to public transportation resources, increased mobility, and a greater choice of transportation methods. Rail lines and train traffic may generate nuisance effects or negative environmental externalities from noise, vibration, or by periodically blocking roads and sidewalks. A study of the potential property effects of passenger rail stations found that property values may increase near passenger rail stations, but "the negative environmental externalities, on the other hand, can have an effect on properties along the railway" (Debrezion 2003).¹¹

Parsons Brinckerhoff assessed existing studies that addressed the potential property effects of passenger rail service on adjacent property values and stated:

It has been theorized that proximity to a rail line would have a negative impact on residential property values, due to nuisance effects such as noise and vibration. The nuisance effect has not been conclusively supported, however. Two separate studies, one that focused on proximity to Portland, Oregon's light rail line (Chen et al. 1998),¹² and one that looked at proximity to BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) lines (Landis et al. 1995)¹³ did not find statistically significant nuisance effects. However,

⁷ Simons, Robert A, Ph.D. and Abdellaziz El Jaouhari, Ph.D. 2004. "The Effect of Freight Railroad Tracks and Train Activity on Residential Property Values". *The Appraisal Journal*, Summer 2004, Volume LXXII Number 3.

⁸ Fontelera, Jorina. August 2003. "A train runs by it. Apartments, condo spring up along tracks." *The Business Journal of Milwaukee*. Retrieved February 22, 2008.
<http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com.milwaukee/stories/2003/08/04/focus1.html?t=printable>.

⁹ Fontelera, Jorina. August 2003. "A train runs by it. Apartments, condo spring up along tracks." *The Business Journal of Milwaukee*. Retrieved February 22, 2008.
<http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com.milwaukee/stories/2003/08/04/focus1.html?t=printable>.

¹⁰ Parsons Brinckerhoff. 2001. *The Effect of Rail Transit on Property Values: A Summary of Studies*. Research carried out for Project 21439S, Task 7. NEORail II, Cleveland, Ohio. Draft. February 27, 2001.

¹¹ Debrezion, Ghebregziabihier, Eric Pels, and Piet Rietveld. 2003. *The Impact of Railway Stations on Residential and Commercial Property Value*. Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper, TI 2004-023/3. Rotterdam, The Netherlands. August 2003.

¹² Chen, Hong, Anthony Rufulo, and Kenneth Dueker. 1998. *Measuring the Impact of Light Rail systems on Single-Family Home Prices: A Hedonic Approach with GIS Applications*. Prepared for the Transportation Research Board, 77th Annual Meeting.

¹³ Landis, John, Robert Cervero, Subhrajit Guhathukurta, David Loutzenheiser, and Ming Zhang. 1995. *Rail Transit Investments, Real Estate Values, and Land Use Change: A Comparative Analysis of Five California Rail Transit Systems*. Monograph 48, Institute of Urban and Regional Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

Landis et al. did find an indication of a nuisance effect for houses adjacent to the CalTrain commuter line in San Mateo County. The authors speculate that the disamenity for CalTrain was ‘probably a function of noise levels that are much higher than BART’s’ (pg. 38). Further, they suggest that because the ‘CalTrain trackbed is minimally separated from adjacent uses, and given that the CalTrain train cars are not specifically designed for quiet operation, this is not a surprising finding’ (pg. 42). Thus, the problem of nuisance effects is one that can be minimized or negated through good system design (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2001).¹⁴

The Proposed Action would increase the frequency of freight rail traffic on the EJ&E rail line and reduce traffic along the five CN subdivisions that enter Chicago. Chapter 2 contains a detailed discussion of proposed changes in train traffic volume on the EJ&E rail line and the CN rail lines.

The Simons and El Jaouhari study found that proximity to gated highway/rail at-grade railroad crossings had a mixed effect on property values. In 1996, before the train traffic increase that resulted from the Conrail merger had taken place, property values of smaller houses located between 251 and 750 feet from the rail crossing dropped 5 percent more than similar properties not in proximity to a rail line. At the same time, medium-sized and large properties and properties located either closer or farther from the crossing experienced no statistically significant adverse property effects. After the volume of freight increased as a result of the merger, Simons and El Jaouhari found that increased traffic delays at the highway/rail at-grade crossings in some communities reduced the area’s appeal to current owners and potential buyers (Simons and El Jaouhari 2004).¹⁵

This analysis considers the Chicago metropolitan area, with a housing stock of more than 1.8 million units, as the Study Area of potential effect for social or economic effects. While there may be adverse effects on individual property owners adjacent or near the EJ&E rail line and a corresponding beneficial effect on property adjacent to the CN rail lines, the Proposed Action would not affect overall property values within the Study Area (the Chicago metropolitan area). With the reduced value of property adjacent to the EJ&E rail line or increases at a rate less than the surrounding areas, the Proposed Action would not result in an adverse effect on property values within the Study Area (the Chicago metropolitan area).

Housing

Changes in rail operations as a result of the Proposed Action would not require the acquisition of residential properties, nor would it introduce a large amount of new workers needing housing into the Study Area. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not affect the availability of housing or rates of affordable housing.

Communities and Community Cohesion

Projects such as the Proposed Action can cause changes in communities or community cohesion for residents; these changes may include splitting or bisecting communities, isolating a portion of a community, or separating residents from emergency facilities or recreational and public facilities. However, the EJ&E line has been in operation since 1891, and the adjacent communities have grown up around the rail line and community ties have developed with the rail line in place. Communities continue to grow in the vicinity of the EJ&E rail line and, as discussed in Chapter 3.6.1.2 above, many of these communities are expected to grow rapidly over the coming decades. As a result of increased numbers of trains on the EJ&E rail line from the Proposed Action, there may be a minor

¹⁴ Parsons Brinckerhoff. 2001. *The Effect of Rail Transit on Property Values: A Summary of Studies*. Research carried out for Project 21439S, Task 7. NEORail II, Cleveland, Ohio. Draft. February 27, 2001.

¹⁵ Simons, Robert A, Ph.D. and Abdellaziz El Jaouhari, Ph.D. 2004. “The Effect of Freight Railroad Tracks and Train Activity on Residential Property Values”. *The Appraisal Journal*, Summer 2004, Volume LXXII Number 3.

adverse effect on community cohesion in certain areas. While more trains could inconvenience residents more frequently throughout the day, the communities in the Study Area are well-established—as are the rail facilities in these communities—so changes in community cohesion and the ability to get around the community are expected to be relatively minor or moderate.

The proposed changes in train traffic as a result of the Proposed Action would not close any existing roads or eliminate any highway/rail at-grade crossings, so there would be no direct loss of access to communities or public services in the Study Area. The Proposed Action would not separate residential areas from retail, service, or employment centers, nor would it create a new physical barrier to the movement of people, goods and services within and between communities. However, as described in Section 4.3.2, the increased volume of rail traffic on the EJ&E rail line would result in increased traffic delays at several intersections. These delays would increase rail-related nuisance in certain communities.

In short, as discussed in more detail below, in locations where the EJ&E tracks run directly through a community (see Figure 1.1-1, Project Vicinity, in Chapter 1), residents would notice increased traffic delays at highway/rail at-grade crossings, but impacts to community cohesion are not expected to be more than moderate. Traffic delays would be reduced along the CN rail lines that experience decreased rail traffic and this would reduce any existing, adverse effect to community cohesion along these rail lines.

Section 4.7 presents information regarding effects on environmental justice populations.

Travel Patterns/Accessibility/Travel Times

Due to the increased frequency of trains on the EJ&E rail line, the Proposed Action would cause minor changes in travel patterns, travel times, and accessibility (vehicular, commuter, bicycle, and pedestrian) in many communities. The potential adverse effects on travel patterns and accessibility include:

- Increased crossing delays (with largest impacts on communities lacking alternate routes)
- Trains temporarily blocking roadways or sidewalks would adversely affect access to businesses, neighborhoods, or public services
- Delays to school buses, police vehicles, fire trucks, and ambulances
- Longer traffic delays during morning and evening rush hours

The Proposed Action would potentially affect travel patterns as motorists/commuters and pedestrians/bicyclists spend more time at highway/rail at-grade crossings. Some existing travel patterns may shift as motorists try to avoid highway/rail at-grade crossings. Section 4.3.2 presents more details on these crossings.

Highway/rail at-grade crossings cause delays when vehicles must yield to trains. This temporarily interrupts the flow of traffic; the length of the interruption depends on the speed and length of the train. Proposed increases in freight train activity on the EJ&E rail line would cause vehicle delays at highway/rail at-grade crossings. SEA evaluated all of the highway/rail at-grade crossings that meet the Board's threshold for environmental analysis. Section 4.3.1 presents a discussion of the Board's environmental analysis thresholds and more information on traffic delays; Appendix F lists the results of vehicle delay calculations for each crossing.

Given the potential for emergency vehicles to be delayed at the highway/rail at-grade crossings, this analysis identifies emergency services in the Study Area. Section 4.3.3 addresses the potential effects on emergency services, including police, fire protection, and medical services in the communities within the Study Area. The Proposed Action could impact emergency vehicles in several manners.

Emergency vehicles (police, fire, and medical) could be delayed at highway/rail at-grade crossings while responding to 911 calls and emergencies and en route to medical facilities, and delays also could potentially affect the ability of medical personnel to get to local medical facilities when needed.

Community Facilities and Public Services

Community Facilities. A large number of parks and schools lie within the Study Area. While increased train traffic along the EJ&E rail line would result in more noise and vibration, changes in air quality, and difficulty accessing nearby facilities, most of the parks and schools would be minimally affected because this is an existing rail line and residents have, at least partially, adapted their travel patterns to train traffic.

The level of impact of the Proposed Action on school and parks would depend on their proximity to the tracks. Table 4.6-4, below, illustrates the parks (listed alphabetically by community) located within 500 feet of the EJ&E rail line that would be adversely affected by the Proposed Action. Noise impacts on these nearby parks and schools would be greater than impacts on those located farther from the rail line and crossings.

Table 4.6-4. Parks Located within 500 Feet of the EJ&E Rail Line		
Park	Community	Acreage
Illinois		
Silver Park	Waukegan	3
Boak Park	North Chicago	3
Foss Park	North Chicago	42
Century Park	Vernon Hills	96
Lions Park	Lake Zurich	5
Citizen's Park	Barrington	55
Langendorf Park	Barrington	40
Kelly Park	Hoffman Estates	31
Lincoln Park	West Chicago	64
Pioneer Park	West Chicago	32
Reed Park	West Chicago	105
Summerlakes Park	Warrenville	13
Clearwater Park	Aurora	57
Frontenac Park	Aurora	26
Willow Lake Park	Aurora	67
Main Park	Frankfort	30
Glaeser Park	Richton Park	51
Algonquin Park	Chicago Heights	10
Euclid Park	Chicago Heights	18
Petrarca Park	Chicago Heights	2
Sauk Village Baseball Fields	Sauk Village	19
Calumet Park	Chicago	165
Indiana		
Cheever Park	Griffith	16
Tot Park	Griffith	2
Lakefront Park	Hammond	32

Table 4.6-4. Parks Located within 500 Feet of the EJ&E Rail Line		
Park	Community	Acreage
Whihala Beach County Park	Hammond	24
Gateway Park	Gary	2
Jackson Park	Gary	6
Kosciuszko Park	East Chicago	22
Riley Park	East Chicago	8
Whiting Park	Whiting	30

Increased train traffic on the EJ&E rail line would lead to potentially higher exposure for children walking to and from the schools, bus stops, or parks.

Public Services. SEA identified public school districts and private schools that are located within 0.25-mile of a highway/rail at-grade crossing to assess the potential for an increase in school bus delays from the Proposed Action (see Table 4.6-5, below). Schools near highway/rail at-grade crossings would potentially experience greater effects because the closer a school is to the rail line, the more likely teachers, buses, and student or parent drivers would have to cross the rail line to get to and from the school. Also the relative distance to an alternative route would be greater for schools located closer to a highway/rail at-grade crossing. For example, if a school is located 350 feet away from a highway/rail at-grade crossing and the alternate crossing is 1 mile away, the relative effect on travel time and distance would be greater than for a school located 2 miles away from an at-grade crossing that would have to go 3 miles to an alternate crossing. The traffic impact analysis discussed in Section 4.3.2 indicates traffic delays would increase at the highway/rail at-grade crossings within the Study Area by an average of 0.3 to 1.9 minutes per delayed vehicle on EJ&E rail line segments experiencing an increase in freight traffic. Delays would decrease on the CN rail lines segments. The average delay per delayed vehicle for the EJ&E highway/rail at-grade crossings for the Study Area is 0.6 minutes.

