

EI-2429
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4 Chatham Court
Robbinsville, NJ 08691
23 July 2006

All Concerned Citizens for the
Preservation of Historic Sites
in Washington Township,
Mercer County, New Jersey

Dear Friend:

You may know by now that a precious legacy of Washington Township's history, namely a 5-mile segment of the old Camden-to-Amboy Railroad, runs through Robbinsville and on to the village of Windsor. In 1991 it was rendered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

That original railbed was created beginning in 1830 and the track and train service open to public use in 1832 (third oldest in the U.S.A.). After the Civil War that segment of track became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and after WWII it became part of the ConRail system in New Jersey.

Now that railroad link to local, NJ and national history is in danger of being lost forever. The Master Plan for Washington Township has set aside that rail line's right-of-way for public recreational use. ConRail is currently interested in divesting itself of ownership of that historic trackage.

Today, with increasing commercial and residential development engulfing more and more available open space in Washington Township, the need to save the C&A Rail Line is critically urgent. Most of the rail line runs parallel to Route 130, an area under scrutiny for re-development.

There are several important reasons for preserving the C&A railroad as public-use land:

- 1. Protecting its integrity as open space, or for future use a light-rail corridor into Trenton.*
- 2. If and until it may be designated a light-rail line, promote its use as "rails-to-trails" hiking and biking area.*
- 3. Conduct an environmental impact study along the rail line, and take appropriate action (e.g. control of mosquitoes; preservation of wetlands) as needed.*
- 4. Protect the historic integrity of Robbinsville and Windsor. Both villages came into existence (as did Washington Township) because of the C&A Railroad.*

This letter is written not just from the point of view of a Washington Township resident, but also as a current member of the Friends of Washington Township/ Washington Township Historical Society. I am a faculty member at DeVry University, North Brunswick where I teach contemporary history. I have written extensively on the history of central New Jersey over the past 20 years.

Please demonstrate your support for preserving Washington Township history by lending your voice to the efforts to save the Camden & Amboy Rail Line. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Henry MacAdam