

# Amtrak B&P Tunnel Project

## Reservoir Hill Community Impact

October 30, 2023

Residents Against  
The Tunnels RATT



**Mt. Royal  
Historic  
District**

**HMRTA**

**Today's Discussion:**

**Part I: Issues & Concerns**

**Part II: Recommendations for Advocacy**

# Part I: Issues & Concerns

- 1 Lack of Effective & Meaningful Community Engagement
- 2 Civil Rights
- 3 Environmental Justice
- 4 Emergency Management Plan
- 5 Land Acquisition & Resident Rights
- 6 Historically Protected Environment

# 1 Lack of Effective & Meaningful Community Engagement

- **Residents need urgent access to all available documentation**
  - Maps & Timelines
  - Past & Present Reports
  - Design & Construction Plans
  - Past Community Engagement Plans
- **Amtrak causes confusion through misrepresentation**
  - Leaves out the important details
  - Fails to provide the most up to date information
  - Different information to different stakeholders
- **Amtrak should engage the community as a whole**





# They Say

It's now down to 2 tunnels!

Emergency ventilation improves the safety for passengers!

Finally, trains will be faster!

No diesel on the tracks!



# They Mean

It's a 2 phased project (2 tunnels now, 2 tunnels later)

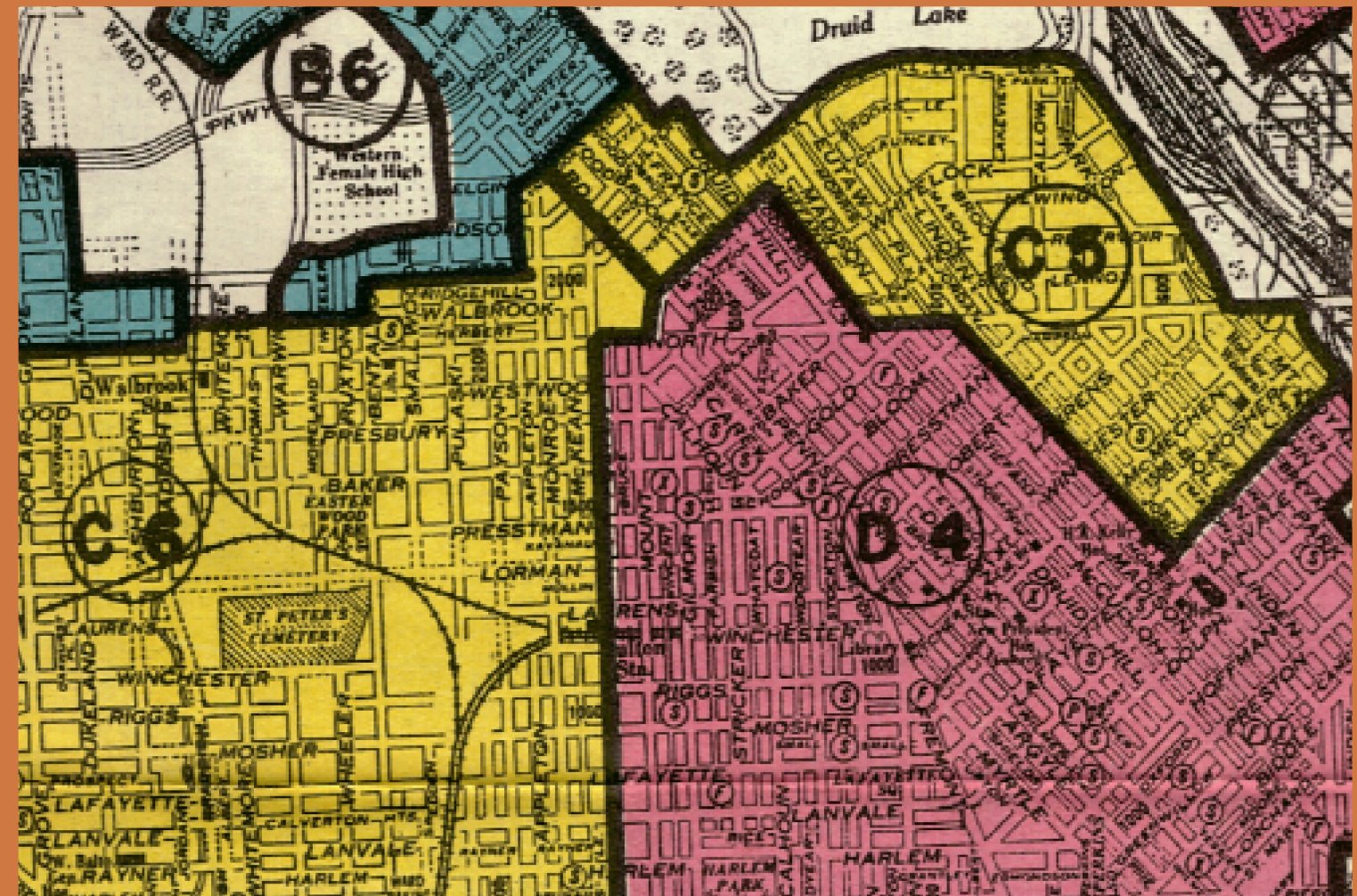
Ventilation will significantly increase air pollution in your community

Travel time will be decreased by only 2.5 minutes

Passenger trains will be all electric, but Amtrak shares their tunnels with freight operators like Norfolk Southern, which use diesel fuel.

## 2 Civil Rights

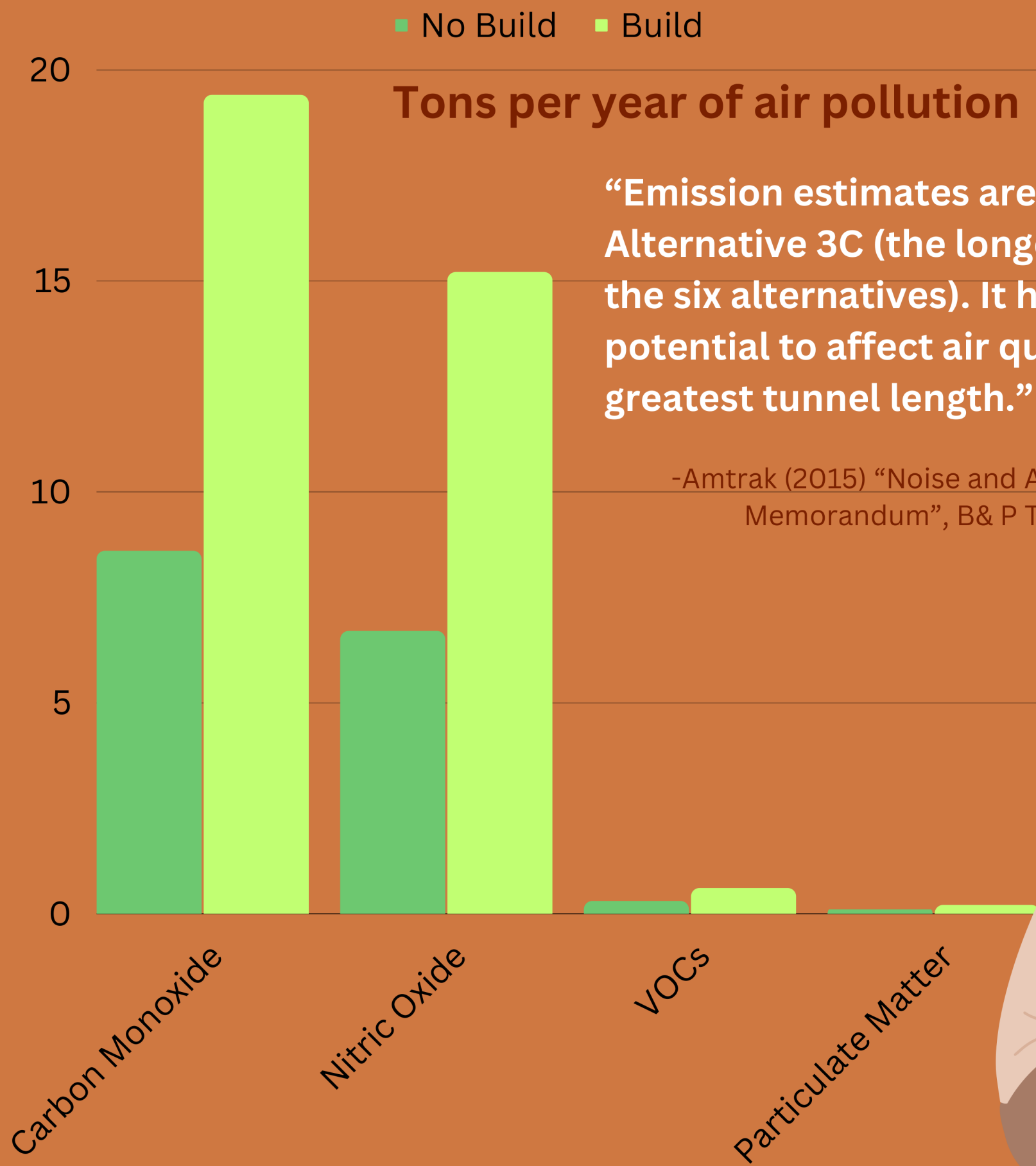
- Route disproportionately affects poor and Black communities
- Route follows the historical disinvestment in Baltimore City
- Impact of alternative routes were not measured equally





# 3

## Environmental Justice



“Emission estimates are for Build Alternative 3C (the longest tunnel out of the six alternatives). It has the highest potential to affect air quality due to the greatest tunnel length.”

-Amtrak (2015) “Noise and Air Quality Technical Memorandum”, B&P Tunnel Project.

### Unequal Risk to Our Children

- < 300 ft from DIH
- Children in West Baltimore have the highest rates of asthma-related emergency visits
- Black children are 7x higher asthma mortality risk as white children





# Amtrak explored 16 routes.



## They selected the route that:

- Avoids all majority white communities
- Is the longest
- Produces the most pollution
- Has the highest number of hazardous materials sites of concern (150 total, 12 high priority)
- Has a ventilation site next door to a 21st Century school

## 4 Emergency Management Plan

- **EMPs must be created in advance of an emergency w/ transgovernmental coordination**
- **EMP depend on strong local infrastructure**
  - Emergency Healthcare
  - Water & Air Management
  - Educated Fire Department
  - Interagency Communication
  - Public Communication Strategy
- **Reservoir Hill residents have experienced 3 known water emergencies in the last two years**
  - Little to no communication
  - No follow up advisories
- **EMP should cover all rail usage**

### 2023 Norfolk Southern Disaster

“If they'd known what chemicals were burning in those train cars, they would have known not to stand nearby, trying to douse it. Emergency responders also brought up that they **needed more training and funding** if they're going to be prepared to respond to events like this” - NPR





## 5 Land Acquisition & Resident Rights

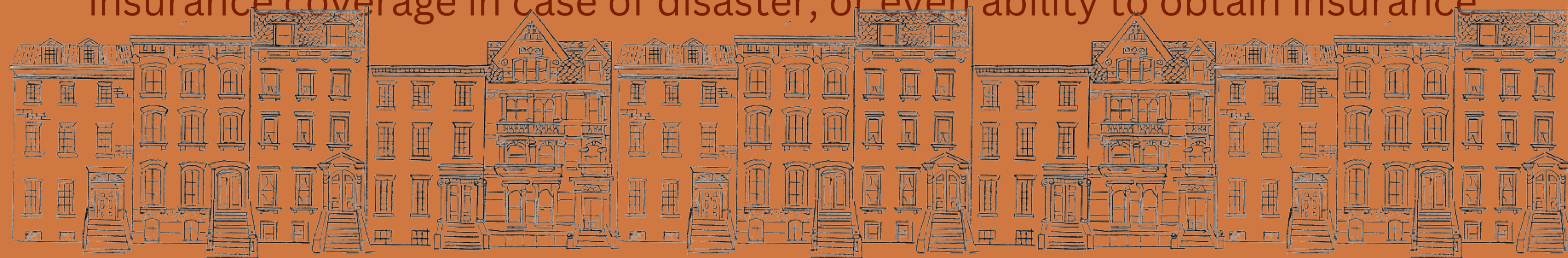
- Already encroaching on resident land (e.g. drilling without a permit)
- Amtrak wants the subsurface rights to our land “from the tunnel to the earth’s core”
- As of today, no resident has been directly informed if they are on the route
- They are threatening to evoke their rights to eminent domain
- They have already evoked eminent domain in Midtown Edmonson and Washington DC Union Station
- Residents have not been properly informed of their rights

“Home equity is many homeowners’ most significant asset (Neal 2013), and **homeownership has been the primary way most families build wealth in America** (Goodman and Mayer 2018).”



## 6 Historically Protected Enviroments

- Reservoir Hill is a **federally and locally recognized historic district**, containing two smaller Baltimore City CHAP districts
- Residents need a **discrete fund** (not the Amtrak CIF) to ensure protection of our buildings and homes, **especially** since Amtrak has limited liability in case of disaster
- We need **third party evaluation** of our buildings and homes **before and during construction**, and **monitoring after construction**
- Residents are unsure of their rights in negotiating with Amtrak, their insurance coverage in case of disaster, or even ability to obtain insurance





# Part II: Recommendations for Community Advocacy





# What We Need From Representative Mfume

1. Help inform the community of their rights
2. Vocally and visibly oppose any evocation of eminent domain
3. Demand documentation from Amtrak
  - a. Geology Report
  - b. Past Community Engagement
  - c. Emergency Management Plan
  - d. Construction Plan & Timeline
4. Advocate for
  - a. Reservoir Hill Demands (10/13/23)
  - b. Environmental & Civil Rights Justice
  - c. Meaningful & Effective Engagement
  - d. Fund for Historic District & Health Maintenance
  - e. Clarity about Amtrak Liability
  - f. Reconsideration of Tunnel Routes & Ventilation Placement





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