



HOFFMAN ESTATES

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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MAYOR

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January 31, 2008

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

Surface Transportation Board
CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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**Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35087
Village of Hoffman Estates –
Additional Comments on Environmental Impact Statement Scope**

HDR

Dear Ms. Johnson-Ball:

My letter of January 18, 2008 outlined a number of concerns identified by the Village of Hoffman Estates related to the proposed purchase of the EJ&E Railroad by the Canadian National (CN). Since that time, we have held a community meeting where some additional ideas were raised. I would like to take this opportunity to provide these to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and respectfully request that you consider them as you create the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The purpose of this meeting was to share background information on the proposed acquisition with Village residents. We also provided an overview of the comments on the EIS scope already submitted to the STB by the Village. In the course of the open discussion, some items came up that deserve additional consideration.

Physical Conditions and Impacts

Is the condition of the track, bed, and rail infrastructure adequate to accommodate the additional freight loads and frequency envisioned by CN? Will there be a need for upgrades beyond the estimated \$100 CN states they will invest in connections and other physical improvements? These questions center on the impacts due to new reconstruction or rehabilitation as well as the performance under heavier rail traffic conditions in the long term. We ask that these questions be part of the review from cost, safety, and construction impact points of view.

The topography of Shoe Factory Road includes a significant vertical curve to the east of the EJ&E at-grade crossing. With additional delays expected due to the CN's projected increase in traffic, the Village is concerned about safety of motorists approaching the

crossing when it is occupied by a freight train. Visibility for westbound traffic is severely limited by the profile of the road. In particular, additional vehicle queuing at the crossing due to increased freight activity could extend to a point where inadequate stopping sight distance is available for westbound traffic on Shoe Factory Road. Means to mitigate this serious road safety concern are needed and the cost of mitigation should be borne by CN.

Cost Issues and Implications

My previous correspondence alluded to the need for CN to share a fair proportion of the cost for improvements needed to mitigate the impacts they create by increasing freight traffic. In many cases, we believe CN should be solely responsible for mitigation if the sole cause of the impact is due to their increased operations.

Hazardous material spills and cleanup were mentioned frequently by attendees at the meeting. While Village Emergency Service personnel are ready to assist with the response to an incident, the associated costs of materials, cleanup, and restoration should clearly be the responsibility of CN regardless of the likelihood of a hazardous material event.

The sight distance visibility issue noted above is indicative of the high potential cost to mitigate impacts for at-grade crossings. Noise and vibration are other issues which have been raised previously. Please consider all alternatives in the review of potential countermeasures to address impacts, with emphasis on those most likely to achieve the greatest amount of mitigation..

Are the costs cited by CN representative of the full extent of physical connections, repair, and rehabilitation that needs to be done? The scope of CN's proposed physical improvements, both new and maintenance needs, must be clearly defined, understood, and addressed.

I would like to express my appreciation to the STB for the open forum soliciting input on the EIS scope. Thank you for your consideration of scope items suggested by the Village. I look forward to the opportunity to take part in the next phases of the STB review.

Sincerely,



William D. McLeod
Village President