

March 28, 2018

Matthew P. Maraglio
New York State Department of State
Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure
One Commerce Plaza
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231

RE: Notice F-2018-0060 Amtrak Proposal

Dear Mr. Maraglio,



Village of Tivoli

Founded 1795

Joel R. Griffith
Mayor

Emily M. Majer
Deputy Mayor

Susan G. Ezrati
Trustee

Jeanann M. Schneider
Trustee

Christopher L. Murphy
Trustee

Robin L. Bruno
Village Clerk

Bonnie L. Day
Treasurer

Kristen Cleaveland
Deputy Village Clerk

Historic Watts de Peyster Hall
1 Tivoli Commons
86 Broadway
PO Box 397
Tivoli, New York 12583-0397

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Thank you for bringing to our attention the proposal before the Department of State from Amtrak and offering us the opportunity to comment. As you can imagine, Tivoli's waterfront is one of the Village's greatest assets and is heavily used by residents and visitors alike for any number of activities including fishing, kayaking, bird-watching and more. I know the DOS is aware that Tivoli purchased riverfront property from CSX in 2010. This land acquisition was achieved with help from Scenic Hudson and many other entities and Tivoli's ultimate goal is a safe and attractive public park right on the bank of the Hudson. We care very deeply about our riverfront!

I am pleased to hear that the public comment period has been extended. In the last few weeks I have fielded innumerable calls and emails and had many people attend our March 21st Board meeting, all expressing concern over the vagueness of Amtrak's proposal, its impacts on river access, and the briefness of the comment period. Even with the period extended, I would still express the following concerns on behalf of the Village of Tivoli and the community we represent.

First, the proposal's graphics are vague and a satisfactory review of the proposal is difficult. The image for the Tivoli location shows two arrows pointing to the west side of the tracks near the Diana St. crossing. We cannot tell from this exactly where the gates would go, what they look like and how they will impact access in the area. What would be useful for us would be a survey, showing all property lines in the area and the exact location and position of the proposed gates to scale.

Second, about two years ago Amtrak trespassed on our riverfront parcel and installed a large electrical panel. Once informed, they were cooperative in relocating the panel off our land, but the experience suggests that whatever gating and fencing is approved, all parties must be clear about the complicated property lines at the Tivoli riverfront.

Additionally, with a future park in mind, it would be practical for both Amtrak and Tivoli to talk about the gating/fencing proposal in the context of our park plans and make sure nothing is done which will need to be redone or adjusted in a few years.

Third, and crucially important, the Village of Tivoli's Fire Department and Rescue Squad have answered numerous calls at our riverfront for everything from boating accidents to forest fires. Any final approved gating/fencing must not prohibit or slow our emergency responders' access at this location. Perhaps that may be as simple as our Fire Department having keys to the gates, perhaps it will take another form. But in any case this emergency access is of critical importance and concern.

Last, while the Village of Tivoli understands Amtrak's safety concerns and acknowledges their Right-of-Way, the public outcry since this proposal came forward had been overwhelmingly negative. The historic use of the waterfront by large numbers of the public for all manner of recreation must be weighed against the purpose of Amtrak's project. All parties should work together so that safety can be improved without hindering or impoverishing the public's access, use and enjoyment of our great river.

For these reasons, we believe that a formal public presentation from Amtrak, with DOS participation, held in the Village of Tivoli, would be fitting. Amtrak should present clearer graphics, be available to discuss our concerns, and explain in full detail to the public exactly what they want to do. Only after such a presentation could the Village and the wider public be in a position to comment meaningfully on the proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mayor Joel R. Griffith

