

City of Aurora

LAW DEPARTMENT
130 S. Chillicothe Road
Aurora, Ohio 44202-6802

June 27, 2018

Sent via Certified Mail and Regular U.S. Mail

Ms. Danielle Gosselin
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423
ATTENTION: Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 394X)

RE: Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 394X), Norfolk Southern
Railway Company-Abandonment Exemption-in Aurora,
Portage County, Ohio

Dear Ms. Gosselin:

Thank you for your letter dated June 4, 2018 regarding the above-referenced matter. The City appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). In addition, please consider the below comments and objections with regard to the attempt to mitigate by Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR).

First, we believe that a number of individuals and/or entities listed on the "Section 106 Service List" attached to the June 4, 2018 letter may not be accurate. We are concerned therefore that the proper parties are not being notified of these proceedings. We have the list that is attached and have cross referenced it with the Portage County Auditor's website and have found that at least several of the letters are not addressed to the correct owner of the respective parcels. In addition, there are several parcels that have been left off of the list which leads the City to believe that there was no attempt at all to notify those affected property owners. We strongly believe that properly notifying all affected property owners is your responsibility and paramount in making sure that the 106 process is done correctly.

As to the specific area known as the Aurora Station District, the railroad right-of-way proposed to be abandoned traverses the center of the Aurora Station District, a focus area that includes properties fronting both sides of SR 82 from just east of Glenview Drive to just west of Eggleston Road. Aurora Township was an important mercantile and trade center in the 19th century, and the Station District was the industrial center for the town. The Station District contains a mix of historic residential dwellings, small-scale retail and office buildings, and the old train depot. The 1904 Aurora Train Station Depot (NR#86001131) at 13 New Hudson Road is individually listed on the National Register, as is the 1853 C.R. Howard House (NR#74001602) at 411 E. Garfield Road. In addition, a number of properties are landmarked on the Aurora Historic Register. At the Aurora Branch of the Chagrin River where it crosses SR 82 in the Station District, an Ohio Historical Marker commemorates the Silver Creek cheese industry which was robust in the area throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. The railroad track is a key component of the entire

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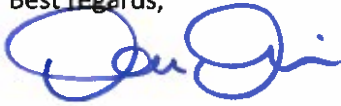
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Station District and should be preserved. Therefore, the offer to leave an approximate 455 feet of track is not sufficient. This area should be further researched to determine what additional track footage is necessary to preserve and protect the historical features and properties in this area.

In conclusion, the City desires to take an active role in the Section 106 review. Furthermore, we remain concerned about the lack of notice of all of these proceedings to all of the affected property owners. Lastly, we strongly believe that due to the historical nature and character of the properties in the Aurora Station District, a more comprehensive review must be undertaken.

Best regards,



Dean DePiero

Law Director

City of Aurora

DD/amp