

The purpose of our proposed trail development in the Lower Big Creek Valley is to begin the revitalization process. The proposed trail will connect two of the greatest assets the region has today, the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. By creating a trail through the valley, there will be a land use that is in harmony with both pedestrians and the environment. It is our hope that the valley will go beyond connecting individual assets and eventually become an asset in its own right.

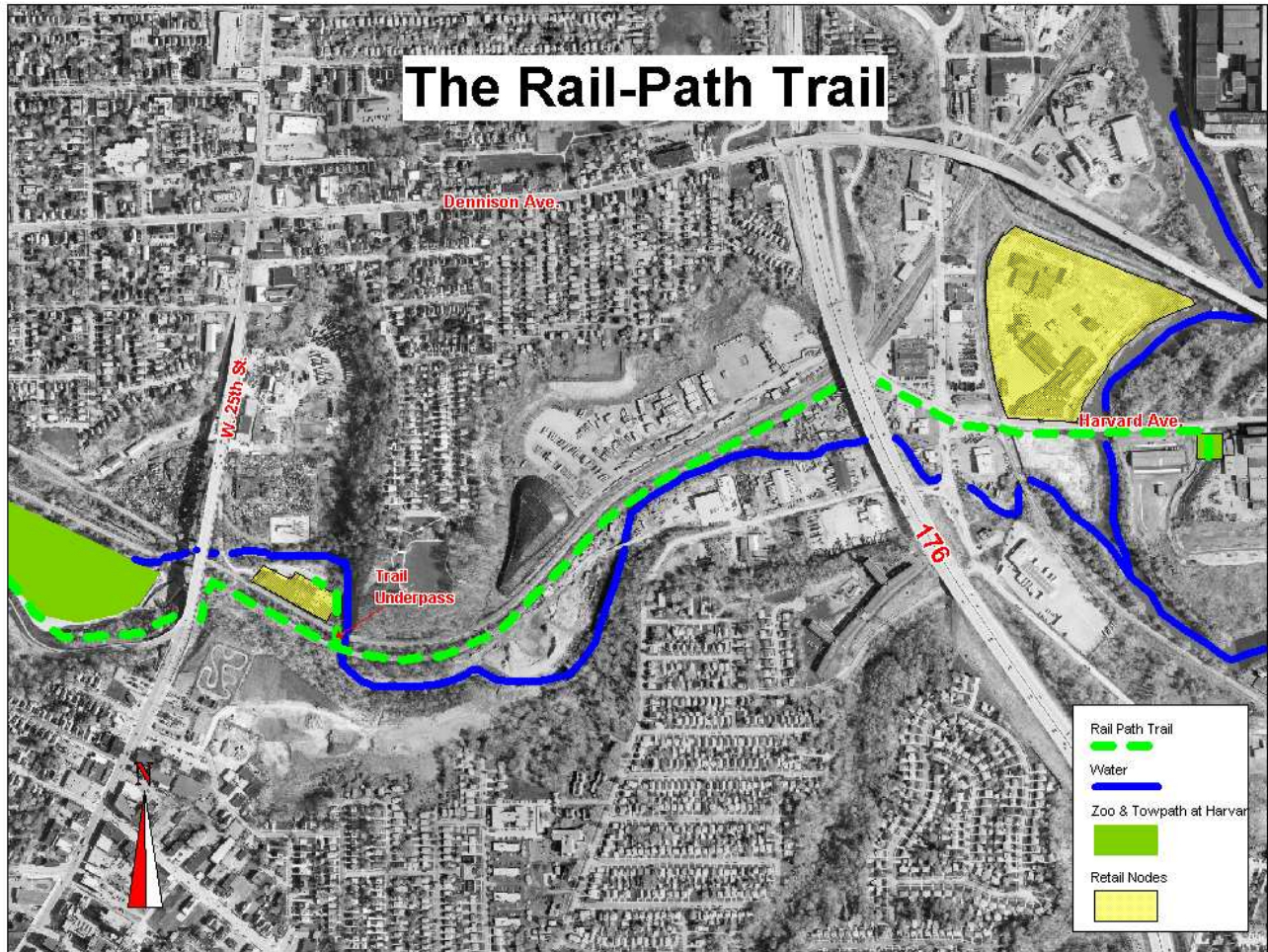
The concept of our proposed rail-trail plan is to consolidate two parallel rail lines onto one track and redevelop the other track into a trail that would connect the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Beyond the creation of the trail, we are also proposing the redevelopment of a building located in the Lower Big Creek Valley that is currently used as a manufacturing facility. We feel these two parts of our project are keys to the redevelopment of the Lower Big Creek Valley.

