

VILLAGE OF ALTAMONT

115 Main Street PO Box 643 Altamont, New York 12009
Phone (518) 861-8554 Fax (518) 861-5379

Mayor

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311844

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Office of Chief Counsel

July 27, 2026

Part of

Public Record

July 27, 2026

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC. 20423-0001

Re: Docket No. FD36873 Union Pacific Corporation and Union Pacific Railroad Company and
Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway

Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

On behalf of myself and the Village of Altamont Board of Trustees, I am writing to express concerns over the proposed merger of Norfolk Southern Corporation with the Union Pacific Corporation. The proposal, as presented, would not be in the best interest of the residents of Altamont and the surrounding communities in both the Towns of Guilderland and Knox, New York. It instead places an unfair burden on the Village, creating numerous safety issues in addition to logistical travel conflicts for our area stakeholders.

Background:

The Village of Altamont is a small historic Victorian village established in 1890. We have over 1700 residents within one mile square. It sits within the Town of Guilderland, which is part of Albany County, and is located approximately 20 miles west of the NYS capital. Our village is known for our historic buildings and houses, has an active business community, a large event fairground, public library, our own utility plants, emergency medical service, fire department, and is home to one of Guilderland Central School District's elementary schools. In addition to serving Village residents, Altamont supplies water and sewer utilities to outside users through Village owned infrastructure and provides a base of operations for emergency services for both Town of Guilderland and neighboring Town of Knox residents.

The Village is divided by the Norfolk Southern Rail Corridor with three crossings, all within a quarter mile or less of each other with **no bypass available**. When trains are running, they intersect State roads, local streets, emergency response routes, and access to local schools and businesses. **We request the STB review of this merger require the applicants to provide a survey of each impacted stakeholder group** and the solutions they offer to mitigate the impacts from increased train frequency, duration of blocked grade crossings, train length, scheduling, structural concerns for historic buildings, and safety.

This is not an anti-rail position as we recognize the importance of rail service throughout the country, and our Village primarily exists due to growth around the railway over 100 years ago. However, a merger this large, potentially creating a 40% control of all national rail transit, needs to be accompanied by investment from the applicants to work with impacted localities to create solutions such that rail blockages are not increased, directly affecting the safety of our community. The benefits that Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern seek through this potential merger should not happen without recognizing their responsibility to provide investment in the communities along the line they will be impacting. Bridges, infrastructure improvements, and scheduling all need to be part of the conversation before any increase in rail transit occurs.

Recent History:

In 2022, the Village was presented with a proposed merger between CSX and Pan Am Systems that would increase rail traffic through the Village. Up until this point, train travel through the Village was sporadic and used mostly for local routes. Residents expect some train travel to come through the Village; however, this merger came with the promise of two-mile-long trains, twice a day, thus creating longer waiting times which presents issues for emergency services and school travel routes. We were informed that these trains must flow through Altamont to accommodate stacked train cars that could not transit other lines due to a low bridge elsewhere. We spoke with the Surface Transportation Board and submitted our concerns; however, the merger was agreed to by the STB as-is. The Village was informed we would be seeing two trains daily after the infrastructure improvements had been completed. Fortunately, transiting trains have not been excessive, remaining at the two trains per day level, and the longer length trains are not a common occurrence.

We suspect the reason for that may be the track itself: **we have had several infrastructure and design issues with the at-level crossing on our Main Street since the merger**. It has been redone and repaired at least four times since 2023. The design and increased road elevation the rail company created has caused trucks to catch the track and pull it up, making crossings impossible for residents and visitors, much less being safe for the trains. Again, our Village was established and grew thanks to the railroad, but many of our historic buildings are only 10-20 feet from the rails. The length and weight of modern trains is a concern for their structural integrity. Further, the repeated damage to the at-level crossing on Main Street presents serious concerns about future damage to the rail that could lead to a potentially catastrophic derailment within the densely populated Village.

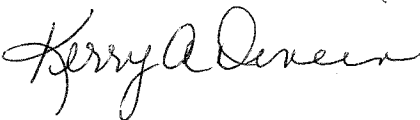
Additionally, **the Village has also experienced multiple issues with the rail warning system** that has activated and become stuck at various times when no trains are present. When these issues occur, the impact on local traffic is significant. There is no bypass and frustrated drivers often navigate around the deployed gates, which is a major safety concern. The response times by the rail company have been completely inadequate, creating a strain on our police department who must tend to this safety hazard. Finally, these issues cause long traffic delays as school buses, commuters, and emergency services must navigate around the failed crossing.

