



## **COLARUSSO AND THE WATERFRONT: NO UPSIDE, NO JUSTICE**

**Hudson, July 10, 2020:**

Recently, supporters of A Colarusso and Son have sought to use “environmental justice” as a wedge to pressure the city’s Planning Board into making bad decisions.

In a Facebook rebutting this campaign, we reiterated a number of key points:

### **Hudson has the right of review of the entire Colarusso operation**

A few years ago, Colarusso did unauthorized alterations to their loading dock on the Hudson River. Per City zoning passed in 2011, that action triggered a full review of their waterfront operation. The application is now being reviewed by the Hudson Planning Board under two separate regulatory frameworks: City Code, and the NY State SEQRA statute, which provides the roadmap and the rules by which such applications are handled by agencies.

Colarusso set the review process back for 18 months with a failed lawsuit that claimed that the City had no ability to regulate their truck traffic. That suit ended with a NY Supreme Court Judge dismissing all the Colarusso claims and affirming the right of the City to conduct their review. That decision was also confirmed by NY DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos, who established the right of the City to conduct the review.

**Colarusso is not dependent on the dock—we are not trying to “drive them out of business”—nor was it unaware of zoning issues it faced when purchasing its waterfront property**

Colarusso had a prosperous road paving business for 100 years with no waterfront access, and the company knew the limitations of the City Code and SEQRA when they bought the property in 2014. They should also have known that SEQRA rules empower our Planning Board to consider a wide range of impacts, including noise, dust, truck traffic, visuals, and impacts on wetlands, the community and the economy.

**Demands for “environmental justice” mask a different motivation: gravel expansion.**

"Environmental justice" claims for the truck way are disingenuous. While ostensibly about eliminating truck traffic in the city (which can be accomplished WITHOUT destroying the waterfront), they are being used to provide cover for a major expansion at Colarusso's dock, with the help of a busy two-lane road through protected wetlands.

We believe Colarusso is attempting to transition to a much bigger and more intrusive gravel transport scheme with massive downside impacts on our roads and waterfront. The company is seeking permits to operate a much larger and more intrusive waterfront operation, whether to run it themselves or offer it for sale to a larger out-of-state or foreign entity.

On multiple occasions, the Colarusso attorney has claimed in front of our Planning Board that there is no upside limit to the number of trucks they can send from the quarry to the waterfront. This is obviously problematic, and has no chance of approval by the Board.

**Approval of the “haul road” WILL NOT solve the problem of big trucks on our streets.**

Colarusso proposes 284 truck crossings per day at the Broad St. railroad crossing, inter-mingled with 28 trains daily. If the haul road is ever built, those same 284 truck crossings would also occur on both Route 9 and Route 9G, where many hundreds of vehicles pass through daily, heading both north and south. The gravel trucks would cross these busy routes at a 90-degree right angle, and the Route 9G crossing would be sited at the bottom of a lengthy hill where northbound cars are often speeding. Data from NY Department of Transportation is

forthcoming, but we could easily be looking at 600-800 right angle interactions with dump trucks, trains, passenger cars, and other vehicles PER DAY at the combined three crossings. On a weekly basis, this translates to 3,000-4,000 engagements between dump trucks and other vehicles.

Beyond this, Colarusso wants to retain the right to use the Columbia St. route IN ADDITION to the proposed haul road. Since Columbia St. is the designated State truck route, the City of Hudson would lack the ability to prevent gravel transport on BOTH the haul road and Columbia St., leading to a potential nightmare scenario.

For three years, Colarusso has refused to provide the Planning Board with the most basic data about the volume of their truck traffic. If they released the data, it would clearly demonstrate that the volume of trucks they were running in 2014 is dwarfed by the number they are seeking in the present application.

**The best approach is to get ALL the trucks out of town—off Front and Columbia Streets AND off the waterfront.**

Assembly Representative Didi Barrett has secured a \$100K grant to support a truck study that will hopefully lead to that outcome. Permitting the Colarusso haul road would only serve to entrench the company more deeply, and will leave us stuck with an ongoing truck problem on both the major routes into our community and on the busy rail line, which is one of the most active Amtrak stations in the entire state of New York.

**Colarusso's expansion is filled with downside—and no real upside for the city.**

Environment: South Bay has been designated by NY Department of State as a Significant Fish & Wildlife Habitat, and in 1982 the Hudson Common Council unanimously passed a resolution promising the community that there would be no further development in South Bay. Colarusso proposes a two-lane, paved industrial highway through the Bay.

Economy: Hudson recently received a \$10 million economic development grant from NY State that is focused on waterfront development. That grant is designed to attract an additional \$40-60 million in private investment in our waterfront zone. It will be impossible to convince investors to build housing and other more benign amenities if they are to be faced with a large and noxious gravel dump and truck route.

Colarusso proposes a major gravel dump and truck route immediately adjacent to the Henry Hudson Waterfront Park, 100 yards from our historic Train Station, right past the front door of Basilica, 50 yards from the historic Dunn Building, and immediately across from the Wick Hotel and the soon-to-be-developed KAZ site. The Colarusso proposal would guarantee that we would be faced with idling diesel dump trucks at the Broad St. rail crossing on a continual basis.

There is nearly zero in the way of employment or economic upside for the City of Hudson in the Colarusso proposition. Spending a few hours at the waterfront makes it clear that there is almost nothing in the way of jobs for Hudson residents, and many of the truck drivers originate from locations as distant as Rensselaer County.

If the Planning Board chooses to adjudicate the economics first in their review, we might see a very short process, as it will become apparent that the huge menu of downside impacts is not being offset by equally large economic upsides for the City of Hudson.