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August 27, 2008

Victoria J. Rutson, Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Comments for Finance Docket #35087 Issues

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I was unable to attend the open meeting in Barrington, IL on 8/27/08. I handed you a copy of my comments on January 9, 2008 of the CN/EJ&E Proposal at the Golf Club meeting. (See attached.) I have reviewed the draft EIS dated July 25, 2008.

- The STB must clearly address all mitigation issues including the severe impact on the greater geographical Barrington area with a federal, state, and CN financial solution.
- Congressman Mark Kirk has shown publicly a Metra funding chart in a Palatine Township meeting. One budget item allocates \$2.1 billion for Metra's Star Proposal. The STB can outright reject the Star Proposal for possible use of the EJ&E tracks. The cancellation of the Star proposal means \$2.1 billion could be directly applied to all mitigation costs identified in FD#35807. The STB decision to terminate the Star Proposal will solve all known financial problems caused by the mitigation issues. There are numerous physical, operating, and financial issues that cannot be overcome by various political operatives who have no understanding of real railroad issues. See attached Pace map of proposed bus rapid transit along I-90 to O'Hare as one real answer. The Metra Star Proposal is a political hoax.
- The STB needs to address alternative routes of freight movements via the Deval location (near DesPlaines) by negotiating new trackage right agreements.
- The STB needs to discuss the future impact of CP/DM&E/ICE, STB FD#35801 rail merger at Roundout and at Spaulding on Metra owned tracks. Metra receives a financial windfall from STB FD#35801.
- The STB must answer the request of Wisconsin Southern to buy 37 miles of CN tracks if the CN/EJ&E proposal is approved.
- The Munger location is not physically laid out for any type of a rail connection due to the elevated EJ&E tracks 75 feet above CN's CCP line which goes under the EJ&E tracks. The DuPage Forest Preserve presents another impossible hurdle. Does the STB have regulatory powers to allow your agency to dictate federal trackage rights of way on forest preserve lands in the State of Illinois?
- I would be happy to discuss any clarifications you need to get a better understanding of available solutions for the STB actions.

Sincerely,


Marvin W. Bridges Jr.

MWB/djb
attachments

Chicago Railroad Issues—January 9, 2008

EJ&E

- Critical Cargo Report approved by CATS
- Freight by-pass movement endorsed
- US Steel, seller
- Purchaser—Western R.R. vs. Eastern R.R.?
- Canadian National most likely buyer

Metra

- Current Metra ownership of track, right-of-way, ballast of former Milwaukee, Soo, IMRL, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern (ICE) owned by DM&E lines—what are ALL freight trackage rights on ALL Metra railroad ownership?
- Star Line Proposal—huge flaws—two major study books published Phase I and II. This information has not been made public.—Why?
- Why not use current Metra lines that can serve O'Hare? Southwest side of Bensenville yard next to O'Hare boundary is a good site to connect to CN's east side location.
- Two Woodfield service options—branch freight line close by from Metra West (Itasca) along Rt. 53 north toward Woodfield mall area. Extend UP Northwest Line—triple track south along Rt. 53 from Arlington Pk. Racetrack to Woodfield mall.
- North Central line currently serves O'Hare on east side. MHSR Coalition has a map showing a rail connection to CTA at River Rd. O'Hare transfer on CN ownership is the best location for all (present and future) passenger rail access to O'Hare and its people mover system.
- Proposed use of IHB as a new commuter line from O'Hare to Midway airport is an ideal location for east side use.
- Chicago Central & Pacific (CN ownership) has excellent route to connect to Metra's West Line from Elgin heading toward Chicago.

CREATE—Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency

- \$1.5 billion—6 yr. program—20% funded by six major railroads is the maximum cash available (\$300 million).
- Amtrak assistance? Metra assistance? No EJ&E involvement? State funds?
- Recent cessation by CN from CREATE proposal will allow new alignment of existing rail lines between passenger and freight use.

O'Hare Expansion—Dispute over benefits and costs using only east side location

- Metra? State of Wisconsin funding? State of Illinois funding?
- Amtrak—Madison/Milwaukee, Milwaukee Mitchell Field direct service to O'Hare. using CN tracks on east side.
- West side proposed rail realignment is not a wise strategy for new extended airport runways.
- Maintain freight only railroad service to Bensenville and Proviso yards on existing rail routes.

