



Yakima Valley Trolleys

Ken Johnsen, President

February 21, 2021

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council,

I am writing to ask that you write a letter of endorsement for our application to the National Park Service on behalf of the City of Yakima's trolley railroad, the Yakima Valley Transportation Company (YVT), to become a National Historic Landmark.

Yakima's trolley railroad is unique in America in that it is the last historically intact early 20th Century electric interurban railroad, of which there were many hundreds everywhere circa 1900. And it is already listed as such on the National Register of Historic Places.

There are no other electric interurban railroads left in America that still use all their original infrastructure and streetcars and locomotives. The state Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation has taken note of this fact and recommended that the YVT become a National Historic Landmark. There are only two other National Historic Landmarks in eastern Washington. It is the highest level of national recognition a historic site can attain.

Members of the trolley organization have worked diligently over the years to preserve the railroad in its original state because of its rarity. We have had a good working relationship with the City for many years and see this opportunity as a boon to both the railroad and the City of Yakima. There is no cost to the City for the YVT to become a National Historic Landmark, and the opportunities for grants far larger than what we have obtained so far, open up when a property becomes a National Historic Landmark.

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The Yakima Herald-Republic Newspaper has strongly endorsed our attempt to become a National Historic Landmark. I attach a copy of their editorial. With the recommendation of the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (letter also attached) and the endorsement by the City of Yakima, I believe we have a very good chance at becoming eastern Washington's third National Historic Landmark.

Both the increased tourism value and the increased opportunities for the YVT to obtain large federal grants for repairs and restorations will be cultural and economic benefits to the City of Yakima many times over. And it will help ensure that Yakima's unique trolley railroad will be preserved for generations to come.

I would be happy to work with the City Attorney to help craft the wording of the letter of support if you give the go ahead. Thank you for considering this request.

Cordially,

Ken Johnsen, President

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