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### Rail spur may land in White Rock

CSX originally hoped to add tracks in Irmo

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CSX wants to put a train siding in White Rock instead of Irmo.

Railroad officials confirmed the change after two White Rock landowners said they had been approached to sell small parcels for the track.

"That's the area we're looking at right now," CSX spokeswoman Meg Sacks said.

The change comes after protests stalled a plan to put the spur in the center of Irmo six miles south.

"We will not be putting the siding there," Sacks said.

The residents, Paul Addy and Gerald Brasington, said they have been approached during the past six weeks about selling slivers of their tracts for the siding.

Neither wants to do that, saying there's too much worry about noise, pollution and dangerous cargo affecting their area on the northwest edge of Richland County.

"They don't care about you sleeping at night," Brasington said.

Addy is trying to rally community support against the project, starting a petition drive against it.

CSX officials envision the siding stretching nearly 1½ miles along U.S. 76 west from Mount Vernon Church Road, Addy and Brasington said.

Sacks was not sure where it would begin.

Les Tweed, president of the Ballentine-Dutch Fork Civic Association, is uncertain about the new site.

"It's an evil necessity, and it's got to go somewhere," he said. "At least, this is more of a blank spot than others. But my first impression is to be very, very wary."

Officials at the nearby Lowman Home oppose the siding, saying a wreck there poses danger for its 400 retirees.

CSX will listen to concerns but needs to settle on a location, Sacks said.

It has searched for a site for the siding for the past year. The White Rock site was chosen because it is flat and less densely populated than others, she said.

The facility would allow multiple trains to pull over as needed to keep rail traffic flowing better in a 30-mile segment between Newberry and Columbia, Sacks said.

Up to 20 trains run daily along the stretch, she said.

Their loads are described as mostly coal, auto parts and grain. But the prospect of chemicals and other hazardous loads — something not revealed publicly — troubles those who live nearby.

"We all worry after Graniteville," said Addy, referring to a chemical spill in the community near Aiken from a train collision at a siding in January 2005.

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