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SERVICE DATE - AUGUST 21, 1998  
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-33 (SUB-NO.116X)

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY  
-ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION-  
IN SALT LAKE CITY, SALT LAKE COUNTY, UT

### BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment and discontinuance of operations over three short railroad line segments described as the Provo Subdivision from milepost 799.0 to milepost 800.26 (a distance of 1.26 miles), the Passenger Line Industrial Lead from milepost 782.32 to milepost 782.79 (a distance of 0.47-mile) and the Provo Subdivision Running Track Passenger Line from milepost 744.20 to milepost 745.48 (a distance of 1.28 miles), for a total distance of 3.01 miles in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

There are four shippers on the lines. Cereal Food Processors and Holnam are located adjacent to the Provo Subdivision. Mountain Cement is located adjacent to the Passenger Line Industrial Lead. Tenneco is located adjacent to the Provo Subdivision Running Track Passenger Line and Amtrak also currently uses that line. In 1996, freight traffic on the lines consisted of 4,068 carloads inbound and 1,877 carloads outbound, for a total of 5,945 carloads. In 1997 freight traffic consisted of 3,347 carloads inbound and 1,649 carloads outbound, for a total of 4,986 carloads. The Passenger Industrial Lead, which extends a distance of 0.47 miles between mileposts 782.32 and 782.79, is located west of downtown Salt Lake City and extends in a general easterly direction from near I-215 to 4<sup>th</sup> West Street with the majority of the track located adjacent to and southerly of 9<sup>th</sup> South Street. The Provo Subdivision, which extends a distance of 1.26 miles between mileposts 799.0 and 800.26, is located near downtown Salt Lake City and extends in a

general northerly direction from near 9<sup>th</sup> South Street to near North Temple Street with the majority of the track located in either 4<sup>th</sup> West or 5<sup>th</sup> West Streets. The right-of-way for the two rail lines encompasses 16.452 total acres, with 10.974 acres tentatively considered to be reversionary and 5.478 acres tentatively considered to be non-reversionary. The Provo Subdivision Running Track Passenger Line extends a distance of 1.28 miles between mileposts 744.20 and 745.48, is located near downtown Salt Lake City and extends in a general northerly direction from 9<sup>th</sup> South Street to near South Temple Street with the majority of the track located in 5<sup>th</sup> West Streets. The right-of-way encompasses 2.206 total acres, with all tentatively considered to be reversionary. The terrain for these three rail lines is essentially level with adjacent land uses ranging from light industrial to commercial.

These railroads are located within a city project commonly referred to as the "Gateway Project." The Gateway Project of Salt Lake City includes, in part, the shortening of the viaducts at ground level at 500 West and construction of an intermodal transportation facility in the Gateway area. Also, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) plans to reconstruct a segment of Interstate 15 which includes demolition and reconstruction of the viaducts. UDOT intends to shorten the viaducts as part of the I-15 Project in order to accommodate the Gateway Project. The shortening of the viaducts and the general redevelopment program would require removal of the portions of trackage proposed for abandonment in this proceeding.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) will convey the right-of-way underlying the lines to the Utah Department of Transportation and the Salt Lake City Corporation as required for the City's Gateway Project. Therefore UP has stated that it will not negotiate with any party for the transfer of the lines for trail use because UP has already agreed to transfer the property.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Geodetic Survey, Utah Department of

Environmental Quality, Utah State Historical Society, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Service, Utah Field Office and the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

### **CONDITIONS**

The State of Utah, Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Response and Remediation (DERR) has informed the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis that eight CERCLIS (superfund) sites are in close proximity to the three rail lines proposed for abandonment. CERCLIS contain data on potentially hazardous waste sites that have been reported to the EPA by states, municipalities, private companies, and private persons that are either proposed for or are included on the National Priorities List. DERR is not aware of any spills that have recently occurred in the right-of-way of the rail lines in question, but DERR is aware that a roundhouse was once located in the area around 4<sup>th</sup> South and 6<sup>th</sup> West. DERR also stated that recent construction activities near 4<sup>th</sup> South uncovered several railroad related burn pits. DERR has also been advised of a buried sludge-pit in the vicinity of the historic roundhouse in the railroad corridor. It is not clear that salvage of the rail right-of-way would uncover these potential hazardous sites. **However, if during salvage of the rail right-of-way if any of these potential sites should be uncovered salvage should cease and DERR should be consulted.**

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified 3 geodetic station markers along the rail line and requests 90 days notice to plan relocation of any markers which may be disturbed or destroyed. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: **The Union Pacific Railroad Co. shall consult with the National Geodetic Survey and provide NGS with 90 days notice prior to disturbing or destroying any geodetic markers.**

The Army Corps of Engineers wrote that a Department of the Army permit may be required for work associated with the Passenger Line- Industrial Lead (MP781.0 to MP782.79) crossing of the Jordan River at approximately 900 West 900 South. The Union Pacific Railroad Company states that the line crossing this river was modified and no longer crosses the river. Therefore we will not recommend a condition.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, and subject to the recommended conditions, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

#### **PUBLIC USE**

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

#### **TRAILS USE**

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

#### **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

The Board's Office of Congressional and Public Services (OCPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OCPS directly at (202) 565-1594, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Congressional and Public Services, Room 843, 1925 K St. Washington, DC 20423.

#### **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 2221, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Scott Decker, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-33 (Sub No. 116X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Scott Decker at (202) 565-1531.

Date made available to the public: August 18, 1998.

Comment due date: September 17, 1998.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of  
Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

PLEASE SCAN MAP