

The Benefits of a Rails to Trails Program

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Background/Objectives. When a regulated rail line is no longer in use, the owner files for formal abandonment with the Surface Transportation Board. In many cases, the abandoned rail line is located within municipalities that have a desire for a rails-to-trails (RTT) conversion of the abandoned rail line into multi-use trails. Reusing an assembled corridor as a trail is beneficial to the municipalities but also provides many intangible and tangible benefits to the railroad.

Results/Lessons Learned. This presentation will provide a summary of CSXTs positive experience with the RTT program. Select case studies will be presented that demonstrate the many ways that the RTT policy has benefited CSXT, prospective purchasers, and other stakeholders, including:

- Significantly reduces the portfolio of properties to manage and associated liabilities, including trespassing; encroachment; 3rd party dumping; and 3rd party illegal activity
- Generates sales revenue from real estate that would otherwise be difficult to market
- Preserves assembled corridor for future railroad use
- Makes a positive impact in communities where we live and work by: adding safe transportation alternatives; adding recreational opportunities; developing positive public relations for the railroad

Additional case studies will be offered to illustrate circumstances where the RTT program may not be a good fit. A limited portion of the presentation will be devoted to post-trail environmental risk mitigation strategies, to show how the above benefits can be gained in a responsible manner, without exposing the public to unacceptable risk of exposure to property with a history of industrial use.