

From: [Nisha Ahamed](#)
To: [Tabachnick, Alan](#)
Subject: Harsimus Branch and Embankment - Jersey City, NJ
Date: Friday, July 14, 2023 9:41:27 PM

Dear Mr. Tabachnick,

I learned this week that the STB is considering authorizing the abandonment of the Harsimus Branch without historic preservation conditions.

I am a property owner and resident in Jersey City, and my backyard is a scant 10 feet from the embankment. Such a decision leads, potentially, and even likely to the demolition of the embankment. This beautiful and historic red sandstone structure is home to a thriving urban ecosystem, and harkens back to the days of Jersey City as a railroad hub. When I first moved in more than 20 years ago, an elderly neighbor told stories of hearing animal noises from the embankment, when the rail cars were parked overnight on the way to the stockyards in New York. Abandoning the Harsimus Branch would break up a century and a half old transportation corridor that is important both for its history and our city's future.

In addition, as a resident, with property within 200 feet of the embankment, I have not been notified by the STB that the board decision may lead to the demolition of the embankment. This demolition would undoubtedly cause significant damage to my home, and the historic neighborhood. I live in an approximately 160 year-old wood frame row house, whose back wall is about 50 feet from the embankment. The demolition and removal of many tons of giant stones and fill required over an extended period of time will cause vibrations that would undoubtedly result in structural damage to my home. The narrow alley that separates my yard from the embankment, would undoubtedly be used as an access point for the demolition, resulting in noise and dust. Further, as is known, rail beds are often contaminated with PCPs and other toxins or carcinogens. Removal of the embankment would result in contaminated dust, which would settle on my and neighboring properties, and could also be inhaled.

The public, including residents, like myself, has had no information about this matter, unless they happen to subscribe to an embankment coalition newsletter. Even then they may not be aware of the imminence or impact of this decision.

I understand that your agency was supposed to have been informed and engaged the public in this process, and it's early stages, and it is now in a late stage of review, without having this level of public information and discourse. I encourage you to correct the situation as soon as possible, and to not make any final decisions this has been done.

I would appreciate your posting this email as an environmental comment, as I am not familiar with your system,

Sincerely,
Nisha Ahamed
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