

document will be mailed to affected federal, state, and local agencies, and will be provided upon request to interested parties on record. The draft Scoping Document may also be obtained from John D. Dean, Project Manager, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017 or downloaded from the project website [www.lowermanhattan.com]. Scoping comments may be made verbally at the public scoping meetings, or in writing. See the **DATES** section above for locations and times. During the scoping phase of the project, comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, or environmental impacts to be evaluated, and suggesting alternatives that are less costly or less environmentally damaging while achieving similar transit objectives. Scoping is not the appropriate forum in which to indicate a preference for a particular alternative. Anyone wishing to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information should contact John D. Dean of the MTA as previously described.

## II. Description of Study Area and Project Need

The core study area is Lower Manhattan south of the following streets: beginning at the Hudson River, east along Chambers Street, north along West Broadway, east along Worth Street, south along St. James Place, and east along Dover Street (Brooklyn Bridge) to the East River. These study area boundaries provide a rough guide, and are to be considered flexible and dependent on the outcome of the scoping process. The study area includes key business locations such as the World Trade Center and World Financial Center; Wall Street and Water Street corridor; civic sites such as City Hall, Federal Plaza, and Foley Square; historic and recreational areas such as South Street Seaport, Federal Hall, and the Battery; and growing residential areas such as Southbridge Towers, Battery Park City, and new residential conversions of former commercial space east of Broad Street.

This study will examine three primary access corridors that link New York's northern and eastern suburbs to the Lower Manhattan "core area." These corridors can be summarized as being (1) on the eastside of Manhattan, largely from the Grand Central Terminal area; (2) on the west side of Manhattan, from the Penn Station/Port Authority Bus Terminal area, and (3) across the East River, from the Atlantic Terminal Complex in downtown Brooklyn. Other reasonable access corridors identified in

the scoping process will also be considered.

The purpose of the MIS/DEIS process is, in coordination with a regional framework of transportation studies, to thoroughly examine the short and long term needs and available options for improving transportation access to Lower Manhattan, and to identify a preferred investment strategy that will address the study area's transportation needs in a cost-effective, equitable, and publicly acceptable manner. This study will consider the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of other recent and contemporary regional transportation studies and data gathering efforts, and closely coordinate with these ongoing studies.

## III. Alternatives

Current Alternatives proposed for evaluation include: (1) No-Build, which involves no change to transportation services or facilities in the study area beyond already committed projects; (2) The Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative, which consists of low-to-medium cost improvements that address both short and long term needs; (3) High Quality Shuttle Service from Grand Central Terminal and/or Jamaica Station to Lower Manhattan using newly constructed and/or existing rights of way, such as the BMT Broadway Line or the LIRR Atlantic Branch; (4) New Subway Service including potential construction of the Second Avenue Subway to Lower Manhattan; and (5) Extended Commuter Rail from Grand Central Terminal and/or Jamaica to Lower Manhattan using newly constructed and/or existing rights of way. Other reasonable alternatives proposed during the scoping process would also be considered.

## IV. Probable Effects/Potential Impacts for Analysis

The MIS/DEIS will evaluate all significant social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives. Among the issues to be investigated in the study area and its access corridors are the potential increase in transit ridership on the current system, the expected increase in mobility, the capital outlays needed to construct the project improvements, and the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities created by the project. Social and environmental impacts proposed for analysis include land use and urban development impacts, visual impacts, impacts on cultural and open space resources, health and safety impacts, and noise and vibration impacts. Impacts on natural areas, geologic forms, air quality, groundwater,

and hazardous materials will also be analyzed. The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and for the long-term period of operation. Impacts to the markets outside the core study area and the access corridors will also be examined where it is appropriate (i.e. traffic and parking near suburban rail stations). Measures to mitigate significant adverse impacts will be considered.

## IV. FTA Procedures

In accordance with Federal Transit Laws and FTA regulations and policies, the MIS/DEIS will include an evaluation of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives. After its publication, the MIS/DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. On the basis of the MIS/DEIS and the public and agency comments received, the MTA will select a locally preferred alternative for a major investment strategy. The locally preferred alternative will then be presented to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for affirmation and inclusion into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Issued on: May 29, 1998.

**Letitia Thompson,**

*Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration.*

[FR Doc. 98-14768 Filed 6-3-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33601]

### Grand Trunk Western Railroad Incorporated—Petition for Declaratory Order—Spur, Industrial, Team, Switching or Side Tracks, in Detroit, MI

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Surface Transportation Board (Board) is instituting a declaratory order proceeding and is requesting comments on the petition of Grand Trunk Western Railroad, Inc. (GTW), for an order declaring that certain tracks located near the Renaissance Center in Detroit, MI, are "spur, industrial, team, switching, or side tracks" under the regulatory exemption at 49 U.S.C. 10906.

**DATES:** Any interested person may file with the Board written comments concerning GTW's petition by July 2, 1998. GTW may reply by July 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Send an original plus 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33601, to: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001, ATTN: STB Finance Docket No. 33601. In addition, pleadings must certify that a copy has been served on GTW's representatives: Robert P. vom Eigen and Jamie Palter Rennert, Hopkins & Sutter, 888 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** By petition filed on May 20, 1998, GTW requests that we issue an order under 5 U.S.C. 554(e) and 49 U.S.C. 721(a) declaring that certain tracks located near the Renaissance Center in Detroit, MI, are "spur, industrial, team, switching, or side tracks" that are, under 49 U.S.C. 10906, exempt from Board authority over the abandonment and purchase of lines of railroad. The tracks at issue extend from GTW's Dequindre Line at mileposts 0.57, 0.71, and 0.81, respectively, near the Detroit riverfront. GTW has requested expedited consideration of its petition so that plans for the sale and development of the parcels of land underlying these tracks may proceed promptly. According to GTW, this land is to be developed to support (a) relocation of General Motors Corporation's global headquarters to the Renaissance Center on the Detroit riverfront and (b) a casino district designated by the City of Detroit. By this notice, the Board is requesting comments on GTW's petition.

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

Decided: May 28, 1998.

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

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-14730 Filed 6-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

[STB Finance Docket No. 32760 (Sub-No. 26)]

**Union Pacific Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Missouri Pacific Railroad Company; Control and Merger; Southern Pacific Rail Corporation, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, SPCSL Corp., and The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company; (Houston/Gulf Coast Oversight)**

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Decision No. 5; Notice of extension to file requests for additional conditions to the UP/SP merger for the Houston, Texas/Gulf Coast area, and revisions to procedural schedule.

**SUMMARY:** The Board is granting a motion filed May 20, 1998, by the Texas Mexican Railway Company, the Kansas City Southern Railway Company, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc., the Texas Chemical Council, and the Railroad Commission of Texas, collectively requesting an extension until July 8, 1998, to file requests and supporting evidence for additional remedial conditions to the UP/SP merger<sup>1</sup> as they pertain to rail service in the Houston, Texas/Gulf Coast region. As a result, the Board is issuing the revised procedural schedule set forth at the end of this decision.

**DATES:** Under the revised schedule, the proceeding will now commence on July 8, 1998. On that date, all interested parties must file requests for new remedial conditions to the UP/SP merger regarding the Houston/Gulf Coast area, along with all supporting evidence. The Board will publish a notice of acceptance of requests for new conditions in the **Federal Register** by August 7, 1998. Notices of intent to participate in the oversight proceeding are due August 28, 1998. All comments, evidence, and argument opposing the requested new conditions are due September 18, 1998. Rebuttal in support of the requested conditions is due October 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** An original plus 25 copies of all documents, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 32760 (Sub-No. 26),

must be sent to the Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, ATTN: STB Finance Docket No. 32760 (Sub-No. 26), Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph H. Dettmar, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On March 31, 1998, the Board instituted an oversight proceeding to consider requests for additional conditions to the UP/SP Merger for the Houston/Gulf Coast area, including those that seek divestiture of certain of the merged carriers' property.<sup>2</sup> All interested persons were directed to file their requests, along with all supporting evidence, by June 8, 1998.

On May 20, 1998, the above-named parties moved for a 30-day extension of that date to July 8, 1998. They state that they are working toward a consensus with respect to conditions that they may request, and that additional time is needed to coordinate their proposal and prepare all supporting evidence. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) and the National Industrial Transportation League filed letters stating that they do not oppose the extension. If the Board grants the motion, however, BNSF urges that the revised due date for filing requests for conditions, and other adjustments to the procedural schedule, be made applicable for all interested persons. UP has asked the Board to adhere to the present schedule.

We do not believe that a 30-day extension for filing requested conditions will unduly burden UP or delay our disposition of these matters. Accordingly, we will extend the deadline for filing requested conditions, make other related adjustments to the procedural schedule, and make them applicable for all other interested persons.

As set forth in the revised procedural schedule, parties that wish to request new remedial conditions to the UP/SP merger as they pertain to the Houston/Gulf Coast region must file them, along with their supporting evidence, by July 8, 1998; the remainder of the procedural

<sup>2</sup>The Board instituted this proceeding in Finance Docket No. 32760 (Sub-No. 21), Decision No. 12 (published in the **Federal Register** on April 3, 1998 (63 FR 16628)), pursuant to the 5-year oversight condition that it imposed upon its approval of the UP/SP Merger. By decision served May 19, 1998, the Board corrected the March 31 decision by designating the docket number for the Houston/Gulf Coast Oversight proceeding as Finance Docket No. 32760 (Sub-No. 26) rather than (Sub-No. 21), and designating Decision No. 12 in Sub-No. 21 as Decision No. 1 in Sub-No. 26.

<sup>1</sup>Union Pacific Corporation, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Missouri Pacific Railroad Company—Control and Merger—Southern Pacific Rail Corporation, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company, SPCSL Corp., and The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company, Finance Docket No. 32760 (UP/SP Merger), Decision No. 44 (STB served Aug. 12, 1996).