Moving Forward:

Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific state that they promote "...more routes, more access, and more competition..." when advocating for their merger. Should this application be approved, however, the reality is that this merger would harm shippers and customers by eliminating competition, disrupting service, and increasing pricing, which overall weakens the national supply chain. **All of this happens while sacrificing the needs and safety of small communities like the Village of Altamont.**

We ask you to prioritize the needs of the communities impacted by the proposed merger, listen to their shared experiences, and refuse to move forward without solutions and investment from the applicants for improved infrastructure that will not diminish the quality of life and safety for our residents and surrounding communities.

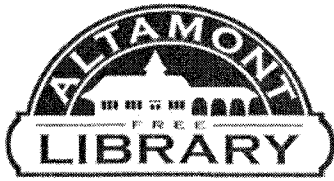
Sincerely,



Kerry A. Dineen
Mayor

c.c. Senator Charles Shumer
 Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
 Congressman Paul Tonko
 State Senator Pat Fahy
 State Assemblymember Gabriella Romero

EXHIBIT 1



179 Main Street
PO Box 662
Altamont, New York 12009
Phone: (518) 861-7239
www.AltamontFreeLibrary.org

Board of Trustees

July 26, 2026

Raelee Grimm
President

Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-001

CC: Parties of Record

Christine Carpenter
Vice-President

RE: STB Docket No. FD 36873
Union Pacific Corporation & Union Pacific Railroad Company
----Control----
Norfolk Southern Corporation & Norfolk Southern Railway
Company28110000228846

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Secretary

Debbie Evans
Treasurer

To Whom it may Concern,

Mallory Fremgen
Micah Ilowit
Tracy Mayer
Nicole Robinson
Joleen Rockhill
Rebecca Stumpf
Trustees

On behalf of Altamont Free Library, I write to express my concerns about the proposed merger of Union Pacific Railroad and Norfolk Southern Railroad. In particular, my concerns are related to one element of the merger that would have the effect of increasing train traffic through our Village, which I feel would negatively impact the health and safety of residents of our Village.

As I understand it, one likely result of this merger will be a marked increase in rail traffic through our village.

Joe Burke
Library Director

My concerns stem from the car traffic patterns that are likely to result from the prolonged train passages across Main Street in Altamont, and the fact there are no means of circumventing the tracks anywhere within many miles of the Main Street level crossing. A cursory look at a map of the Village will reveal that if mile-trains shut down Main Street for more than about five minutes at a stretch, two issues will likely result:

-First, emergency response vehicles will be prevented from quickly accessing a significant portion of the Village. There are no methods of bypassing the train tracks in or near the Village via an underpass. First responders, who are dispatched from the north side of the tracks could be delayed from responding to emergencies on the south side of the tracks for ten minutes or more. Moreover, for major sections of the adjacent Town of Knox, Altamont first responders are the closest dispatch point for fire and medical emergency services, and a ten-minute delay in responding time may mean the difference between life and death, or a house being salvageable or not.

-Second, south of the tracks, NY Rte. 156 begins a steep and winding climb up a hill. If Main Street is closed off for five minutes or longer each time a two-mile train passes through, a dangerous traffic pattern is likely to emerge where cars are backed up through the intersections of Altamont Boulevard, Main Street, Prospect Terrace, Helderberg Avenue, and NY Rte. 156. (the so called "Five Corners"). If road traffic backs up going up the hill, cars coming down the hill at high speeds are likely to not have sufficient warning of the

presence of stopped cars, due to the blind curves on the hill. Car accidents may likely result over time unless appropriate warning signals are put in place.

Finally, I am concerned about potential damage that will occur to our historic library building with the additional rumbling of an increased number of double decker train passing each day. We have already begun to see the effects of increased vibration after a recent increase in train traffic over the past year.

Altamont Free Library is housed in the history Altamont Train Station, built for the D&H Railroad in 1897, and as such is immediately adjacent to the train tracks that will see the increased traffic. It is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. I am concerned that the additional rumbling and shaking caused by additional long double-decker trains passing twenty feet from our building could cause damage to our slate roof, brick chimney, and other parts of the building which place an additional bourdon on the library for expensive repairs.

We have already seen a deterioration in our chimney bricks which had not previously shown signs of deterioration when inspected just two years ago. This increase in the rapidity of the deterioration must be at least partly or mostly attributable to the very evident increase in vibration that the building experiences when very long, very heavy trains pass by, which they currently do four times per day. Previously, Altamont Free Library had only been exposed to the comparatively minor vibrations from short, single-stacked trains. The station simply wasn't built with that kind of shaking and jostling in mind.

Altamont Free Library is proud of our building's legacy as a historic train station. Indeed, that is what draws many of our patrons to us. We wish to continue to be good stewards of our home and we wish nothing but the best for whatever company controls the rail line adjacent to our property. However, the disruptions and safety concerns attendant with the proposed plan will negatively far too many Altamont and Knox residents, who will derive only highly diffuse benefits from it. I strongly urge you reject the proposal for the reasons stated above.

Sincerely,

Joseph Burke

Director, Altamont Free Library