



To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VI. A.

From: Mark K. Nolan, AICP, Transportation Planner

Action

Date: December 19, 2013

Discussion

Information

Subject: Southwest LRT Freight Rail Re-Route: The "Southern Arm"

Action Requested:

Discuss potential issues regarding the "Southern Arm" alternative of the Southwest LRT freight rail re-route options and potential impacts to Edina, and make recommendations for City Council consideration if necessary.

Information / Background:

Please recall that at the October 24 ETC meeting the group Safety in the Park gave a presentation regarding issues surrounding the Southwest LRT and potential freight rail re-route options. While their presentation focused on future impacts to St. Louis Park, they also discussed the planned "southern arm," which runs on MN&S track through Edina (east of Highway 100). Safety in the Park discussed how the possibility exists for increased freight traffic with this option, potentially impacting Edina neighborhoods.

Attachments:

October 24, 2013 Safety in the Park Presentation (slides 18-30)

The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



An important component that affects Edina directly is the planned "Southern Arm".

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



The Southern Arm would replace a "switching wye" in St. Louis Park that enables trains to change direction from East/West to North/South and vice versa. It's a cumbersome procedure, rarely utilized.



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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route

A map of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, illustrating a freight rail re-route. The map shows a network of streets including 40th St, 39th St W, 37th St W, 35th St W, 33rd St W, 31st St W, 29th St W, 27th St W, 25th St W, 23rd St W, 21st St W, 19th St W, 17th St W, 15th St W, 13th St W, 11th St W, 9th St W, 7th St W, 5th St W, 3rd St W, 1st St W, and the Mississippi River. Blue arrows indicate the current rail route, and red arrows indicate the proposed re-route. The re-route follows a path from the river, through 40th St, 39th St W, 37th St W, 35th St W, 33rd St W, 31st St W, 29th St W, 27th St W, 25th St W, 23rd St W, 21st St W, 19th St W, 17th St W, 15th St W, 13th St W, 11th St W, 9th St W, 7th St W, 5th St W, 3rd St W, and 1st St W. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The copyright notice at the bottom right reads "©2013 Hennepin County - All Rights Reserved".

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route

As part of the SWLRT plan the switching wye may be replaced by a southern arm to accomplish the same task-changing direction.

A map of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, illustrating a freight rail re-route. The map shows a network of streets including 40th St, 39th St W, 37th St W, 35th St W, 33rd St W, 31st St W, 29th St W, 27th St W, 25th St W, 23rd St W, 21st St W, 19th St W, 17th St W, 15th St W, 13th St W, 11th St W, 9th St W, 7th St W, 5th St W, 3rd St W, and 1st St W. Blue arrows indicate the current rail route, and grey arrows indicate the proposed re-route. The re-route follows a path from the river, through 40th St, 39th St W, 37th St W, 35th St W, 33rd St W, 31st St W, 29th St W, 27th St W, 25th St W, 23rd St W, 21st St W, 19th St W, 17th St W, 15th St W, 13th St W, 11th St W, 9th St W, 7th St W, 5th St W, 3rd St W, and 1st St W. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The copyright notice at the bottom right reads "©2013 Hennepin County - All Rights Reserved".

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



The combination of the Swap and the Southern Arm is estimated by the Met Council to cost \$60M.

Only the SLP re-route (in the most recent plan) **REQUIRES** these elements because building the northerly arm of the Brunswick Central plan would wipe out the Switching Wye and the railroad demands *some* way to change direction.

Therefore, the actual cost of the Brunswick Central is \$260M, not just \$200M. Collocation does not require southern arm.

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



While SitP's main goal is to stop an SLP re-route, we are also concerned about the Southern Arm. Depending on market conditions, the Southern Arm will make it possible for long, heavy freight trains to cross several St. Louis Park roads, including Excelsior Blvd, at grade creating safety issues. It is, again, modifying a track that was never built for such purposes into a mainline.

This should concern Edina as well since the MN&S travels past churches, homes, and more in close proximity.

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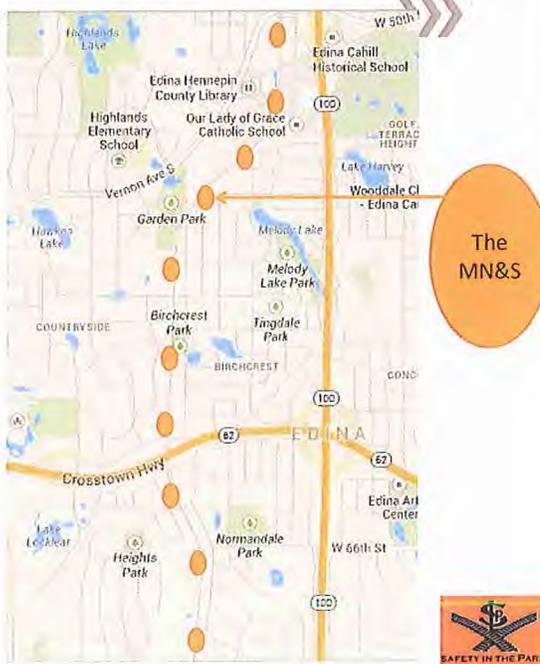


The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route

How does this effect Edina?

If market conditions are favorable, it could mean large increases in freight headed to the Minnesota River Docks.

Most importantly, once this is built, there is no turning back. Federal law protects rail lines in perpetuity.



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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route

The Minnesota River Grain Elevator and Docks



The MN&S

Swing Bridge

Barge Loading

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route

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The St. Louis Park Freight Rail Re-Route



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