

II. Description of the Study Area and Project Need

The corridor extends roughly from 13th Street in the Strip District, through the Golden Triangle between Liberty Avenue and Fort Duquesne Boulevard, and into the North Shore from the Fort Wayne Railroad Bridge to the West End Bridge south of I-279 and Route 65. Recently, this area has experienced new development and redevelopment such as the Western Pennsylvania History Center, the Cultural District, Andy Warhol Museum, new Alcoa Headquarters, and Lincoln Housing. Significant new development is proposed or underway including expansion of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, new hotels, the O'Reilly Theater, PNC Ballpark, new Steelers Stadium, Carnegie Science Center expansion, a North Shore amphitheater, new parking facilities, and new retail and office development. The vision is to expand Downtown from its traditional Golden Triangle confines across the Allegheny River into the North Shore.

This corridor experiences significant congestion during peak periods and when there is an event at Three Rivers Stadium. Demand for parking exceeds supply, a condition which will be exacerbated when some land presently being used for parking will be developed for other purposes. The North Shore area is perceived as difficult to access. Improved transportation facilities will be required to support new development in the corridor. Transit linkages between the major attractions need to be improved.

III. Alternatives

The following describes the No-Build, TSM, and Build Alternatives that were evaluated in the MIS and are being presented for further study in the North Shore/CBD Transportation Corridor DEIS:

1. No-Build Alternative—Existing transit service and programmed new transportation facilities with level of transit service expanded as appropriate to meet projected year 2020 travel demand.

2. TSM Alternative—Enhanced bus service including: high-frequency shuttle bus service connecting the major attractions and hotels in the corridor; routing of regional bus services through the North Shore; and a network of regional express buses serving Steelers and Pirates events. To ensure service reliability and improve bus speeds, exclusive bus lanes and bus priority treatments are proposed for periods of high congestion (i.e., post-game events).

New pedestrian facilities linking the North Shore with adjacent communities are also included in this alternative.

3. Build Alternatives: The set of build alternatives being considered in the DEIS include the following:

a. Intermodal Transportation Centers—Two Intermodal Transportation Centers (ITC's) are proposed: one at Federal and General Robinson Streets (ITC #1) and the other near Reedsdale Street and Allegheny Avenue (ITC #2). These would be high-capacity (2,000+) parking garages connected by a rapid transit line to the Golden Triangle.

b. Roadway Improvement—A ramp from ITC #1 to Route 28.

c. People Mover Gateway Alignment—Automated people-mover operating primarily on elevated guideways using vehicles with rubber tires or low-speed Maglev technology. This alignment begins at Fifth and Liberty Avenues, traverses Cecil Way, crosses over Fort Duquesne Boulevard, extends across the Allegheny River on a new bridge, and terminates at ITC #1.

d. People Mover Fort Wayne Alignment—Automated people-mover operating primarily on elevated guideways using vehicles with rubber tires or low-speed Maglev technology. This alignment begins at the Steel Plaza LRT Station, uses a portion of the Penn Park Line, crosses the Allegheny River either on the lower deck of the Fort Wayne Railroad Bridge or on a new bridge just east of the Fort Wayne Bridge and then turns west to terminate at ITC #1.

e. LRT Gateway Alignment—This alignment extends from the existing Gateway LRT Station in the Golden Triangle in a subway under the Allegheny River to a station at or near ITC #1 and then west to the Carnegie Science Center and ITC #2.

f. LRT Fort Wayne Alignment—This alignment connects with the existing LRT system at the Steel Plaza Station, uses a portion of the Penn Park Line and crosses the Allegheny River on either the lower deck of the Fort Wayne Railroad Bridge or a new bridge just east of the Fort Wayne Bridge, and turns west to ITC #1 and further west to ITC #2.

IV. Probable Effects

The FTA, FHWA, and Port Authority will evaluate all significant environmental, social, and economic impacts of the alternatives analyzed in the EIS. Primary environmental issues include: land use, neighborhood enhancement, parklands, traffic and parking, visual impacts and aesthetics, archeological, cultural and historic

resources, navigation impacts of new river crossings, and geotechnical issues associated with tunnels. Other issues to be considered are floodplains, wildlife and vegetation including endangered species, safety, air and water quality, hazardous wastes, displacements, and energy impacts. The impacts will be considered for both construction and operating and maintaining the new facilities. Measures to mitigate any adverse impacts will be developed for consideration.

V. FTA Procedures

In accordance with the federal transportation planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450) and the federal environmental impact regulations and related procedures (23 CFR 771), the Draft EIS will be prepared to include an evaluation of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives. The DEIS will consider the public and agency comments received. Port Authority, in concert with the City of Pittsburgh, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and other affected agencies will select the preferred alternative. Then Port Authority, as the lead agency, will continue with the preparation of the Final EIS. Opportunity for additional public comment will be provided throughout all phases of project development.

Issued on: January 14, 1999.

Sheldon A. Kinbar,

Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration.

[FR Doc. 99-1234 Filed 1-19-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33693]

RailTex, Inc., Mid-Michigan Railroad, Inc., Michigan Shore Railroad, Inc., and Grand Rapids Eastern Railroad, Inc.—Corporate Family Transaction Exemption

RailTex, Inc. (RailTex),¹ Mid-Michigan Railroad, Inc. (MMRR), Michigan Shore Railroad, Inc. (MS), and Grand Rapids Eastern Railroad, Inc. (GRE), have jointly filed a verified notice of exemption. MS and GRE will be merged into MMRR with MMRR being the surviving corporation. After consummation of the transaction,

¹ RailTex is a noncarrier which directly controls 22 Class III railroads operating in 22 states, as well as 3 rail carriers that operate in Canada.

RailTex will control 20 Class III railroads in the United States.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after December 31, 1998.

The purpose of the transaction is to simplify RailTex's corporate structure and eliminate costs associated with separate accounting, tax, bookkeeping and reporting functions. The properties of the rail carriers involved in this transaction are located in the States of Michigan, Kansas, Missouri and Texas.

The merger of MS and GRE into MMRR is a transaction within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). The parties state that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers operating outside the corporate family.

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33693, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, P.C., Ball Janik LLP, Suite 225, 1455 F Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

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Decided: January 12, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-1113 Filed 1-19-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 46X)]

Soo Line Railroad Company— Abandonment Exemption—in St. Paul, Ramsey County, MN

On December 31, 1998, Soo Line Railroad Company, doing business as Canadian Pacific Railway (Soo), filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad known as the St. Paul Terminal Trackage extending from milepost 17.29± (southeast of Jackson Street) to the end of the line at milepost 18.19± (near I-35E North), a distance of .90± miles in Ramsey County, MN. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 55117 and includes no stations.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by April 20, 1999.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than February 9, 1999. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 46X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Diane P. Gerth, 150 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Replies to the Soo petition are due on or before February 9, 1999.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: January 12, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-1112 Filed 1-19-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Form 12196

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 12196, Small Business Office Order Blank.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before March 22, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue