

I was so pleased that the estimable Jacques Kelly turned his expert eye towards our beautiful new Dorothy I. Height Elementary School and penned such a nice piece on its history, its architecture and the design process. (Jacques Kelly: Turning a 19th-century school into a 21st-century resource for Baltimore's Reservoir Hill, October 20) We in Reservoir Hill are proud of our new school, and of the ongoing progress of our historic neighborhood.

It's a shame that the B&P Tunnel project plans to concentrate and spew unfiltered diesel fumes from freight trains right over this school from literally across the street. It's a shame that the Historic houses that Mr. Kelly makes reference to will likely be badly damaged during the explosives and boring of underground construction and the ongoing train traffic. It's a shame that massive industrial construction will dominate some children's years at the school. It's a shame they'll be on the front lines should there be one of the disasters that show up on the freight lines' safety records.

That's why we were out there on the first day of school, protesting the B&P Tunnel Project's plan to build a 50' diesel exhaust stack across the street from the school. This doesn't belong next to a school, nor anywhere in our densely populated residential neighborhood where asthma levels are already above the national average. For that matter, why is adding unfiltered diesel train exhaust in concentrated doses anywhere in Baltimore City an okay idea?

The B&P Tunnel plan takes little concern for Baltimore, and needs to be scrapped and restarted with the City's well-being a higher priority. Yes, passenger trains must come through the city – that's where the passengers are! But industrial diesel-powered, double-stacked, hazardous freight trains can only be a detriment to the city and need to go around population centers. If we are serious about our port, we need to build industrial access to it – away from the city. Is the linking of the two (Amtrak and Freight) to create the criteria for this project purely a funding-based, coat-tail riding decision? This is not the 19th century when the Railroad Barons could run roughshod over anywhere they liked; we now have laws - and try to separate them from corporate interests. That's why we are protesting the opening a swath for double-stack freight to run right through Baltimore City, affecting its entire future with pollution, noise, industrialization, real estate devaluation, and hazards to human life. This is a very real deciding point in Baltimore history –

yet few people seem to know, and the City Government seems to be okay with it.

Respectfully,

Laura Amlie,

President, Residents Against the Tunnels