

SUMMARY OF WILL COUNTY IMPACTS

Identified By The
Draft Environmental Impact Study
Prepared In Connection With The Proposed Acquisition Of
Elgin Joliet & Eastern Railway [EJ&E]
By Canadian National Railway [CN]

Introduction:

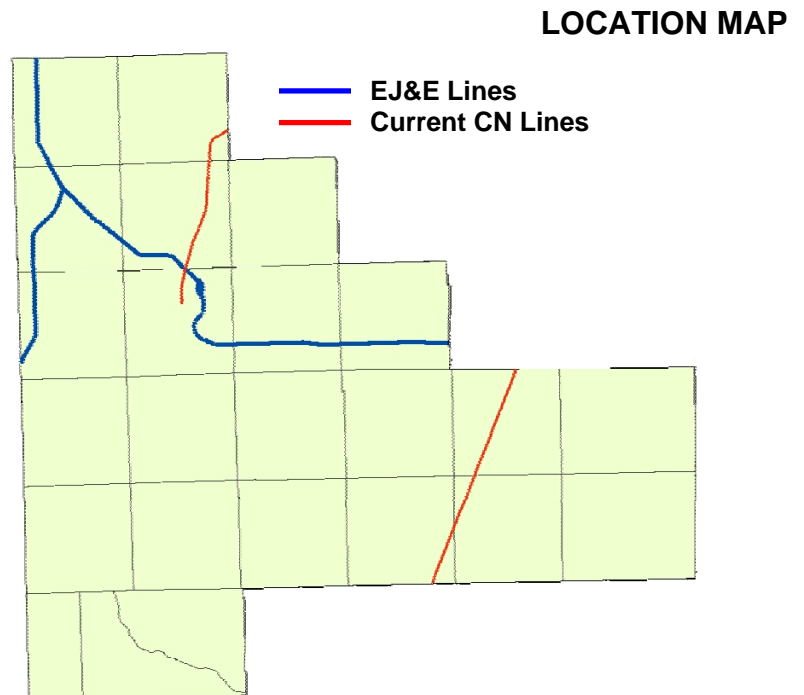
On July 25, 2008 the Surface Transportation Board released a Draft Environmental Impact Study [DEIS] identifying potential issues along the entire route of the Elgin Joliet & Eastern Railway [EJ&E], which may occur as a result of the Canadian National Railway's [CN] purchase of the EJ&E.

The DEIS examined four different areas:

- Impacts on current CN routes and communities if the acquisition is approved.
- Impacts on EJ&E routes and communities if the acquisition is approved.
- Impacts due to construction of connectors
- Impacts if current operations continued without modification

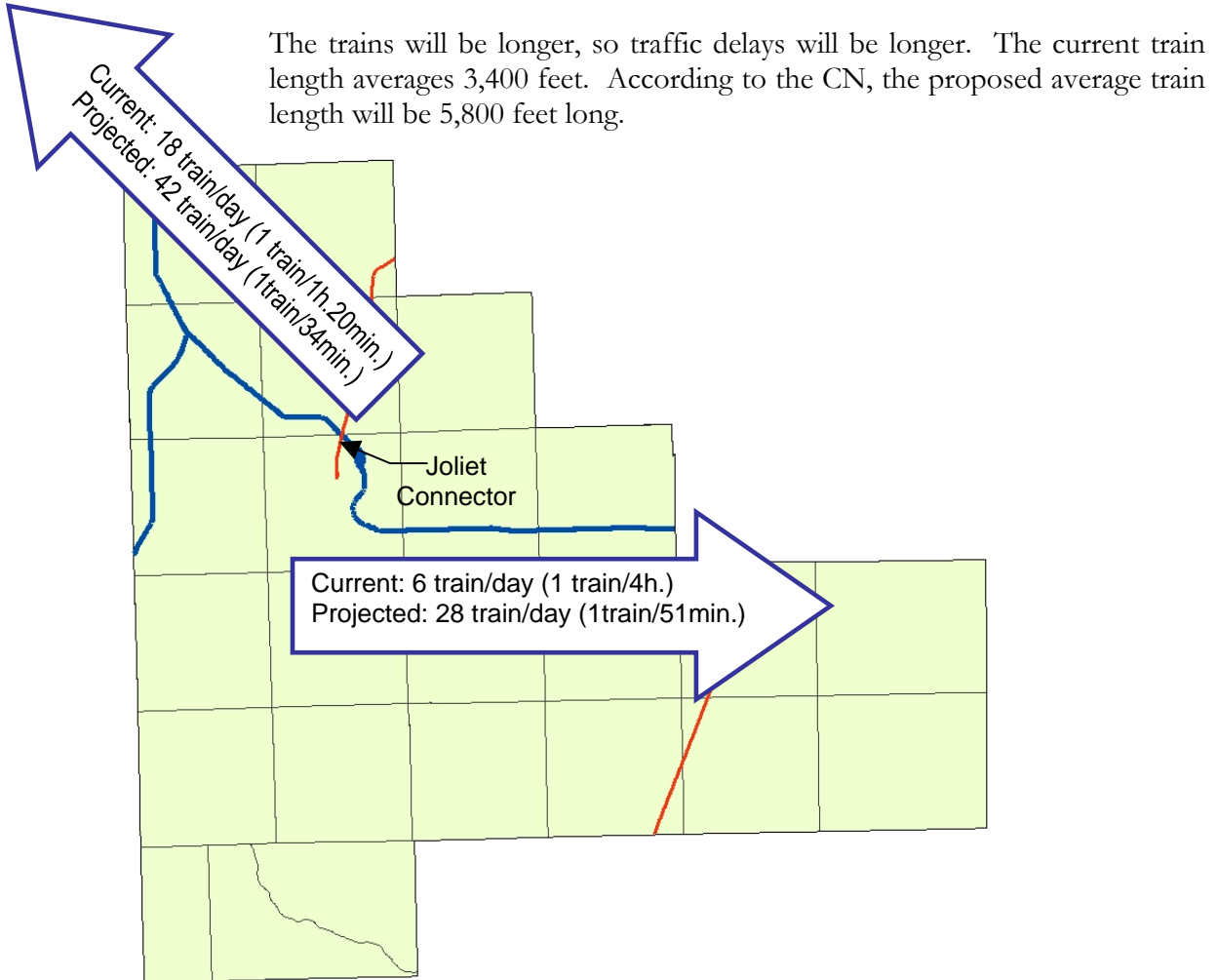
Each of the areas of study were evaluated to project impacts in 13 categories:

1. Rail Operations
2. Rail Safety
3. Transportation System
4. Hazardous Waste Sites
5. Land Use
6. Socio-Economics
7. Environmental Justice
8. Energy
9. Air Quality and Climate
10. Noise and Vibration
11. Biological Resources
12. Water Resources
13. Cultural Resources



Proposed Railroad Changes in Will County:

Many Will County communities will see an additional 24 trains per day, the greatest numeric increase along the entirety of the proposed CN route. The number of trains will increase from 18 trains per day, *which averages to a train every 1 hour and 20 minutes*, to a projected rate of 42.3 trains per day, *which averages to one train every 34 minutes!*



Canadian National also proposes to construct a connector from EJ&E to their existing line which is used by the Metra Heritage Corridor. The exact location of the proposed connector is just north of the old Joliet Prison and west of the EJ&E viaduct over Collins Street (IL Route 171).

Identified Impacts

1) Rail Operations

With regard to passenger train service, no significant impact was noted in the DEIS for existing services provided by Amtrak or Metra. No specific issue was addressed regarding future passenger rail service, other than the possibility that the proposed STAR Line could present “potential operational complexities.” The DEIS’s use of this term appears to be deliberately vague since there is not an operational plan available for the STAR Line and CN has stated on record maintaining freight operations will be a priority.

2) Rail Safety

Two at-grade crossings in Will County were modeled to determine the likelihood of an increase of accidents greater than 0.15 accidents per year (average: 1 accident every 7 years). According to the DEIS's model, Woodruff Road in Joliet would average 0.18 accidents per year under current conditions and 0.21 accidents per year with the proposed transaction. So regardless of the decision, Woodruff Road appears to require additional safety measures.

Renwick Road near Plainfield is a statistical anomaly. Crossing gates were installed earlier this year (2008) to supplement the existing flashing light signals. Since there is no history for this at-grade crossing with crossing gates, the transportation modeling program generated an accident rate of 0.16 accidents per year under the previous conditions. The DEIS suggests that the new crossing gates are an adequate mitigation measure.

3) Transportation System

Given the standards used by the DEIS, only three of the 38 at-grade crossings in Will County received consideration. In Plainfield, eastbound 135th Street is projected to have traffic backed up enough to block US Route 30.

Woodruff Road in Joliet will not only expect the additional frequency of accidents previously discussed, but also attainment of the over 40 hours of Total Delay per Day threshold. Total Delay per Day is simply the sum of the amount of time each vehicle is delayed at a crossing. The example given was if 60 vehicles were each delayed 1 minute the Total Delay would be 1 hour. Woodruff Road is expected to reach 156 hours of Total Delay per Day.



Washington Street in Joliet is expected to experience the largest amount of Total Delay per Day at 164 hours of Total Delay per Day.

Illinois Route 126 in Plainfield did not receive consideration for mitigation in the DEIS despite the projection of over 22,000 vehicles per day crossing the tracks in 2015 and its close proximity to US Route 30/Illinois Route 59. Even though there will be more trains, which will be an average of 2,000 feet longer according to the DEIS, the average delay will not increase dramatically due to the trains specified in CN's operational plan are expected to run 15% faster than the current EJ&E trains. The expected Total Delay per Day at Illinois Route 126 is 33 hours and the length of auto back-up from the crossing would average only 100 feet, according to the projections and the DEIS analysis.

With regard to emergency response, Plainfield Fire Station #3 on 119th Street near US Route 30 and Joliet Fire Station #8 on Essington Road near Caton Farm Road were identified by the DEIS as the only two emergency service providers that could be "substantially affected." The total time the nearby crossings could be blocked exceeds the DEIS threshold of 30 minutes and each of these stations do not have a grade separated crossing within 1 mile.

4) Hazardous Waste Sites

In Will County, there are known Hazardous Waste Sites near the proposed construction sites at the Joliet Connector and East Joliet Yards. Regardless of who owns the railway, the same US EPA requirements apply.

5) Land Use

The Proposed Joliet Connection could affect land use, including the I&M Canal Trail, but not the land use patterns in this area because most of the land use is for industrial and commercial uses.

6) Socio-Economics

Some homes, especially those less than 1,700 square feet in area, in close proximity to the railroad right-of-way may see a decrease in the property values based on case studies in the Cleveland, Ohio area.

House Size	Change in Property Value by Distance from Rail Line (%)								
	1 Additional Train			10 Additional Trains			20 Additional Trains		
	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.	≤250 ft.	251-500 ft.	501-750 ft.
Small (<1,250 sq. ft.)	(0.24)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(2.40)	(1.05)	(1.16)	(4.79)	(2.10)	(2.32)
Medium (1,251-1,700 sq. ft.)	(0.27)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(2.68)	(1.09)	(0.74)	(5.35)	(2.19)	(1.47)
Large (>1,700 sq. ft.)	(0.19)	n/a ^a	n/a ^a	(1.91)	n/a ^a	n/a ^a	3.81	n/a ^a	n/a ^a

Source: Derived from Simons and El Jaouhari, 2004.⁶

Notes:

^a Not statistically significant.

7) Environmental Justice

There are no minority or low-income communities in Will County, or the entire region, disproportionately affected by the potential impacts generated by the proposed acquisition.

8) Energy

Due to the increased travel distance CN’s rerouting will cause and the corresponding delays experienced by cars and trucks, fuel consumption for the Chicago region will increase by over 639,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 84,000 gallons of gasoline per year.

9) Air Quality and Climate

The increase in train traffic and additional idling vehicles would not exceed the current 1-hour or 8-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standards as a result of carbon monoxide emissions at any specific sites in Will County or the Region.

The increase in carbon dioxide emissions is equivalent to 1,000 passenger vehicles (0.0069 million metric tons of carbon dioxide), which is a tiny fraction of the total carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. and the world.

10) Noise and Vibration

Vibrations from future train operations on the EJ&E rail line would not be sufficient to damage the earthen Prestwick Dam in Frankfort.

The noise level along the Lake Renwick Heron Rookery will increase by 4 decibels and 6 decibels along the Sugar Creek Preserve and were not deemed significant impacts in Section 11 – Biological Resources.

The mitigation measures for noise identified in the Environmental Impact Statement addresses train horns in Quiet Zones as well as the squealing and clanking by wheels passing and turning on the tracks. There are no specific recommendations for Will County.

11) Biological Resources

The Hine's Emerald Dragonfly has a known habitat along the Romeoville Branch of the EJ&E. EJ&E maintains train speeds between 4 and 6 mph at all times on that Segment in order to reduce vibration impacts to the larvae. The proposed acquisition would not affect that procedure so the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly habitat will not be adversely affected.

12) Water Resources

Since all operations will be conducted on existing railroad right-of-way, there will be no additional impact on water resources in Will County or the region other than standard erosion control procedures during construction.

13) Cultural Resources

Despite new construction for the Joliet Connector near the I&M Canal, no cultural resources will be adversely affected in Will County.

Next Steps:

The Surface Transportation Board will accept comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Study until Tuesday, September 30, 2008. The Will County Department of Highways, Land Use Department and the State's Attorney's Office through Special Council will coordinate and consolidate comments regarding technical issues, shortfalls, and errors within the Draft Environmental Impact Study.

The Land Use Department's preliminary thoughts on the inadequacies of the DEIS include a lack of specific recommendations and enforceable conditions of operation.

The DEIS does not recommend means of mitigation to traffic congestion and delay for any at-grade crossing in the region. Only a list of possible mitigation options are identified and a specific recommendation will not occur until the Final Environmental Impact Study is released when it is too late to comment.

The DEIS is reliant upon the Operational Plan provided by CN, but the Surface Transportation Board does not require strict adherence to that Operational Plan by any enforceable means similar to the conditions the Will County Board enforces for Special Use Permits Ordinances.