

Explanation: 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

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-60

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Scotch Plains 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, 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 federal Safe Streets and Roads for all grant portions of what will be used in association with Union County Connects, and

WHEREAS, in June 2023, Union County was awarded \$1.5million in NJDOT 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 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, (aka 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-mile defunct section of CRR ROW (Elizabeth -Cranford), and a shared usage of the 8 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 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 Mayor and Council of the Township of Scotch Plains, 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 New Jersey Transit.

Dated: March 5, 2024

RECORD OF VOTE

COUNCILMEMBER	YES	NO	NV	AB	COUNCILMEMBER	YES	NO	NV	AB
ADAMS				X	ZIMMERMAN	X			
STAMLER	X				MAYOR LOSARDO	X			
WHITE	X				COMMENT				
MOTION	ZIMMERMAN				SECOND	WHITE			
X- INDICATES VOTE AB- ABSENT NV- NOT VOTING									

Certified copy of a resolution adopted
at a regular meeting of the Township
Council of the Township of Scotch Plains,
Union County, New Jersey on

March 5, 2024

Bozena Lacina

Bozena Lacina, RMC
Municipal Clerk

