

Developments subsequent the original transmission of this analysis and the attached letter template indicated revisions to enhance clarity. Where text has been removed, an enlarged, bold-faced ellipsis is inserted. Where text has been revised it is enclosed in parentheses and in bold-faced, italic text.

For those that have not been following the debate over the high speed rail, a short summary is that one of the proposed corridors, NC3, is the Norfolk Southern line that bounds our neighborhood and could have a drastic effect on our neighborhood. The effects include: adding a second rail line next to the current line for the entire length of the neighborhood so freight traffic can idle while passenger trains go by, 8 additional trains per day coming by at between 25 and 60 mph, raising the rail bed an estimated 2-3 feet to give semis clearance under the Peace Street Bridge, and possible changes to the easement and retaining features along the existing track. These changes would have a significant impact to noise, vibration, visibility, and pollution. Additionally, this option would adversely affect 54 businesses and more than a few homes in the Five Points Neighborhood and would cost an estimated 42-46 million dollars more.

Several groups have already spoken out in favor of NC3. In fact, last Thursday July 29, a citizen task force for passenger rail appointed by the Raleigh City Council voted 8-1 to endorse the NC3 option. It seems these groups are more concerned with possible street closings in Glenwood South, which may have other solutions than the definite impact on our neighborhood from option NC3.

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I ask that each of you please take some time and read more about the proposed options on <www.sehsr.org> to familiarize yourselves with the issues and how the proposals will impact our neighborhood as well as the City of Raleigh as a whole.

There are several very good posts with insightful information on the Five Points CAC user group <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FivePointsCAC/join>> and <fivepointscac.org>.

Form your own opinions but I URGE you to get involved.

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Thank you,
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LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear Mr. Mayor, City Council Members, and Citizen Task Force Co-Chairs,

We are members of the Glenwood–Brooklyn and Five Points communities and CAC, but are writing this letter representing ourselves. That said, this letter represents not only our own concerns, but those of many Five Points/Roanoke Park, Georgetown and Glenwood–Brooklyn neighbors and businesses who will be adversely affected if the NC3 (N&S) proposal for the SEHSR is adopted. We are disturbed that our legitimate concerns have not been addressed ... ***(and that the review process has not permitted)*** ... citizens adequate time to consider the facts and offer you our thoughtful concerns on this matter.

The information about the pros and cons of the different rail options has only recently been available to the general public in a way that can be absorbed and evaluated. Many of us only received accurate answers to our questions and concerns about the proposals at the public information session and hearing held Monday night July 26. The 5 Points CAC and neighbors have been actively engaged since then, investigating and sharing information.

The Citizens Task Force decision Thursday night July 29 to approve NC3 before citizen groups have had a chance to offer opinions seems hasty at best, and was not in the best interest of the West side neighborhoods. The decision by the Task Force does not represent or reflect our concerns, nor does it appear to take into account NCDOT's own assessment of the deleterious effects the project would have on the West side neighborhoods.

While we (and most other neighbors we have spoken with) support high speed rail, and recognize its importance to Raleigh 's future growth, our overwhelming preference is for the CSX route (NC1&2). We and others are strongly opposed to the NC3 (N&S) option for the following reasons:

1. Taking of land and intrusion into historic neighborhoods. The NC3 option takes a long strip of land along the current N&S tracks, widening the trains' right of way into the neighborhoods all along

their path into downtown Raleigh. Aside from taking many homes and businesses in these revitalized and historic neighborhoods, the plans effectively cut them off from the surrounding areas and would undoubtedly have a negative impact on patronage of local businesses. By our count, the NCDOT matrix underestimates the numbers of homes and businesses taken and affected by this option. It is important to note that many actual abutters and business tenants were not notified of the impending impact of the plans on them (and were therefore not counted). In rather stark contrast, the NC1&2 option primarily keeps all trains within the areas where the railroads already have tracks and right of way (and does not displace any homes or intrude into neighborhoods).

