



TOWN OF FALMOUTH RESOLUTION
***Supporting an Interim Bicycle & Pedestrian Trail on the Berlin
Subdivision Rail Corridor***

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 non-rail recreational or nonrecreational 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 non-rail use; and

WHEREAS, any conversion to non-rail 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 gravel/stone trail surface; and

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

WHEREAS, the conversion of the inactive rail corridor to an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail received the most votes of the options presented to the 15-member Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council; and

WHEREAS, approximately 3.8 miles of the rail corridor lies within the Town of Falmouth; and

WHEREAS, the Falmouth Town Council finds that significant public benefits will result from an interim trail conversion, including:

Resolution 47-2024

- Increased pedestrian and bicyclist mobility within the Town and the region,
- Reductions in vehicle emissions and traffic demands,
- Promotion of healthful active transportation,
- Greater connection and an increase of access to preserved natural spaces in Falmouth and surrounding towns for recreation and respite,
- Creation of a new universal access trail for disabled residents and visitors,
- Provision of a safe travel corridor within the Town for cyclists of all ages,
- An increase in cyclist visitors to Falmouth, benefiting local businesses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH ASSEMBLED THIS 23RD DAY OF OCTOBER, 2023, THAT:

1. The Town Council supports an interim trail on the 3.8 miles of state-owned, inactive track in Falmouth.
2. The Town Council hereby petitions the Commissioner of Transportation and the Maine State Legislature to approve 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.

Attest: _____
Ellen Planer, Town Clerk

Date: _____