

BOROUGH OF FANWOOD, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION: 2024-03-083

DATE OF ADOPTION: March 18, 2024

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 Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fanwood 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 June 24, 2021, the Mayor and Council adopted Resolution No. 21-119 supporting the 'Rails to Trails Union County' advocacy group as a means to transform unutilized railroad lines into usable pedestrian and bicycle trails; 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 Borough of Fanwood, 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.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Certified to be a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Governing Body of the Borough of Fanwood at the duly held Meeting on the 18 th day of March, 2024.  Courtney Agnello, Deputy Borough Clerk	MOTION:	Council President Katherine Mitchell
	SECOND:	Erin McElroy Barker
	YES:	Council President Katherine Mitchell, Gina Berry, Erin McElroy Barker, Patricia Walsh
	NO:	None
	ABSTAIN:	None
	ABSENT:	Jeffrey Banks, Anthony Carter