

## **TOWN OF FREEPORT RESOLUTION**

### **Resolve, To Petition the Commissioner of Transportation and the Maine State Legislature to Implement the Recommendation of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council**

**WHEREAS**, the State Railroad Preservation and Assistance Act requires the Department of Transportation to seek legislative approval for any conversion of a state-owned rail corridor in which the department controls the right-of-way to a nonrail recreational or non-recreational transportation use; and

**WHEREAS**, the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council was formed in April 2022 pursuant to Maine Revised Statutes, Title 23, section 75, to review the section of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail corridor from mile post 0.0 in Portland to mile post 26.5 in Auburn, referred to as the Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor, for potential nonrail use; and

**WHEREAS**, any conversion to nonrail use is considered interim in nature, with rail corridors preserved for future rail use as provided under the State Railroad Preservation and Assistance Act; and

**WHEREAS**, conversion to an interim trail would involve removing the existing tracks and ties and developing a multi-use trail on the former track bed, with a paved or grave/stone trail surface; and

**WHEREAS**, authorizing an interim trail use is only the first step, and would enable additional planning regarding construction and funding of an interim trail; and

**WHEREAS**, of the 13 members of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council to cast a vote, a majority of 7 members voted to recommend the conversion of 26.5 miles of the inactive Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor to an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail; and

**WHEREAS** the afore-referenced 26.5 miles of the state-owned Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor is an integral part of a 62-mile looped, off-road multi-use trail network initiative led by the Casco Bay Trail Alliance and connecting Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, Brunswick and Freeport; and

**WHEREAS**, the Casco Bay Trail Alliance vision is consistent with and complimentary to Freeport's "Connect Freeport" vision; and

**WHEREAS**, the Connect Freeport vision and activities are consistent with and complimentary to Freeport's Complete Street Committee Ordinance and Complete Street Policy; and

**WHEREAS**, it may be worthwhile for the Town of Freeport to express its continued interest in the Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor to the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation and to the Maine State Legislature

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FREEPORT ASSEMBLED THIS 2ND DAY OF JANUARY, 2024, THAT:**

The Freeport Town Council, in support of an interim trail on the 26.5 miles of state-owned, inactive Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor from Portland to Auburn, hereby petitions the Commissioner of the Maine Department and the Maine State Legislature to permit the conversion of 26.5 miles of the Berlin Subdivision Rail Corridor to an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail, consistent with the recommendation of the rail use advisory council.

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