



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

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STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

December 14, 2015

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Attn: Mr. Jeff Irwin

Re: Harsimus Branch, STB Dkt. No. AB 167 (Sub-no. 1189X); Letter, Mr. Irwin to Mayor
Fulop dated Sept. 17, 2015

Dear Ms. Rutson:

This letter responds to your communication dated September 17, 2015, concerning consultation with the City of Jersey City in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The City has sought to retain the Harsimus Branch (inclusive of the Embankment) intact for a variety of public purposes compatible with historic preservation since at least 2005, as documented in our communications in various proceedings before this agency. More recently, and as indicated in my previous letter dated November 24, 2014, the City views an offer of financial assistance (OFA) as an efficient means not only to address the needs of local shippers, but also to keep the historic Harsimus Branch and Embankment properties intact for uses that are consistent with the City's historic preservation ordinance and relevant federal and state statutes. In that regard, the City has recently amended its acquisition bond ordinance to ensure that bond proceeds are available for OFA purposes as well as for compatible open space and historic preservation.

The City understands that acquisition by OFA is consistent with all applicable environmental laws, and I have requested our rail counsel to discuss this and related matters in a separate letter to you.

If the City is able to acquire the Harsimus Branch by OFA or otherwise, it expects that it will be bound by operation of state and local law to comply with, among other things, applicable portions of the Department of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings in connection with any actions that have an impact upon historic structures. Your agency thus can be assured that City's planned acquisition will maximize preservation of historic assets in the Branch.

In addition to obtaining information from the City, we urge STB to seek information on “reasonably foreseeable land use” from other interested parties, including local neighborhood associations such as the Van Vorst Park and Hamilton Park Associations, the PRR Harsimus Stem Embankment Preservation Coalition, and the Rails to Trails Conservancy, who have sought to participate in the Section 106 process. These community organizations enthusiastically support preservation. By contrast, the attempted illegal abandonment of the rail line and the unauthorized sale of historic assets to a developer for demolition would foreclose meaningful comment on historic preservation issues if permitted to stand.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a trailing flourish, representing Steven M. Fulop.

Steven M. Fulop
Mayor