The peak afternoon travel time was found to be 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be minor delays experienced by the school buses in the afternoon because most of the routes would be completed within an hour of school dismissal (i.e., before 4:00 p.m.). The traffic analysis indicated that the Woodruff Road and Washington Street crossings in Joliet, Illinois, would experience the greatest amount of delay due to the Proposed Action. These intersections are used multiple times during the day by Joliet Public School District 86. If a train were encountered by a school bus traveling on either Woodruff Road or Washington Street it would experience an average delay of 5.3 minutes in its arrival at the school.

Children who walk to school could potentially be affected by the Proposed Action because they must stop for trains at highway/rail at-grade crossings. It is assumed that pedestrians would observe the same delay as a vehicle. Pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks is a safety concern that is addressed in Section 4.2.2. Section 4.2.3 discusses safety warning systems at the highway/rail at-grade crossings.

Table 4.6-5, below, shows the public school districts and private schools that are located within 0.25 mile of a highway/rail at-grade crossing and would potentially be affected by increased delays.

Table 4.6-5. School Districts and Private Schools Located within 0.25 Mile of a Highway/Rail At-Grade Crossing	
Municipality	School District/Private School
Illinois	
North Chicago	North Chicago School District 187
North Chicago	Holy Family School
Rondout	Rondout School District 72
Vernon Hills	M&M Academy
Mundelein	Children's House Daycare Inc.
Hawthorn Woods	Saint Matthew Lutheran School
Lake Zurich	Lake Zurich School District 95
Barrington	Barrington Community Unit School District 220
West Chicago	West Chicago Community High School District 94
West Chicago	Washington School
West Chicago	Trinity Lutheran School
West Chicago	Lincoln School
West Chicago	Carrie Roundy Kindergarten
Aurora	Indian Prairie School District 204
Plainfield	Plainfield School District 202
Crest Hill	Richland Community School District 88a
Joliet	Joliet Montessori
Joliet	Joliet Public District 86
Joliet	Union School District 81
New Lenox	Ivy League Montessori
Frankfort	Heritage Christian
Matteson	Washington Royal School
Chicago Heights	Saint Anne School
Chicago Heights	Chicago Heights School District 170
Chicago Heights	Mount Carmel School
Indiana	
Griffith	Griffith Public School District
Griffith	Ready School
Griffith	Saint Mary School
Griffith	Bible Baptist School
Gary	Lake Ridge School District
Whiting	Whiting High School Athletic Facilities

Potential effects on bicycle travel and bicycle/pedestrian recreational trails are discussed in Section 4.2.5.

4.6.3.2 Proposed New Constructions

This section discusses the socioeconomic effects from construction of the six new connections and three new segments of double track. Potential socioeconomic effects from the various construction alternatives for each new construction would, for the most part, not vary significantly. A comparison of the alternatives is presented in later in this chapter in Section 4.6.4.3, Fiscal Effects; Section 4.6.4.4, Housing; and Section 4.6.4.7, Community Facilities.

Population and Demographics

Based on an IMPLAN[®] analysis, construction activities would generate a total of 708 jobs during the two-year construction period, including 396 jobs directly attributable to construction. However, all of these jobs would end at the completion of construction and would not generate a long-term increase in employment. In a large, well-developed economy like the Chicago metropolitan area, temporary construction-related jobs are likely to be filled by local workers, and few, if any, workers would be induced to move into the Study Area as a result of the Proposed Action. If construction activities did induce new workers and dependents to move into the area, the number would be minimal in comparison to an area as populous as metropolitan Chicago. Demographics also would remain unchanged. The construction alternatives for each connection would use construction crews of similar sizes. For example, the two Joliet construction alternatives would require similar numbers of workers. Therefore, potential socioeconomic affects from construction would not vary between construction alternatives.

Economic Effects

A summary of the estimated economic effects of construction is presented in Table 4.6-6, below.

Table 4.6-6. Estimated Economic Effects from Construction				
	Employment	Business Output (millions)	Value Added (millions)	Labor Income (millions)
Direct Effects	396	\$50.00	\$27.37	\$22.63
Total Effects ^a	708	\$89.88	\$52.39	\$37.49

Notes:

^a Total effects include direct, indirect, and induced effects. See Section 3.6 for a discussion of total effects.

Because construction would not occur, the No-Build alternatives would not affect employment, the gross regional product, or income in Illinois and Indiana.

