



4141 Douglas Drive North • Crystal, Minnesota 55422-1696

Tel: (763) 531-1000 • Fax: (763) 531-1188 • www.crystalmn.gov

Posted: January 16, 2015

**CRYSTAL CITY COUNCIL
FIRST WORK SESSION AGENDA**

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

6:30 p.m.

Conference Room A

Pursuant to due call and notice given in the manner prescribed by Section 3.01 of the City Charter, the first work session of the Crystal City Council was held at _____ p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2015 in Conference Room A located at 4141 Douglas Drive, Crystal, Minnesota.

I. Attendance

Council members

___ Dahl

___ Deshler

___ Kolb

___ Libby

___ Parsons

___ Peak

___ Adams

Staff

___ Norris

___ Therres

___ Peters

___ Sutter

___ Revering

___ Norton

___ Serres

II. Agenda

The purpose of the work session is to discuss the following agenda item:

1. Potential freight rail connector track proposed by BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway) and CP (Canadian Pacific) through 5170 and 5160 West Broadway

** Denotes no supporting information included in the packet.*

III. Adjournment

The work session adjourned at _____ p.m.

Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling the City Clerk at (763) 531-1145 at least 96 hours in advance. TTY users may call Minnesota Relay at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Possible BNSF-CP Freight Rail Connector Track

FROM: John Sutter, City Planner/Assistant Community Development Director *JS*

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW: Patrick Peters, Community Development Director *PP*

DATE: January 14, 2015

TO: Anne Norris, City Manager (for January 20, 2015 work session)

SUBJECT: Discuss potential BNSF-CP freight rail connector track in the 5100 block of West Broadway

City staff has indirectly learned that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Canadian Pacific (CP) railroads are proposing to construct a connector track in the southwest quadrant of their "diamond" crossing in Crystal. An aerial photo showing the general vicinity is attached.

Please note that staff does not know the alignment of the proposed connector track. At this time the railroads have only acknowledged that they are exploring the feasibility of such a connection and its general location. Despite repeated requests from staff they have not provided any more information. Last week the railroads expressed their interest in meeting with staff to share more information, but they are having trouble coordinating schedules on their end. Hopefully this meeting will occur before the work session on January 20 so staff will have more information to report to the Council.

In the meantime, based on information received by staff from third parties, it appears that the following properties may be directly affected by the railroads' need to purchase right-of-way for the proposed connector track:

- 5170 West Broadway (Thomas Auto Body/North Suburban Towing)
- 5160 West Broadway (Midwest MasterCraft)
- 5140 West Broadway (Red Rooster Auto Parts)

Apart from the property impacts, the connector track may significantly increase the length and frequency of freight trains running on the BNSF track extending south through Robbinsdale and Golden Valley into Minneapolis. It is possible that the primary purpose of the connection would be to divert CP freight trains to the BNSF track. Staff's understanding is that the frequent freight trains currently running on the CP track may be as long as 100 cars (4,000 feet) compared to the much shorter and less frequent trains currently running on the BNSF track.

At this time, based on this limited information, staff has the following preliminary concerns:

- On the CP track, if trains using the new connector track have to slow down to make the curve, then vehicle delays at the Douglas Dr and West Broadway crossings may be even greater than what presently occurs.
- On the BNSF track, if the length of trains increase by, say, a factor of 10, for example from 10-car trains to 100-car trains, then the vehicle delays at the Corvallis and West Broadway crossings may also increase by a factor of 10.
- If the trains diverted onto the BNSF track would be as long as current CP freights, then all of the Crystal crossings - Douglas Dr (CP), West Broadway (CP), Corvallis (BNSF) and West Broadway (BNSF) - could be closed by a single train.
- Taken together, these grade crossing effects may negatively impact police, fire and EMT services and response times in Crystal.
- While the BNSF track predates the development of Crystal, it has not seen anything like the level of activity that may occur if CP freights are diverted onto the BNSF. The negative impact on adjacent neighborhoods and businesses could be significant.

Again, at this time staff has received no information about the proposed connector track directly from the railroads. The purpose of this work session item is to make the Council aware of this proposed freight rail project and its potential impacts. Staff hopes to be able to provide more information at the January 20 work session.



