

From: [Sean A. Gallagher](#)
To: [Tabachnick, Alan](#)
Cc: [Stevens, Karen](#); [Webster, Elizabeth](#)
Subject: Re: Harsimus Branch Abandonment (Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1189X)) - Follow Up
Date: Friday, September 29, 2023 8:38:18 PM

Alan,

Thank you. Please see attached the comment I spoke last night at the meeting.

This morning the area around the Embankment flooded. New York City is in a state of emergency. If the Embankment was redeveloped into more buildings the flooding you will see in the video would be a lot more extreme.

See the link to my footage of my house and neighbors flooding.

<https://youtu.be/hNPcNAwKp0g?si=0znpdW3bRhtRSjSY>

Please do the right thing. A sign and website documenting the Embankment is not the best STB can you. Please modify the MOA.

Best,

Sean

☐ Gallagher Comment_Docket No....

On Fri, Sep 29, 2023 at 4:16 PM Tabachnick, Alan <alan.tabachnick@stb.gov> wrote:

To: Interested Parties

Re: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act Online Public Meeting on September 28, 2023 for Conrail's request to abandon the Harsimus Branch in Jersey City, NJ, Docket No. AB-167 (Sub-No. 1189X)

Thank you for your interest in this proceeding and thank you to those who signed up for the virtual Section 106 public meeting, held last night, on September 28, 2023. We appreciate everyone's participation, input, and heartfelt remarks. As noted at the meeting last night, the meeting was transcribed by a court reporter and the transcript will be posted on our website when it is finalized, at www.stb.gov. Attached please find the slides we presented last night for your information.

If you would like to submit written comments, you can email them to me, or you can submit them through our online system. Please follow the instructions below. We are very interested in hearing from as many people as possible on this case.

To provide comments through the Board's website, access the homepage at www.stb.gov and then select "File an Environmental Comment" below the "Need Assistance?" button on the right side of the home page. Clicking on "File and

Environmental Comment” brings you to the comment form where you can type your comments directly into the form. Longer comments and documents can be attached to this form as Word, Adobe Acrobat, or other formats.

You can also submit comments via email to Alan.Tabachnick@stb.gov, and written comments can be mailed to:

Alan Tabachnick, Surface Transportation Board, [395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001](#),

Attention: Environmental Filing, Docket No. AB 167 (Sub-No. 1189X).

If you have any questions, please contact me via the email address above or by phone at 202-245-0367.

Alan Tabachnick

Federal Preservation Officer

Surface Transportation Board

Office of Environmental Analysis

[395 E St SW](#)

[Washington, DC 20423](#)

[202-245-0367 \(o\)](#)

[202-934-8469 \(c\)](#)

alan.tabachnick@stb.gov

Sean A. Gallagher
332 5th Street (Adjacent to the Embankment)
Jersey City NJ 07302

- Resident, Property Owner, and Embankment Preservation Coalition Board Member -

Thank you Alan ... my name is Sean Gallagher ... I am a Jersey City resident who watched my father ... with local advocates ... transform the abandoned Central Railroad of New Jersey rail yard into Liberty State Park ... the most visited State Park in the nation.

...Jersey City - almost 50 years ago - saw that historic rail infrastructure could be re-imagined as natural and recreational open space for the public good ... making the city more sustainable.

... Today I am dedicated to continuing this effort as the Sustainable Design Director at Diller Scofidio Renfro. We re-imaged new york city's 10th Ave Rail Line into what everyone knows today as 'The Highline' an innovative piece of green infrastructure that connects the community of Manhattan together in a whole new way ... and this effort is being replicated around the world ...

...However ... I believe that the Harsimus Branch and Embankment has the potential to be more impactful ... locally and nationally ... than the Highline could ever be ... and as a Board Member of the Embankment Preservation Coalition - I request STB to re-consider abandonment with no conditions and help the city and coalition protect this rail right-of-way as a public asset.

... Our historic rail right-of-ways are vital in our fight against climate change and to make cities healthier places to live. If these right-of-ways are disassembled and not repurposed as green infrastructure, we are losing one of our greatest tools in creating large scale green infrastructure within the existing urban fabric.

Jersey City ... like most coastal cities ... will continue to suffer from increased levels of extreme heat, pollution, and flooding. The Harsimus Branch and Embankment right-of-way already acts as green infrastructure to mitigate these risks and make our city more livable...

...On top of the Embankment ... is the largest naturally seeded downtown urban forest in the United States. It is a 30 year old mature ecosystem in the center of Jersey City ... This forest is currently estimated to lower Jersey City's heat island effect by 5 degrees Fahrenheit, absorbing 8.6 million gallons of stormwater ... and sequestering 120 tons of CO2 pollution per year while providing 88 tons of fresh oxygen to our residents.

... But the Vision for the Embankment is much more than this ... the Vision re-imagines the Embankment as a continuous public corridor that is part of the national East Coast Greenway that connects over 400 communities from Florida to Maine along the Atlantic coast.

... The East Coast Greenway has coordinated with the Embankment and Bergen Arches ... this is of national significance and built on the foundation of rails to trails rail-right-away for the public good ...

... Jersey City and the Embankment Preservation Coalition have been protecting this railroad right-of-way for green infrastructure and public space for over 25 years with the help of STB. However ... if abandoned with no conditions ... the Embankment right-of-way then becomes much more likely to be disassembled and broken up for private development and profit.

....Our city residents will lose 8 acres of public green space and the opportunity for a Jersey City East Coast Greenway trail and park system to fight climate change and strengthen the connections between our communities.

... I ask you to continue to help protect the integrity of this rail right-of-way and be a leader in demonstrating how we have the opportunity to transform our

obsolete historic railways into the green infrastructure of the future. ... The current MOA does not accomplish this currently and I ask it not be presented to the STB Board or NJ-SHPO.