To Encourage Productive and Enjoyable Harmony Between Man and His Environment: Environmental Impact Statements at Northwestern University’s Transportation Library

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Today’s Webinar

• Case study:
  • Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company Abandonment of Cross Lake Michigan Car Ferry Service (WI, MI) : Environmental Impact Statement.
    • What can we learn from an EIS?

• What is NEPA?

• What is an EIS?

• Collections at Northwestern University’s Transportation Library
  • Locating an EIS
  • How we process and catalog EISs
  • How this collection is used by Northwestern students, faculty, and the general public
Northwestern University’s Transportation Library
Passenger Travel:
“2000 Miles of Blue Sky and Water”
Auto Ferries

Inland Water Pamphlets Collection

Chesapeake & Ohio Lines Magazine April, 1941
Coal and the C&O

- The Pere Marquette was merged into the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad System in 1947.
- C&O was known for shipments of coal.
C&O Launches the S.S. Badger

Internal company file photograph folder produced by the C&O Railroad for the SS Badger and SS Spartan
The Decline of C&O Cross-Lake Service

- Freight volume began to deteriorate in the mid-1960s
- Passenger service continued to be strong, but freight faced steep declines:
  - 1961: 132,000 freight cars, 54,000 autos, 153,000 passengers
  - 1975: 41,770 freight cars, 54,429 autos, 168,395 passengers
- Losses of $4 million/year

Gary Gelzer Collection
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Signed in 1970
- First major federal environmental law in the United States
- EISs are required for any proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment

The Act recognized six specific responsibilities. Among those were:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice
NEPA Oversight

• NEPA Process
  • The process is overseen primarily by the **Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)**, established in the Office of the President under NEPA
  • The EPA’s **Office of Federal Activities** reviews EISs and some EAs, provides comments in the Federal Register
  • Any conflicts that arise are handled by the **U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution**.
What’s in an EIS?

• History

• Description of the proposed action and its relationship to land use plans, policies, and controls

• Summary of environmental impacts
  • Recommendations: filters to improve air and water quality with existing service
  
  *If service was discontinued:*
  • Freight traffic: 92% rerouted through Chicago
    • Additional: 68,000 rail cars/year (271/day)
    • vs. 4.5 million annual traffic volume
  • Passenger traffic split between Chicago and the Upper Peninsula
    • 244 cars daily rerouted through each route
      • About a 1.5% increase over the Mackinac Bridge
      • Chicago’s traffic volume was 244,000 vehicles
Environmental Impacts, Continued: Oil vs. Coal

- The existing situation saw the burning of around 70 tons of coal per boat per day, or 57,000 tons annually.
- Rerouting freight and auto traffic would have resulted in nearly an additional million gallons of oil annually, with automobiles averaging 18 MPG.

Unique situation: the energy crisis of the mid-1970s
- “Essential” energy vs. “non-essential” energy sources
- This served as the basis for arguments for keeping the ferry.

- Public Attitudes
  - Passengers: the ferry trip was part of the vacation experience.
  - Impacted communities: fears of job losses
  - Railroads’ operational philosophies
- Impact on economy, employment
- Historical considerations
- Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments
  - Job losses
  - Permanent shift in fuel sources
- Alternatives Considered
  - Denial of Abandonments
  - Retention of Routes to Optimize Passenger Operations
  - Retention of Routes to Optimize Freight Operations
Public Comments

In the spirit of transparency and democratic engagement, the City of Lexington is committed to providing a platform for public comments on various matters, including but not limited to, public meetings, planning and development projects, and other initiatives that impact the community. The Public Comments page serves as an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions on a wide range of topics.

For instance, the Public Comments page features discussions on significant issues such as the City's support for the Kentucky Derby and the importance of community engagement. These comments highlight the diverse perspectives and the active participation of the community in shaping the city's future.

Furthermore, the Public Comments page includes a notification from Daniel L. Farnsworth, City Manager, which outlines the city's commitment to fostering an inclusive and engaging environment for all residents. It emphasizes the value of community input in decision-making processes and the city's efforts to respond to public concerns responsibly.

The Public Comments page is a testament to the City of Lexington's dedication to open dialogue and community involvement. It underscores the importance of public input in the city's development and the role it plays in ensuring that the community's voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process.
EIS Collection at Northwestern

• 1992: donation of over 20,000 EIS titles from Northwestern faculty H. Paul Friesema
• A collection for the public good
• The collection now numbers over 33,000 titles
• What do we collect?
  • Draft and Final EISs, no Environmental Assessments, Reports.
• Formats
  • Print, microfilm, CD-ROM, electronic formats
Environmental Impact
Assessments
Reports
Statements

What’s the difference?

From A Citizen’s Guide to NEPA
Since 2012, EISs have been published electronically.
EISs are downloaded and hosted on our server at Northwestern.
Minimal cataloging data: publishing agency, title, date.
Call numbers are agency, state, acquisition number, D (draft) or F (Final).
  - Example: BLM-CO-780753 F
Google Books project: statements are made available in HathiTrust and Google Books.
Used by students, faculty, researchers from government, community organizations, and industry.
EISs circulate to Northwestern patrons and via interlibrary loan.
EIS Discovery Tool

Transportation Library

The Northwestern University Transportation Library is one of the largest transportation information centers in the world, encompassing information on all transportation modalities, including: air, rail, highway, pipeline, water, urban transport and logistics. It includes significant collections on law enforcement, police management and traffic enforcement. Its collection of environmental impact statements is one of the most complete in the country.

Find out more about the Transportation Library
Environmental Impact Statements: Getting Started

Key Resources

- The Transportation Library has one of the largest collections of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) in the nation, thanks in part to the North American Environmental Impact Assessment Library. EISs are available in a variety of formats, including PDF, Text, and other formats. The library also offers access to the Transportation Library's Database of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs).

- Environmental Impact Statements at Northwestern University:
  - Search for EISs at the Library's website.
  - EIS Database: A searchable database of EISs available online.
  - Transportation Library: A physical collection of EISs.

- EIS Database:
  - Search for EISs by keyword, location, date, or topic.

- Environmental Protection Agency:
  - A searchable database of EISs available online.

- Google Books:
  - Search for EISs by keyword, location, date, or topic.

- Environmental Impact Statements:
  - Transportation Library:
    - Search for EISs by keyword, location, date, or topic.

- EIS Database:
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- Environmental Protection Agency:
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- Environmental Impact Statements Collection:
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Resources


• Transportation Library catalog [https://search.library.northwestern.edu/primo-explore/search?vid=TRANNEW&lang=en_US&sortby=rank](https://search.library.northwestern.edu/primo-explore/search?vid=TRANNEW&lang=en_US&sortby=rank)

• EPA EIS Database
  • Records of all EISs received by EPA since 1987
  • EPA comment letters on EISs since 2001
  • Electronic (PDF) versions of EISs received by EPA since October 2012

Search by title, publication or comment letter date, agency, state or territory.

[https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-public/action/eis/search](https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-public/action/eis/search)
Additional Resources

• HathiTrust  https://www.hathitrust.org/
• Google Books  https://books.google.com/

• State Environmental Impact Report Databases
  • California Environmental Quality Act CEQA.net Database
  • Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) Database
  • Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Environmental Review Archive
  • New York City Environmental Quality Review Act (CEQR) Access
  • Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Register
What’s Become of the Badger?

Image credit: SS Badger website
Contact

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