

Amending Resolution No. 275 Of 2014 As Amended, Establishing A Policy For A “Rail With Trail” Along The County-Owned Ulster And Delaware Railroad Corridor

Referred to: The Housing and Transportation Committee (Chairman Collins and Legislators Clinton, Corcoran, Harmon, Kitchen, McCollough, and Stewart)

Ulster & Delaware Corridor Advisory Committee Chair, Legislator Jeff Collins and U&D Corridor Advisory Committee Members Legislators McCollough, Nolan, Sperry, and Uchitelle, offer the following:

WHEREAS, the County of Ulster purchased the 38.6-mile Ulster and Delaware Railroad (U&D) corridor in 1979 to promote economic development through expanded tourism and to provide recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Ulster County Legislature determined that it was critical to establish a policy for the future uses of the U&D Corridor, and via adoption of Resolution No. 275 of 2014 the Ulster County Legislature established a policy to support a segmented “Rail with Trail” plan as follows:

“The Ulster County Legislature hereby establishes a policy to support a segmented “Rail with Trail” plan to convert the U&D corridor to a rail trail only in the segment between Kingston and Boiceville.

In furtherance of this policy for segmented rail with trail, the Ulster County Legislature also hereby establishes a policy to support and encourage the continued operation of a tourism railroad along an appropriate section of the U&D corridor west of the Ashokan Reservoir.

The Ulster County Legislature requests the County Executive submit a plan outlining projects and secured funding sources to advance planning and design for the rail trail conversion and on-going maintenance; and develop and solicit a request for proposals for potential tourism railroads to operate west of the Ashokan Reservoir in the future, as set forth herein and above.

No railroad tracks shall be removed in any segment except by resolution of the Ulster County Legislature,” and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 155 of 2015 established the Ulster & Delaware Corridor Advisory Committee for the purposes of conducting a thorough reexamination and study regarding the optimum use of the full U&D Corridor, and to recommend possible modifications to the existing policy to ensure the Corridor would be utilized for the greatest benefit to the residents and tourists of Ulster County; and

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WHEREAS, the U&D Corridor Advisory Committee successfully retained the services of an independent consulting firm, Stone Consulting & Design, P.C., to advise the Committee on recommendations for the highest and best use for various segments of the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Committee determined that the segmented approach to the Corridor, which includes railroad only segments, trail only segments, and rail with trail segments will maximize the public benefits of the Corridor; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution No. 488 of December 15, 2015, the segmented “Rail with Trail” Policy was amended to include the following:

“Convert to trail only on the segment between Cornell Street and the east side of the Kingston Plaza to enhance quality of life and improve public health in the City of Kingston, provided sufficient track shall be left to load passengers at Kingston Plaza.

“Include an increased available railroad segment, co-located with public trail wherever feasible, in the segment from the east end of Kingston Plaza to MP 8.33, which would increase the potential for possible future tourism theme trains without sacrificing trail connectivity from Kingston to the Ashokan Reservoir.

The segment between MP 8.33 and Basin Road will require further investigation on the future feasibility of rail with trail and shall be the last segment to be altered or converted on the east side of the Ashokan provided that trail connectivity co-located on the corridor shall be preserved.

The segment from Basin Road to Route 28A in Boiceville, which includes all of the U&D Corridor within New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) lands, shall be converted to a public recreational trail.

From Route 28A in Boiceville to Bridge Street in Phoenicia shall be designated as railroad segment with a co-located trail where it is found to be feasible.

The segment from Bridge Street in Phoenicia to the Ulster County line in the Town of Shandaken shall be utilized as a recreational trail with a co-location of a possible rail station and rail connection to Delaware County immediately near the County border at Highmount,” and

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WHEREAS, Resolution No. 241 of May 14, 2024 reestablished the U&D Corridor Advisory Committee for the purpose of developing policy recommendations to guide activities in the area between MP 8.33 and Basin Road (“Undesignated Section”); and

WHEREAS, the reestablished U&D Corridor Advisory Committee held eleven meetings, received multiple presentations, accepted and reviewed various communications and held periods of public comment during meetings on the following dates: September 26, 2024, January 23, 2025, January 30, 2025, February 27, 2025, and April 24, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the reestablished Committee recommended several modifications to the existing segmented “Rail with Trail” Policy that would help the County realize the maximum benefits from the Corridor and accommodate both railroad and recreational trail uses; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the segmented “Rail with Trail” Policy shall be amended to include the following:

~~The segment between MP 8.33 and Basin Road will require further investigation on the future feasibility of rail with trail and shall be the last segment to be altered or converted on the east side of the Ashokan provided that trail connectivity co-located on the corridor shall be preserved~~

“Rail use shall be offered in extension to the existing operating permit to go beyond Route 28A to a distance, as deemed appropriate by the Ulster County Commissioner of Public Works in cooperation with current leaseholder, far enough to clear the road’s right of way in order disembark passengers.

The section currently known as the Ashokan Rail Trail shall be extended East in the direction of the City of Kingston to connect to the extended operating permit area, and at the point of connection, Rail with Trail should co-exist, including a trailhead and appropriate visitor facility with restrooms to serve both trail and rail users, with the County securing rights of way along the Undesignated Section.

The Undesignated Section from the proposed intersect West to the Ashokan Rail Trail shall be designated as trail only and the Section of the Corridor now containing rail operations be designated Rail with Trail,” and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature requests that the County Executive take swift action in submitting a revised plan outlining projects in compliance with this policy, including secured funding sources to advance planning and design for the segmented rail with trail conversion, as well as on-going maintenance,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Postponed in Committee: Housing and Transportation on June 5, 2025 without consent

Postponed in Committee: Housing and Transportation on July 3, 2025 with consent

Passed Committee: Housing and Transportation on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE