



Meeting Notes

Freight Rail Study Project Management Team (PMT)

Meeting #2

November 9, 2010

PMT Members/Alternates Present

Birchwood Neighborhood, Karen Hroma	City of St. Louis Park, Meg McMonigal
Eliot View, Doug Guild (Margaret Heil designated representative)	City of St. Louis Park (Planning Commission), Claudia Johnston
Lake Forest Neighborhood, Lynne Carper	Hennepin County, Katie Walker
Lenox, Jeremy Anderson	Hennepin County, Ia Xiong
Lenox Alternate, Kandi Arries	Mn/DOT, Timothy Spencer
Sorenson Neighborhood, Lois Zander	Mn/DOT, Peter Dahlberg
Sorenson Neighborhood, Joe LaPray (alt)	Twin Cities and Western Railway, Bob Suko and Mark Wegner
Triangle, Kristin Rohman Rehkamp	CP Railway, Amber Backhaus
Safety in the Park, Jami LaPray	Kimley-Horn and Associates, Jeanne Witzig
Safety in the Park, Thom Miller	St. Louis Park School Board, Rolf Peterson
City of St. Louis Park, Kevin Locke	
Bronx Park, Kathryn Kotki	

PMT Members Not Present at Meeting

Brooklawns, Jake Spano	Cedarhurst Neighborhood, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer
Brookside Association, Tim Dunsworth	Eliot, Marjorie Douville
Blackstone Neighborhood, Chris Johnson	Elmwood, Paula Evensen





South Oak Hill and Wolfe Park

Comments on PMT Meeting #2 Notes

Correction provided by Bob Suko, TC&W:

A couple of comments regarding the meeting notes for clarification, specifically page #4 bullet point #2 under Operations:

1. We run 2-3 loaded coal trains per month westbound through this area, the empty trains go out to the BNSF at Appleton.
2. We run 3-4 loaded and empty ethanol trains through this area with the loads being eastbound and the empties being westbound.

Additionally, on page #4 referring to Granite Falls, it's important to note that we don't have any running rights on this subdivision of the BNSF and that they are running a very heavy workload of trains daily.

Also, as I mentioned Appleton is 144 miles out of the way for us impacting our customer base and additionally have no running rights on the BNSF east of Appleton. I've explained this multiple times but it seems to keep coming up so I'd like to make sure it's in the minutes.

Correction provided by Lynne Carper, Lake Forest representative:

Lynne Carper was in attendance for the full meeting on August 26, 2010.

Welcome and Introductions

- Requested audience members to sign up for Open Forum discussion so that appropriate time can be allotted to speak at the end of the PMT meeting.
- Reviewed agenda items, including standing Open Forum agenda item.
- In response to request made at PMT #2, the meeting will be taped and broadcast. Request was made to use the microphones during the meeting for taping clarity.
- Reviewed "we are here" roadmap; emphasizing focus of meeting to walk through preliminary railroad design concepts.
- Indicated corrections to August meeting notes in PMT packets.
- Called attention to summary of comments made during the working tour held on October 2, 2010.
- Highlighted that Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) are up on the study website.
- Reviewed Meeting Protocol. Ask PMT members and audience to respect meeting protocol.



Review of Study Goals and Objectives

- Jeanne Witzig indicated that the key issues/concerns/goals identified by the PMT members at the August meeting have been summarized into Draft Study Needs and Goals. The Draft document is included in the PMT packets, and reflects a format for this information to be used in the environmental document. **REQUESTED ACTION: In the interest of time asked that the PMT review the Draft document and provide comments before or at the next PMT meeting.**

