

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City



www.committeeof100.net

February 22, 2016

Ms. Anna Chamberlin
Program Manager, Phase II Long Bridge Study
DC Department of Transportation
100 M Street, S.E., Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20003-3515

Founded 1923

Chair

Nancy J. MacWood

Vice-Chair

Stephen Hansen

Secretary

Jim Nathanson

Treasurer

Carol F. Aten

Trustees

George Clark

Dorothy Douglas

Monte Edwards

Alma Gates

Erik Hein

Larry Hargrove

Kathy Henderson

George Idelson

Caroline Petti

Elizabeth Purcell

Laura M. Richards, Esq.

Marilyn J. Simon

Pat Tiller

Frank Vespe

Bill Wright

945 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

202.681.0225

info@committeeof100.net

Re: Long Bridge Study

Dear Ms. Chamberlin:

I appreciate the opportunity I had to speak to you at the February 10th public meeting concerning the Long Bridge Study. The Committee of 100 has reviewed the materials presented at the public meeting and we have concerns about the shared SW tracks and the number of cross-river train trips attributed to CSX. While the existing cross-river trips by VRE and Amtrak are available in published schedules, that is not the case with CSX. Can you explain how the present and projected numbers of CSX cross-river trips were determined?

Number of CSX Trains.

Phase I of this study quantified 23 trains per day were using the bridge and now the figure is 18. For 2040, the Phase I study projected 34 trains per day and this Phase II Study has a figure of 46 trains per day. In the Virginia Avenue Tunnel EIS, the Committee of 100 was not able to obtain that information and at the December 5, 2013 Long Bridge Phase I meeting asked how the number of CSX trains was determined. Mr. Siaurusaitis, the Michael Baker consultant, explained that CSX insisted on a nondisclosure agreement under which only Michael Baker would be allowed to see the freight projection data, and Michael Baker was required to "sanitize" the data for any public use. What CSX gave Michael Baker was not the projected number of trains, but rather the amount of freight, by category and by tonnage. Michael Baker thus had to convert that into the number train cars required to haul that amount of freight, and estimate the number of train cars and locomotives that would make up a single train.

In trying to confirm the Phase I figures, the Committee of 100 reviewed the 2005 Federal Railroad Administration Report to Congress: *Baltimore's Railroad Network: Challenges and Alternatives*, that projected the number of CSX trains traveling between Washington and Baltimore will increase from

33 trains a day in 2012 to a high of 56 trains a day in 2050 (page 4-13). This projection, performed in 2005, did not take into account the increased freight that will result from expansion of the Panama Canal.

Now, with the approval of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel, CSX will be able to run two-way freight throughout the City and because the proposed CSX intermodal facility in Baltimore has been disapproved, the new large ships coming through the Panama Canal will likely unload in Norfolk/Newport News, and CSX will bring the additional freight through DC to Baltimore for distribution. What was the source of the CSX data used in this Phase II Study?

MARC's Plans To Through-Run to Virginia

These figures do not include MARC's plan to through-run to Virginia. In May of 2014 MARC and VRE announced they are planning a true regional rail partnership to thru-run MARC to L'Enfant Station and on to Virginia and to extend VRE from Union Station into Maryland. According to MARC's Growth and Investment Plan (Sept 2007), MARC plans by 2020 to have trains on the Penn Line cross the Potomac and continue to Alexandria. The Penn Line currently runs 26 trains on week days from Baltimore to Union Station and if all of them continued to Alexandria and then would have to return from Alexandria, that would mean 52 additional trains crossing the Potomac each day by 2020. The Committee of 100 acknowledges that initially, probably not all Penn line trains will through run to Alexandria, but it is important to include a specific estimate for 2020 and what is anticipated from 2020 through 2040. Further complicating the shared track issue is that CSX requires diesel on its Long Bridge and SW tracks, but the Penn line runs on the NE corridor, that is electrified. The Phase II Study needs to encompass MARC's plan to through-run to Virginia.

Shared SW Tracks

The Study needs to examine the differences between freight and passenger rail operations. Currently, the operations of the Long Bridge and the SW tracks are controlled by CSX. CSX designs their rail lines for freight loads, not for passenger loads. Freight operations are typically slower and less time-critical than passenger rail. As a result, signaling, scheduling, platforms, speed and logistics generally are optimized for CSX's freight operations. CSX requires that trains traveling on the SW tracks and the Long Bridge use diesel locomotives because the overhead wires for electric would interfere with tall freight loads. This applies to Amtrak and is the reason for the long lay-over at Union Station in through trains, because of the required change of locomotives. The Study needs to evaluate the benefits of separating freight operations from passenger and commuter operations and how those operational benefits affect capacity limitations of separate freight and passenger river crossings.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Sarah Campbell

Chair, Transportation Subcommittee

Cc: Councilmember Mary Cheh