

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regard to the "Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail" proposal. It is my hope to share some insight on the matter. Having grown up very close to this proposed and then becoming a 10-year resident of Rapid City, this matter is important to me. As an avid hiker and trail runner, I can attest to an entire community that actively travels throughout the Midwest to experience its trail systems. If not for the substantial health and mental benefits that come from experiencing the outdoors, one should weigh the financial gain that comes from those who travel to experience it these trails. Additionally, campgrounds near the Missouri River have experienced an unprecedented growth during the past 2 years. This has undoubtedly been observed in the local communities. By not providing these campers or the numerous hiking/running/biking enthusiasts across the country with a proper trail experience, we are simply allowing their dollars to go to the communities that do offer these experiences.

As a former resident of Rapid City and someone who has personally observed the numerous benefits that come with a good trail system, I urge you to progress this proposal. Thank you for your considerations.

Best regards,

Dr. Jevin Meyerink

https://www.yankton.net/opinion/letters/article_bf6521de-2581-11ec-b44f-93f65f290df4.html

Letter: 'Rails To Trails' A Good Idea

Jan and Carl Brush, Yankton
Oct 4, 2021

This is in response to the letter from the gentleman from Avon concerning Rails to Trails. (Press & Dakotan, Sept. 28) We believe you should visit some trails in several of our neighboring states. There are many trails which pass through farmlands, resulting in few problems or complaints. Please check out Iowa's 89-mile Raccoon River Valley Trail. It is an award-winning trail and an economic benefit for the small towns it passes through. It passes through beautiful farmland and connects to the state capitol. It eventually will be part of the Great American Rail Trail, which will link Washington, D.C., to Washington State. It will connect with the Cowboy Trail in Nebraska, and hopefully, there will be a connector to trails in our state.

Rails to Trails is a positive investment for our state and communities. Businesses in small towns will benefit from the trail traffic. The folks who utilize trails are not a threat to the landowners' safety or privacy. Trail users ride bikes, walk, run, rollerblade and generally just like to enjoy fun and healthy outdoor activities for folks of all ages. Trails provide a safe environment for these activities. Folks with

disabilities especially appreciate such an environment. On trails we visit throughout the country, we see hand-pedaled bikes and trikes, wheelchairs and electric-assisted bikes.

If grant money is available, as inferred by the trail opponent's letter, South Dakota should indeed take advantage of it rather than let another state benefit from it.

Our experience has shown that there are always objections by landowners and some other taxpayers to the establishment of new Rails to Trails. This is generally because opponents have little knowledge of the benefits of trails and little or no experience with trails. Hopefully, our state will follow the lead of other states in establishing more beautiful and health-promoting trails.

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this brief letter of support for the Rails to Trails Project from a personal perspective. However, as the Platte-Geddes School District superintendent, I feel our athletic teams and programs like Let Me Run and Boys on the Run could greatly benefit from the project as well.

Platte is a very active community. It's not uncommon to see children riding their bikes around town, mothers pushing their children in strollers, and people of varying ages walking or running around town. Often these people are seen on the very busy highways that pass through town. With the exception of the old track at the elementary school and new track at the Athletic Complex, our community members lack safe alternatives. The majority of the sidewalks in town are located along those busy highways and those that use them still have to cross intersections, which pose another safety risk. While trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle we are putting ourselves at risk every time we go for a bike ride, walk or run. The Rails to Trails Project offers a safe alternative.

I have found that bike paths/running trails are heavily used in communities that have them. If you are opposed to this project, I encourage you to take the Highway 37 by-pass around Mitchell or visit the many miles of trails around Sioux Falls. If Mother Nature is cooperating, you will see for yourself how these trails serve as a healthy and safe alternative for those that enjoy exercising outdoors.

I could continue to provide a myriad of reasons why I support the Rails to Trails Project, but none of them are more important than the safety and health of our community and community members.