Business Output and Value Added. Construction activities from the 6 new connections would be expected to add \$50 million per year to the local economy for two years. Of this total, \$27.37 million (55 percent) would be used for purchase of goods and materials, and about \$22.63 million (45 percent) would be spent on labor each year. The total business output would be \$89.88 million and the materials purchases would result in a total infusion of about \$52.39 million to the gross regional product. The addition to the gross regional product would be a minor addition to the economy of the Chicago metropolitan area and would end after construction is finished. Construction activities would have a minor, beneficial, short-term effect on the local economy.

Labor Income. As shown in Table 4.6-6, above, construction of the connections is expected to directly generate \$22.63 million of labor income annually during the estimated two-year construction period. Total direct, indirect, and induced income from these construction activities would be an estimated \$37.49 million. The direct, indirect, and induced income from construction activities would end after the completion of construction with no long-term effect on income.

Unemployment Rates. Construction activities would directly generate 396 jobs and a total of 708 positions during the two-year construction duration. Job growth would cease shortly after the completion of construction. Because there are over 3.7 million jobs in the five counties that comprise the Study Area (see Table 3.6-3 in Chapter 3), project construction would temporarily increase employment by less than one-tenth of one percent. No permanent affects would be expected.

Fiscal Effects

Property and Other Taxes. Effects on property taxes from the proposed rail construction activities would be limited to the acquisition of property. As a private enterprise, the Applicants would pay tax on all property acquired for construction, and no property would be removed from the tax roles. CN would also pay the same tax rate as EJ&E. While all the connection alternatives would require the acquisition of new ROW, only the Munger, Joliet, and Matteson connection alternatives would require the acquisition of either residential or commercial structures. Effects from each of the Munger, Joliet, and Matteson, Illinois alternatives are discussed as follows:

No-Build at Munger. Because no construction or acquisition of new ROW would occur, this alternative would not affect property or other taxes.

Proposed Munger Connection. The Applicants would acquire portions of four vacant properties. No structures would be acquired. The Applicants would pay tax on the vacant property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

Munger Alternative–Original Proposal. The Applicants would acquire portions of four properties. The properties would remain viable for current uses. No structures would be acquired. The Applicants would pay tax on the property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

Munger Alternative–UP Connection. The Applicants would acquire undeveloped portions of one residential property and three vacant properties. No structures would be acquired. The properties would remain viable for current uses. The Applicants would pay tax on the property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

Munger Alternative–Northwest Quadrant. The Applicants would acquire portions of forest preserve and utility properties. No structures would be acquired. The properties would remain viable for current uses. The Applicants would pay tax on the property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

No-Build at Joliet. Because no construction or acquisition of new ROW would occur, this alternative would not affect property or other taxes.

Proposed Joliet Connection. The Applicants would acquire undeveloped portions of three commercial properties and two vacant properties. No structures would be acquired. The properties would still remain viable as commercial enterprises, and no businesses would be displaced. The Applicants would pay tax on the property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

Joliet Alternative–Original Proposal. The Applicants would acquire one business and portions of six other commercial properties. Acquisition of developed property in Joliet for the Original Proposal could result in a minor reduction in local property tax revenue.

No-Build at Matteson. Because no construction or acquisition of new ROW would occur, this alternative would not affect property or other taxes.

Proposed Matteson Connection. The Applicants would acquire two vacant parcels and undeveloped portions of one residential property, one commercial property, one industrial property, and seven vacant properties. Acquisition of developed property in Matteson for the Proposed Matteson Connection Alternative would reduce local property taxes by approximately \$50,000.

Matteson Alternative–Northeast and Southwest Quadrants. The alternative connection at Matteson would require the acquisition of 18 parcels, including undeveloped residential parcels,

existing commercial establishments, and vacant properties. No residential displacements would be required. Acquisition of developed property in Matteson for the Northeast and Southwest Quadrants Alternative would reduce local property taxes by approximately \$57,000.

Matteson Alternative—Southwest Quadrant. This alternative would require the Applicants to acquire vacant land and would not result in the displacement of residences or businesses. The Applicants would pay tax on the property; no property would be removed from the tax roles. Therefore, this alternative would not affect the tax base or local property tax rates.

Table 4.6-7, below, outlines full and partial acquisitions by property type and the total acquisition required for each construction alternative.

The analysis estimates that construction activities would generate \$3.82 million of local and state tax revenues during each year of the two-year duration, as well as \$8.71 million of federal tax revenues. Given the size of the economy of metropolitan Chicago (as described in Section 3.6), construction-related tax revenues would be a temporary, minor benefit, and the benefit that would end after two years when the construction activities would be completed.

Property Values. *The Applicants would bring the EJ&E rail lines closer to residences under the following connection alternatives:*

- Munger Alternative—UP Connection
- Proposed Matteson Connection
- Matteson Alternative—Northeast and Southwest Quadrants
- Matteson Alternative—Southwest Quadrant

In areas of proposed double-track construction, the double track would also bring the EJ&E rail line slightly closer to some existing residences. See Section 4.6.3.1 for a discussion of property values.

Table 4.6-7. Property Acquisition Summary

Construction Site	Residential		Commercial		Industrial		Vacant		Acreage
	Full	Partial	Full	Partial	Full	Partial	Full	Partial	
Leithton Double Track									
Leithton Double Track	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	8	3.8
Diamond Lake to Gilmer Double Track									
Diamond Lake to Gilmer Double Track	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Munger Connection									
No-Build at Munger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Munger Connection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.02
Munger Alternative—Original Proposal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.7
Munger Alternative—UP Connection	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.4
Munger Alternative—Northwest Quadrant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2.4
East Siding to Walker Double Track									
East Siding to Walker Double Track	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Joliet Connection									
No-Build at Joliet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Joliet Connection	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	3.8
Joliet Alternative—Original Proposal	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	4.2
East Joliet to Frankfort Double Track									
East Joliet to Frankfort Double Track	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Matteson Connection									
No-Build at Matteson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Matteson Connection	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	7	16.8
Matteson Alternative—Northeast and Southwest Quadrants	6	2	6	1	1	0	1	1	13.5
Matteson Alternative—Southwest Quadrant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Griffith Connection									
No-Build at Griffith	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Griffith Connection	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3.3
Ivanhoe Connection									
No-Build at Ivanhoe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Ivanhoe Connection	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3.2
Kirk Yard Connection									
No-Build at Kirk Yard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Proposed Kirk Yard Connection	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2.4

Housing

Because construction would not occur and new workers would not be required, the No-Build alternatives would not affect the availability of housing. As discussed in Section 4.6.4.1, the construction workforce would be primarily local and, therefore, would not require new housing or place pressure on the availability of housing, including affordable housing. None of the construction alternatives would require acquisition of housing units; however, if housing units were acquired, given the currently weak market for owner-occupied and rental housing in the Chicago metropolitan area, the supply of housing units (over 1.8 million in 2000), and the current higher-than-average market vacancy rate, construction would result in a very minor reduction in the overall availability of housing.

Communities and Community Cohesion

Because the acquisition of new ROW or additional delays would not occur, the No-Build alternatives would not affect community cohesion. Residential acquisitions are not a major element of any of the connection alternatives; therefore, community cohesion would not be adversely affected or disrupted by property acquisitions or residential relocations.

The proposed physical changes that would take place under any of the construction alternatives would not close any existing roads or eliminate any highway/rail at-grade crossings, so there would be no direct loss of access to communities or public services in the Study Area. None of the construction alternatives would separate residential areas from retail, service, or employment centers, nor would they create a new physical barrier to the movement of people, goods and services within and between communities. However, as described in Section 4.3.2, the increased volume of rail traffic on the EJ&E rail line that would result from the Proposed Action would result in traffic delays at several intersections. These delays could adversely affect the communities and would increase rail-related nuisance.

Section 4.7 presents information regarding effects on environmental justice populations.

Travel Patterns/Accessibility/Travel Times

Because no construction or additional delays would occur, the No-Build alternatives for the proposed connections would not affect travel patterns, accessibility, or travel times. Construction activities would introduce temporary effects such as delays or slower speeds while moving through the construction area. Construction would not close any existing roads or eliminate any highway/rail at-grade crossings, however, and existing travel patterns would resume following construction. These effects would be similar for all the construction alternatives.

Community Facilities and Public Services

Community Facilities. None of the connection alternatives would result in the relocation or displacement of any public facility or community center. Nor would construction of any of the connection alternatives result in changes to school district capacity or enrollment. Because the EJ&E rail line is already in place, neither the increase in frequency of trains, nor the other changes that occur because of construction, would affect the number of schools or students. Given the size of the construction workforce in the Chicago metropolitan area, it can be expected that construction jobs would be filled by local workers and that few, if any, new residents would move into the area for construction of the connections and double track. There would, therefore, be no increase in the school age population as a result of construction.

