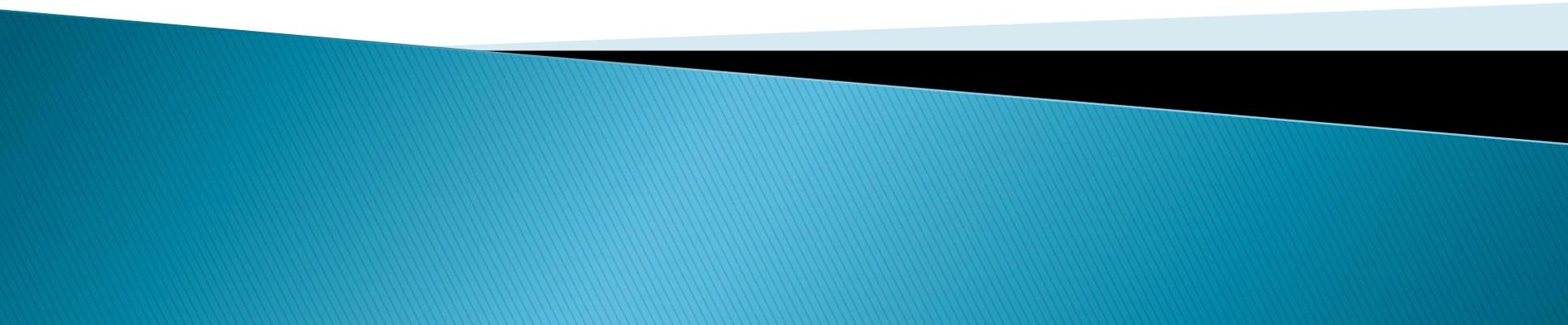


**Letter to Senators**  
**re: Railroad Crossing**  
**March 11, 2015**



Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We, the members of the Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education, applaud the Town Board of New Castle for identifying a project that concerns the safety of our students and we join them in requesting that the federal government fund the construction of a railway and roadway overpass at the junction of the Metro-North Harlem Line's Roaring Brook Road grade crossing and the Saw Mill River Parkway (Exit #33) in Chappaqua, NY.

Horace Greeley High School is less than 1/2 mile from the Roaring Brook Road grade crossing and during the morning and evening rush hours, traffic at this location increases significantly resulting in a line of vehicles stretching over the grade crossing and onto the Saw Mill River Parkway. In addition, the Saw Mill River Parkway divides the Town in half so this interchange is a vital and heavily-traveled thoroughfare that also is used by a large number of young and inexperienced teenagers just learning how to drive. The fatal Metro-North train accident that occurred on February 3, 2015, which took the lives of two Town residents among others, has shed light on the urgent need for major safety improvements at this intersection in order to prevent a similar tragedy.

Today, Metro-North's Harlem line is among our nation's busiest commuter corridors. Coupled with re-development plans for the nearby 120-acre Chappaqua Crossing property to include retail, commercial and residential buildings currently underway, traffic and congestion in this area will increase exponentially during most hours of the day, including a host of new drivers to the area who are not familiar with the nuances of navigating this interchange.

In the 1930s, DeWitt and Lila Bell Wallace, founders of Reader's Digest, had the foresight to donate land near the Metro-North tracks to the Town to make possible the future construction of a vehicular bridge over the Saw Mill River Parkway. Recommendations to create that elevated interchange at the Saw Mill River Parkway and Roaring Brook Road grade crossing date back to the Town's 1963 Development Plan, and were reiterated when the Town updated its Development Plan in 1989. The elevated interchange also would eliminate the need for traffic control devices on the Saw Mill River Parkway at this interchange. For those commuters who opt to drive into New York City rather than take the train, this means less time sitting in traffic, and for the environment, this means less pollution from vehicles sitting idle at a red light.

Unfortunately, this initiative has languished. Over the years, increased vehicle and rail traffic has only exacerbated the problems at the Roaring Brook Road grade crossing and according to New Castle Police Department records, 14 separate problems with warning gates and numerous accidents at this very location have been reported over the past ten years alone.

Your assistance is requested to help marshal the resources and collective efforts of the government agencies in order to address this grave public safety concern before it's too late!

Sincerely,

Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education

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