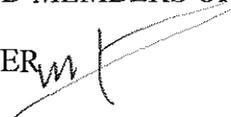


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 5, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER 

FROM: ROBERT C. DUBÉ, FIRE CHIEF

SUBJECT: NORFOLK SOUTHERN ETHANOL TRANSLOADING FACILITY MEETING UPDATE

On April 29th, representatives from the City (Fire, Code Administration and Transportation & Environmental Services) met with Norfolk Southern (NS) and RSI representatives at the Transloading facility site. Topics of discussion included the general site plan for the NS proposed changes along with fire protection and safety enhancements. This was a productive meeting with open dialogue regarding fire protection and access concerns. While counter to the City's continued strongly expressed view, NS remains committed to their use of the site for ethanol transloading. NS appears willing to provide additional safety enhancements to the operation. While NS has emphasized the "efficiency" rationale for this project, it is clear that this facility will allow for greater ethanol throughput.

The site is proposed by NS to have a new rail spur and additional track within a containment area to allow for an entire unit train to be staged and offloaded inside the containment area. This area will be several hundred feet further west, from the Cameron Station development. The railcars will no longer be staged along the main rail line thus eliminating the nightly movement of railcars. In my professional opinion these changes improve the overall site and operational safety by limiting the movement of the railcars and put all railcars inside a containment area. This is not currently the case.

Currently, the ethanol transport trucks are connected for loading using a pump on a portable cart that is moved from railcar to railcar by a motorized all-terrain type vehicle. Movement of this portable cart was the direct cause of one of the three spills that have occurred at the site since operations began. The site changes as proposed by NS inside the containment area will provide a stationary manifold with fixed connection ports and hoses that will attach the railcars to the manifold. Additionally, a fixed truck loading facility will move all vehicular movements away from the railcars. The fixed truck loading facility will include a containment system for spills and a deluge foam system design to automatically (and immediately) deploy 500 gallons of

alcohol resistant foam throughout the entire loading facility and associated containment system. A heat or flame detection system will be installed in the truck loading facility. This is a significant safety improvement, providing immediate fire and vapor suppressing foam to the most vulnerable area of the operation.

During the overview, City staff requested additional safety improvements to be considered which included:

- Potential of installation of a deluge foam system in the railcar containment area as well as the truck loading facility.
- Potential of installing remote operation capabilities to valves connecting the railcars to the manifold. This would allow remote operation of valves during an emergency situation.
- Access to the south side of and between railcars in the railcar containment system. The overall length may reach 2,200 feet, which presents difficulty in regard to extending and operating fire hoses to achieve needed fire flows.
- Potential of installing additional fire hydrants to improve water access.
- Potential of installing yard hydrants for fire department use (similar to a standpipe system in a high rise building).
- Potential of installing a large, underground cistern with storm drain grating and underground piping. This would put a larger spill inside of a container where vapor concentration would exceed the flammable range and would not burn, thus reducing the need for foam application to isolated areas. This would also greatly improve the product recovery and reduce contamination.
- Evaluate the designed slope of the railcar containment area to direct a spill and collection of product away from the railcars.
- Allowing City's Code Administration and the Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office to be involved in the structure and fire protection system design and review.

There will be future meetings to follow up on the above requested safety enhancements and we will keep you apprised. NS indicated to us that they are still on their track to begin the construction and operations of the facility later this fall.

cc: Yon Lambert, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Bill Skrabak, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Gregg Fields, Acting Director, Code Administration