

4.13 Cultural Resources

SEA analyzed the potential affects of the Proposed Action and associated new construction on historic and archeological resources (cultural resources). Section 4.13.1 discusses the methodology used to determine the potential effects. Sections 4.13.2 presents the No-Action Alternative, and Section 4.13.3 presents the effects of the Proposed Action.

The following is a summary of the findings presented in this section:

- SEA analyzed the potential impact of the Proposed Action and the associated construction of new rail connections and double track on historic properties in the Area of Potential Effect that are on or are eligible to be place on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Increased noise and vibrations as a result of increased freight rail traffic along the EJ&E rail line would not directly affect historic or cultural resources in or immediately adjacent to the Area of Potential Effect. With respect to the proposed construction, none of the new rail connections or their alternative configurations or the double track segments would adversely affect historic properties that are on or eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and that are within the Area of Potential Effect. [Section 4.13.3 and .4]

4.13.1 Methodology

SEA defined the Area of Potential Effect (APE) as the area of construction where ground-disturbing activity would take place. The APE consists primarily of railroad-owned Right-of-Way (ROW). Non-railroad property that would be acquired specifically to construct connections between the CN and EJ&E is also included in the APE.

SEA sent National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) scoping letters to the Illinois and Indiana State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in January 2008. SEA also sent NEPA scoping letters to representatives of several Federally-recognized Native American tribes in January 2008. The Illinois and Indiana SHPOs requested further details on the project, including information on the APE regarding historic properties within it.

On April 30, 2008, SEA sent letters to the Illinois and Indiana SHPOs, formally initiating the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). .In May 2008, SEA met with both the Illinois and Indiana SHPOs.

SEA sent formal tribal contact letters to six Federally-recognized Native American tribes on April 9, 2008, and followed up in May 2008. At the request of the SHPOs, SEA sent contact letters to two additional tribes. One of the tribes (the Prairie Band of the Potawatomi Nation) responded, indicating that they knew of no historical cultural resources in the study area.

SEA also conducted archaeological and architectural historical assessment surveys of the APE in April, May, and June of 2008.

4.13.2 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the EJ&E rail line would continue to operate as it currently does (See Section 2.3.1). Cultural resources in the project APE would experience neither direct construction-related impacts nor further impacts related to operation and maintenance of the rail line. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the No-Action Alternative.

4.13.3 Proposed Action

This section assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Action and associated new construction on historic properties (i.e., National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible or NRHP-listed cultural resources) within the project APE.

4.13.3.1 Proposed Changes in Rail Line Operations

Operationally, the Applicants would substantially increase the number of trains traveling on several segments of the EJ&E rail line under the Proposed Action. As a result of the increased traffic, areas surrounding many segments of the EJ&E rail line within the Study Area would experience greater noise impacts (See Section 4.10). However, noise and vibration would not adversely affect cultural resources in or immediately adjacent to the project APE.

4.13.3.2 Proposed New Constructions

The Proposed Action alternative consists of the construction of six proposed rail connections and four proposed double tracks and/or siding extensions. These project components are described in Section 2.2.2.

Direct impacts on cultural resources from construction of the connections and double-track under the Proposed Action would not occur along several segments of the EJ&E rail line. The following paragraphs summarize direct impact locations (from north to south and counterclockwise around the arc) in the Study Area.

No Build Alternatives

Because this alternative involves no construction or ground-disturbance activities, no NRHP-listed or NRHP-eligible cultural resources would be affected by this alternative at any of the connection or double track locations.

Proposed Munger Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Munger Connection found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of the proposed connection or any of its alternative configurations.

Proposed Joliet Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Joliet Connection found that none of the historic properties located within the APE (two National Register-eligible bridges and the National Register-listed I&M Canal) would be adversely affected by the construction of the proposed connection or any of its alternative configurations.

Proposed Matteson Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the proposed Matteson Connection found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. A potential historic district associated with “Historic Matteson” lies west of the CN railroad tracks and is therefore outside the project APE. In addition, the railroad building and three historic buildings located along Main Street immediately east of the CN tracks are also outside the project APE. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of the proposed connection or any of its alternative configurations.

Proposed Griffith Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Griffith Connection found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this connection.

Proposed Ivanhoe Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Ivanhoe Connection found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this connection.

Proposed Kirk Yard Connection

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Kirk Yard Connection found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this connection.

Proposed Leithton Double Track

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Leithton Double Track found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this second track.

Proposed Diamond Lake-to-Gilmer Road Double Track

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed Diamond Lake-to-Gilmer Road Double Track found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this second track.

Proposed East Siding-to-Walker Double Track

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed East Siding-to-Walker Double Track found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this second track.

Proposed East Joliet-to-Frankfort Double Track

A cultural resource assessment survey by SEA of the APE associated with the construction of the proposed East Joliet-to-Frankfort Double Track found that no archaeological or historic resources were present. SEA therefore has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the construction of this second track.

4.13.4 Conclusion

SEA determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on any property listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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