

UNITED RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY of NEW JERSEY

www.URHS.org

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October 12, 2016

Wharton Hugh Force Park Trolley Project

The former Central Railroad of NJ rail right-of-way survives on the hillside above and parallel to the approximately 2,600 foot long restored section of the Morris Canal in Wharton's Hugh Force Park. We propose to replace track on approximately 3100 feet of the available right-of-way. This would be placed on the east/south side of the present right-of-way so as to preserve the present hiking trail. Trolley operations would not exceed four miles per hour to provide a pleasant ride and not conflict with hikers. Trolleys are traditionally pedestrian compatible and hiker friendly.

Such a trolley operation would compliment and improve the enjoyment of the experience of the present canal park. The historic amenity of the park would also be dramatically increased by the future implementation of a parallel canalboat operation. The trolley and future canalboat would allow passengers pleasant views of each other. In addition, trolley riders will have a view of the canal & basin, NJ Transit, Morristown & Erie, and Norfolk Southern trains passing by north of the restored lock along the cleared power line right-of-way. The trolley would in effect be a portable viewing platform.

The proposed operating vehicle would be a vintage trolley car. Several such cars are available and could be loaned to the operation. One of these vintage Public Service cars, built in 1916, is nearing full restoration at Phillipsburg and a second, 65-year-old, more modern car is at the URHS Boonton Shop being restored and repainted into a 1930s paint scheme..

A carbarn for the rail vehicles would be needed to protect the cars from the elements as well as to provide for their security. The proposed carbarn would be 150 feet long and 14 feet wide and constructed on the east / south side of the double track-wide right-of-way nearest the Wharton DPW complex and back against the hillside. This brick / barn-red building would be adorned with the historic, white painted, cast iron letters "CENTRAL RAILROAD OF NEW JERSEY" which were preserved from the former C RR of NJ Elizabethport locomotive shop, built in 1901 and cupolas. A track will pass through the building with switches to reposition the cars.

For the future, it would be highly desirable for a few parcels of land to be acquired to permit a rail connection around the Morris Canal basin west of the restored lock to W. Dewey Avenue near Lake Junction. If additional properties could be obtained from County Concrete / John Crimi at Hopatcong Junction, this triangular plot would be highly desirable and assure and secure an additional buffer to the present Morris Canal park area. It could also allow construction of a second carbarn to store and protect additional rail equipment.

Wharton Hugh Force Park Trolley Project Business Plan

1. The Proposal

- A location within Morris County where United Railroad Historical Society might;
- Operate an historic trolley on former and abandoned railroad right-of-way as an interpretive element in an area with a significant historical heritage such as the Hugh Force Canal Park in Borough of Wharton
- Construct a carbarn in which to store and protect the trolleys when not in use
- Become a synergistic tourist attraction for Morris County by offering rail excursions

2. Tourism Potential

- Morris County is well located in relation to the geographic and population center of NJ
- Revolutionary War sites, Morristown National Historic Park, many local museums, etc.
- Outstanding local history: Turnpikes; Iron; Explosives; Morris Canal; Railways; Excursions

3. The Business Model

- Operations would be by a non-profit governing entity
- Trolley cars have been pledged by owner, North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society
- Track construction materials are pledged by Friends of NJ Transportation Heritage Center
- Funds for building and track construction have been pledged by Liberty Historic Railway
- Additional donations and grants will be vigorously pursued
- Expenses and income will be tightly monitored and controlled by project governing entity

4. Operating Plan

- Initial operations: weekends, from July 4th to Labor Day
- Special Santa & Easter Bunny trips would be added as soon as possible
- Eventually, operations could become near year-round
- Numerous special events, charters, birthday and dinner cars could also be hosted

5. Mission / Keys to Success

- The focus would be to attract visitors from the large, nearby population
- Also attract international tourists from the NYC area
- Facilitate with internet promotion, media coverage, an attractive brochure, and signage
- Visitors would be attracted by the unique, historic trolley cars and the site itself
- Desirable to add additional parcels to the south/west of Hugh Force Canal Park as buffer

6. Competitive Edge / Attractiveness

- Pleasant, historic park area for operations
- Nearby world class museums / venues / restaurants / hotels / motels / shopping
- Ease of access via highway and public transit (short taxi ride from Dover)
- Outstanding local, historic, industrial, and other canal sites

7. Initial Construction Cost Estimates

· Survey & Monumenting of Property:	\$ 10,000
· Trucking of Materials / Equipment Rental:	\$ 25,000
· Initial Car barn:	\$115,000
· Track Construction:	\$200,000
· Movement of Rail Vehicles to Site:	\$ 10,000
· <u>Miscellaneous:</u>	<u>\$ 50,000</u>
· Total (funding pledged by LHRy) :	\$410,000

8. Anticipated Expenses

· Fuel: \$25 per operating day:	\$ 750
· Electricity: \$25 / month x 12 = per year:	\$ 300
· Telephone and Internet Expenses per year:	\$ 300
· Insurance: (estimate of present URHS P&C policy annual increase):	\$ 3,000
· Maintenance: Annual Estimate:	\$ 5,000
· <u>Annual Improvements to Property:</u>	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
· Total Annual Expenses:	\$ 15,000

9. Pricing Strategy / Income Projections

- Bargain pricing of \$5 adult and \$2 child for initial short round trip ride is suggested
- A family group price of \$10 would be desirable and attractive
- Two round trip rides per hour = a total capacity of 100 individuals
- At 50% of capacity & av. fare of \$3 = \$900 income per 6 hour day
- Initial Weekend (4 July - Labor Day) income projection = \$18,000+ per season

10. The United Railroad Historical Society of NJ - Background summary

- Formed in 1987; governed by delegates from 15 NJ-based railroad historical groups
- An all-volunteer, IRS designated, non-profit, public benefit corporation
- Preserves & restores railway equipment for the Future NJ Transportation Heritage Park
- URHS owns over 70 locomotives, passenger, freight, and service cars
- Includes luxury observation - lounge cars from the famous Jersey Central *Blue Comet* and New York Central *20th Century Limited* trains
- Has successfully achieved over \$3 million in grants and donations since 1988
- Boonton restoration & storage facility improvements in last eight years;
 - » Erected a \$200,000 shop building
 - » Installed \$80,000 of security fencing
 - » Operating, restored locomotive donated
 - » Paved yard and work areas & Installed electrical and compressed air systems
 - » Restored railroad cars for offices, shop, storage and meeting room
- Inadequate room at Boonton - not able to operate public excursions there
- The Boonton restoration shop facility is only able to be open to the public one day annually for the Railroad Museum (For A Day) Festival
- URHS activities are supplemented by accomplishments of several local collections;
 - » Historic bus, truck, military, etc. and railroad equipment