

From: Tepke, Paige (Schumer) Paige_Tepke@schumer.senate.gov
Subject: ***FINAL RELEASE***--SCHUMER URGES CSX TO STOP
RAILROADING THE BRONX & NYC AND HONOR THE DEAL THEY
AGREED UPON – SO NYC CAN FINALLY ACQUIRE UNUSED TRACT
OF BRONX LAND FOR COMMUNITY GREENWAY PROJECT; PLOT
IS A CRITICAL – AND MISSING –
Date: Oct 18, 2018 at 7:08:45 PM
To: Tepke, Paige (Schumer) Paige_Tepke@schumer.senate.gov

Hi everyone:

Please see the final release from our press conference this afternoon, let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Paige

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 18, 2018

CONTACT: Paige Tepke
[212-486-4489](tel:212-486-4489)

**SCHUMER URGES CSX TO STOP
RAILROADING THE BRONX & NYC AND
HONOR THE DEAL THEY AGREED UPON –
SO NYC CAN FINALLY ACQUIRE UNUSED
TRACT OF BRONX LAND FOR
COMMUNITY GREENWAY PROJECT; PLOT
IS A CRITICAL – AND MISSING –
LINK BETWEEN MANHATTAN AND HUDSON
RIVER GREENWAYS**

*After Agreeing To Independent Appraisal Of Abandoned
Putnam Right-Of-Way Corridor, CSX Rejected The Market
Value Provided By Expert*

*NYC Has Worked With Bronx Community To Develop Plans
For A Greenway That Will Finally Unite Hudson River And*

Manhattan Greenways; Mayor Has Already Committed Funds At Appraised Value

Schumer To CSX: Stop Blocking the Tracks! Let's Get the Bronx Greenway Moving Again

Today, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer urged CSX to take ‘yes’ for an answer, be a good neighbor and agree to the independently- and professionally-derived fair price for the Putnam Right-Of-Way in the Bronx. Schumer urged CSX to stop stalling and instead do the deal with the City of New York as the City presses ahead in its plan to acquire the CSX-owned Putnam Right-Of-Way, an abandoned parcel of land that the community has sought to transform into a greenway for years.

Schumer explained that, after the City and CSX agreed to an independent appraisal of the land, conducted by an expert in corridor valuation recommended by CSX, the railroad company then rejected the fair market value provided by the appraiser. The City and local community groups are seeking to turn the abandoned corridor —once part of the old Putnam rail line— into a greenway. The project is a critical link that could connect the popular Manhattan and Hudson River Greenways. Bronx community leaders also plan to ‘day-light’ the old Tibbets Brook that runs underneath the rail corridor.

“My message to CSX is clear: stop stalling and give the Bronx something to cheer about by selling the abandoned Putnam Right-Of-Way to the City at the fair price established by the independent expert—that CSX itself recommended! This parcel is the missing piece of the puzzle to connect the Manhattan and Hudson River Greenways—and will inject a vibrant green lifeline into the Bronx,” said **Senator Schumer.** “Anybody who rides their bicycle as avidly as I do through the streets of our city knows that the Hudson River and Manhattan greenways are disconnected by this ugly piece of unused land. For years, City Hall and the community have been working on a plan to build a beautiful greenway that will connect the Bronx to a massive network of other Greenways and parks and bike paths. We cannot allow these negotiations to stall on the tracks when we’re just outside the station. I’m calling on CSX to get rolling and close this deal with the City so that we can finally put shovels in the ground and build this important project. It’s time for CSX to honor their word and work with the City and local community to get this done.”

“Shame on the CSX Corporation for using this as an opportunity to take advantage of New York City and residents,” said **Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)**. “We are here today, standing united, to urge CSX to work with us to allow the City to redevelop this tract of land south of Van Cortlandt Park as a new greenway, which would be a critical investment in our community and will have a tremendous benefit on the quality of life of New York City residents, families and visitors for years to come.”

“I have worked for years with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park and other elected officials to encourage CSX to sell the Putnam Right of Way. Senator Schumer finally got the Parks Dept and CSX to agree to an independent appraisal of the land, and now that we have one, CSX needs to step-up and do the right thing and sell it at a fair price. CSX has no use for this property, and yet its transfer to the City would bring considerable environmental and aesthetic benefits to the region,” said **Rep. Eliot L. Engel (NY-16)**.