The trail and redevelopment of 4001 Pearl Road are the first two phases of our project, but it should be noted that there are plans being formulated to create a retail center to serve the Towpath Trail, the Lower Big Creek Trail, and the Scenic Railroad. The site of this retail development is at Harvard and Jennings Avenue and has been called "Harvard Junction". The development is contingent to the superfund cleanup of the former Harshaw nuclear facility, the extension of the towpath trail into downtown Cleveland, and the extension of the Scenic Railroad into downtown Cleveland.

All of these factors will lead to the greater revitalization of the Lower Big Creek Valley and the reinvestment of the area surrounding the valley. Consolidating

the two rail lines, Connecting the two assets, and Creating reinvestment opportunities is what we feel is a successful plan for the Lower Big Creek Valley.

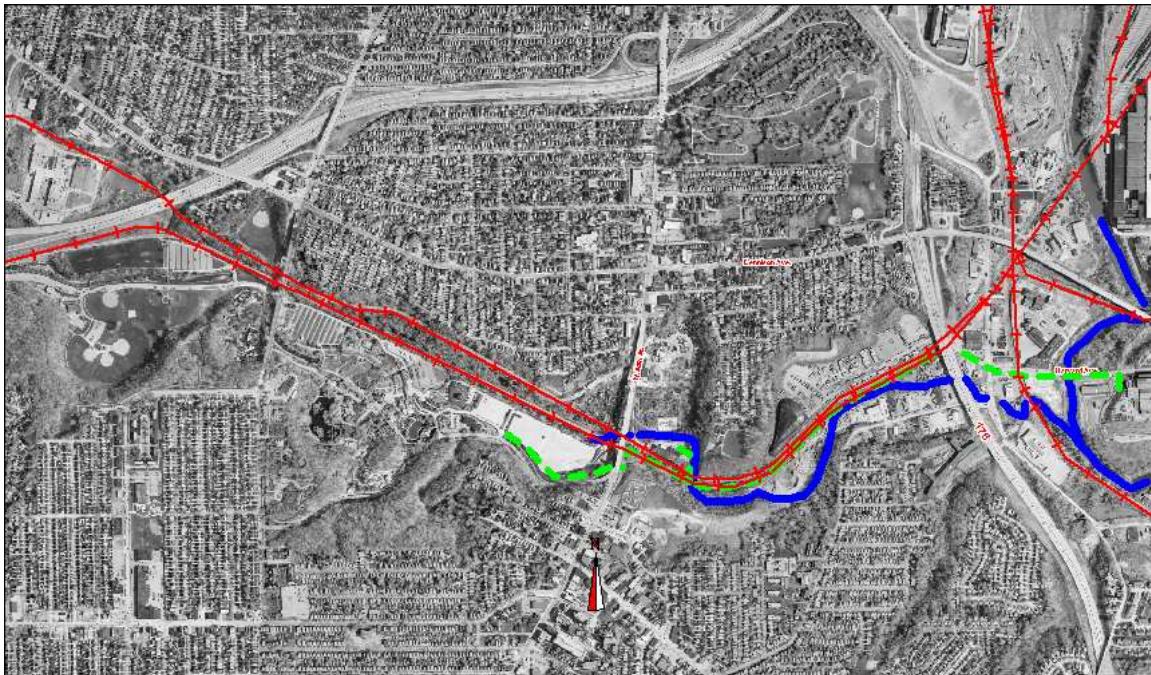
Figure 1.



Concept

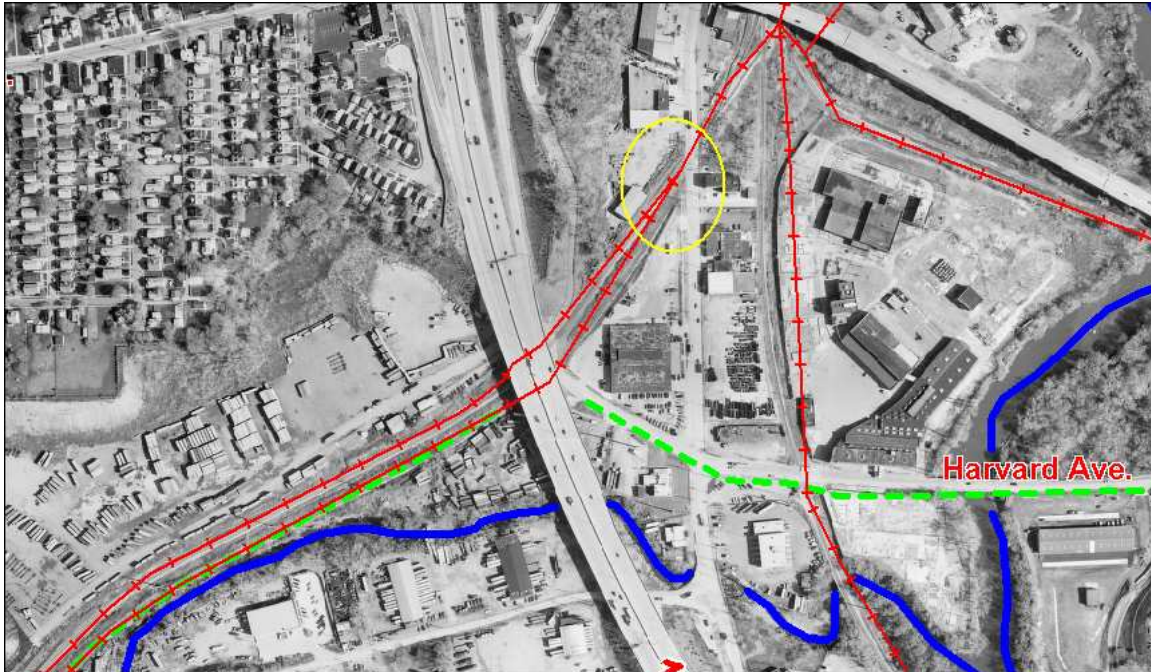
The Lower Big Creek Valley has two active rail lines that run parallel to each other through the valley and along the creek. The two rails are owned by two different (and competing) companies; North Line—Norfolk Southern and South Line—CSX. In figure 2 the two rail lines can be seen.

Figure 2.



Our plan calls for the acquisition of the southern line to be redeveloped as a trail. Both railroad companies would share the northern line between Harvard Rd. and the point of the lines splitting. It should be noted that both companies do share a rail line a short distance from our proposed trail. The rail connection can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3.



Because there is already a connection of the lines at the east end, we feel the conflict and/or disruption would be at a lesser extent than if two connections were being proposed.

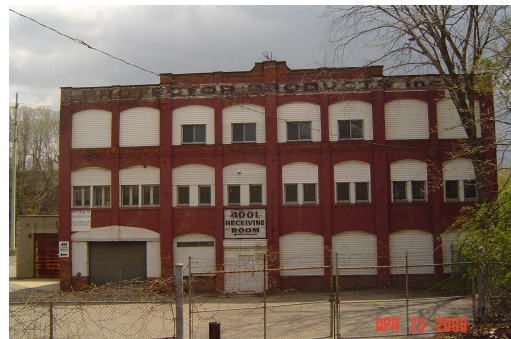
We feel that the two rail lines should be combined into one line because of the wasted space that is present in two active rails running along parallel lines in an ecologically sensitive area that should be an asset to the area. Consolidating the lines and creating a recreational trail is an opportunity to bring greater value to the valley.

The creation of the Rail-Trail Path would create an opportunity to bring a better use to 4001 Pearl Road located in the valley. The redevelopment of 4001 Pearl Road should not only be a more efficient use, but a use that enhances the Rail-Trail Path and the overall connection of recreational assets in the area. 4001 Pearl Road can be seen in figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4.



Figure 5.



The way we are proposing to redevelop 4001 Pearl Road is in the creation of an Extreme Sports Recreational Facility. The facility would have recreational activities, such as indoor paintball, a rock climbing wall, indoor BMX/skate, and other recreational activities.

Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.



The redevelopment of 4001 Pearl Road would, also, help to improve the overall image of the Lower Big Creek Valley. It would be a valuable midpoint between the Zoo and Towpath that would enhance the overall experience of using the Rail-Trail Path. In figures 9 and 10 the enhanced image can be realized in the redevelopment of 4001 Pearl Road.

Figure 9.

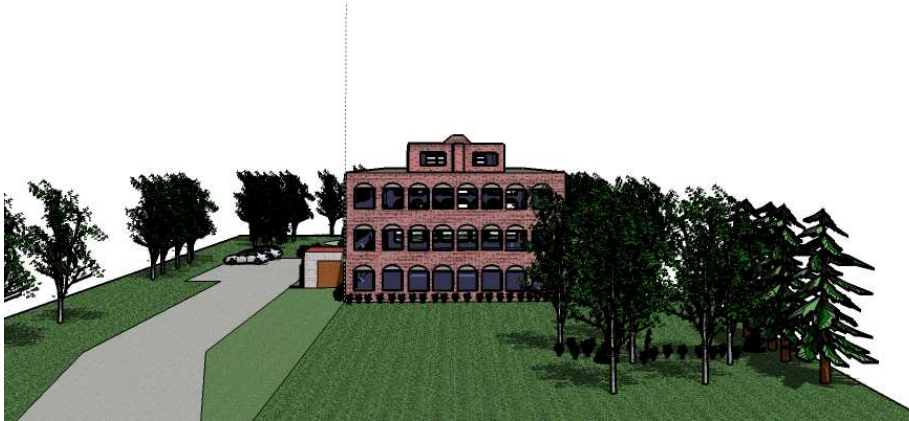


Figure 10.



The future the Lower Big Creek Valley will be bright with the creation of the Rail-Trail Path. The eventual extension of the Towpath Trail and Scenic Railroad will allow for the development of Harvard Junction, which will make the Rail-Trail Path a main thoroughfare for recreational pedestrians in the Lower Big Creek Valley.

RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY

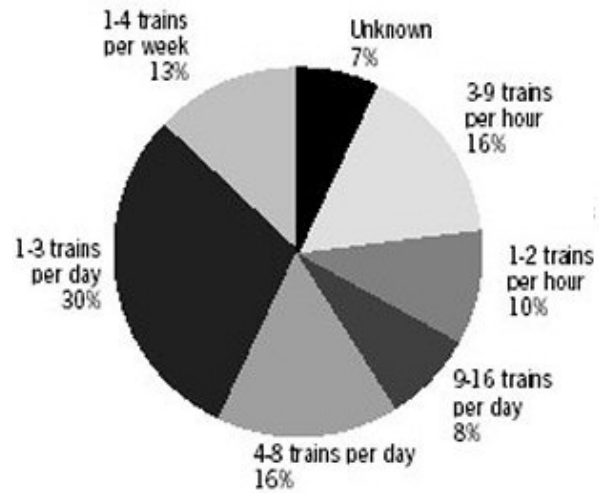
Rails to Trails Conservancy is a national program that uses existing rail lines to build healthier place for healthier people. Rails to Trails was founded in 1986 and has state and regional offices in Ohio, Florida, California, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. It is a 501(c)(3) non profit corporation with over 100,000 members and supporters. Rails to Trails converts abandoned, unused rail lines into recreational trails. Today there is 13,150 miles of rail-trails with over 100 million visitors per year.



A subsection of the Rails to Trails Conservancy is the Rails with Trails Conservancy. This group creates recreational trails that parallel existing rail lines. The trails are on or adjacent to active railroad corridors. Today, there are 65 Rails with Trails that encompass 239 miles in 30 states. These trails are located adjacent to active rail lines ranging from a few slow-moving short-haul freight trains weekly, to high frequency Amtrak trains traveling as fast as 140 mi/h. Forty-six percent of these tracks have between 1 and 8 trains per day. See Figure These corridors often offer scenic stretches along rivers for trails when the alternative is typically a busy roadway.

Figure 11.

Frequency of trains , by percentage of existing RWTs



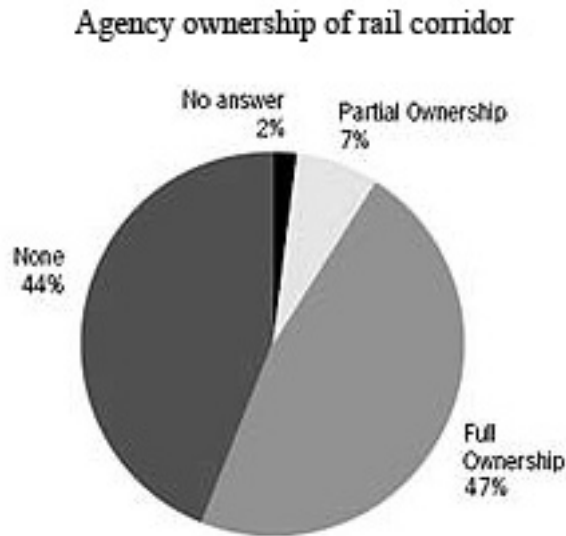
Our project will call for a combination of these two programs. By establishing a trail from the south rail line we will be creating a Rail with Trail as this trail will run parallel to the north line. In urbanized areas such as Cleveland, Ohio, it is often difficult to find land for recreational trails. Trail developers often have to work with

various land owners to either purchase the land and/or obtain easements. It is also difficult to find continuous stretches of land.

The ownership of these trails is often an issue. The Federal Highway Administration’s study Rail with Trails: Lessons Learned, found that, “Government agencies own about half the Rails with Trails corridors nationwide. In the remainder, the railroad retains ownership. For eighty percent of these, the trail management agency purchases a use easement or license from the railroad or transit authority, utility, private landowner, or other government agency. “

Many of the trail management agencies purchased the trail right-of-way by receiving their funding through a variety of Federal, State, county, city, and private funds. Railroad companies also may choose to donate the land, obtaining a tax deduction. Transfer of ownership is quite often seen as the easiest way to reduce liability risks, although indemnification agreements can have a similar effect. Financial compensation also helps gain railroad company support for projects.

Figure 12.



Often, the biggest concern of railroad companies is safety and liability. Railroads have multiple liability concerns about the deliberate location of a trail near or on an active railroad corridor. Rails with Trails: Lessons Learned found that:

- Trail users may not be considered trespassers if a railroad intentionally invites and permits trail use within a portion of their right-of-way, and that the railroad would therefore owe a higher duty of care to trail users than they would otherwise owe to persons trespassing on their corridor.
- Incidents of trespassing and injuries to trespassers will occur with greater frequency due to the proximity of a trail.
- Trail users may be injured by railroad activities, such as an object falling or protruding from a train, hazardous materials, or by a derailment.
- Injured trail users might sue railroad companies even if the injury is unrelated to railroad operations, causing railroads to incur legal fees, court costs, and potential judgments for damages. Railroads have in the past borne the burden of litigation for many incidents on their property, even for crashes with at-fault automobile drivers who have blatantly ignored obvious warning systems.

According to the Rails with Trails 2000 report Design, Management, and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Rail Lines, of 61 trail managers surveyed only one reported an instance of a train-related accident on the trail. Furthermore, only 3 out of 61 reported accident claims filed against the trail managing agency. No claims have been filed against railroad companies.

To address the issue of safety on the tracks there are a couple of important factors to consider. First, our plan calls for no at grade railroad crossing. Many government agencies and railroad owners have adopted policies of not creating any new at grade crossings. This means that at no point will users of the trail cross the tracks. A large number of Rails with Trails are separated from the railroad tracks. 71% of Rails with Trails use barriers to separate the tracks and the trail. These barriers can range from natural vegetation to fences. Our project has natural vegetation serving as a barrier in many parts of the route.

Railroad companies are concerned with consideration for future expansion needs and future changes to adjacent land uses as a reason for opposing Rails with Trails. Railroads often anticipate an increase in future business and prefer to hold onto the railroad right of way. Due to the difficulty of returning the land to private use later, many railroad companies are reluctant to sell or lease the land. Railroad companies feel that trail planners do not understand railroad operations and support the trails over safety and common sense.



Most states have laws that substantially reduce public and private landowner liability for all types of trails, including Rails with Trails. Neither public agencies nor private landowners have suffered from trail development. In Rail-Trails and

Liability: A Primer on Trail-Related Liability Issues and Risk Management Techniques Hugh Morris found, "Adjacent landowners are not at risk as long as they abstain from 'willful and wanton misconduct' against trespassers such as recklessly or intentionally creating a hazard. Trail managers minimize liability exposure provided they design and manage the trail in a responsible manner and do not charge for trail access." There are many options available to limit liability exposure. These include:

- Recreation use statute
 - This allows for the owner to not assume responsibility or incur liability as long as they do not charge for admission to use the trail.
- Trespassing legislation
 - Makes it s crime to be on the property
- Rail with Trail State statute
 - Says that no adjoining property owner is liable to any actions of any type resulting from trail users trespassing on adjoining property.
- Easement/lease agreements that limit liability
 - City or government agency assumes all liability except in negligence.
- Easement/lease agreements with full indemnification
 - Usually a city or government agency assumes full liability
- Insurance
 - 98% of trails are insured against liability. 69% stated that insurance was not difficult to obtain.
- Transfer of Ownership
 - Railroad typically would transfer physical ownership of the corridor to government or trail managing agency.

Undertaking a project such as this does not have to be all bad for railroad companies. There are also several potential benefits to the railroad companies. These benefits include:

- Reduced Liability Costs
 - Railroad companies spend millions of dollars per year on things such as insurance and legal fees. Agreements that reduce their liability would reduce their costs.
- Financial Compensation
 - Often, railroad companies receive financial compensation. An average sales price is \$800,000 for the property.
- Reduced crime, safety, dumping, and nuisance problems.
 - By improving the aesthetics of the area, many trails have seen a reduction in these problems.

PROJECT SUCCESS AND FEASIBILITY

In order to determine the project's potential for success amongst the community, seven determining factors were identified as the bases for the proposal. Those seven factors were recreation, ecology, job creation, fiscal benefits, time to build, cost to build, and political interest of the proposal. Each factor influenced the project's potential for success independently of each other and at different levels. In other words, some factors were considered more significant than others based on survey results.

In order to gather accurate information, surveys were conducted at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Towpath Trail. Surveys were conducted at the zoo due to gauge the interest level of a recreational trail connecting to the zoo as well as to determine the importance of surrounding uses. The Towpath Trail surveys portrayed information regarding the users of recreational trails.

Surveys were further conducted by contacting political and community stakeholders in and around the Lower Big Creek Area as well as gathering vital information from the local community residents. Results of the foregoing surveys are set forth in Appendix A.

a. Weighing the Survey Results

Utilizing the information gathered from the surveys, it was next necessary to interpret these results according to a scale. Before analyzing the specifics within each survey, and inputting them into a table, each survey was given its own weight. For example, because the surveys from the stakeholders and the residents involved people with intimate knowledge of the area as opposed to out of town/area visitors to the Zoo and Towpath, they were given more weight than the Zoo and Towpath surveys. A specific breakdown of the relative weighting of the surveys can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Redevelopment Issue	Stakeholder (10%)	Residential (14%)	Zoo (7%)	Towpath (7%)	Total
Ecology of the Valley	0.08	0.08	0.03	0.05	25%
Recreational Opportunities	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.04	
Employment Impact	-	0.05	0.02	0.01	10%
Ongoing Tax Base	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.02	10%
Time to Complete Development	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	5%
Cost to Build	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.01	10%
Community Support	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.02	15%
					100%

Once the relative weights of the surveys were determined, the specific data was analyzed in order to determine how important each of the seven factors ranked according to the individual survey responses. These individual responses were then multiplied by their respective survey weights and tallied together to form respective weights for each of the seven criteria. Again, a detailed analysis is set forth in Table 1 above.

Accordingly, the weighted matrix table was created with each factors weight indicated in the far left column. See Table 2 below.

Table 2.

WEIGHTS	FACTORS	ALTERNATIVE RATING	ALTERNATIVE WEIGHTED
0.25	ECOLOGICAL QUALITY		0
0.25	RECREATION		0
0.10	JOB		0
0.10	FISCAL NET LOSS/BENEFIT		0
0.05	TIME		0
0.10	COST TO BUILD		0
0.15	POLITICAL INTEREST		0
1.00	TOTAL		0
		WORST 1 2 3 4 5 BEST	

The next step in determining the project potential feasibility was to score each category. This was done according to a breakdown of each of the seven factors. Each factor was then given a score of one to five using specific scoring standards. The score was then reduced according to the categories relative weight within the scope of the project. These seven weighted scores were then tallied to determine an overall score of the project. An example is set forth below in Table 3 and the full scoring sheet is set forth in Appendix B.

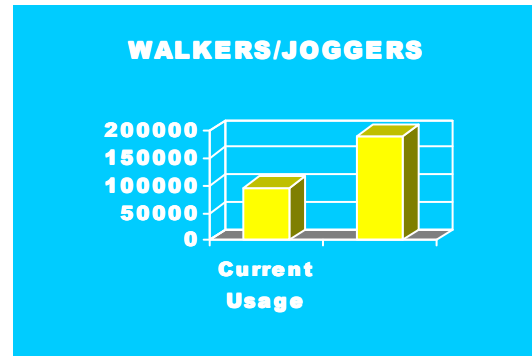
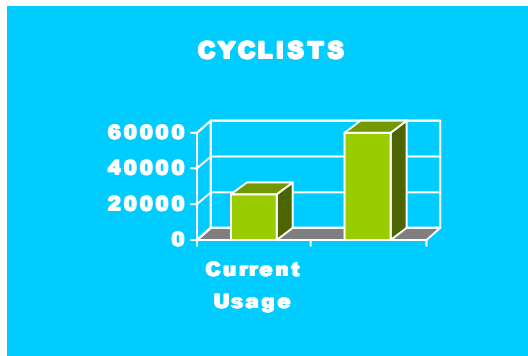
Table 3.

Time To Develop	Select One	Results	Weights	Group Alternate Weight
Does your project take 0-18 months to complete?	5	3	0.05	1.5
Does your project take 18 months – 3 years to complete?	4			
Does your project take 3 to 5 years to complete?	3			
Does your project take 5 to 8 years to complete?	2			
Does your project take 8 plus years to complete?	1			

b. Factor Analysis of the Rail-Path Trail

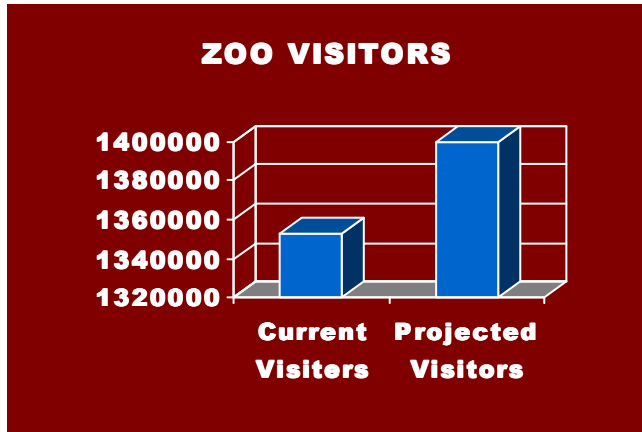
RECREATION

The Rail-Path Trail proposes a dramatic increase in recreational activities in the Lower Big Creek Valley. With the connection between the Zoo and the Towpath Trail, annual users will increase by approximately 100%. Currently, there are approximately 123,000 annual users of the Big Creek Trail comprising of cyclists, walkers/joggers, and in-line skaters. When the trail connection is in place, it is estimated that approximately 250,000 users will utilize this trail.

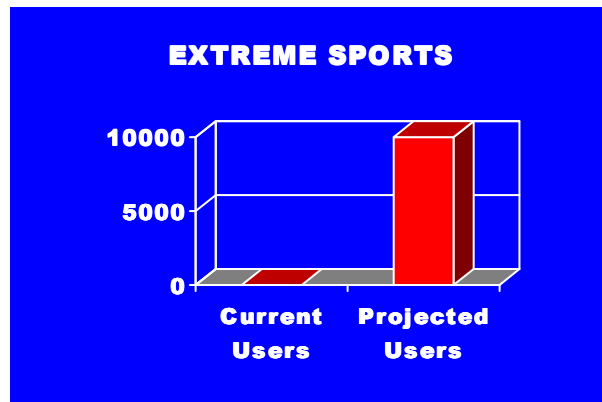


Further, with the construction of Harvard Junction, canoe and kayak will be available for rent along the creek and river for individuals and families to enjoy a different perspective of the valley.

As annual visitors to the Zoo top out at approximately 1.353 million visitors, annually, it can be expected that because of the enhanced links and access to the Zoo via the trail, visitation can only increase. A conservative estimate would be that annual visitation would increase by approximately three percent, or 50,000 people.



Finally, with the renovation of 4001 Pearl Road, extreme sports such as indoor paintball, climbing, and indoor biking (BMX riding), will be introduced to the Valley. It is expected that this facility will enjoy an annual visitation of about 10,000 annually.



Using the scoring guidelines set forth in Appendix _____, this project would score a 4 out of 5. There is no introduction of urban camping as it is not a feasible use because the proposed trail parallels an existing and used railroad.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Plans are in the developing stages to remediate the Harshaw Site. Once remediated, the construction of Harvard Junction will bring new life to the area,

removing what was a rundown and dangerous area, and creating an interactive node. Further by removing one railroad track and converting it into a recreational trail with abutting landscaping, part of the ecology of the valley is restored.

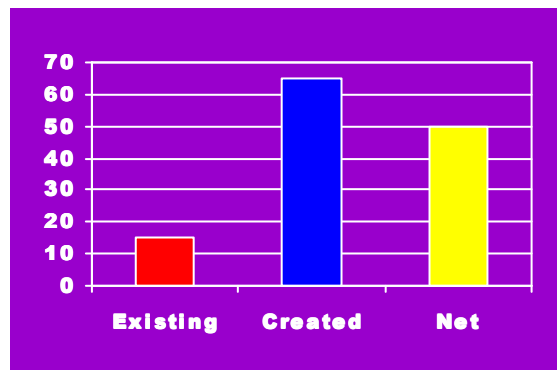
Because the project does not remove noise pollution (two trains will still exist but only on one track), or hillside subsidence, though, the overall score is relatively low.

JOB CREATION

Currently, there are approximately fifteen individuals employed in the handful of businesses located at the 4001 Pearl Road building. By renovating and restoring the building in order to create an extreme sports complex, it was necessary to relocate the businesses. However, it is expected that approximately fifteen jobs will be created because of the extreme sports complex, thereby resulting in zero net loss of jobs.