Respectfully,


Joel Bailey

I am offering my support to develop the idle rail line from Platte to Tyndall into a bicycle path. The last use of the rail track was in 1989 by the Dakota Southern Line. It does not make good sense to let the property be inactive. Allowing a private group to develop and use the line for biking, running, walking, and other outdoor activities would attract visitors to the area, but more importantly it would give local residents a safe place to have outdoor recreation. I am the cross country coach for the Andes Central/Dakota Christian Sports Coop cross country team and would definitely use this proposed development for our practices. I always worry about my runners in our practices running along county gravel roads and on the shoulders of highways when we meet farm equipment, trucks, and heavy traffic. I have also served 18 years in the South Dakota Legislature and worked to support tourism, not only in the Black Hills, but all across our great state. A scenic, well designed bike path will expand tourism in South Dakota.

Thank you,

Larry Lucas

[REDACTED]
Pickstown, SD 57367
[REDACTED]

Letter To Editor:

Rails to Trails: City Council, Please Reconsider.

A few weeks ago, the Geddes City Council minutes reported a lack of support or enthusiasm for a proposed effort toward grant money for a local Rails to Trails project. As an avid bike rider that rides 1000+ miles most years—many of those miles on old railroad beds converted to bike trails—I was dismayed that the leaders in Geddes opted to turn a cold shoulder on a project that could prove fruitful in future decades with minimal effort or fiscal investment from the city.

The trends are working in your favor as a small town set in beautiful terrain; we “city dwellers” are always looking for get-aways and healthy adventures away from the metropolis. Finding new bike trails traversing wide open spaces and beautiful country is a weekly goal for some. I write this letter while in the car—our bikes strapped to the roof and our destination ninety minutes away. The Mankato Rambler annual bike ride will offer us and 1500 fellow bicycle enthusiasts 42 miles of astonishingly beautiful fall scenery through freshly harvested farm fields and river valleys with rest stops in the three small towns along the route.

We attend 3-5 of these group ride events every year and will drive up to 3 hours to attend—spending our money in the small towns, exploring the local parks and shops and spending the nights in the local lodging. All the rides we attend have 500+ riders registered. How can you turn your back on 500+ individuals exploring your small town and taking in the sites and amenities?

surrounding communities in the county will miss out on, please read the September 24th MPR.org story of Crosby, MN titled “Rugged terrain lures mountain bikers to northeastern Minnesota’s booming trails”. In short, Crosby was on the decline for decades after the iron ore mines closed in the 1960s. Main street was deteriorating and economic activity was stagnate. In 2011, a small group of forward-thinking individuals realized that the open pit mines that had been sitting stagnant for decades—literal pockmarks on the landscape—were prime for building bike trails. The first 25 miles of bike trails were developed and opened in 2011. That first year, there were 18,000 that rode the trails and supported the nearby small businesses. In 2020 the number of visitors to the trails in Crosby—population 2,386—was 180,000. I traveled to Crosby three times this summer and spent many overnights in the vicinity. We dined in the restaurants, drank beer at the breweries and even supported the local hardware store by buying a much needed first aid kit—a story for another week. Main street Crosby is completely revitalized and every historic building on the street is filled with shoppes and eateries.

Geddes can take great pride in the last ten years with how the Saddle Club has been revitalized. The rodeo grounds and athletic complex are beautiful and are a feather in the community cap. This is concrete evidence of a community coming together for the greater good and future of Small Town America. Keep this momentum going by supporting the small group of dedicated individuals that will work to build a bicycle route through the county using dormant infrastructure.

To borrow from Kevin Costner in the classic 1989 movie Field of Dreams, “Build it and they will come”. I urge the council members to consider changing their lack of support of the Rails to Trails resolution. I also thank Judy Parker for taking the initiative in presenting this fantastic, forward-thinking idea to the council members. I look forward to future visits to Geddes and bringing my bike along to explore the beautiful new trail system traversing the county.

Chastity (Merkwan) Healy,
Scientist
Minneapolis, MN

Sept. 24, 2021

To whom it may concern,

As a Charles Mix County land owner, retired rural hospitality business owner, and former member of South Dakota Tourism, I am happy to support the efforts of "Friends of Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail".

We have had a few bikers come through our area and they seem to enjoy our rural environment and small town Mom & Pop businesses.

