



Commack Council of PTAs

SEPTA IH NR RH WP BIS MSIS CMS CHS

Townline Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 119,
Commack, NY 11725

To the Townline Association Executive Board:

The Commack PTA Council is strongly opposed to the proposed CarlsonCorp. Townline Rail Terminal because of the adverse effects it will have on the families within the Commack School District and community. The proposed freight terminal will consist of five tracks totaling 9,400 feet; two 100,000 square-foot buildings; and a 161-freight car capacity totaling 10,456 feet of train.

While we understand the importance of freight trains and the critical role they play in the transport of goods and other materials, we cannot support such a proposal so close to children and families within our community. This freight yard poses significant health and safety challenge that can:

1) Compromise the health of Commack residents.

- A 2018 study by the Loma Linda University of Public Health found that children living less than ten miles from a freight railyard were at significantly greater risk for asthma-related emergency room visits. These are alarming statistics especially in light of the fact that hundreds of families live within the vicinity of the proposed freight yard and Northport High School, Harborfields High School, North Ridge Primary School and Commack High School are within a 10-mil radius.

2) Adversely affect the environment

- Most of Long Island is dependent on an underlying sole source aquifer system, which supplies 400 million gallons a day of freshwater from more than 1,500 public supply wells to over 2.8 million people in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Recharge basins are natural or artificially constructed excavations that collect rainwater or snowmelt to replenish this sole source aquifer system. These basins not only increase groundwater levels but also provide habitats for water birds and other wildlife, lessen flood risk and provide valuable recreational space. The proposed CarlsonCorp. Town Rail Terminal would sit on top of a deep recharge basin potentially compromising the quality of our ground water and harming the recharge water which replenishes drinking water reserves for humans and wildlife.

3) Lead to significant traffic congestion

- The proposed freight yard will house trains that will collect waste and transport it elsewhere. The trains will then return with goods, which will also need to be transported to their final destination. Trucks will be used to bring waste to the trains and trucks will be used to collect goods and transport them throughout Long Island. As a consequence, the freight yard will increase truck traffic on local streets, including Pulaski Road, Townline /Commack Road, Indian Head Road and Jericho Turnpike. Our local streets will experience exorbitant traffic congestion adversely affecting student drop-offs and pick-ups not only for regular school days but also major school functions and sporting events.

Finally, the potential for harm to our community is greatly exacerbated by the presence of a freight rail terminal. Like many freight companies, CarlsonCorp will be required to receive and ship hazardous materials upon request based on the Common Carrier Obligation stipulated by the federal Surface Transportation Board. This means that hazardous materials could potentially come into our community.

As of October 2023, the Federal Railroad Administration had recorded 742 train derailments in 2023 alone. The most publicized of these train derailments took place in East Palestine, OH where a freight train carrying hazardous materials sent smoke and particulate matter into the air while crash runoff contaminated nearby waterways. If such an event occurred within the vicinity of the Townline Rail Terminal, the results would be catastrophic for Commack children and families.

Clearly, the freight yard is not a good fit for our community and, as a result, the Commack PTA Council and all of the PTA units within the Commack School District stand firm in their opposition to this proposed project.

Sincerely,



Heather Gordon
President, Commack PTA Council