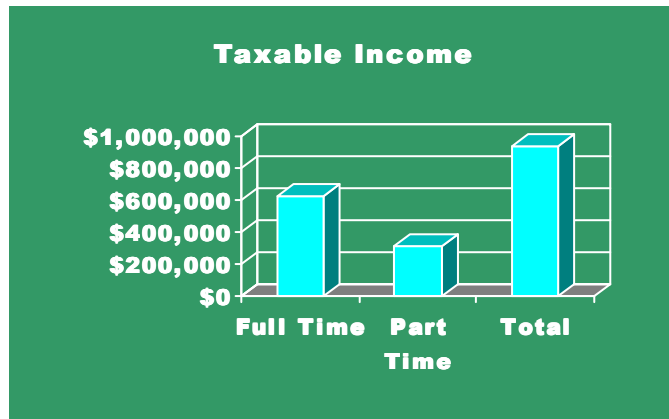
Further, with the construction of Harvard Junction, it is projected that approximately fifty additional jobs will be required to maintain and operate the restaurants and retail. With the creation of jobs reaching sixty-five and a loss of fifteen, the net creation of new jobs to the Valley is fifty, or an increase of about 19.2%.

As the job creation is just under 20%, the overall score for this project is four out of five.



FISCAL BENEFITS

As Harvard Junction and the Extreme Sports Complex will create fifty additional jobs, this means that there is an increase of over \$900,000 in taxable income that will go to the area. It is estimated that with the fifty new jobs, half will be full-time and half will be part-time. Utilizing a conservative pay scale of \$25,000 for full-time and \$12,500 for half-time workers, the city will have an additional \$937,000 of taxable income.



The City of Brooklyn will also benefit from the new property construction and residents who live within one block of the trail will receive a five percent increase in property value. Accordingly, the fiscal benefits to the Valley will increase the value of area between one and five percent, resulting in a score of four.

TIME TO BUILD

The projected time to complete the Rail-Path Trail is approximately eighteen months. As there is very minor demolition in the removal of the train track, construction paving of the path will not take long to complete.

Renovation of 4001 Pearl Road is estimated to take approximately two years, as it will begin redevelopment slightly after construction of the trail begins.

Construction of Harvard Junction is contingent upon remediation of the Harshaw Site and the Scenic Railway finalizing its plans to place a station at the junction. As plans for remediation are in progress but yet to be finalized, the time of construction is more than five years away.

Despite the short time for completion of the trail and extreme sports facility, the potential for delay in constructing Harvard Junction results in a score of three.

COST

Because this is a unique situation in that the project proposes to take an existing railroad, requiring two competing railroads to share one track, the cost of such an acquisition is indeterminable. While any number of agreements could be made, including easements or donations of land, there is no way in determining the price of buying a railroad track. As CSX would likely require compensation for giving up their ownership and use rights, any logical guess would have to be on the extreme high end, resulting in a score of 1.

POLITICAL INTEREST

The political interest in redeveloping the railway corridor is extremely high, but not necessarily in the sense that would push the development towards success. As stated above, this project involves taking an existing, active railroad, requiring the current owner, CSX, to move to a competing railroad track.

This obviously raises numerous issues. First, it is highly unlikely that two of the largest railroad companies in the nation would be willing to share a railroad

track. Norfolk Southern and CSX are fierce competitors and any negotiations between the two would be extremely difficult. Some of the major foreseeable issues between them would be agreeing upon scheduling changes and compensation paid by CSX to Norfolk for use of their track.

Further, there is an ownership issue. As liability is a major concern among the railroad companies, whoever is going to own this trail is going to have to agree to indemnify both Norfolk and CSX. This would result in high liability insurance costs, likely deterring both major and minor stakeholder from assuming ownership and/or management responsibilities. Accordingly, finding a party such as Metroparks and the City of Cleveland to take on this responsibility is highly unlikely. As such, the score for political interest results in a one out of five because of the high anticipation of political avoidance in dealing with the negotiating process and ownership responsibility.

MATRIX RESULTS

According to the above scores, the raw score came to 17, with a weighted score of 2.65. This translates to a score of 2.65 out of a potential for success of 5. This does not seem to indicate a great potential for success.

Weights	Factors	Project Rail-Path	Weighted
	Ecological		
0.25	Quality	2	0.50
0.25	Recreation	4	1.00
0.10	Jobs	4	0.40
0.10	Fiscal Impact	4	0.40
0.05	Time	2	0.10
0.10	Cost to Build	1	0.10
	Political		
0.15	Interest	1	0.15
1.00		17	2.65

CONCLUSIONS

While the project creates the most direct link between the Zoo and Towpath Trail, as well as utilizes existing space, the implementation of this idea is highly unlikely. There are too many concerns with the application of this project as there are numerous barriers including negotiating with the railroad companies, agreeing upon ownership, and obtaining the necessary financial support to fund the project.