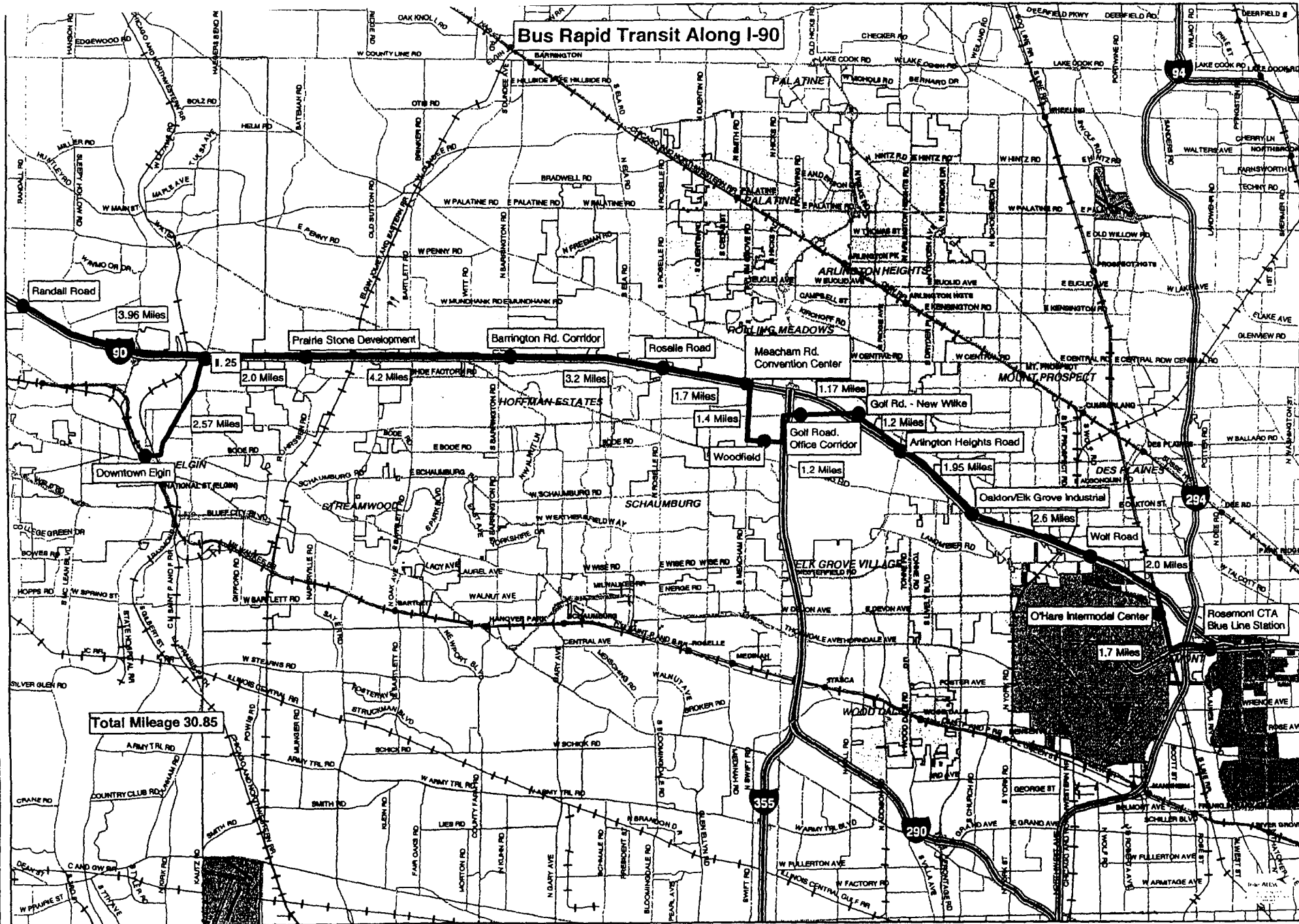
RTA/METRA/PACE Transit Task Force—Power shift to city away from suburbs. Why? Political Roles of Gov. Blagojevich, Rep. Mark Kirk and Mayor Daley.

TEA 21—

- West Loop Transportation Center is a priority for Mayor Daley—possible casino location
- Speaker Hastert has three major funding priorities for "his" district

DME/ICE—Do not allow any coal movements through CREATE? Why not force all coal movements over EJ&E?

Bus Rapid Transit Along I-90



Total Mileage 30.85

Legend

- Interstate
- Major Road
- CTA Station
- Metro Station
- Airport
- Local Distribution Area