Tourism has become very important for our small towns, county, and State. There are many small towns along the rail, who would benefit from this trail. The proposed recreational trail would enhance the visitor experience at nearby State Parks & recreation areas, along the Missouri River. This would be a boost to the economies of the small towns along the tracks, the counties, the Yankton Sioux Tribe and South Dakota.

Sincerely,

Judy Parker



Geddes, SD 57342

Friends of Fisher to Olathe R-R
to show it may concern:

We have had some in Olathe May Co. &
want to support the above group

We have an abundance of further and
fishermen who come to the area for their
sport and are grateful for them. But we
also have birds and mammals and human
fisher and mammals and to help them
fisher. They ~~can~~ would be a great
part to our community of Olathe

It would also bring in tourism
trade to our small town, county and state

It would also, as a benefit to the
greater Olathe area as they walk along
have walked away in the last fishing
in Olathe May County at Lake Olathe

The "Trail" will connect Vermont State
Park, Vermont State Park and Olathe
and many more communities.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Living Mountain
Olathe, Mo 64574

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Niobrara Promoters, I am writing this Letter of Support to the Economic Development Association to encourage the proposal of the Regional Multi Use Recreation Trail. As a Promoter of Niobrara's community, the development of the Regional Multi Use Recreation Trail would positively benefit the states of Nebraska and South Dakota, as well as the communities involved. The *Friends of the Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail* will provide a plethora of advantages for all communities within reach and is sure to be utilized greatly by both states.

The trail will provide more user options for Lewis and Clark Lake and the Missouri National Recreational River area. This proposal aligns with the economic goals Niobrara Promoters has for the community of Niobrara. The community of Niobrara economically thrives on recreational tourism and developing a scenic hiking and biking recreational trail would provide additional revenue for the community. Area businesses, such as the local restaurants, bars, campgrounds, and convenience stations, will all thrive in the creation of a recreational trail bringing more tourism into the area.

In addition, creating a multi-use trail network connecting both Nebraska and South Dakota will establish unity between the states and the communities from which the trail will go through. The *'Rail to Trail'* may also act as a historical area of interest for many tourists visiting the area.

In conclusion, the Niobrara Promoters offers its full support in the development of the Regional Multi Use Recreation Trail. This development will help our state and local communities thrive economically and would be most beneficial.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Bauer

Secretary for Niobrara Promoters

Czech Days Tabor, South Dakota

Tabor Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 21
Tabor, SD 57063-0021



RESOLUTION SUPPORT FROM TABOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A REGIONAL MULTIPURPOSE RECREATIONAL TRAIL

WHEREAS a group named Friends of the Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail has been formed that represents communities in Charles Mix of Platte, Geddes, Ravinia, Land Andes, Wagner, Dante, and Pickstown, and in Bon Homme County of Avon, Springfield, Tyndall, and Tabor; and,

WHEREAS, said group proposes a regional multipurpose recreational trail be created from a corridor on approximately 70 miles of the rail line through heritage Yankton Sioux Tribal land, in scenic, historic sections of Bon Homme and Charles Mix Counties, and will connect with state and national parks said proposed trail to accommodate multisession use including cycling, hiking, equestrian activity, snowmobiling and Nordic skiing; and,

WHEREAS the proposed recreational trail would enhance visitor experience at nearby South Dakota State Parks and Recreational Areas along the Missouri River, Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake, encourage visitors to extend stays and to make return visits, and positively impact area communities; and,

WHEREAS national experience testifies "rails to trail" conversions encourage economic diversification, improve livability conditions, enhance local lifestyles, attract new resident, and stimulate new business formations; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed portion of the rail line, owned and controlled by the Rail Authority of the South Dakota Department of Transportation, is currently unused by, and no longer viable for, commercial railroad traffic; and,

WHEREAS time is of the essence as a funding opportunity, from the American Rescue Plan distributed through from the Economic Development Administration of the United States commerce Department for transformational outdoor recreational program exists for a limited time; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tabor Chamber of Commerce recreational trail concept and supports efforts of Friends of the Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail to secure said funds from EDA

Dated this 7th day of October 2021
For the Tabor Chamber of Commerce

Susan Shrader

Secretary Susan Shrader

Cc: President, Mike Sedlacek
Vice President, Steve Bares
Treasurer, Amy Beran

Bon Homme Heritage Museum
West 14th & Main
Tyndall, SD. 57066

To whom it may concern,

The Bon Homme Heritage Museum is thrilled to hear that a biking trail on the old NAPA to Platte rail line is being proposed. The Bon Homme Heritage Museum is placed on city property just west of the old rail line and would make an excellent location for a trail head. With the trail head by the museum it would open a new avenue for people to see our wonderful museum and the heritage in this area. Showcasing the history of this splendid area would be wonderful opportunity for people to understand our history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Wagner, President".

Bon Homme Heritage Museum Board
Janet Wagner, President

Ref: Proposed Rail
to Train Project
of Friends of Tabor
to Platte Rail to
Trails Box 454
Tynah, S. Dak
57066

Geddes Historical Socy
Box 132 Geddes
S. Dak 57342
605-680-4028

Dear TO whom it may concern;
ON behalf of the Geddes Historical
SOCIETY, which is a 501(c)3 NON PROFIT
organization organized in 1972 for the
purpose of promoting economic development
preserving history, historical buildings
and sites.

We see that this project is an
excellent way of giving the public
young and old an opportunity to see
the beautiful landscape that the
RAILS^{of} WENT threw. BY turning the
RAILS TO TRAINS they will have
this opportunity to travel or walk
thru the country side as our
trains did in the past.

a motion was made on Oct
6th at our monthly meeting and
and, carried, that we send a

a letter of support for this
proposed project.

Now, therefore be it Resolved That
we as a board representing history
for this area do hereby endorse said
Regional Recreational Trail Concept
and support efforts of Friends of
the Tabor to Phatte train to secure
Funds from EPA.

Thank you your efforts to provide
economic development, safety, for our
bikes, workers young and old and
preserving history of this region.

Sincerely yours

Dated Oct
7th 2021

Arnold Dejeu
Secretary
Chas Mier -
Geddes Historical Society

Letter of Support

Re:

Proposed Train to
+ Rain Project

Deaf's Amoco

Box 99

Geddos SD 5731

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN -
ON BEHALF OF ^{Geddos} ~~Deaf's~~ ^{business} ~~owner~~
^{28 years} ~~owner~~ (55 years) ^{28 years} ~~past~~ member of
Geddos City Council (18 years as
mayor), also my wife and I live
ON OR NEXT TO PROPOSED RAINHEAD
BY PASS ROUTE TO AND THROUGH GEDDOS
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED
THAT I OWNER OPERATOR OF DEAF'S AMOCO
DO HEREBY ENDORSE SAID ^{Reign} ~~Reign~~
RECREATION RAIN CONCEPT AND
SUPPORT EFFORTS OF FRIENDS OF THE
TOWN OF PLATTE TOWN TO SECURE
SAID FUNDS FROM EDA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO
PROVIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY
FOR OUR YOUTH - TEENS - ADULTS!

Dated Sep 25 2021 *Ronald A. Deaf*

REF: PROPOSED RAIL
TO TRAIN PROJECT
C/O TABOR TO PHATTE
BOX 454 TYNDALE
SD-57066

JOHN WILLIAMS
BOX-200 ^{Geddes} mich 1946
~~STOCK MARKET~~, S. DAK
57342
10-6-2021

Dear to whom it may concern;

On behalf of a property owner in
Geddes and a landowner who owns land
next to the railroad ~~and~~ and land
adjacent to proposed rail to train concept.

Now, therefore be it resolved that
I a past cash donor to proposed
project and a land owner next to
proposed rail to train project do
hereby endorse said regional
recreation train project and support
efforts of friends of the Tabor to
Phatte train to help secure funds
from EDA.

Thank you for your efforts to
provide economic development and
safety for our youth, teens, adults,
bikers and walkers.

Sincerely yours
John Williams

From: **Veurink Insurance Agency, LLC** <[REDACTED]>

Date: Thu, Oct 14, 2021, 9:19 AM

Subject: Trail.

To: [REDACTED]

I think this trail would be awesome. Too bad the trail can't stay on the rail. Keep us updated. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone