

ORDINANCE NO. 3108**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE NAME 'GM&O HERITAGE TRAIL' FOR FORMER RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY IN THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS**

JUL - 7 2014

WHEREAS, in 1865 a rail line was chartered from Dupou, Illinois to Baldwin, Illinois as the Cairo-St. Louis Railway--the first railway to serve Monroe County;


City Clerk

WHEREAS, in 1886 the line was purchased by the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, which merged with Gulf, Mobile & Northern Railroad in 1940 to become the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio (hereinafter "GM&O") Railroad;

WHEREAS, in 1972 the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) approved merger of the GM&O with rival Illinois Central railroads to form the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad (ICG), following which the ICG began to abandon or sell redundant trackage;

WHEREAS, in 1984 the ICG successfully petitioned the ICC to abandon the old GM&O mainline south of St. Louis through southern Illinois, and the last train made its way through Monroe County in the summer of 1985, ending over one hundred years of rail service through Columbia;

WHEREAS, a short segment of the former rail line has already been converted to a multi-use trail and, other than a short section of the rail alignment that runs through the Gedern Village subdivision, the remainder of this alignment within the City limits is still under City ownership;

WHEREAS, extension of this trail and improvement of its surface as envisioned in the Explore Columbia Plan will ultimately provide an almost five-mile round trip facility from Creekside Park to the Monroe County Welcome Center which will become the backbone and focal point for Columbia's bicycle and pedestrian network;

WHEREAS, designation of the trail to commemorate its historic use is supported by the GM&O Historical Society Inc., a not-for-profit historical and educational organization dedicated to preserving the history of the railroad, its predecessor lines and subsidiary companies; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that it is fitting and appropriate to assign this historical designation to the trail so as to declare to future generations the importance of the GM&O to the growth of Columbia and Monroe County.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbia, as follows:

Section 1. The recitals contained above in the preamble of this Ordinance are hereby incorporated herein by reference, the same as if set forth in this Section of this Ordinance verbatim, as findings of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois.

Section 2. The City of Columbia, Illinois, hereby establishes the name for the following parcels (mapped in Exhibit A, attached) to be the "GM&O Heritage Trail" to commemorate and preserve the history of the GM&O Railroad, its predecessor lines and subsidiary companies:

04-05-300-006-000
04-08-200-001-000
04-09-300-006-000
04-15-300-005-000
04-15-365-010-000
04-16-200-002-000
04-22-200-001-000

Section 3. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, as provided by law.

Alderman Niemietz moved the adoption of the above and foregoing Ordinance; the motion was seconded by Alderman Ebersohl, and the roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None.

PASSED by the City Council and APPROVED by the Mayor this 7th day of July, 2014.


KEVIN B. HUTCHINSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

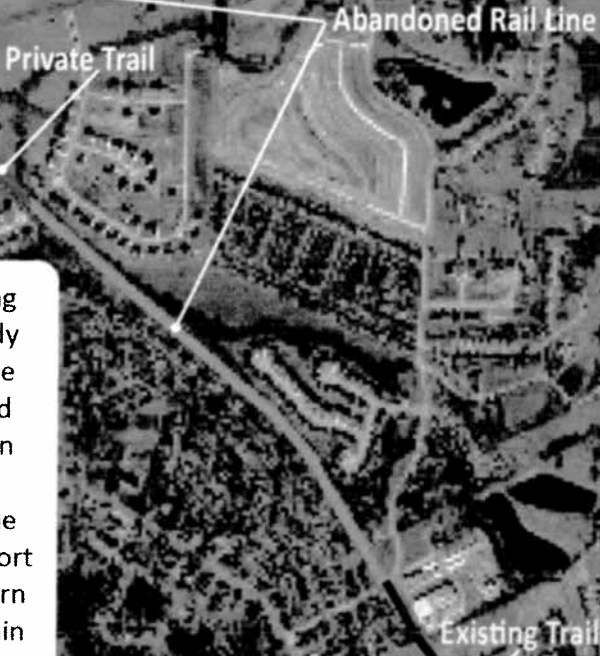

WESLEY J. HOEFFKEN, City Clerk

(SEAL)



From a regional planning perspective, it is of interest to note the presence of an abandoned rail line from Dupou to Baldwin, Illinois. This line was originally chartered in 1865 as the Cairo – St. Louis Railway. This was the first railway to serve Monroe County. In 1886 the line was purchased by the Mobile & Ohio RR extending the M&O's service from Mobile, Alabama to St. Louis. The M&O merged with Gulf, Mobile & Northern Railroad in 1940 to become the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio RR. This created a rail system of almost 2000 miles which connected St. Louis with the ports of Mobile and New Orleans. Seven years later the GM&O acquired ownership of the Alton Railroad. The consolidation of these two railroads expanded the line to a 3000 mile North-South rail system serving America's Middle States and offered a direct line between the great gateways of commerce and industry of this region.

In August of 1972, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) approved a merger of the GM&O and rival Illinois Central railroads forming the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad(ICG). Not long after the merger, the ICG began to abandon or sell redundant trackage and in 1984 the ICG successfully petitioned the ICC to abandon the old GM&O mainline south of St. Louis through southern IL. The last train made its way through Monroe County in the summer of 1985, ending over one hundred years of rail service in Columbia.



As it pertains to this planning effort, the rail line has already been converted to a multi-use trail in the Rails-to-Trails method of trail network generation. The current portion of converted alignment is located to the west of the American Legion property. The trail is approximately one mile long and the surface is oil and chip. Other than a short section of the rail alignment that runs through the Gedern Village subdivision, the remainder of the alignment within the City limits is still under City ownership.

Extension of this trail and improvement of its surface will provide an almost 5-mile round-trip facility from Creekside Park to the Monroe County Welcome Center. As both a recreational and historical asset to the City, the GM&O Trail will become the backbone and focal point for Columbia's bicycle and pedestrian network.

Special Thanks to Bill Seibel of the Columbia Play Commission for his exhaustive research on this topic.