

VILLAGE OF NORTH BARRINGTON

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Bruce J. Sauer, Village President

Memorandum

From: Bruce J. Sauer, Village President
To: Section on Environmental Analysis of the STB

The expansion of the EJ&E rail line and the subsequent increase in rail traffic will be immeasurably harmful to the Barrington area communities.

Sound and air pollution; petrified traffic on multiple roads; police, fire and emergency response atrophy; and the simple, long term destruction of property values will be the end result of this proposal.

The EJ&E simply crosses too many of our most traveled and most necessary roads. Access to our schools, our hospital, our business districts, our sports fields, our restaurants and churches all require a trip across those rail lines by the vast majority of our residents. Our highest density roads, Route 59, Lake Cook Road, Cuba Road, Ela Road, Routes 12, 22 & 14 are the only paths to employment for thousands of commuters who travel through the Barrington communities everyday. Each of those roads is bisected by the EJ&E. These already stressed suburbanites will loose hours of everyday to an expanded and ever worsening traffic ordeal. Their productivity, their standard of life, their very nature will be negatively impacted.

The real tragedy of this mess is that the people impacted most have chosen to live in the area because of its rural, slower paced flavor. It is the stark truth that homes valued from the hundreds of thousands to the millions of dollars are within stepping distance of the EJ&E. The line's long history of minimum use has created an acceptance of its place in the community and an expectation of utilization continuity. There is a moral sense of place in the current practice of minimal rail traffic on the EJ&E.

The communities it traverses have long understood that another commuter line could someday travel these rails, enhancing access to Chicago and lowering commuter woes. This has been historically perceived as a necessary expansion of mass transit and an acceptable use of the EJ&E line. It fits the needs and the design of the communities. CN's purchase of that line jeopardizes any increase in mass transit rail support.

While pollution, traffic and safety can be numerically documented and logically argued, I fear most for the families who have made the greatest investment of their lives in their homes. The Barrington area has long been a bastion of high property value. People

spend more on housing here because of the location, the schools, and the way of life. They have anticipated, and rightly so, an increased value in their home that will someday translate to equity based savings. Many use that equity to finance college educations and for most, that value enhanced equity is expected to serve as the cornerstone of their retirement. The expansion of the EJ&E line will drive property values below purchase prices, wiping out all gains, destroying educational dreams and making senior lives that much harder.

And to what end?

CN's management has stated that it expects growing profits from the EJ&E for decades to come. We are not blind to the advantages freight moving quickly through Chicagoland brings to endless suppliers and consumers alike. Delivery expediency will create greater demand for that service, and demand will generate better pricing and greater profits for CN. It is fair therefore, for the people in the Barrington area to also have expectations.

An amenable plan for the expansion of this line that mitigates at grade crossing problems, decreases all forms of environmental degradation, maintains property values and enhances traffic flow is possible. It will take money . . . but money is just what they expect to gain.

I call upon the STB to look at this projected line purchase as the 100 year investment it truly is. The amount of investment required to resolve the social and environmental issues, if projected over the century of service and profits anticipated, is fair.

Those who will gain the most must be required to carry the burden of making their investment palatable to those who will loose the most.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce J. Sauer".

Bruce J. Sauer
Village President, North Barrington