2) Detrimental Impact. The NCDOT planners' matrix for the NC3 option clearly shows much greater detrimental effects for land and people in every category, including noise, vibration, residential and business relocation, and environmental impact.

a) Noise and vibration: Though the SEHSR trains are theoretically "quieter," they operate at higher speeds and are still diesel-powered, and actually increase noise, vibration, and air pollution in the densely populated areas along the NC3 option. This is actually a concern with both options, though the opportunity to use creative alternatives, such as tunnels or cut and cap, that would reduce impact on neighborhoods is more viable for the NC1&2 option. We are also very concerned that assessment of the actual impact on the area will not commence until after an option has been chosen.

b) Loss of homes and businesses: though the NCDOT underestimates this impact for NC3, at 54 it is still double that of NC1&2. In addition to businesses and homes lost, the collateral effects on the "new abutters" to the line as it intrudes into the neighborhood will affect property values--in fact home sales are currently being negatively affected by the proposal.

c) Environmental impact: NC3 runs across creek and delicate watershed areas that feed into the Neuse River. In addition, according to N&S spokesman John Edwards, NC3 would result in not only increased speed, but increased idling of freight due to re-routing the N&S line--adding to noise, vibration, and air pollution in the densely populated adjacent neighborhoods. Impact of

potential freight accidents, with higher speeds and increased congestion, is also a concern.

d) Rail Traffic: NC3 option would create undesirable changes in freight patterns on the N&S line. The conflicting needs of freight and passenger services on the N&S corridor have been inadequately studied; the impact of freight changes do not appear to have been addressed at all.

e) Neighborhood connections: The NC3 option proposes a layout and street closing patterns that would isolate neighborhoods from area commerce, amenities and roadways (both coming into the neighborhoods and going out). Beyond proposed street closures at Fairview and Georgetown Rd, NC3 plans call for tracks to be built up, cutting off even visual access of each side from the other. In other areas of the country, that system has created pockets where neighborhoods are isolated, typically resulting in lowered quality of life and viability of those areas.

f) Safety factors: There are viable alternatives that allow safe use of grade level crossings that have been summarily dismissed. In addition, there is currently not adequate planning for dealing with spills or derailments (such as happened this past month). Adding traffic of any sort to rails on the west side increases hazards to densely populated neighborhoods and makes this option less satisfactory than the NC1&2 plan

3) Costs vs Benefits: The cost for NC 3 is \$42–46 million more than NC1&2. As taxpayers, this does not make sound fiscal sense to us. In addition, the proposed costs have not factored in even rudimentary noise and vibration abatement, or beautification/integration of the project into the existing areas. In fact, citizens were told at the information session on 7/26 that such abatements would be unnecessary, though they are standard along the Northeast corridor through densely populated areas. The actual costs do not take into account loss of businesses, jobs, reduction of property values, and possible "flight" from the neighborhoods along the NC3 route. Those losses also translate into loss of revenue for the city. It would seem common sense that the extra \$42–46 million saved in choosing the NC1&2 option over NC3 would allow planners to find more creative solutions to street closings in the downtown area (e.g. putting the train underground around Jones St.).

4) Lack of vision & railroads as "good neighbors". The current rail system cuts an ugly swath through some of the most valuable areas of the city, already cutting the city in half. Expanding that swath, as the NC3 route does, shows a lack of creative vision for Raleigh and fails to integrate the rail system in ways that are pleasing and attractive (and therefore bring commerce in and make Raleigh a desirable destination). In addition, there has been no effort to have the rail systems "give back" to the communities they impact-- leaving a history of the railroads not being "good neighbors." NC3 forces the neighborhoods adjacent to this route to absorb more burden of the impact of the proposed SEHSR (without any benefits).

Accepting either option without serious modification is not in the best interest of Raleigh. This is, as one of our neighbors so aptly put it, a 100-year plan; we need to get it right. This is a legacy decision, and of the options presented, NC3 is the least desirable, even with modifications. We urge you to reconsider these plans and vote against NC3.

We would also like to request that any documentation pertaining to communications between the City or Advisory Councils with CSX and N&S prior to this recommendation be made public and available for citizen review at the next meeting of the City Council.

Respectfully,

(name/s)