

October 11, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Grant Could Allow Completion of West Wye Rail Project

The City of Springfield has been awarded a \$1.8 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration that could allow for the completion of a new "west wye" project in northwest Springfield. The new west wye would replace an existing wye, which is located in the West Meadows of Jordan Valley.

The west wye is one element of a comprehensive rail reconfiguration plan that was included in the Rail Reconfiguration and Grade Separation Study that was accepted by City Council in 2007. The study provided a rail track reconfiguration plan that would accommodate the redevelopment of Center City and the West Meadows, accommodate future stormwater needs, and provide an opportunity for at-grade crossing closures, to decrease the potential for train, pedestrian, and vehicular encounters.

A "wye" is a connecting section of track between two main lines that allows trains to reverse direction without engine reconfiguration, and also affords the opportunity to shift rail traffic from one main line to another.

A new wye in northwest Springfield would provide an efficient means for coal delivery to City Utilities Power Plants, would provide an opportunity for trains to reverse directions without reconfiguring in the North Yard of BNSF Railway, and would provide reductions in train, pedestrian and vehicle encounters. Currently, trains up to two miles in length are brought into the BSNF north rail yard northwest of Kansas Expressway and Division Street. A wye would allow trains to come from the northwest and go directly to the power plants, and exit by reversing the maneuver without engine reconfiguration.

"The railroads helped build Springfield in the early part of the last century," said Fred Marty, Deputy City Manager. "Today, with fuel prices continuing to rise, moving freight by rail is on the rise. This project helps achieve both capacity and safety needs, making it extremely important to Springfield's long-term development."

Springfield is one of eight cities nationwide to share in a \$19.4 million FRA grant for Rail Line Relocation and Improvement projects. More than 50 cities applied for the grants, seeking a total of \$202 million for railway relocation needs. The complete value of the grant is \$1,898,444. The City will also contribute \$791,556 from the 1/4-Cent Sales Tax for Capital Improvements. The City has also received a congressionally directed appropriation through the Federal Rail Administration, which will contribute another \$500,000 to bring the total estimated cost of the west wye project to \$3.19 million. With the award of the competitive grant, the City has identified adequate funds to acquire, construct and complete the project.

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