



**Protecting Our Quality Of Life  
For Generations To Come**

---

January 27, 2023

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Surface Transportation Board Decision, Docket No. FD 36575

Dear Chairman Oberman,

It has recently become known to several Long Island communities that Townline Rail Terminal, LLC, an affiliate of CarlsonCorp, Inc., plans to construct and operate a new rail line in the hamlet of Kings Park, New York. According to the proposal, the line would extend approximately 5,000 feet on a portion of CarlsonCorp's property and would run parallel to the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) Port Jefferson Line.

This is not going to be a sleepy rail spur, with one freight train rolling in and out occasionally. It is going to be a regional train yard with five tracks totaling 9,400 feet, two buildings totaling 100,000 square feet, and a 161-freight car capacity totaling 10,456 feet of train. These trains will be hauling not only ash, but unassociated construction and demolition debris.

What the proposal fails to show is that the train yard will be only 500 feet from established residential neighborhoods in Kings Park and in very close proximity to residential homes in Fort Salonga, East Northport and Commack, all which tightly border the projected area. What the proposal fails to show is there are several schools, playgrounds and a nursing home in close proximity to the proposed rail yard. What the proposal fails to show is the surrounding area includes a federally classified deep recharge area for a sole source aquifer.

The surrounding communities were never advised by local, state or federal officials that this was ever a possibility. Just the opposite, the last the community knew, there was going to be an indoor compost facility on this property. Community members were invited into town hall and shown a detailed PowerPoint presentation of that proposal. There has never been any type of communication that plans had changed for Carlson's property.

The Town of Smithtown Supervisor, Edward Wehrheim, the town board, and Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta are in favor of this proposal. The latter stated there has been no organized opposition. Well, the surrounding communities were unaware of this proposal and now that we know, we are organized and we oppose it. The previously mentioned politicians failed in their duty as elected representatives to advise, educate and give community members an opportunity to be heard before they formally came out in support of this rail yard.

This proposal has more questions than answers, and more problems than solutions.

The rail yard's proposed location is on the edge of a light industrial/residentially zoned area, plainly in the back yard of families. No reasonable person would believe that a berm, which the town's supervisor has mentioned, would ever shroud the noise, fumes, lights, site, and health risks associated with this yard. Moreover, its proximity to so many residents, its history as a sand mine & dumping ground, and its closeness to a deep recharge area for Long Island's sole source aquifer; it is unconscionable that Townline Rail was able to receive a waiver to forego a full environmental impact statement.

It is important for the Surface Transportation Board to be aware that the surrounding communities already bear the burden of several major sources of environmental blight, including the Huntington Resource Recovery Facility, the Northport power plant, the Huntington and Smithtown landfills and their methane burners/vents, medical waste incinerators at both Northport VA hospital & St. Catherine's Medical Center, and the various heavy industrial uses that have been going on in this area for decades, many of which continue to operate illegally and unchecked.

We respectfully request that the Surface Transportation Board revisit its decision and stop this ill-conceived project in its tracks. We are aware of the eventual closing of the Brookhaven landfill, which will happen incrementally, starting in 2024. We are also aware that there are far better locations moving forward to tackle the issue of removing ash and unassociated construction and demolition debris off Long Island, such as the Winter Bros. 228-acre site in Yaphank, which is almost three times the size of the proposed Townline Rail Terminal, and is in a far less populated area.

It is important to understand what is happening here. CarlsonCorp is building something in far excess to what is needed to haul ash away from the Covanta facility. This project, if allowed to proceed, will unquestionably bring more trucks into our community and onto our roads, not less.

It has become a well-known and truthful axiom on Long Island, development of all kinds only succeeds when it comes from the bottom up, when the community is engaged. This did not and is currently not happening with respect to this multi-town impactful proposal.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Henninger*

Linda Henninger

Townline Association, president

Lh.townline@gmail.com