

# Alton reveals marketing plan for old train station

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**ALTON** - The **City of Alton** has released a marketing plan for the old train station, located off **College Avenue**, which is for sale at the cost of \$1 - and moving expenses.

The train station, which is owned by **Union Pacific Railroad**, must be moved away from the tracks if purchased from or donated by the railroad. According to Union Pacific's guidelines, which are outlined in the city's marketing plan, the station may be

donated to a responsible not-for-profit 501(C)(3) organization as determined solely by the Union Pacific Railroad under the following circumstances:

- The station is to be removed entirely from the present site and away from UPRR property. This includes the removal of the structure from the site, the demolition of remaining station features (foundation, platform, etc.), and the restoration of the site to a state determined by the UPRR. All costs are the responsibility of the selected responsible party.
- It is the intention of the UPRR to donate the station to a responsible not for profit organization, via UP's Standard "Donation Agreement". The Agreement would donate the station "as-is", with specific terms and performance requirements, and would release and indemnify the UPRR from all liability and obligations, including any environmental issues.

Moving that building, however, could prove to be a herculean task. The main rectangle of the building is 22 feet and three inches wide by 67 feet and five inches long, according to the city's marketing plan. Moving that station from its current area to any designated location would be difficult, considering the already-narrow access road leading to the station and its inability to be taken east, due to the viaduct over College Avenue.

"Obviously, it is a brick building, so there is concern about it's safety to be moved and its ability to maintain structural integrity during that move," **Alton Building and Zoning Director Greg Caffey** said. "The challenge is it is in a very confined space. The access road is narrow. We can't move it east, under that viaduct. We can only move it west through Upper Alton. We would have to move existing utility lines to accommodate it. It would be a very expensive undertaking."

That undertaking is being advocated by more than 250 people from across the country who have joined the Facebook group **Save the Alton Train Station**, which was started by Alton native and train station enthusiast **Jennifer Campbell**. People in that group share pictures, memories and ideas of and for the Alton Train Station.

Campbell reached out to **Alton Area Landmarks Association President Terry Sharp**, who has been researching methods to possibly move the station. Sharp said he will be meeting with Caffey at the February meeting of the **Alton Area Landmarks Association** to further discuss possibilities for the future of the station. Sharp believes it should be preserved due to the memories and history contained within its brick walls, which were made of **Alton Brick** by **John C. Wuellner Construction Company of Alton**.

According to the city's marketing plan, the station was originally owned by the **Chicago and Alton Railroad**, which planned the building's construction in the winter of 1927 during a reassessment of the stations and services offered by the railroad. The plan said the station was built with the intent to increase passenger service and mail delivery.

It was completed in May of 1928 to serve as a passenger depot. The station was subsequently owned by the **Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad** before being attained by the Union Pacific Railroad, which currently owns the property.

During the building's history, the train station has seen few upgrades, including the original clay tile roof being replaced with asphalt shingles and the original brick passenger platform being replaced with concrete.

Alton wrote the marketing plan as part of an agreement between the **Federal Railroad Administration**, the City of Alton, the **Illinois Department of Transportation**, the **Illinois Historic Preservation Agency** and Union Pacific Railroad. A complete copy of the plan can be found at: [https://www.cityofaltonil.com/media/pdf/Alton\\_Station\\_Marketing\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.cityofaltonil.com/media/pdf/Alton_Station_Marketing_Brochure.pdf).

Caffey and **Alton Mayor Brant Walker** agreed the new station off Homer Adams Parkway should be completed this spring and ready for operations by early summer.