



City of Davenport

Community Planning & Economic Development Department

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August 10, 2010

Christa L. Dean, Attorney
Surface Transportation Board

Re: Invitation to Become a Cooperating Agency and Participating Agency
STB Finance Docket No. 35237
City of Davenport, IA – Construction and Operation Exemption – in Scott County, IA
Eastern Iowa Industrial Center Rail Project

Dear Ms. Dean:

For the purpose of complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the City of Davenport, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), has prepared an Environmental Assessment and is in the process of initiating a supplement to the Environmental Assessment as previously completed for the Eastern Iowa Industrial Center Rail Project in Scott County, Iowa. Find enclosed with this letter a project description that contains the project purpose and need statement and a map of the proposed project limits.

Because your agency has jurisdiction by law and/or has special expertise with respect to an environmental issue, we are inviting your agency to be a cooperating agency with FHWA in the preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment for this project. This is in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1501.6). As a result of your involvement as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the supplemental Environmental Assessment, and after an independent review of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment to ensure that your comments and suggestions have been addressed, you can expect that this Environmental Assessment will satisfy your NEPA obligations and that you can adopt the document without the need to re-circulate it.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (23 USC §139), we are also inviting your agency to be a participating agency in the NEPA process. Participating agencies are responsible to identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts of a project that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for a project. We suggest that the role of your agency in the development of this project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

- 1) Review the project purpose and need, the methodologies and level of detail required in the Supplemental Environmental Assessment analysis.
- 2) Participate in coordination meetings as needed
- 3) Provide timely review and comment on the supplemental Environmental Assessment to reflect your agency's views and concerns on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

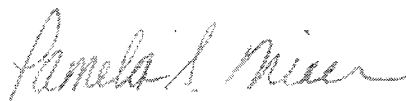
To either accept or decline this invitation, please respond to FHWA in writing prior to August 20, 2010. If your agency chooses to decline the invitation, your response should state your reasons for declining. Pursuant to Sec. 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, any federal agency that chooses to decline the invitation must specifically state in its response that it:

- o Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- o Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and
- o Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of the supplemental Environmental Assessment for this project, please contact me at 563/326-7769 or pminer@ci.davenport.ia.us

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Pamela S. Miner, Director
Community Planning & Economic Development
City of Davenport, Iowa
563.326.7769
pminer@ci.davenport.ia.us

Enclosures:
Project Description/Purpose
Map of Project Limits

CC:
Randy Hyler, Iowa DOT
Mike LaPietra, FHWA
Tom Parham, FHWA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of a new railroad extension, approximately 2.8 miles in length, located in southern Eldridge, northern Davenport, and an unincorporated area of Scott County Iowa and will provide freight rail service to the Eastern Iowa Industrial Center (EIIC). The proposed alignment begins on the Eldridge line of the Iowa Chicago and Eastern Railroad (IC&E) (now part of CP rail) at the Blackhawk Road crossing, and continues as follows (See attached project map):

- curves to the west through the Eldridge Industrial Park and Commercial Development;
- continues across First Street into agricultural land, turns south through agricultural land, and ends at the EIIC. The proposed project will realign the existing Eldridge Line spur of the IC&E at the Blackhawk Road crossing;
- curves to the west through the Eldridge Industrial Park and Commercial Development;

The original alignment of the project was configured with an 11 degree turning radius on the eastern end of the rail extension. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for this alignment in March of 2008 and Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) was completed in July of the same year. In subsequent design discussions, it was determined that this radius was too severe to adequately handle the transport of large and extra-length cargo, particularly components of the wind industry. Engineers and designers have determined that a turning radius of 9 degrees will more adequately serve this purpose; therefore the design has been altered as shown on the attached project map. This modification in the project design affects three property parcels of the 21 parcels that comprise the project. The Federal Highway Administration has determined this change requires the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

A wide spectrum of resources will be re-evaluated including cultural resources, floodplains, impacts to homes and businesses, socioeconomic resources, noise and air quality. Impacts may vary depending on the elements of the final design.

As part of the proposed project, existing right-of-way will be used whenever practical although additional right-of-way may be required to accommodate the proposed improvements. Precise right-of-way impacts, as well as potential impacts resulting from noise levels, air quality, cultural resources and natural resources, parks or recreation facilities and the natural environment, will be determined as planning and design activities continue.

DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

This project is being developed for federal funding participation. A determination by the Iowa DOT and the Federal Highway Administration has identified this project as requiring preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED (from original EA)

*Eastern Iowa Industrial Center Railroad Extension Project
Cities of Davenport and Eldridge, Scott County, Iowa*

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to provide rail connection between the EIIC and IC&E to promote economic development in the area. There are currently over 300 acres available and ready for development, with streets and utilities in place, with an ultimate build out of 1,200 to 1,300 acres of industrial sites along the proposed rail corridor.

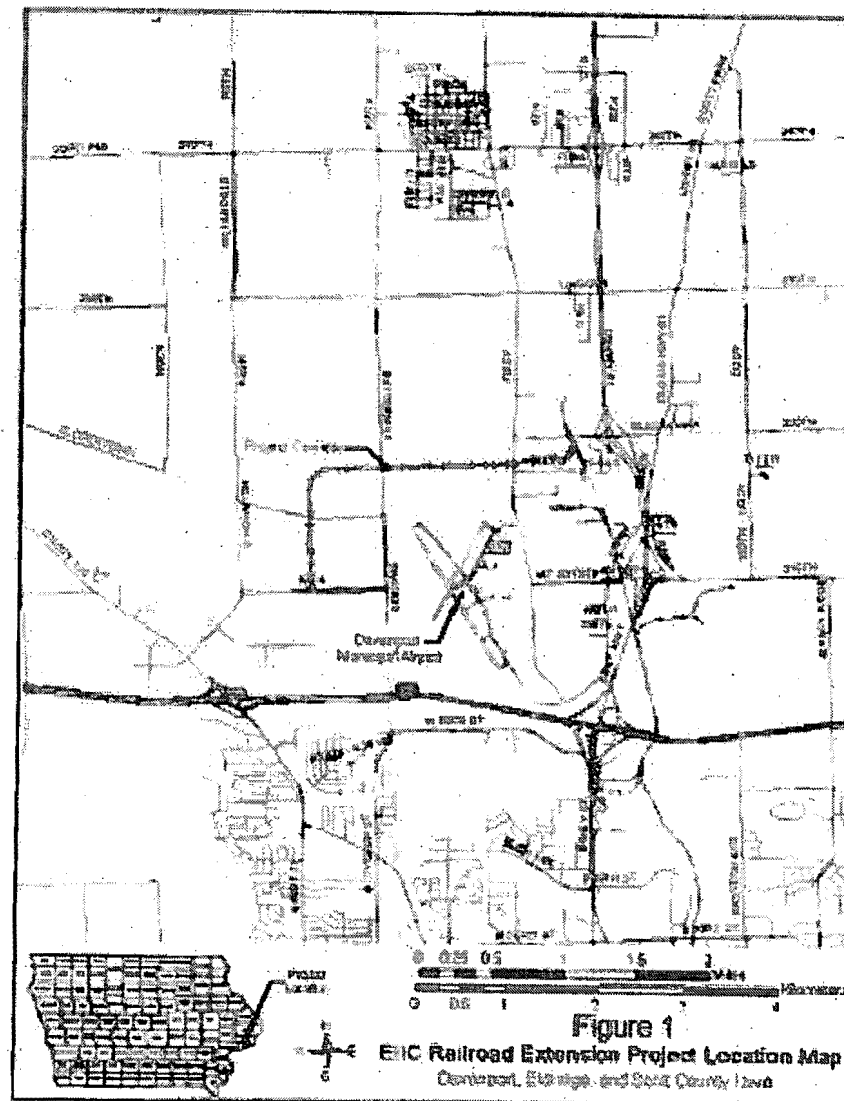
There are several functional needs for this project which are described below.

- Promote Economic Development. Currently 77 full-time jobs are present within the EIIC, and the GDRC has estimated that rail access would create 300 jobs within the first two years of operation. Another potential 1200 jobs would be created from future developments with rail access for a total of 1500 jobs.

According to the QCDG and GDRC, Davenport sites have been presented to 130 prospective employers in the past three years. Of those, Economic Development staff has determined that approximately 20 percent of industrial development prospects expressed a need for rail service. There is interest from development already within the EIIC for rail access as well. In April 2002, a large distribution center for Deere and Company was constructed. This facility opened in January 2003. The company which operates the facility for John Deere has expressed interest in rail service to the facility in order to improve its efficiency and supply chain system for the multiple locations in eastern Iowa and western Illinois.

- Relieve Traffic Congestion. Relief from traffic congestion at the Northwest Boulevard interchange at I-80 is needed. The Iowa Department of Transportation 2003 annual average daily traffic counts were 11,900 on Northwest Boulevard north of the I-80/Northwest Boulevard interchange; 12,100 on Northwest Boulevard south of the interchange; 41,100 on I-80 east of the interchange; and 36,900 on I-80 west of the interchange. Truck traffic on the I-80 mainline is 10,530 trucks or 29.8% with overall traffic being 35,300 AADT. The *Quad City Area 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan* projected daily traffic counts are expected to increase by 2% on Northwest Boulevard north of the I-80/Northwest Boulevard interchange; 60% on Northwest Boulevard south of the interchange; 46% on I-80 east of the interchange; and 40% on I-80 west of the interchange.
- Legislative, Regional and Local Plans. In 2005 the proposed project was earmarked within the federal SAFETEA-LU legislation and the Bi-State Regional Commission described the proposed rail extension project in its *2035 Quad Cities Area Long-Range Transportation Plan*; and the proposed project was also listed in the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies* for the Bi-State Region adopted by the Bi-State Regional Commission in 2006. The City of Davenport has also invested over \$6 million in the development of the EIIC, including RISE funds from the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Project Map
Total Project Area



Project Map

