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Phillis Johnson-Ball
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001
Ref: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

August 27, 2008

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087, Proposed Purchase of EJ&E Railroad by Canadian National Railways

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

I am writing to you to protest the proposed purchase of EJ&E rail line in the Chicago, IL, metropolitan area by Canadian National Railway Company. This purchase would have a grossly negative impact on our community, particularly as it applies to emergency service, school district transportation issues, school district safety issues, and business continuity and development issues.

Facts:

If CN acquires the EJ&E line and follows its proposed operating plan, the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) indicates that

- The number of trains will increase from 5.3/day to 20.3/day (283% increase)
- Train lengths will increase from 2,590 ft. to 6,321 ft. (144% increase)
- Weight of railroad cars (tonnage) will increase from 286,000 lbs. to 315,000 lbs (10% increase)
- Total number of train accidents on EJ&E rail line is calculated to increase by 28%
- Number of highway/rail accidents annually on the EJ&E rail line predicted to increase 284%
- There would be a large percentage increase in the volume of hazardous materials transported on the EJ&E rail line; the expected percentage increase in reportable hazardous material releases would also increase. Due to the location of this rail line within 600 ft. of Barrington High School and its proximity to downtown business and residential areas, and its proximity to (rail line is adjacent to) Lagendorf Park, Citizen's Park, and Cuba Marsh Forest Preserve, this is of concern.
- Due to the increased frequency of trains, the Proposed Action would adversely affect travel patterns, travel times and accessibility. Traffic delays would increase at highway/rail at grade crossings by up to 5.3 minutes per delayed vehicle on the EJ&E rail line (a 489% increase in minutes delayed for crossings in Barrington). For the Lake-Cook Road crossing this would mean an average wait of up to 79.5 minutes (15 vehicles on average are delayed at this crossing x 5.3 minutes/vehicle). For the crossing at North-west Hwy-Rt. 14, this would mean an average wait up to 95.4 minutes (18 vehicles x 5.3 minutes/vehicle).
- Long term air quality impacts would be caused by traffic delays at at-grade highway/rail crossings. Air pollutants from trains and traffic delays along the EJ&E route would increase.
- Increased train volume on the EJ&E rail line would increase traffic delays and emergency response times.

The Barrington School District indicates that:

- The proposed acquisition of the EJ&E rail line by CN will have a significantly negative impact on the day to day functionality of 12 schools, more than 9,000 students (roughly 90% of the student body), and more than 1,000 staff in the Barrington 220 School District.
- Because the Barrington Transportation Company's fleet is based in the center of the Village of Barrington (just west of the EJ&E rail crossing on Lake-Cook), significant delays and safety situations will occur throughout our district as buses cross the EJ&E approximately 840 times per day to deliver students to and from all 12 schools.
- The EJ&E rail line intersects seven major thoroughfares in our school district; therefore, increased freight traffic will dramatically affect the commute times of District 220 staff, students and parents, which could alter school schedules and jeopardize the safety of the region's children as they travel to and from classes and extracurricular activities.
- Approximately 1,700 of the high school's 3,000 students either walk or drive themselves to school each day. We can expect

- In addition to these dangerous conditions, increased rail traffic will result in significant transportation disruptions, delayed emergency response times and added costs for school district taxpayers.

The DEIS has recognized only that the Route 59/Hough St. crossing should be separated. The crossings on Route 14, the most heavily traveled road in town and Lake-Cook Road which is also heavily traveled were not recognized by the DEIS as needing grade separations. This effectively cuts off Barrington High School from the majority of its student population and is unacceptable. The DEIS also did not recognize the need for a rail-to-rail separation at the Union Pacific/EJ&E grade crossing, impacting Metra commuter service although Metra has stated that this purchase would have tremendous impact on its ability to provide service on this commuter line.

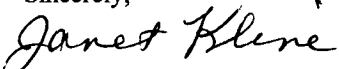
Additionally, CN's purchase and use of the EJ&E rail would cut off about half of the community from the public library and park district recreational facility, and would cut off at least two assisted living/senior living communities from the closest hospital. The tracks run adjacent to two large public parks and at least one forest preserve in our community (Barrington Township) alone.

I am extremely concerned about how our school district and emergency responders would be able to cope with the changes that would be caused by this purchase. 20 trains per day means a train every hour & twelve minutes. Two grade crossings cut the high school off from emergency providers and the bulk of its student body. With an average of 15 to 18 cars waiting at those particular grade crossings for an average of what is predicted to be 5.3 minutes per car every hour & twelve minutes, I do not see how we can get our children to school safely and in a timely manner or how emergency responders can get to more than half of the community when needed. It is simply not possible. Mitigation of these two grade crossings alone is estimated to cost more than \$70 million. Who is going to pay that \$70 million? Is Canadian National Railway, which would profit directly from this purchase going to pay it? They should!

Please do not allow CN's purchase of the EJ&E railway! Moving the CN's rail traffic from one set of tracks to another is not the answer.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

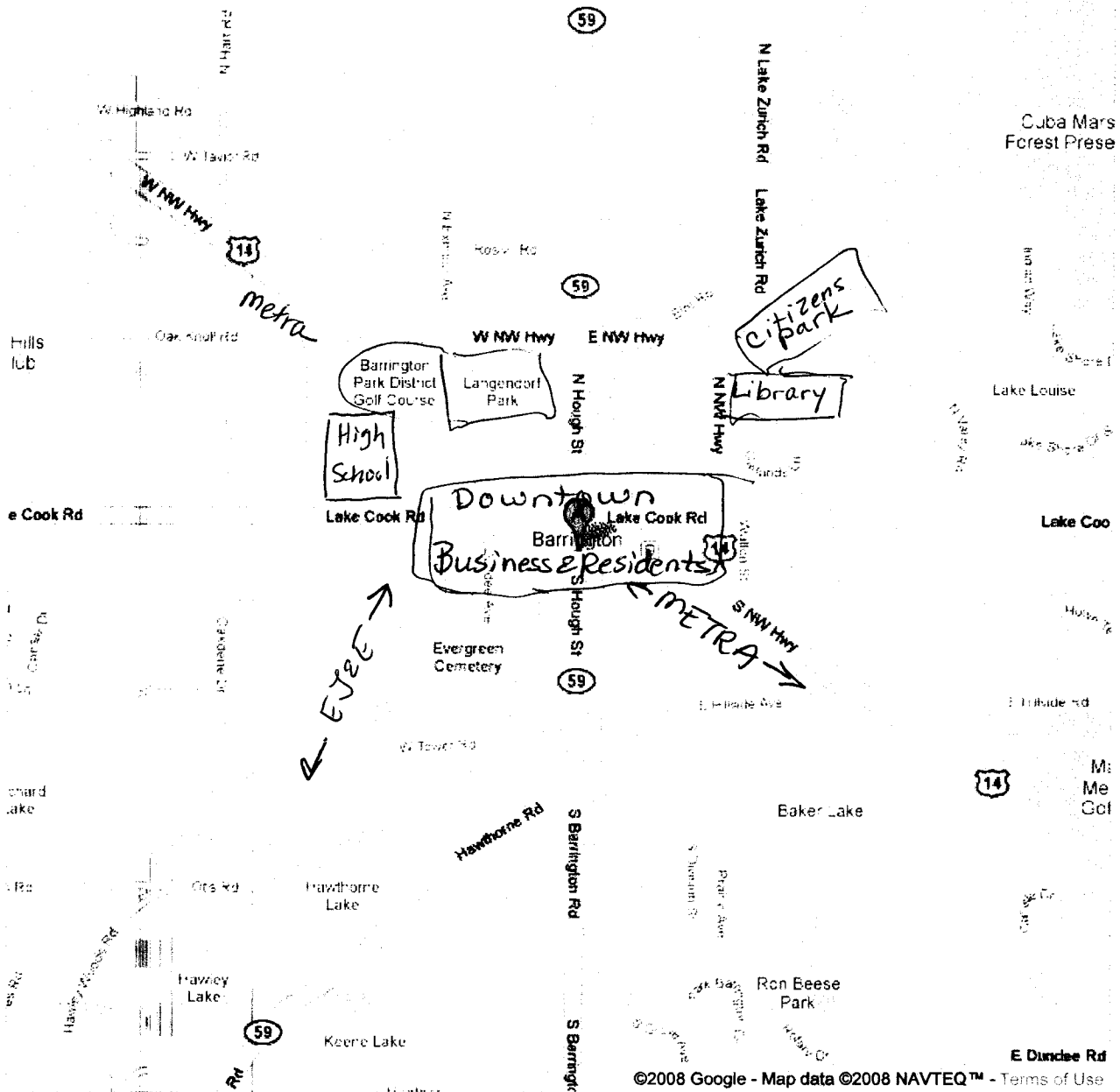

Janet Kline

Google

Address **Barrington, IL**

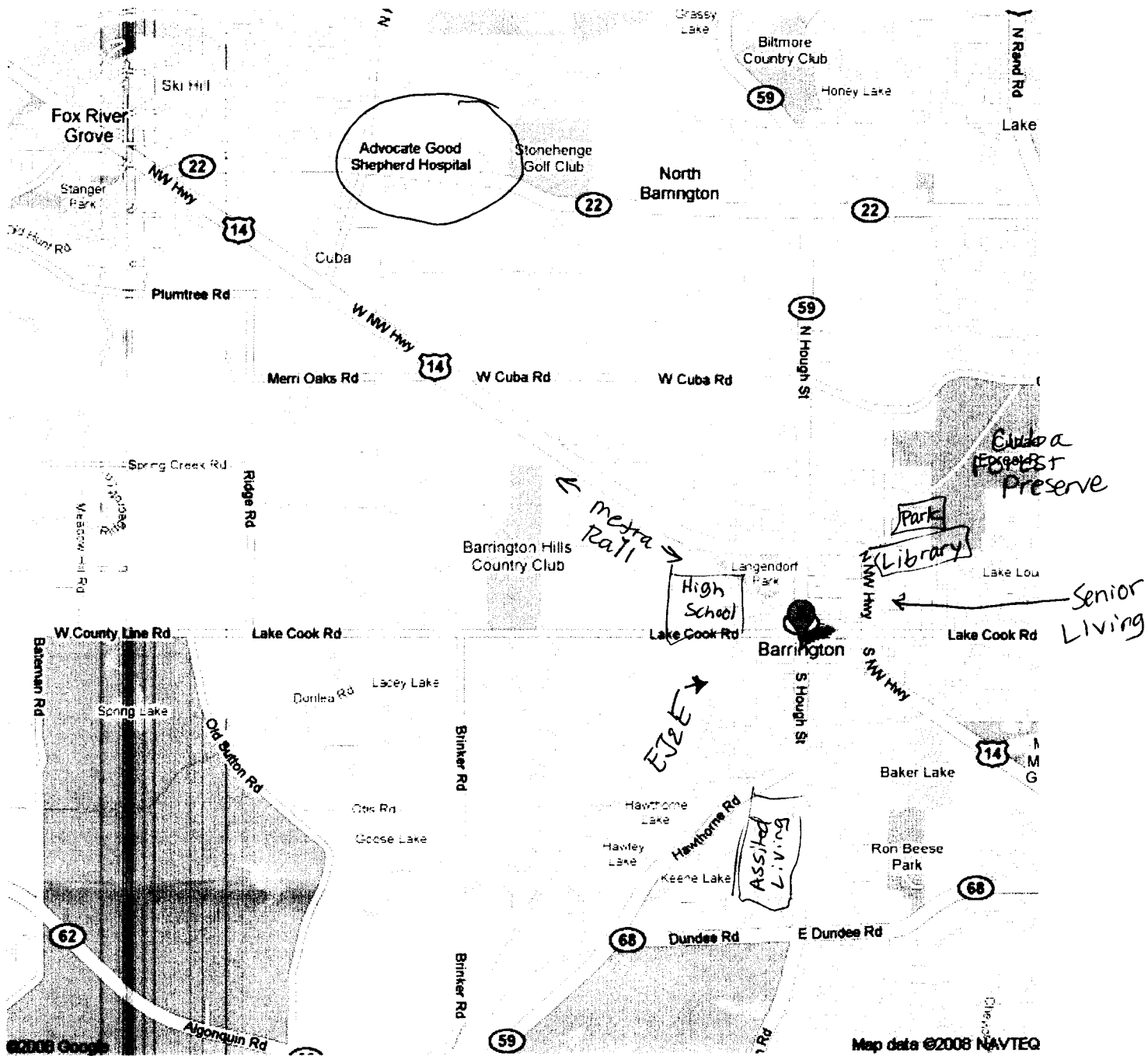
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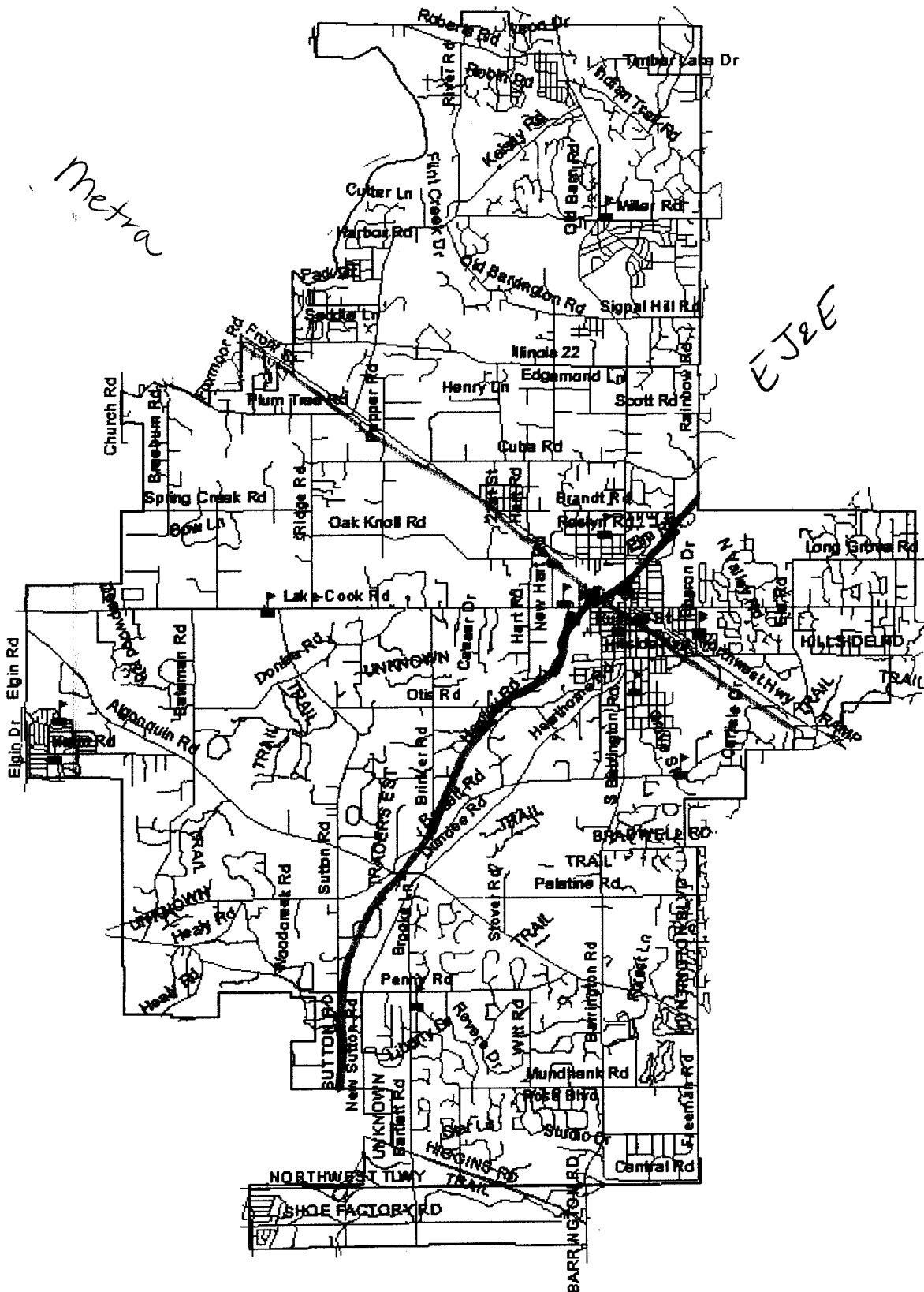


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District 220 Boundary Map



Last update 02/10/08