



## Sioux Falls Railroad Relocation and Environmental Study - FAQ's

### 1. What is the purpose of this study?

The study is being conducted to identify potential environmental impacts associated with relocating the existing BNSF rail yard from downtown Sioux Falls to an area northeast of the city.

### 2. What is an Environmental Assessment and why is it needed?

The National Environmental Act (NEPA) of 1969 directs Federal agencies, when planning projects or issuing permits, to conduct environmental reviews to consider the potential impacts on the environment by their proposed actions. An environmental assessment (EA) is being prepared to determine whether or not relocating the existing BNSF rail yard to an area northeast of the city would significantly affect the environment. If the answer is no, the Federal agency issues a finding of "No Significant Impact" (FONSI). If the EA determines that the environmental consequences of the proposed project may be significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared. An EIS is a more detailed evaluation of the proposed action and alternatives.

### 3. What is the study's schedule?

<b>July 26, 2006</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Public Open House Review and Develop Potential Alternatives
<b>January 17, 2007</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting Evaluate Potential Impacts Identify Preferred Alternative Draft Environmental Assessment <i>(available for review)</i>
<b>May/June</b>	Public Hearing Final Environmental Assessment, FHWA will determine the next step

### 4. How do I participate in the study?

The study team has created several ways to participate in the process. Two open houses and one public hearing are planned in addition to group workshops that will be held with effected property owners prior to the second open house and prior to the public hearing. Information about property owner workshops will be sent out to adjacent landowners. In addition, the City of Sioux Falls has created a project website which allows 24 hour, 7 day a week access to the latest information regarding the study.

**5. Why isn't a presentation given at the open houses?**

The open house format offers more opportunities for the public to talk directly with the study team and to get their individual questions and concerns addressed. We have found the open house format facilitates two-way communication and helps the study team to understand and consider the public's concerns and needs for further alternative refinements. The City of Sioux Falls is committed to having a sufficient number of consultants and agency representatives present at each open house to answer questions on an individual basis. A more formal presentation will be given at the public hearing (tentatively scheduled for May/June).

**6. What information was provided at the July 26th open house?**

The study team was introduced and answered questions. Information was available about the study areas, schedule, project history and what the next steps in the process are. Comments were received and will be considered throughout the next phases of the study. The handout prepared for the meeting is available on the project website.

**7. How will utilities be addressed?**

The location of utilities within the study area will be identified and appropriately documented. The cost of utility relocations will be included in construction cost estimates and be considered as the study team and project sponsors evaluate alternatives.

**8. How will train traffic change through the existing network?**

We expect the number of trains going through the Sioux Falls area to be about the same as it is today. However, train traffic could increase or decrease, based upon market changes. The switching activities that occur downtown currently are expected to change with the relocation of the switching yard which will decrease the train traffic in the downtown area. This will also decrease the amount of time the trains occupy the street crossings in this area.

**9. How does this study affect downtown Sioux Falls?**

There are many advantages to moving the existing rail yard from downtown Sioux Falls.

- a. Crossings at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street will be occupied by trains less often due to the elimination of switching operations.
- b. Removal of the rail and ties associated with the existing switching operations will create opportunities for redevelopment providing a better use of this vital and growing part of the city.
- c. Redeveloping the rail yard will create new opportunities for Sioux Falls residents to shop, work and play in the downtown area.

**10. How is train noise assessed and mitigated?**

Train noise levels will be determined using noise modeling techniques approved by reviewing agencies. The changes in train traffic, due to the rail switching yard relocation, along each corridor will be documented in this analysis.

**11. When will the study be completed?**

The study is on schedule to be completed in July 2007.

**12. What is the outcome of the study?**

The major outcomes are as follows:

- a. Description of preferred alternative that includes sufficient conceptual level design detail to estimate construction costs and identify the type and location of improvements to be constructed.
- b. Identification of potential impacts to the environment.
- c. Measures that will be taken during design and construction to mitigate potential impacts where required.

Once the Environmental Assessment is completed, the Federal Highway Administration will make a determination of "Finding of No Significant Impact" or decide if an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared.

**13. What is the next step after the corridor study is completed?**

If the determination results in a "Finding of No Significant Impact", the City may begin preparing detailed construction documents and purchasing necessary right-of-way. Once construction documents have been prepared and right-of-way acquired, the project will go to bid and a contractor will be selected to begin construction.