



CITY OF HACKENSACK

65 Central Avenue - HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY 07601

Main Number: 201-646-3900

www.Hackensack.org

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Caseen Gaines

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AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE HACKENSACK CITY COUNCIL TO NEW JERSEY TRANSIT RE: SAFETY ALONG THE PASCACK VALLEY LINE

August 18, 2025

Dear NJ Transit Agency Safety Management Department:

On behalf of the citizens of our municipality, we are writing to express our profound concern regarding the recent fatalities along the Pascack Valley Line.

The two deaths that occurred within just over a week—in Hackensack on August 7 and River Edge on August 15—are alarming and warrant action, as the emotional toll on the victims' families, first responders, and our wider community is immense and far-reaching.

We recognize the impossibility of preventing all tragedies; however, now is the time to explore ways to limit future fatalities, whether intentional or unintentional, and enhance safety for everyone.

We urge the ASM to conduct a thorough safety audit of the Pascack Valley Line, focusing specifically on high-risk areas identified by data on past incidents, particularly at pedestrian crossings and along stretches of track adjacent to residential neighborhoods and schools.

We request consideration of the following:

- **Increased and enhanced signage:** Installing more prominent, reflective, and multilingual signs with clear warnings about the dangers of trespassing and suicide prevention hotline information.
- **Upgraded warning systems:** Adding ground-level flashing lights and more distinct audible alerts that activate when a train is approaching, offering an additional warning beyond the standard crossing gates and bells.
- **Physical barriers:** Evaluating the feasibility of installing additional fencing or other physical deterrents at known points of unauthorized access.
- **Community outreach:** Expanding public education campaigns, especially in schools, libraries, and community centers, to raise awareness about rail safety.

We stand ready to support your efforts to address this critical issue—and will happily partner with our neighboring communities along the Pascack Valley Line—to ensure that the corridor is safe for all of our residents and those visiting our area. Let's work together to prevent the loss of more lives.

Sincerely,

Caseen Gaines

Agatha Toomey

Roberto Diaz

Philip Carroll

Sonya Clark-Collins