



Ms. Danielle Grosselin
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E. Street, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Attention: Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 394X)

June 26, 2018

Dear Ms. Gosselin:

As President and Director of the Aurora Historical Society & Museum, the Society's Board of Trustees respectfully request that the Aurora Historical Society be included as a consulting party in the matter concerning the abandonment of the Norfolk Southern Railway Company's 5.5 miles of rail line in Aurora. While it is indicated that NSR is willing to mitigate the adverse effect on the Aurora Train Station, the Society believes that the 455 feet is insufficient in the preservation of the historical significance of Aurora's Historic Train District.

Since the construction of the Erie Railroad in 1856 the line from Cleveland to Pittsburgh linked Aurora with the rest of the world and was instrumental in transforming the town into a dairy and recreational center. Virtually the entire 5.5 mile corridor through Aurora played an integral role in the historical development of our community. As the rail line first entered the northeast part of the city the train stopped at the Erie "Aurora Pond" Station located on the Northern edge of what came to be known as Geauga Lake. Besides transporting commuters to Cleveland, the train brought families to Geauga Lake Park as early as the 1880s.

As the line progressed in a southeastern direction the trains would stop on a daily basis where it intersected with the famous Chillicothe Road (now Ohio Rte. 306) to pick up shipments of milk headed for the commercial dairies in Cleveland. The historic and Landmarked "Wee House" recently purchased by the City of Aurora was a pick up point for milk at that location. Continuing on the line ran to Aurora Station which was the primary commercial center of Aurora. Now the northern end of Aurora's Station District, the area was the site of grist mills, saw mills, a furniture maker, freight yard, the A.B. Hurd & Sons store and the Frank Treat & Sons store. Focal point of the district is the Aurora Station which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Adjacent to the line and located along the Chagrin River were numerous cheese factories which are historically recognized through the Ohio Historic Marker Program.

Progressing in a southeastern direction and just beyond the Aurora Station is the location of what was "Factory Bridge" which spanned the Chagrin River and was destroyed by the historic "1913 Flood." The bridge was replaced in 1913 by a stone viaduct and became a landmark on first fairway of the Aurora Country Club built in 1926 as one of two, along with the Aurora Inn, focal points for Aurora's first "Commuter's Village" to be built by A.B. Smythe. Today, the former golf course is owned by the City of Aurora with conservation easements in place designed to protect the land from future growth and development.

Based upon the historic significance of the rail line and also the potential for future use of the corridor by the community to enhance the passive activity, it is important that the Aurora Historical Society be a party to any actions impacting the region.

Your consideration of the Society's position is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Kudley, Jr.".

John Kudley, Jr.
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