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Bend-in-the-River

An environmental education space
for an urban community

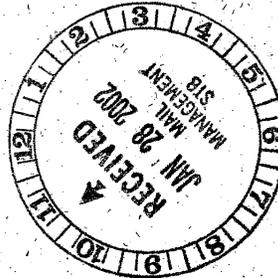
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December 19, 2001
Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 183)

Dear Secretary:

It is with some concern that we write on behalf of a group of interested citizens to inform the Board of problems which we believe will result from the reactivation of the freight rail line by Union Pacific Railroad along the 900 South corridor on the west side of Salt Lake City.

Over 25 community organizations have worked for four years to create a two-acre natural area and urban tree house for and with the children of the Glendale/Poplar Grove area. The site is on Fremont Ave. on the east bank of the Jordan River just south of Jordan Park.

The Bend-in-the-River Partnership includes local government, schools, colleges, neighbors, and non-profit organizations. Children have worked with adults to plant over \$11,000 worth of native trees and shrubs, have watered those plantings regularly, and are slowly improving the two acre site to enable classes from Parkview, Riley, Glendale, and other area schools to use the site as an environmental learning center. Classes use the area daily during the spring and fall and somewhat less frequently at other times of the year.

In addition, the Bend-in-the-River recently received significant recognition as a successful urban greenspace. The Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 Winter Olympics funded a large planting in October, and over 75 community members worked together to plant 100 native plants and shrubs. The Bend-in-the-River project qualified for this funding through SLOC's initiative to promote urban forestry.

The viability of this site, and our collective work, derives its sustainability through access to the site from the nearby residents and the children mentioned above. The Bend-in-the-River is located 2 blocks south of the proposed Union Pacific rail line, and many of the site users reside north of 900 South. We are concerned that the rail line re-activation proposal would adversely affect this access and as a result damage the success of our project in its infancy.

The members of the Executive Committee of the Bend-in-the-River Partnership request that you consider these issues as you make your decisions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Irene Fisher
Irene Fisher
Executive Committee Chair
Bend-in-the-River Partnership

Cc: Charles Spitulnik

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