

Village of Mineral City
Railroad Committee
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RE: Preliminary Rail Restoration Report

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Mineral City Railroad Committee:

I am providing your members with a preliminary cost estimate for the restoration of four proposed routes into Mineral City for rail service. These figures were generally agreed upon by a former Class I railroad track inspector, and are still being reviewed by a former Class III railroad general manager for their validity.

Route #1 is from Mineral City to Valley Jct. (Zoarville), which would essentially provide a spur from the Wheeling & Lake Erie Rwy Co.'s main line that occasionally hosts passenger trains. Its projected costs for the 2 mile line are between \$2M-\$3.25M, with annual maintenance up to \$40K.

Route #2 would extend the existing W&LE Sandyville Branch south of the former Belden & Blake Co. to Grant St. Should Route #1 and Route #2 be completed, they would restore a circuitous route from Mineral City-Valley Jct.-Brewster-Canton, ideal and beneficial for both freight and passenger service, and a future route for the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic RR from Canton. The projected costs for the 1.75 mile line are between \$2.2M-\$3.25M, with annual maintenance up to \$30K.

Route #3 would reconnect Valley Jct. with Dover. This would provide access to the RJ Corman RR Co. network, and access attractions including Dover Dam, Reeves Museum, and the Tuscarawas County Fairgrounds. The former Reeves Mill could also be used to house local passenger trains and an operations center, space permitting. The projected costs for the 7.1 mile line are between \$5.4M-\$7.1M, with annual maintenance up to \$142K.

Route #4 is more difficult in reconnecting Minerva to Mineral City. This route would access the Minerva Steam Train Museum and its excursion train operations, Ohi-Rail for freight connections to the Panhandle, Carrollton, and Bayard, the W&LE for its connections, and the Norfolk Southern Rwy Co.'s Bayard Branch leading to its Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Canton, and other intercity-interstate main line

connections. The costs for the 15.83 mile line are projected at \$13.9M-\$31.4M, with annual maintenance up to \$307K.

Public way right-of-way acquisition costs c.2004 for a one square foot by the length of the distance between Grant St. to near N. Wooster Ave. in Dover were calculated between \$5570-\$5820. A 66' wide easement typical for railway widths would thus cost between \$367620-\$384120.

Governance model choices available include a municipal enterprise, a cooperative with other municipalities and government agencies, a Transportation Improvement District, a dedicated port authority, or a multi-county port authority. I would recommend a port authority for the intra-county routes independent of the Tuscarawas County Port Authority due to its current emphasis on production projects instead of distribution projects. Should inter-county routes be added, I would then recommend a multi-county port authority to actively and cooperatively involve those participating municipalities, townships, and counties. I would not recommend a transit authority, as ownership and operation of the right-of-way and infrastructure should not be coupled with carriage provision, which should be reserved to all qualified private and public third parties (i.e., ODOT does not provide bus service).

Although the costs may sound extreme, I would suggest teaming up with other interested municipalities and government agencies, and undertaking the above projects in the indicated order to establish a revenue stream, retire the debts, and demonstrate to investors the projects are investment grade. Also remember two tracks approximate 16 highway lanes of capacity, and highway lanes cost a minimum of \$10M per mile.

I have barely scratched the surface of the background and possibilities with this report, but if the preliminary figures and routes are of interest to the Committee and Council, please feel free to contact me for a more extensive report.

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Van Epps