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HC #71200

Cynthia T. Brown, Chief
Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: STB Docket No. AB-547-X, Abandonment of a Portion of the Roaring Fork Railroad
Holding Co Track Between Mile Posts 360.31 and 360.51, Glenwood Springs, Garfield County

Dear Ms. Brown:

On 5 October 2016 our office received notification from Baker & Miller PLLC that the Roaring Fork Transit Authority (formerly Roaring Fork Railroad Holding Company) plans to vacate and abandon a section of rail track in Glenwood Springs. This segment of railroad track was originally part of the Denver & Rio Grand Railroad's Aspen Branch (5GF.1661), which was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

In most cases, the act of removing a National Register-listed (or eligible) property from federal oversight is considered to have an adverse effect on historic properties (per the National Historic Preservation Act - see 36.CFR.800.5(a)(2)(vii)). When the line was transferred from the Southern Pacific Railroad to the Transit Authority, this adverse effect was avoided by railbanking the line, preserving it in place pending a possible return to rail use.

The current proposal is to vacate the portion of the line between Mile Posts 360.31 and 360.51 so that the City of Glenwood Springs can undertake a road project. The nature of design of the road project was not revealed in the Baker & Miller PLLC letter, but as a city government, Glenwood Springs is not necessarily required to follow the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act. It is possible that the City will choose to alter or demolish this segment of the railroad in order to complete its road project.

Therefore, we believe that the proposal to vacate this portion of the railroad line would have an adverse effect on historic properties. Again, it may be possible to avoid a finding of adverse effect if the Transit Authority and the City formally agree to protect the subject segment of railroad line from actions that would adversely affect its ability to remain National Register-eligible. In the absence of such an agreement, the adverse effect caused by this undertaking will need to be mitigated, and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) drafted to define the parties and measures needed to accomplish this mitigation.

OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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If you have any questions, please contact Joseph Saldibar, Architectural Services Manager, at (303) 866-3741.

Sincerely,


Steve Turner, AIA
State Historic Preservation Officer

OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have this day served copies of document upon all parties of record in this proceeding, via U.S. Mail.



for: _____

Steve Turner, AIA
State Historic Preservation Officer

11/16/2016
Date