The schools and parks with the greatest potential to be affected by construction would be those located near highway/rail at-grade crossings because of the increased exposure of children and others

to trains. Figures 4.6-1 through 4.6-7 that follow illustrate the connections (from north to south along the EJ&E rail line) and the schools and parks within a 1.5 mile radius of the connections. A 1.5 mile radius is a reasonable estimate of the distance away from the park or school that students and residents may walk.

No-Build Alternatives. Because no construction, acquisition of new ROW, or additional delays would occur, the No-Build alternatives would not affect community facilities.

Munger Connection in Illinois. Valley View Park (Bartlett, Illinois), Bartlett Christian Academy (Bartlett), and Wayne Elementary School (Wayne, Illinois) are located within a 1.5-mile radius of three of the Munger alternatives (Proposed Connection, Original Proposal, and Northwest Quadrant) (see Figure 4.6-1, below). Although Pratt's Wayne Woods serves many of the functions of a park, it is a forest preserve and is not included in this discussion. The following parks and schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Munger Alternative-UP Connection (see Figure 4.6-2, below):

- Bartlett, Illinois
 - Bartlett Point Estates Park
 - Valley View Park
 - Glenn A. Koehler Fields of Bartlett
- South Elgin, Illinois
 - East Avenue Park
 - Ann Street Park
 - Bike Path Park
 - Pantan Mills Park
 - S.E.B.A Park
 - County Park
 - Lions Park
 - Crystal Springs Park
 - Pickerel Point
 - River Ridge Park
 - Clinton Elementary School
- St. Charles, Illinois
 - Taly Park
 - Charlemagne/Kingswood Park
- West Chicago, Illinois
 - Cornerstone Lakes Park
 - Prestonfield Park

Joliet Connection in Illinois. The following parks and schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Joliet connection alternatives (see Figure 4.6-3, below):

- Joliet, Illinois
 - St. Joseph Park
 - Garnsey Park
 - Rivals Park
 - Heggie Park
 - Forest Park
 - Sator Sanchez Elementary School
 - Saint Joseph School

- o Spanish Center, Inc.
 - o Premier Academy Middle School and High School
 - o Will County Safe School
 - o Parks Elementary School
 - o Saint Mary's Nativity School
 - o Holy Cross School
 - o Cunningham Elementary School
 - o Lincoln Elementary School
 - o Forest Park Individual Education School
- Lockport, Illinois
 - o Dellwood Park
- Fairmont, IL
 - o Fairmont Community Center Park
 - o A.F. Hill Park
 - o Fairmont School
 - o Hill School
 - o Fairmont Junior High School
- Crest Hill, IL
 - o Chaney Park
 - o Chaney/Monge School

Matteson Connection in Illinois. The following parks and schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Matteson connection alternatives (see Figure 4.6-4, below):

- Matteson, Illinois
 - o Memorial Park
 - o Oakwood Park
 - o Governors Trail Park
 - o Holden Park
 - o Zion Lutheran School
 - o OW Huth Middle School
 - o Saint Lawrence-O'Toole School
 - o Matteson Elementary School
- Park Forest, Illinois
 - o Illinois Park
 - o Logan Park
 - o Indiana Park
 - o Algonquin Park
 - o Eastgate Park
 - o Central Park
 - o Krotiak Park
 - o Veterans Memorial Park
 - o Winnebago Park
 - o Keokuk Park
 - o Marquette Park
 - o Cedar Park
 - o Somonauk Park

- o Tennis and Health Club
- o Algonquin Elementary School
- o 21st Century Preparatory Center
- o Mohawk Intermediate Center
- o Rich East Campus High School
- o Saint Irenaeus School
- o Forest Trail Middle School
- o Lakewood School
- o Dogwood School
- o Wildwood School
- o Indiana Elementary School
- o Illinois School
- Olympia Fields, Illinois
 - o Sergeant Means Park
 - o Tolentine Park
 - o Bicentennial Park
 - o Spirit Trail Park
 - o Maynegaite Park
 - o Arcadia Park
- Richton Park, Illinois
 - o Pierce Park
 - o Glaeser Park
 - o Jones Park
 - o Richton Square School
 - o South Suburban Seventh-Day Adventist Elementary School
 - o Immanuel School
 - o Sauk Elementary School
- Chicago Heights, Illinois
 - o Beacon Hill Park