“With the acquisition of the Putnam Right-of-Way we can connect the city to upstate and open up new recreation opportunities for not only the Northwest Bronx, but for visitors from all over the region. It is time for CSX to come back to the table, negotiate in good faith, and give the community a chance to make this piece of land something they can enjoy. I want to thank Senator Schumer for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with him and my colleague in government to make this greenway plan a reality,” said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

“This CSX property has been an eyesore and a blight in our community for far too long and it’s time for that to change. CSX has already agreed to sell this property for a frankly excessive four million dollars. There is nothing that can be done at this site except turn it into green-space – it is not developable and is otherwise unusable except for a new park. I look forward to working together with Senator Schumer and Councilman Cohen as well as Community Board 8 Chair Rosemary Ginty, Environment & Sanitation Chair Laura Spalter, and all interested people in our neighborhood to resolve this issue,” said **NYS Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz**.

“I have been pushing for this project for many years, and I am disappointed that after a long process CSX is unwilling to hold up their end of the agreement. This project would alleviate a major burden placed on the New York City sewer system while creating a space the public could utilize. It’s a win/win. The city is willing to spend the amount quoted, and now CSX is backing out. It is my sincere hope that they will reconsider. Thank you to Senator Schumer, my colleagues in government, New York City Parks and the members of Coalition for Daylighting

Tibbetts Brook for their continued support on this project,” said **NYC Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

"The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, on behalf of the over two dozen organizations and elected officials, who have signed onto our Coalition for Daylighting Tibbetts Brook, are urging CSX to do the right thing and to sell this land to New York City for the very fair appraisal amount so that NYC Parks can turn this neglected space into a valuable community asset. We are hoping that that will include Daylighting Tibbetts Brook which will remove millions of gallons of water from the Broadway sewer reducing Combine Sewer Overflows on the Harlem River, reduce flooding along Broadway and provide an ecological benefit to Tibbetts Brook and our local environment. We look forward to what can become of the Putnam Right-of-Way South of Van Cortlandt Park once we get it out of CSX's hands," said **Christina Taylor, Executive Director of the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park**.

“The purchase of this land is an important part of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality’s sustainable program to protect our Water, Land & Air from flooding due to storm water, sea rise, and the surge. We have been working on this since the late 1990s,” said **Karen Argenti, Recording Secretary and Board Member of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality**.

“The City has the opportunity to transform the Putnam Right-Of-Way property into an environmentally sustainable open space and park for all NYC residents to enjoy. It is unacceptable that CSX is stalling on honoring the agreement to sell the property. CSX is preventing New York City from connecting and expanding the greenway from Manhattan to the Bronx and instead they are willing to let the property create conditions of blight,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, District 10**.

"Restoring and redirecting Tibbetts Brook and its riparian landscape from the Broadway sewer to the now defunct Putnam trail right-of-way from Van Cortlandt Park to the Harlem River provides an unprecedented opportunity to allow communities in Kingsbridge, Marble Hill and beyond to reclaim their local natural landscape, providing much needed public green space along its one mile trajectory while alleviating the city's overburdened sewage system exacerbated by intubated waterways," said **Amanda Schachter and Alexander Levi, cofounders of SLO Architectures**.

In 2017, after years of stalled negotiations, Senator Schumer and Councilman Andrew Cohen brought the City and CSX together to discuss the City's plan to acquire the Putnam Right-of-

Way. During the negotiations, the two parties agreed to hire an independent appraiser to establish the market value of the corridor; the hired appraiser was agreed upon by both entities. Furthermore, both the City and CSX equally split the cost of the appraisal and agreed upon the methodology and scope. The appraisal was completed on December 19, 2017. The City has accepted the independent appraisal report figure while CSX has indicated that they are unwilling to accept the appraised value.

The corridor has been abandoned since the 1980s and CSX has no development plans for the property, while the City plans to transform the corridor into a greenway. The greenway will be a part of the Daylighting Tibbetts Brook project. According to Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, this project will help reduce Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) occurrences on the Harlem River and help with flooding issues along Broadway and other areas of the Tibbetts Brook Watershed. The conversion of this segment of the abandoned railway corridor would connect the Putnam Greenway to the Hudson River Greenway, the Manhattan Greenway, and would fulfill a piece of the Governor's Empire Trail from the Battery to Canada.

The City has tried to obtain the Right of Way (ROW) since 2005. The corridor was once a part of the Putnam Rail Line. A vast majority of the Putnam railroad line has already been transformed into a greenway, running more than 47 miles from Van Cortlandt Park through Westchester and Putnam Counties.

Schumer was joined by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr, NYS Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member Fernando Cabrera, Bronx Community Board 8, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park and the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, New Yorkers for Parks, City as Living Laboratory, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, Kingsbridge Business Improvement District, SLO Architecture, and others.

###