

ST. CHARLES  
SINCE 1834

September 17, 2008

Mr. Mike Payette  
Assistant Vice President for Government Affairs  
Union Pacific Railroad  
101 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1910  
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Mr. Payette:

We are writing to you on behalf of our respective organizations to express a desire to work with Union Pacific on the potential abandonment and adaptive reuse of the St. Charles spur line. We understand that there has already been some discussion of this matter with adjacent private property owners; however, we believe it is important that you understand the desires of the community.

As you know, the existing St. Charles rail spur traverses the City of St. Charles from the east (DuPage Airport) to the west (Cardinal Industries). The line has served several establishments over the years, but planned closure or relocation of those businesses has prompted discussion that the line could be abandoned. If that occurs, we believe that the use of the corridor as a recreational amenity and utility right-of-way is the most appropriate and beneficial use.

In 2003, the City of St. Charles and St. Charles Park District collaborated on the formation of a plan for development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The plan calls for a future trail on the Union Pacific right-of-way (section of plan enclosed). The western terminus of the line is adjacent to the Great Western Trail Greenway, a limestone bicycle and pedestrian path that is owned and maintained by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. The redevelopment of the rail spur as a bike and walking path would connect the existing Great Western Trail with downtown St. Charles and the Fox River bike trail, enhancing bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and providing additional transportation and recreational opportunities to residents throughout Kane County.

We have enjoyed a productive working relationship with Union Pacific and hope to continue that in the years ahead. The adaptive reuse of the rail spur is an important project for our entire community and we stand ready to begin collaborative discussions with Union Pacific.

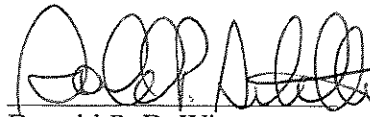
DONALD P. DEWITTE *Mayor*  
BRIAN TOWNSEND *City Administrator*

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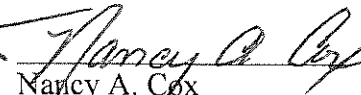
You may contact Brian Townsend, City Administrator, with questions or comments regarding this letter. He can be reached at 630-377-4425 or [btownsend@stcharlesil.gov](mailto:btownsend@stcharlesil.gov)

Thank you for your consideration.

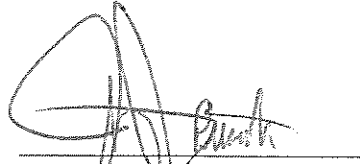
Sincerely,



Donald P. DeWitte  
Mayor  
City of St. Charles



Nancy A. Cox  
President  
St. Charles Park District



John J. Hoscheit  
President  
Forest Preserve  
District of Kane County

Enclosure

In addition to these greenways, access corridors are needed to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections for neighborhoods and open space facilities. These include:

- From the bike trail along the east side of the Fox River to the Prairie Path
- From the Cambridge neighborhood to a major bike path.
- From LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve northerly along Randall Road and Silver Glen Road to Blackhawk Forest Preserve.
- From LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve south to Kane County Judicial Complex at Peck Road and Route 38, connecting to Geneva Park District's Peck Farm Park
- From the Great Western Trail to the East Fox River Trail.
- From Red Gate and Timbers neighborhoods to downtown St. Charles.

Under *Transportation*, 1996 plan states:

Sidewalks and bicycle paths provide connections between places of residence, places of work, commercial services, and recreational facilities. NTPC's Resource Management Plan recommends that local transportation programs be coordinated with open space and greenway planning in order to encourage joint use and landscape enhancements of rights-of-way, as well as assure the continuity of greenways, trails and bikeways. This plan supports this recommendation. The Open Space and Recreation Chapter describes such linkage routes.

Sidewalks and bicycle paths also promote the small town character of the community. Such routes should be established as a priority element of streets and the development and enhancement of open spaces and should be planned as part of all future developments. Areas where there is an evident need for connecting routes include the following:

1. The near northwest side (including Timbers, Red Gate and Thornley on the Fox) has limited pedestrian connections with other parts of town, particularly to the downtown area.
2. Bike routes need to be developed and strengthened through the downtown area, particularly for continuity of the east and west Fox River bike trails. This is addressed more fully in Chapter 9, "Commerce".
3. Bike routes need to be established on the northeast side to tie into the Prairie Path.

In 1996, the St. Charles Park District developed its own *Comprehensive Master Plan*. This plan addresses bicycle and pedestrian facilities in similar detail, generally within the context of a vision for greenways. The plans are complimentary to one another.

As of the time of the development of these two plans, St. Charles had already developed an arterial system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The principal "spines" of the plan are the trails along the Fox River, both of which connect to trails in neighboring

Road and Fox Chase Drive was built in 2000. The signal is intended to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle traffic crossing Kirk Road in the vicinity of Wredling Middle School and St. Charles East High School.

**Union Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way** The Union Pacific Railroad owns a spur that extends from Kautz Road on the east to the Cardinal Industries property near the intersection of Peck Road and Main Street. This plan does not intend to cause a premature end to this rail spur. However, if the spur is ever abandoned, the City and Park District should work to acquire it and develop it with a bicycle/pedestrian facility, including the Fox River bridge crossing. This has the potential of becoming a major east-west arterial bicycle facility, connecting the Illinois Prairie Path on the east to the Great Western Trail on the west.

**Red Gate Road Bridge** Kane County is currently moving towards building a sub-regional bridge over the Fox River, roughly between Route 31 at Red Gate Road and Route 25 at Pinelands Road. When it is built, the City and Park District should work together to ensure that a separate lane capable of carrying bicycle and pedestrian traffic is built at the same time. The lane should have viable connections to the existing Fox River Trail on the east side of the river, the existing trail on the south side of Red Gate Road on the west side of the river, and the contemplated trail along Route 31.

**Division Street to Gray Street Crossing** For the past 75 years, the possibility of a vehicular bridge over the Fox River at this location has been contemplated by both St. Charles and Geneva. This crossing is not in either city's current Comprehensive Plan, and this document does not call for such a bridge. However, if one is ever built, the City and Park District should work together to ensure that a separate lane capable of carrying bicycle and pedestrian traffic is built at the same time. The lane should have viable connections to the existing Fox River Trail on the east side of the river, the existing north-south bikeway on the west side of the river, and the on-street bikeway proposed by the City of Geneva.

**From Main Street to Division on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** Currently the St. Charles Bike Facility Map shows a planned bikeway that would run on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue from State Avenue, which is north of Main Street, to Division, which is south of Main Street. There are portions of the bikeway along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue that already exist; the existing bikeway is on-street. Consideration should be given to acquiring rights to locate an off-street bikeway on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Main Street and Division as property becomes available. There are some areas where the City already owns the right-of-way, such as the Public Works Facility – Langum Park and the open space north of South Cemetery; the City should take steps to provide an off-street bikeway in these locations.