

ITEM 11 - Action
November 17, 2004

Approval of TPB Letter of Support for the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) Study for the Relocation of the CSX Rail Line Within the District of Columbia

Staff

Recommendation: Review the attached draft letter and authorize the TPB chairman to send a letter to the NCPC expressing support for this study.

Issues: None

Background: At the October 20 meeting, the Board received a brochure on the NCPC study of the relocation of the active seven-mile stretch of CSX rail line within the District of Columbia. It discussed a draft letter from the TPB to the NCPC expressing support for the study. The attached draft letter has been prepared to reflect the Board comments.

The TPB Technical Committee was also briefed on this study at its November 5, 2004 meeting.

**DRAFT**

November 17, 2004

*District of Columbia
Bowie
College Park
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Loudoun County
Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County*

Patricia Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, N.W. – Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Gallagher:

This letter is to express the support of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) for the National Capital Planning Commission's effort to study the relocation of the active seven-mile stretch of CSX rail line within the District of Columbia. The Board recognizes the need to address the security concerns created by the movement of hazardous materials on this corridor. This rail line is critical to the movement of passengers and freight along the east coast, and the demand for passenger commuter rail service, in particular, is expected to increase steadily.

As the rail line goes through several jurisdictions outside of the District of Columbia, the impacts of any relocation of this stretch or of changing the operations of the railroads to divert hazardous materials from the District core area must be assessed for the entire region. In addition to the movement of hazardous materials, certain chemicals sitting in cars on tracks can endanger neighborhoods and government buildings throughout the region. The Board supports a study to address these concerns and identify ways to ensure the safe operation of critical freight and passenger services in the region. This study should identify feasible options with specific costs and sources of funding for implementation as quickly as possible.

The TPB has reviewed the Commission's assessment of the federal and national interests in this effort, and concurs that the Commission has demonstrated through its outreach and coordination that it is the appropriate agency to lead and coordinate an alternative rail alignment study. The TPB looks forward to working with the Commission and our other planning partners on this important and timely effort.

Sincerely,

Christopher Zimmerman
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board