

City of Cincinnati



E1-8282

Mark Mallory
Mayor

Office of the Mayor

July 14, 2008

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Rec'd 7/21/08

Surface Transportation Board
Section on Environmental Analysis (SEA)
395 E Street S.W., Room 1106
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

RE: Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 289X), Norfolk Southern Railway Company
Abandonment – in Cincinnati and Norwood, Hamilton County, Ohio

Dear Section on Environmental Analysis:

This responds to the Norfolk Southern Railway Company letter dated April 3, 2008, captioned as above, stating the railroad's plan to abandon a segment of rail line between Milepost CT 2.50 (Cincinnati) and Milepost CT 3.60 (Norwood), a distance of 1.10 miles, located in Hamilton County, Ohio. The Norfolk Southern Railway Company letter enclosed an Environmental Report.

The City of Cincinnati is vitally interested in the 1.10 mile section of Norfolk Southern railroad property between milepost CT 2.50 (Cincinnati) and milepost 3.60 (Norwood) for a Public Use. The Cincinnati metropolitan area currently does not have rail transit. However, it is the region's plan to construct a light rail transit network that would complement the existing bus transit system.

The Regional Rail Transit Plan for the Cincinnati area is shown in Attachment I. Many of the proposed rail transit alignments would make use of abandoned railroad rights-of-way. Attachment II shows how the Norfolk Southern right-of-way fits into the plan. As you can see, the Norfolk Southern 1.10 mile segment is a key piece. Without that segment, a key part of the rail transit network will be missing. Moreover, preserving the line would be consistent with future freight rail use.

Due to rising gas prices, congestion and other environmental factors, the public is increasingly looking to alternative modes of transportation. Light rail transit is one of the modes being used in several communities throughout the country. This rail segment proposed to be abandoned also fits well into long range plans for local feeder lines into the Ohio Hub Passenger System.

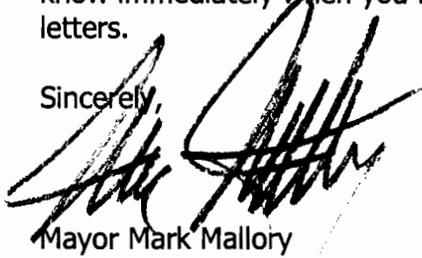
Considering the Cincinnati region's rail transit plan, the City considers it highly important that the 1.10 mile segment of railroad right of way not be abandoned, but rather be preserved for future rail use.

In that regard, the City of Cincinnati respectfully disagrees with the statement in the Norfolk Southern Environmental Report that abandonment would not produce adverse environmental impacts. Indeed, the adverse environmental impact would be great if this key rail segment is not preserved for the Cincinnati region's planned rail transit network.

The City of Cincinnati is considering its options, which include financial assistance procedures, public use procedures, and interim trail use and rail banking.

The City intends to enter the Surface Transportation Board proceedings. Please let us know immediately when you file your notice of exemption, pleadings and environmental letters.

Sincerely,

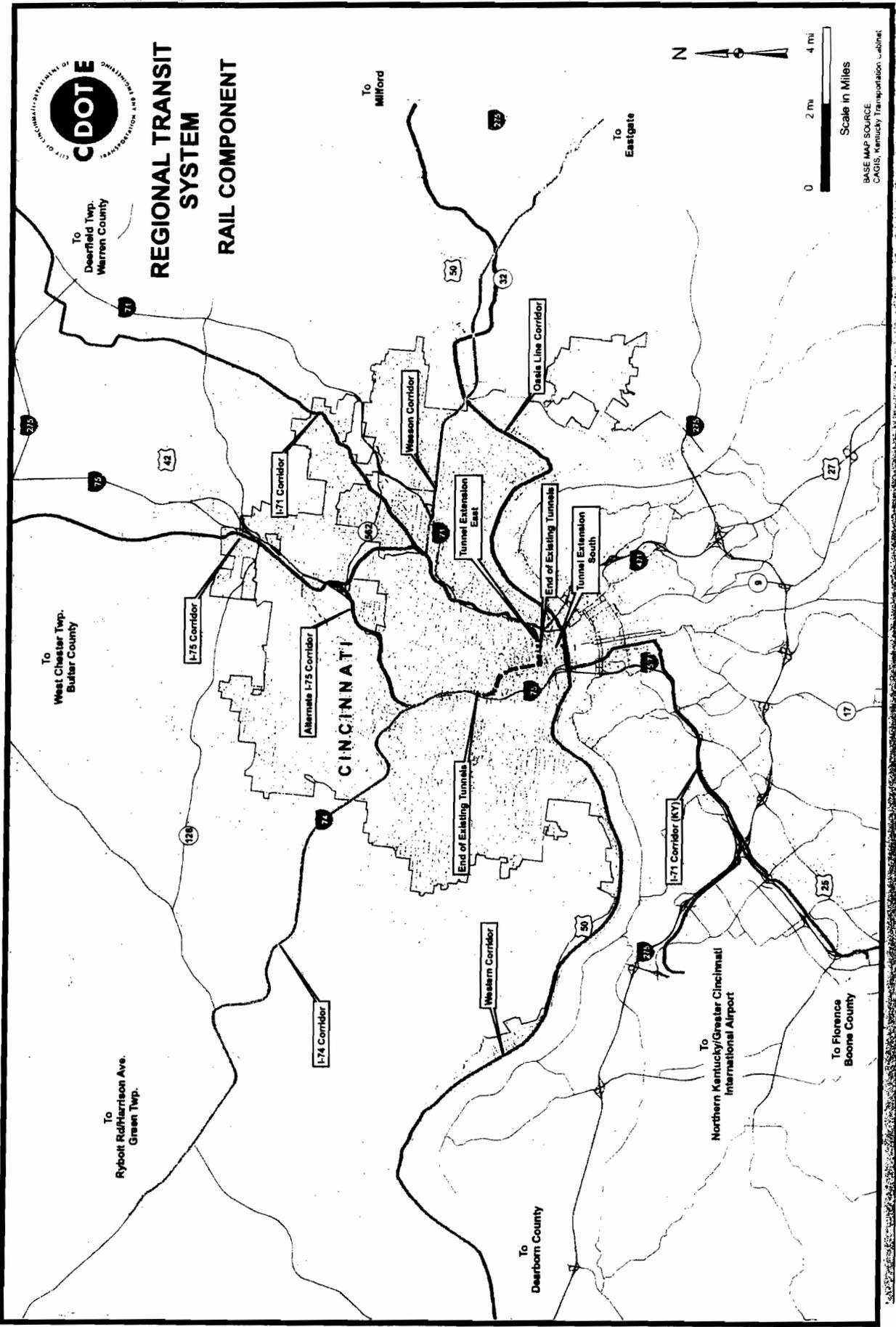
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Mallory', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Mayor Mark Mallory

Attachment I: Regional Transit System – Rail Component Map

Attachment II: Norfolk Southern Right-of-Way Segment in the Rail Plan

cc: Kathy Headrick, Norfolk Southern Corporation
Eileen Enabnit, Director, Department of Transportation and Engineering
Mark Policinski, Executive Director, OKI Regional Council of Governments
Marilyn Shazor, Chief Operating Officer, SORTA



Attachment II

