

RESOLUTION NO. 2005- 149

SUPPORTING CUYAHOGA VALLEY SCENIC RAILROAD AND CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK IN EXTENDING EXCURSION PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE TO DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga Valley Preservation and Scenic Railway Association, d/b/a "Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad" (CVSR), is a private sector, volunteer supported, non-profit corporation that has operated excursion passenger rail service in the Cuyahoga Valley since 1972; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) is Ohio's only National Park and, with over 3 million visits in 2004, it ranks third among National Parks across the country in annual visitation; and

WHEREAS, CVSR operates in partnership with CVNP, which owns and maintains 26 miles of CVSR's track and provides interpretive and other support to CVSR, including regularly scheduled service, education field trips and special events through the Park; and

WHEREAS, CVSR and CVNP are essential elements of the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway, a National Heritage Area stretching 110 miles from Cleveland's Lake Erie shore to Dover/New Philadelphia, with CVSR as the "Steel Spine" – one of three transportation connectors within the Canalway; and

WHEREAS, CVSR has grown as a regional attraction and as an essential element in CVNP and the Canalway, with ridership averaging more than 100,000 annually in the past 5 years; and

WHEREAS, CVSR and CVNP have invested over \$30,000,000 in infrastructure, railroad rolling stock and related capital assets to create the capacity to move toward fulfilling the vision of CVSR as a heritage attraction and alternative transportation into and through the Park and across the Canalway; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, CVSR and CVNP worked in partnership with Akron Metro RTA to extend excursion passenger rail service 25 miles from the southern boundary of the Park in Akron to downtown Canton to provide a 51-mile transportation route linking the National Park and Akron with Canton; and

WHEREAS, CVSR and CVNP are working to extend service an additional 8 miles northward to downtown Cleveland providing a one-of-a-kind regional asset in Northeast Ohio - excursion passenger rail service connecting three major metropolitan areas – Cleveland, Akron, and Canton - and Cuyahoga Valley National Park; and

WHEREAS, broad community support is essential to accomplish the challenging task of extending CVSR's excursion passenger rail service to Downtown Cleveland; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority supports "transit to the park" and is pleased to evidence its support for this effort.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Trustees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority:

Section 1: That the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority hereby embraces the regional vision of connecting Cleveland, Akron and Canton with excursion passenger rail service and supports extending said excursion passenger rail service from Cuyahoga Valley National Park to Downtown Cleveland as "transit to the park."

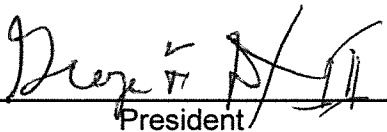
Section 2: That the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority shall work in concert with the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Rail Development Commission, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, City of Cleveland, consulting parties and other local stakeholders to advance this project and work cooperatively with all parties to provide "transit to the park" benefiting all residents of the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.

Section 3: That CVSR and CVNP be and they are hereby authorized to list the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as a supporter of this project, and can call upon the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer for further assistance and evidence of that support.

Section 4: That the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer be and hereby is authorized and directed to support the planning, design and implementation of the extension of excursion passenger rail service from Cuyahoga Valley National Park to Downtown Cleveland in partnership with CVSR and National Park Service.

Section 5. That this resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

Adopted: October 18, 2005



President

Attest: 

CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
STAFF SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

TITLE/DESCRIPTION: SUPPORTING CUYAHOGA VALLEY SCENIC RAILROAD AND CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK IN EXTENDING EXCURSION PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE TO DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND	Resolution No.: 2005- 149
	Date: October 13, 2005
	Initiator: Executive Dept.
ACTION REQUEST: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Review/Comment <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

- 1.0 **PURPOSE/SCOPE:** This action will indicate the Board's endorsement of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's (CVSR) Proposed Downtown Cleveland Extension Project.

- 2.0 **DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION:** The Committee of the Whole Board of the GCRTA Board of Trustees viewed a presentation at its September 20, 2005 meeting by CVSR and its main partner in the project, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The presentation outlined the purpose and need for extending CVSR service into downtown Cleveland. The Board subsequently requested that the Board show its support of the Plan by adoption of a Board Resolution.

Adoption of this resolution will reflect the Board's support of CVSR's goal to "complete the steel spine of the Ohio & Erie Canalway by extending CVSR excursion rail service 8 miles from Cuyahoga Valley National Park to downtown Cleveland," and to:

 - Improve and increase access to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park for all citizens;
 - Promote ridership on RTA and CVSR through new linkages at the Tower City and Settler's Landing Waterfront Line stations;
 - Leverage the more than \$30 million already invested in 51 miles of trackage used by CVSR between Canton, Akron and its current terminus at Rockside Road in Independence;
 - Support the region's economic development and tourism through alternative transportation;
 - Protect and enhance the natural systems and environmental quality of the Cuyahoga Valley.

- 3.0 **PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND:** Does not apply.

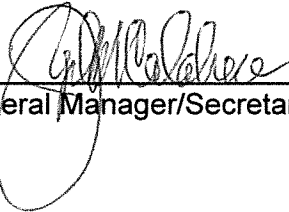
- 4.0 **DBE/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BACKGROUND:** Does not apply.

- 5.0 **POLICY IMPACT:** This endorsement is consistent with the Board policy goal to provide community benefits.

- 6.0 **ECONOMIC IMPACT:** CVSR projects a significant ridership increase from the extension. Current boardings of 100,000 would rise to approximately 250,000 annual boardings. Part of this would be regular service riders and school trips, plus new customers for specialty trains (wine trains, murder mystery express, etc.) and charters. A direct excursion passenger rail connection between Downtown Cleveland and the National Park creates a very unique amenity that will increase this region's economic competitive advantages compared to other regions lacking this cultural resource. Cleveland and Northeast Ohio will enjoy tangible positive economic impacts that will greatly enhance the region's ability to retain businesses and attract new ones, expand cultural tourism and bolster the convention trade.

- 7.0 ALTERNATIVES: Not adopt the action. Without GCRTA support this project could not receive due consideration for funding at NOACA and would not proceed.
- 8.0 RECOMMENDATION: This CVSR project was reviewed by the Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole Board at its September 20, 2005 meeting. The committee recommended a resolution supporting the CVSR be prepared for approval.
- 9.0 ATTACHMENTS: None.

Recommended and certified as appropriate to the availability of funds, legal form and conformance with the Procurement requirements.



CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer