



Session Summary

To:	City of Saskatoon	From:	Doug Fast
Attn:	David LeBoutillier	Phone:	(306) 956-3070
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Re:	Rail Relocation versus Grade Separation Feasibility Study – Stakeholder Sessions – Feb 28/18	Email:	d.fast@fastconsulting.ca
		Pages:	<u>3</u> in total

Date: March 1, 2018

Session 1 – Feb 28, 2018, 4:30pm	21 attendees
Session 2 – Feb 28, 2018, 6:00pm	6 attendees

General Synopsis:

Each session had a mix of attendees who were either business owners or private residence owners in locations affected by rail service. The sessions began with a general milling-about period where attendees could study road layouts of grade separation options at each of the nine priority at-grade rail crossings and potential rail relocation options. Both sessions had attendees who expressed concern about the rail crossings that affected them most. Concerns included access to roads and businesses, drainage issues, environmental regulations, transportation of hazardous material, ground contamination from grain spillage, and general timing of construction. Once attendees were informed by City staff that none of the grade separation options were going to be recommended to Council, the atmosphere in the room relaxed considerably. A 30 minute presentation by HDR gave an overview and cost-benefit analysis of each option considered, concluding that their recommendation to Council on March 12th will be to cease studying grade relocation options and pursue more engineering work on one of the three relocation options considered (the “red line” which passes south of Stonebridge). Attendees in both sessions showed interest and were engaged in the presentation. A question and answer period followed the presentation, with good participation in both groups. Many questions centered around track relocation, which was a clear preference by attendees in both sessions.

Questions and Answers:

The question and answer period brought about more in-depth discussions about various concerns shared by attendees. The questions and answers have been summarized below.

Q: Does the City have any influence on the timing of trains through the City – i.e., limiting rush hour usage of tracks? And if not, isn't that worth pursuing as a way of reducing traffic headaches?

It was explained that CN and CP Rail are private, for-profit companies and their tracks were there first. While they don't want to delay their trains, it was noted that train interchanges between the companies are scheduled at night to reduce peak-hour traffic delays.

Q: When calculating the cost-benefit for each option, did you take into account the product or materials the trains are moving? There is hazardous material moving through the city and this would not be remedied with an overpass.

HDR said they did not monetize movement of hazardous goods in their cost-benefit analysis, and reiterated that the cost-benefit analyses did not make any of the grade separation options economically viable to pursue.

Q: Did the study take into consideration an increase in train traffic in the future?

HDR confirmed they considered train count forecasts, growth in commodities, increasing train lengths, and traffic forecasts.

Q: Did you take into account that getting rid of the tracks in the City will increase property values and allow for redevelopment?

HDR confirmed this data was captured in the calculations and informed attendees that property values would increase on average by approximately 5%.

Q: Is there a specific cut-off number in the budget that would shelve the project and lead to the City not considering relocation?

It was explained that the study is still in a very preliminary stage. If Council agrees to continue studying the "red line" relocation option, funding would then be explored, including provincial and federal support options.

Q: Did you consider carbon emissions in the cost-benefit analysis?

HDR confirmed carbon and NOx emissions were both considered, which included forecasting vehicle ages and length of time spent at crossings. Train emissions were not included.

Q: What's the probability of CP and CN working together for a shared corridor? How would the costs be shared?

It was explained that a higher probability existed if a solution could be presented that's a win-win with benefits (such as improved speed and alleviation of bottlenecks with a double track bridge) and financial gain to both companies. Costing would most likely be a public endeavour, but it was pointed out that many cost-sharing mechanisms exist at all levels of government, including the National Trade Corridor Fund through Transport Canada.

Q: If the tracks are relocated, will CP and CN still own the land that the tracks were on?

While they would still own that land, it was suggested that the companies may opt to gift the land if the City funds the "red line".

Q: How many of the existing rail crossings are on the proposed Rapid Transit routes?

Three rail crossings are on the Rapid Transit routes, however the City does not consider the rail crossings to be a factor in the transit program's success.

Q: Is relocating CN lines not worth considering? Has the City thought about a controlled crossing at 71st?

The City feels the CP lines are more problematic as they have a greater impact on residential streets and traffic volume. Transport Canada has strict guidelines about crossings. While 71st is not currently being looked at, the one on Highway 7 is.

Q: How does EMS handle rail crossings? Can you communicate directly with the train engineer?

It was explained that Fire, Police, and Ambulance all have concerns about the crossings but have methods in place to alleviate some of the issues. At Idylwyld and 25th, there is a 24 hour monitor in place that allows dispatch to see if a train is going through. There is also new technology coming out that provides advanced warning about an approaching train and its length. While there isn't direct communication with train engineers, EMS is notified if a train breaks down at a crossing.

Feedback from Evaluations:

Attendees were asked to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the session to rate how useful the information was. Overall, attendees were satisfied with the experience, agreeing that it was a valuable use of their time, it was easy to participate and ask questions, and the information was clear and understandable.