Walk Through of Preliminary Railway Design Concepts for the MN&S Study

- Jeanne Witzig provided an overview of the reference documents included in the PMT packet: Summary of Existing Alignment Configuration and Operations; General Design Requirements, Key Issues with Range of Potential Mitigation Options/Design Elements; At-Grade Crossing Summary, Estimated Intersection Block Time, and General Noise and Vibration information.
- Reviewed that the preliminary railroad baseline design concepts reflect federal design requirements, and initial requirements specified by the railroads. The baseline design concepts do not currently reflect all the mitigation measures suggested to date, as the first step is to walk through the design with the PMT.
- Paul Danielson, Kimley-Horn went through the preliminary design concept packets, starting in the southern section of the study area. A summary of his key points are presented below:
 - Study team met with the CP, BNSF, and TC&W to review their specific design requirements.
 - Design needs to be able to move freight traffic efficiently and effectively to the MN&S
 - Connection from the CP – Bass Lake Spur requires a climb of roughly 20-30 feet in elevation
 - Freight rail operations require grades to be relatively flat; 0.6 to 0.8 percent grades are preferred, with maximum grade of 1 % (see handout)
 - Freight trains cannot make “sharp” turns, so need a prudent design that will allow TC&W to operate. A curve of 8 degrees allows for a 25 mile per hour speed
 - To make the connection from the CP- Bass Lake Spur to the MN&S need to consider: curve and grade requirements, desire to connect with existing Hwy 7 overpass, and minimize impacts to Golden Auto site.
 - Design team looked at numerous options in southern connection area. Design option presented tonight reflects maximum curves and grades. Currently evaluating other design options that could potentially reduce right of way impacts in this area.
 - Proposed design would allow for current switching operations in Skunk Hollow area to be removed.
 - Current customer served by CP Railway would need to be maintained.
 - Existing rail on MN&S is jointed rail. Proposed design would be to FRA Class 2 Standard. Design would include continuously welded rail (CWR). Under FRA Class 2, there would be more frequent inspections of track.



- FRA Class 2 standard would reflect maximum speed of 25 mph. Railroads could choose to travel at lower speeds through corridor. 25 mph reflects the design standard.
 - Grade separations would be challenging. Provided example of “impact footprint” relative to Library Lane and Lake Street.
 - Enhanced grade crossings, specifically Whistle Free/Quiet Zones could be a mitigation measures to further consider. Quiet Zones must have a higher level of protection that what is currently at crossings.
 - Track area near Minnetonka Boulevard requires straightening out.
 - Current design plans call for a grade separation of Cedar Lake Trail (trail is proposed to go under tracks).
 - In discussions with the BNSF Railway, indicated need for a 10,000 +/- siding. A siding is defined as a place to store trains off the mainline. Siding would be located within the existing BNSF right of way.
 - Preliminary design concepts do reflect closure of 29th Street.
- Following the presentation by Paul Danielson, opened the discussion up to questions from the PMT.
 - Question was asked relative to the length of a train, and curves. Response: A 4 to 5 degree curve is flatter than an 8 degree curve. Trains could make an 8 degree curve at 25 mph.
 - Question: Who sets the speeds? Response: Each classification of track has maximum speed. Operator of the trains has decision on speeds (within the max) based on specific conditions.
 - Comment: Disappointed that trains are going to move faster, and that design does not reflect mitigation. Response: Goal of this PMT meeting to provide overview of baseline design concepts. Study process not at the point yet to define mitigation. Important for the PMT to take design concepts back to neighborhoods to review, provide comments, and suggest potential mitigation measures.
 - Question regarding grade crossing. Response: Referenced handout in PMT packet that summarizes the conditions at the study area grade crossings. In response to request from PMT, reviewed the grade crossings, and existing protection.
 - Question regarding noise and vibration analysis. Response: Noise and Vibration expert will be conducting detailed analysis. Analysis has not been completed to date, as the proposed centerline of alignment needs to be defined before the study. Reviewed (read) the general questions and answers regarding noise and vibration (handout).
 - Question: Status of side track on the Bass Lake Spur? Response: Final decision on track status would need to be negotiated with CP. Abandonment of track in this area is something that the CP is considering.
 - Could Library Lane and Lake Street Intersection be made “Quiet”? Response: It could be considered. The quiet zone process would require approval by the FRA.
 - Question regarding requirement of 1 percent grade. Response: Current design requirements reflect 1 percent grade as maximum. If grade is reduced, track modifications would be required further to the west. During subsequent design stages, more detailed survey would be completed.



- General question regarding safety at Quiet Zones. Response: Provided quiet zone example from city of Coon Rapids and the Northstar Corridor. Additionally, quiet zone has to result in an increase in safety at the crossing. FRA is a part of the process/approval. Also indicated that the train operator has the option to blow whistle if needed. Quiet zone crossing design reflects “labyrinth” type of design.
- Question regarding development of cost estimates. Response: Currently in the process of developing preliminary capital cost estimates. Currently there are some key assumptions/elements that could sway the estimates either up or down. Cost estimates will be provided to PMT, and will include key area line items (e.g. track improvements, structural improvements, etc).
- General comment and expressed concern about time to review plans/information, and that preliminary design plans were not available prior to the PMT meeting. General question about how mitigation will be approved/decided. Response: Acknowledgement there is a lot of information to review. Initially study process assumed to be 6 months. Based on complexity of the process/issues, anticipate that the study schedule will be extended through spring 2011, and that more than 6 PMT meetings will be held for the study. January PMT will present proposed design concept to be studied in the state environmental assessment worksheet.
- Question: Does the study design cross Cedar Lake Road? Response: Current design does not extend to Cedar Lake Road crossing.
- Question: Will the study take into account proximity of area schools (identified 5)? Response: Study team has coordinated with St. Louis Park HS regarding bus and pedestrian travel patterns. Primary traffic issue is in the afternoon. Additionally, high school students have to cross tracks to get to the football field. This is an area where pedestrian mitigation could be considered.
- Question of where the proposed BNSF siding. Response: There is the potential that trains could be stored on the siding. Blocking operations are not anticipated to be performed on the proposed BNSF siding.
- General question regarding mitigation process: Response: Essentially two step process: 1) identify problems/issues, and then 2) develop solutions. Current focus of study at step 1. There is no mitigation off the table at this point in the study process.
- General comment that point in the process is confusing to public/audience members. Need clarity on other options for rerouting. Response: City of St. Louis Park resolution requested County to conduct two other studies to determine if there is another viable option to the MN&S. Currently studying potential to keep in Kenilworth as well as alternatives presented in the 2009 study. Joint meeting of the City and School Board will be held on November 29, 2010 to review findings from study. This will be a public meeting. Once city has received study results, they will be reviewed by city staff and technical consultants, followed by a council study session and outreach to determine how to proceed.

The purpose of the MN&S study is to evaluate if freight service is relocated, what would be the best design. Completion of the study does not mean final approval.



Next PMT Meeting

- In effort to assist in getting the information out regarding the study, the next PMT meeting will be an Open House, to be held on December 16, 2010. Technical experts will be available at the meeting to answer questions. The preliminary design concepts will be available at the meeting to review and discuss.
- Study team will also be doing outreach to the business community in the study area. We will be working closely with the city to reach out to individual business.
- Suggestion to include a Question and Answer period so that everyone hears questions/responses.
- **Action Item: If PMT members have suggestions on format for Open House, please submit ideas to la Xiong at Hennepin County.**

Open Forum Discussion

All PMT meetings will include an Open Forum Discussion.

Ten individuals signed up to speak at the Open Forum.

- General comment that timeline keeps changing and there is lot of information to review. How should the input be provided, and how should it be focused? Supportive of open house idea. Response: Key Issue handout in PMT packet can be used as a starting reference point for mitigation measures that relate to key issues. Also referred to Comment sheet provided. **Action: Requested preliminary comments on DRAFT railroad design concepts by December 7.**
- Comment: Open house should be held at a location that can accommodate more people than the council chambers. Would like more information on how mitigation decisions will be made and what can this study learn from other communities.
- Comment: Opposed to this project, and wants to hear more about other options.
- Question: Will there be a derailment study? Response: Safety factors, speed and curves are part of the overall design requirements. TC&W indicated “we don’t want derailment”. If the MN&S spur is the corridor, TC&W will insist design is better than today.
- General concern about bridge over Minnetonka Boulevard and the proposed track correction required in this area. Concerned about impact to residence. Response: Study team will identify specific dimensions in this area for clarity on impact.
- General comment about frustration with the process.
- Question regarding ability of the train to stop traveling 20 mph as it crosses Dakota Avenue? Response: The ability of the train to stop is dependent on many factors. This question would require analysis (outside of PMT meeting) to provide an accurate response.
- Question: Can there be a grade separation at Dakota Avenue by the school? Response: First, it is anticipated to be easier to get the road over the railroad, because cars can climb easier than trains. Grade separation in this area would have significant impacts to the surrounding area, as additional right of way would be required to accommodate the grade separation.



- Question regarding at-grade crossing studied? Response: Referred to grade crossing summary handout in PMT packet. Grade crossing evaluated in study are those that are potentially impacted by track improvements. Excelsior Boulevard is not currently included in the study. TC&W indicated that they did not believe anything would change at Excelsior Boulevard. **Action: Katie Walker will check with Jim Grube of Hennepin County regarding what analysis has been done to date at Excelsior Boulevard.**
- Comment as a concerned citizen that St. Louis Park is known for “children first”. Concerned about derailments, chemicals, and children making poor decisions. Concerned about cars backing up on Hwy 7 if Lake Street and Library Lane are closed.
- General question/comment that if this project is not a done deal, why are funds being spent on the design and when does the decision need to be made? Response: The level of design at this stage of the process is at a level for environmental review. The design is not at a preliminary engineering level. Again, the purpose of this study is to determine if in MN&S, what would be the best design. Completion of the state environmental review process does not mean approval of the project.
- Question of when LRT is coming. Response: The LRT development process was reviewed. A locally preferred alternative has been selected, and an application to FTA to move into preliminary engineering has been made. The Metropolitan Council is now the lead local agency. LRT construction is anticipated to start in 2014. Along with LRT, need to figure out a way for freight to move from west to St. Paul and back again. In developing solutions, need to identify design/alternatives that first avoid, then minimize, then mitigate. The LRT and freight actions will need to move in tandem. **Action: Provide an outline on process and decision point schedule.**

Summary/Status of Action Items from PMT #1

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline/Status
PMT #1		
Asked PMT members to identify ways the project team can assist their respective group in getting the word out regarding the project	PMT Members	ON-GOING
Hennepin County will check into providing a more user friendly web address.	Ia Xiong/Hennepin County	COMPLETE New Website Address Provided: http://mnsrailstudy.org/
Check on policy to televise PMT Meetings on	Kevin Locke/City of St.	COMPLETE



City's Cable network	Louis Park	City has the ability to televise meetings. Will pursue for future PMT meetings.
Recommendation to bring the findings of the two separate studies underway, (co-location in Kenilworth and alternatives to the MN&S Spur) in response to request by the City of St. Louis Park, to the PMT for information (anticipate at PMT Meeting #5).	Hennepin County/City of St. Louis Park	ON-GOING PMT Meeting #5
Provide clarification on existing railroad ROW in MN&S Spur.	KHA Team in Consultation with CP Railway	ON-GOING To be addressed in railway presentation discussion at PMT #2
Coordinate with CP Railway on best time to view corridor from a safety perspective. Work with PMT members to identify most appropriate locations to view the project area.	KHA Team	COMPLETE Field Review scheduled for September 18, 2010 from 10-12 noon.
General request to bring or submit questions to be addressed at upcoming PMT meetings. Questions can be submitted to:	PMT Members	ON-GOING

Summary of Action Items from PMT #2

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline/Status
PMT #2		
Summarize priorities provided by PMT members into Draft Study Goals/Objectives	Kimley-Horn is partnership with HC, Mn/DOT and SLP	COMPLETE
Review Official Requests submitted by members of the PMT relative to the scope of this study.	HC, Mn/DOT and SLP	COMPLETE



Summary of Action Items from PMT # 4

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline/Status
PMT #4		
Requested PMT members to review and provide comments on the DRAFT Study Needs and Goals	PMT Members	On or before next PMT meeting
Asked PMT members to provide suggestions on format for December 16 Open House	PMT Members	On or before December 1
Requested PMT members to provide preliminary comments on Preliminary Railway Design Concepts	PMT Members	December 7
Follow up with Jim Grube Hennepin County on Excelsior Boulevard	Katie Walker, HC	On or before next PMT meeting
Provide Outline on LRT and Freight Rail Process/Schedule	Study team	On or before next PMT meeting





MN&S FREIGHT RAIL STUDY

HENNEPIN COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY AND THE
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN COOPERATION WITH THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK

Attachment A: Others Present at Meeting

Jeb Myers	Kari Hendin
Suzie Buchkosky	Rosie McKay
Allan Elias	Mike Daly
Jeremy Meyer	Joe Neal
Mike Rozman	Meg McCormick
T. Rozman	Fritz Vandover
John Madison	Iris and Tony Pasell
Martin Green	Cheryl DeVaal
Sue Sanger	Brad Smith
Pat Alliton	Dave McKenzie, S EH
Dave Christianson, Mn/DOT	Don and Dorothy Yohnke
Thorwald Anderson	Carl and Carole Bennis
Helene Herbst	Jerry M. Vasquez
Mike Hough	Matt Flory
Lisa Gulbranson	Tara Frady
Jeff Roy, LNA	Kathy Steward
Mary Gosselin, LNA	Mike Rose
Sharon Duncan, LNA	Jeff Dugdare
Claire (last name)	Carol and Bill Donlon
Mary Beth Gaines	Clayton Johnson
Gail Miller	Tom Johnson
Duane Googins	Scott Dworakaski





- Bryan Hins
- David and Suzanne Davison
- Mark Christiansen
- Chris and Celeste Gaspard
- Susan Melbye
- Jennifer Kiss
- Anne Mavity
- Paul Danielson, Kimley-Horn
- Mike Hermann, Kimley-Horn
- Michael Couse, AECOM

