

**TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD
CRANFORD, NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-165

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONVERTING EXISTING BUT UNDERUTILIZED
RAIL TRACK WITHIN THE CENTRAL RAILROAD (CRR)/NEW JERSEY TRANSIT
(NJT) RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) INTO PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRAILS AND
CONNECTING ALL PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRAILS IN UNION COUNTY**

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford wishes to show continued support for the use and expansion of alternate modes of transportation in order to reduce vehicular traffic on our roads, provide safe means of off-road travel, increase usable greenways and open space and provide connectivity of communities of place via off-road trails throughout Union County; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2021, the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford adopted Resolution No. 2021-269 which expressed support for the ‘Rails to Trails Union County’ advocacy group in their pursuit of the transformation of unutilized railroad lines into walking and bicycle trails connecting the Township of Cranford and all other municipalities with unutilized railroad lines in the County of Union; and

WHEREAS, the ‘Rails to Trails’ group has transformed into ‘Union County Connects’, a group with the larger vision of creating and connecting all pedestrian and bicycle trails in Union County, and

WHEREAS, Union County Connects (UCC) has the support of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, and

WHEREAS, in February 2023, Union County was awarded a \$700,000 (seven hundred thousand dollars) in Federal Safe Streets and Roads funding for all grant portions of what will be used in association with Union County Connects, and

WHEREAS, in June 2023, Union County was awarded \$ 1,500,000 (one and half million dollars) in NJDOT (New Jersey Department of Transportation) funding for the conversion of the Rahway Valley Line from an abandoned railway line to a bicycle/pedestrian trail, and

WHEREAS, in September 2023, Union County received a \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) award for the design and construction of a new pedestrian/bicycle way through the Borough of Roselle, connecting with the East Coast Greenway in Cranford, which then connects with the Goethals Bridge, and the CRR/NJT line, and

WHEREAS, all Union County municipalities along the former CRR New Jersey ROW from Elizabeth, through Roselle/Roselle Park, Cranford, Garwood, Westfield, Fanwood, Scotch Plains and Plainfield are experiencing exponential growth of mixed use residential/commercial

development with the potential for increased vehicular traffic on North and South Avenues (also known as SR 28 and UC 610) which parallel the CRR line as main east-west routes of travel; and

WHEREAS, it is apparent that the joint conversion of the 3.8 (three and eight-tenths) mile defunct section of CRR ROW (Elizabeth-Cranford), and a shared usage of the 8 (eight) mile section of operating NJT ROW (Cranford- Plainfield) could be converted via Rail-to-Trails and Trails within Rails (Massachusetts Central Rail Trail) into a 12 (twelve) mile off-road bicycle/pedestrian trail that would provide a new travel way potentially reducing traffic on our roadways, changing modal travel to unite our municipalities for pleasure, social and business travel and potential economic benefits, with the provision of a new Union County destination connecting all municipalities via bicycle and pedestrian travel.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey, hereby expresses support for “Union County Connects” in its pursuit of connecting all underutilized railroad ROWs, bicycle and walking trails and parks in the County of Union.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Union County Board of County Commissioners and appropriate New Jersey Transit representatives.

Certified to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford at a meeting held March 19, 2024.



Patricia Donahue, RMC
Township Clerk

Dated: _____

March 19, 2024