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## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Patrick Harrigan

May 7, 2018

Town Council of the Town of Huntington  
100 Main Street  
Huntington, New York 11743

Dear Supervisor Lupinacci and Council Members,

The Half Hollow Hills Central School District is located in a residential area of 50,000 people in the central part of Long Island, approximately 40 miles from New York City. We provide outstanding educational opportunities for approximately 8,500 students. The School District currently transports our students to and from public and private schools each day. These students travel over 1.6 million miles over the course of a year, covering areas within the Dix Hills, Melville, Deer Park, Wheatley Heights, Farmingdale, East Northport and Commack areas as well as locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk County and Queens. Even with this enormous volume, the District prides itself on the level of consistency of our transportation operation, as well as our safety record. After reviewing the plan for the proposed Villadom Project, the District has identified a number of significant transportation concerns with respect to this project. Should this project be allowed to move forward, the Half Hollow Hills School District, while on the periphery of where the Villadom Project is proposed, will certainly be negatively impacted for the reasons outlined below.

1. The District currently has 19 bus routes transporting almost 400 students to and from various schools within and outside the District's boundaries that each traverse the area identified within the proposed Villadom Project.
  - a. The years-long major construction with traffic re-routing, lane closures, heavy machinery, and oversized construction equipment on our roads will all cause a potentially unsafe condition as our buses seek to get these almost 400 students safely to and from schools each day.
  - b. The added congestion from compromised road conditions will certainly cause delays for our buses. Should these delays be significant enough, the District would be required to contract for additional buses to ensure route times are reasonable and within District guidelines.
2. When all this congestion from and complexity of major construction causes traffic delays, the 19 identified and specifically impacted routes referenced above will not only be the ones negatively impacted. The way school districts manage their transportation operation is to take advantage of

the tiered start and end times of buildings to maximize use of buses. Stated differently, buses which are used for high school bus routes first thing in the morning are then used for middle school bus routes immediately thereafter, and then ultimately elementary school bus routes. Because of this, the District believes that the true impact will be delays to not only the bus routes noted above, but also to all subsequent routes which these 19 identified bus routes are responsible for. This larger impact means over 630 students would be negatively impacted, in the form of long route times, unsafe road conditions, and delays in arriving to destinations. Taxpayers would be incrementally impacted as some of the delays will force the District to increase its transportation related expenditures to compensate. And finally, 60 preschoolers with disabilities are transported by Suffolk County to specialized programs throughout Western Suffolk County traversing the same impacted areas in and around the Villadom Project.

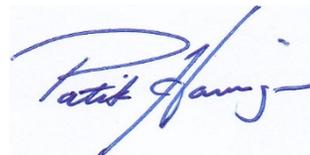
3. The District's additional concern is with respect to residual and ancillary issues which are yet to be known by anyone involved. For example, Jericho Turnpike is a main thoroughfare for commuters headed East and West of the area impacted. Were the proposed project to move forward and these typical commuters now experience even further delays to their already congested Long Island commute, it is likely that some of these drivers would seek alternative routes to their end destination. What we and likely no one else can identify at this point is what other routes these commuters will opt for. And, specifically as it relates to the District, will these other routes further and incrementally impact additional bus routes throughout our District.
4. Furthermore, Vanderbilt Elementary School is located on one of the most impacted roads, Deer Park Ave (New York State Route 231). The removal of sand from the proposed site, which is said to take 18 months, presents a clear and grave danger to our students, parents, staff and buses entering and exiting the school. Tractor trailers carrying 32 cubic yards of sand will make 2-3 truck passes every 15 minutes right past the school on their way to the Long Island Expressway. This would also impede our students playing on the playground and participating in gym classes on the fields along Deer Park Ave.
5. Finally, with almost 600 parking permits issued each year to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at both High School East and High School West, the District is significantly concerned about how this proposed project (inclusive of the added congestion and unsafe road conditions) would negatively impact our community's young, inexperienced drivers.

We, the members of the Board of Education, in conjunction with the Superintendent of the Half Hollow Hills Central School District and his Administrative Team, oppose the current proposal before the Town of Huntington to amend the Town of Huntington's 2020 Horizons Comprehensive Plan, make an unprecedented zone change from R40 one acre housing to C5 commercial, and approve a 56 acre, half mile long, 486,000 square foot mall with approximately 2,000 parking spots and an underground parking garage. The location and scope of the project will have a negative impact on the safety, security, and well-being of the students, staff and residents of the Half Hollow Hills Central School District.

Yours truly,



Eric Geringswald, President  
Half Hollow Hills Board of Education



Dr. Patrick Harrigan, Superintendent  
Half Hollow Hills Central School District