



## PA-TEC Policy Statement for Rails and Trails

Recognizing that locations of existing dormant and active rail corridors present opportunities for trail development, the Pennsylvania Transit Expansion Coalition sets for the following policy recommendations for rails-to-trails conversions that are done outside of the Federal program where permanent abandonment is not an issue:

### I.

1.1 All alternative trail locations should be evaluated where possible, and trails using non-railroad rights of way should be prioritized.

1.2 The trails should be integrated, as much as possible, with other existing recreational assets, such as parks.

1.3 If a railroad's right of way is deemed the best alignment for trail construction and use, every effort should be used to locate the trail on a section of the railroad's right of way that, as a portion of the entire right-of-way's width, has historically been the least utilized, so that the recreational use is less likely to conflict with future or restored rail use. If an alternate right of way for a trail is not available, the railroad's right of way should be utilized.

### II.

In any instance where a railroad's right of way is to be converted to trail use for recreational purposes, the right of way will be demarcated as a railroad corridor as follows:

2.1 The party enacting the interim conversion of the railroad to a greenway or trail, in conjunction with the railroad's legal owner will erect prominent signage along the entire right of way that demark the owner of the corridor, and state that the railroad has been converted to interim, low impact use, which does not proscribe the future development of active passenger or freight rail activity.

2.2 The party utilizing the railroad's right-of-way for interim use as a recreational trail will enact disclosure policies and requirements, for adjoining and nearby property sale transactions that make clear the potential future use of the corridor in question.

### III.

In situations where these recommendations cannot be performed, or a line has been converted to alternate uses and cannot be demarcated as a dormant railroad that is temporarily converted to low impact use, then the conversion must not be publically presented as an effort to preserve the railroad for future rail transit purposes.

*Development of this policy is based on NCHRP Synthesis 374 "Preserving Freight and Passenger Rail Corridors" from the National Transportation Research Board of the National Academies in Washington, D.C.*

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