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Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Milwaukee County Parks
9480 Watertown Plank Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
(414) 257-PARK

Reference: EP-749-1

To Whom It May Concern:

As a supporter of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Milwaukee County Parks oppose the restrictions to the railbanking negotiations proposed by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) (Docket ID: EP-749-1).

It took Milwaukee County Parks six years to acquire a three-mile stretch of abandoned railroad corridor in the northeast region of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin from the submittal of its Statement of Willingness to assume responsibility for the corridor in 2009 to the recording of a Quit Claim Deed transferring ownership to Milwaukee County in 2015.

Milwaukee County, with financial assistance from both the Federal government and the State of Wisconsin completed the development of this three-mile, paved, 10-foot wide, non-motorized, multi-use trail in the corridor. The facility serves as an important link in the Milwaukee County Parks Oak Leaf Trail System, as well as, a network of local and statewide non-motorized trails. It also provides access to popular destinations and attractions on the east side of Milwaukee from both the City of Milwaukee and the surrounding Milwaukee and Ozaukee county suburbs, for utilitarian, commuter, and recreational trail users.

Although railbanking can be a long process, with negotiations sometimes taking years to complete, we have found the process to be well worth the effort. The rail-to-trail conversion in Milwaukee County provides a positive boost to the local economy and it contributes to a healthier, more vibrant community. The placement of restrictions on the duration of the railbanking process could prevent future such conversions from taking place, therefore we oppose the proposed Surface Transportation Board railbanking rule changes.

Sincerely,

Guy Smith
Executive Director
Milwaukee County Parks



MilwaukeeCountyParks

countyparks.com



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