Griffith Connection in Indiana. The following parks and schools, all within Griffith, Indiana, are located within 1.5 miles of the Griffith connection alternatives (see Figure 4.6-5, below):

- Griffith Park
- Central Park
- Cheever Park
- Franklin Fields Park
- Tot Park
- Longfellow Elementary School
- Griffith Middle School
- Calumet Baptist School
- Bible Baptist School
- Franklin Elementary School
- Beiriger Elementary School
- Saint Mary School
- Elsie Wadsworth Elementary School
- Griffith Senior High School
- Eldon Ready Elementary School

Ivanhoe Connection in Indiana. The following parks and schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Ivanhoe connection alternatives (see Figure 4.6-6, below):

- Hammond, Indiana
 - Gibson Woods Park
 - Harding Park
 - Phrommer Park
 - Charles N. Scott Middle School (#4433)
 - Morton Senior High School
 - Miller School
 - Saint Catherine of Siena School
- Gary, Indiana
 - Brunswick Park
 - West Gary Lighthouse Charter School
 - Treasure's Child Development Center
 - Grissom Elementary School
 - Dulles School
 - Ivanhoe Elementary School
 - West Side High School
 - Holy Rosary School
 - Brunswick Elementary School
 - Thomas A. Edison Junior High School

Kirk Yard Connection in Indiana. The following parks and schools, all within Gary, Indiana, are located within 1.5 miles of the Kirk Yard connection alternatives (see Figure 4.6-7, below):

- Ambridge Park
- Lincoln Johnson Park
- Jackson Park
- Gateway Park
- Norton Park
- Buffington Park
- Borman Square
- Emerson School for the Visual and Performing Arts
- 21st Century Leadership School of Gary
- Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
- M.C. Bennett Holiness School
- Spirit of God Accelerated Education
- Trinity Academies
- Gary's Promise
- Life with Hope Preparatory Academy
- Horace S. Norton Elementary School
- Beveridge Elementary School
- Holy Trinity School
- Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran School
- Chase Alternative School
- John H. Vohr Elementary School
- Jefferson Elementary School
- Ralph Waldo Emerson School

- Holy Angels Cathedral School
- Horace Mann Elementary School
- Ambridge Alternative School

Public Services. The No-Build alternatives would not affect public services because no construction, acquisition of new ROW, or additional delays would occur. Construction effects on public services would include minor, adverse effects such as temporary delays and slow speeds while moving through construction areas. Effects on public services would be similar between construction alternatives.

4.6.4 Conclusions

Under the No-Action Alternative, the CN and EJ&E rail lines would continue to operate under current conditions. There would be no investment in connection improvements and no increased traffic along the EJ&E rail line.

The Proposed Action would improve the operational efficiency of the North American freight rail system by reducing transit time through Chicago. Chicago is a large, developed economy that would not experience any major benefit from construction or operation of the Proposed Action; the effects would be minuscule compared with existing economic activity in the greater Chicago area.

Under the Proposed Action, SEA found:

- Employment would be reduced by up to 114 positions; this would have a minor effect on business output and employment in the Chicago metropolitan area.
- State and Federal tax revenues would be reduced to a minor extent.
- While there could be minor localized effects on property values, the property values in the Study Area would not be affected.
- There would not be any effects on housing supply or demand.
- Effects on community facilities would be minimal because the communities have grown around the EJ&E rail line and adapted to its presence. Effects on school buses would be localized.
- Construction of the proposed connections and double track would create short-term employment and demand for goods and services.
- Construction would result in little or no impact to the tax base. Construction of the proposed connections and double track would require acquisition of property; with the exception of Matteson, where some developed commercial property would be acquired, most of the acquisition would be vacant land.

Most of the existing residential and commercial development adjacent to the EJ&E rail line occurred after the line began operation in 1891 and evolved with the EJ&E rail line as an existing condition. The local communities and economies have developed with the rail line in place and integrated any effects from the rail line. Communities and residents near the EJ&E rail line may experience minor, adverse, local effects on property values and community cohesion as a result of increased rail traffic on the EJ&E rail line.

SEA acknowledges that the Proposed Action would affect access to community facilities, particularly schools, in areas near highway/rail at-grade crossings for the EJ&E rail line. The Proposed Action would also affect some local property owners through the acquisition of property by the Applicants to construct the connections and double track. See Chapter 6 for SEA's recommended mitigation to reduce potential effects on community facility access and property owners whose land would be acquired.











