



DVRPC

**DELAWARE
VALLEY
REGIONAL
PLANNING
COMMISSION**

2/7/38
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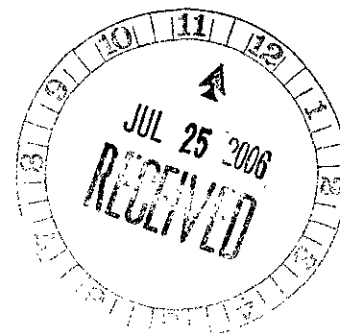
July 19, 2006

Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Room 700
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings

JUL 25 2006

Part of
Public Record



Re: STB No. AB 167 (Sub-No.1185X)
5.7 mile Robbinsville Industrial Track Abandonment in Hamilton
and Washington Townships, Mercer County, NJ

Dear Mr. Williams:

In response to the May 11, 2006 public notice in the *Trenton Times*, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) offers the following comments to the record of the above-referenced rail corridor abandonment proceeding before the Surface Transportation Board. DVRPC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the nine-county, Philadelphia-Camden-Trenton region. In developing our comments we have coordinated with the Mercer County Planning Division and New Jersey Transit. We have also reviewed the proposed abandonment in relation to the goals and policies embodied in *Destination 2030*, the region's adopted long-range plan, and two related technical reports: *Abandoned Railroad Inventory and Policy Plan* and *Delaware Valley Rail Freight Plan*.

Proposed Action: CONRAIL is seeking an Exemption for the Abandonment of a 5.7 mile segment (mileposts 32.20 to 37.90) of the Robbinsville Industrial Track Abandonment in Hamilton and Washington Townships, Mercer County, New Jersey.

Recommendation: As a general policy statement, DVRPC supports the retention and preservation of the region's rail corridors as key transportation and potential non-transportation assets. Consistent with this policy, DVRPC does not support the abandonment of freight or passenger rail corridors without an assessment of their potential reuse for alternative transportation, recreation or open space uses. This position is consistent with similar policies developed and adopted by both the Mercer County Planning Division.

Specifically, this rail corridor should be preserved in its entirety for future transportation needs, including Mercer County's desire to acquire portions of the right of way for non-motorized transportation uses as a trail.

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Other potential reuses of this corridor should also be evaluated, including:

- Future dedicated freight rail connections to the northern New Jersey/New York City markets from the Philadelphia/Camden and southern New Jersey markets via the Bordentown Secondary (a.k.a. Camden – Trenton "Riverline");
- An alternative passenger rail service corridor from New York City to Atlantic City;
- Options for a compatible and synergistic trail or Bus Rapid Transit line serving the neo-traditional Washington Town Center; and,
- Historic interpretation of this most historic rail corridor in the State, the Camden and Amboy Railroad, the first railroad to operate in New Jersey in the 1830's.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments for the record of this proceeding.

Sincerely,



Richard G. Bickel
Director, Division of Planning

cc: Matthew Lawson, Principal Planner, Mercer County Planning Division
Donald Shanis, Deputy Director, DVRPC

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