



TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE/I-287
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

**New York State Department of Transportation
Metropolitan Transportation Authority Metro-North Railroad
New York State Thruway Authority**

Meeting Minutes

***Stakeholders' Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)
Land Use SAWG Meeting #4***

***Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor
Environmental Review***



October 23, 2007

Meeting Title: Stakeholders’ Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)
Land Use SAWG Meeting #4 – Focus on Local Land Use in the Villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, NY

Meeting Purpose: Exchange of information

Location/Date: Power Authority of New York Building, White Plains, NY
October 23, 2007

Agenda:

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Attendees:

Name

Anzevino, Jeffrey
Barclay, Suzanne
Fazzi, Sal
Lewy, Cheryl Winter
Lynch, Ryan
Mercurio, P. Gilbert
Meyers, Hon. Joseph
Schulman, Sy
Silverberg, Steven
Weinstein, Vic
Zupan, Jeff

Members from other SAWGs in attendance:

Cerbone, William (Bridge SAWG)
Mclaughlin, Jack (Bridge SAWG)
Ross, Irene (Bridge SAWG)

Members of the agencies and consultant team.

Agenda Item 1

Introduction

The facilitator, Paul Plotczyk of Work Systems Affiliates International, Inc., introduced the meeting with an overview of the SAWGs, their overall purpose, and the role of SAWG members. Jim Coyle (Earth Tech, environmental consultant) briefly talked about the current activities of the Environmental, Bridge, and Transportation SAWGs.

The first presentation focused on local land use in the villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, New York. The second part of the meeting focused on how alignments currently under consideration would traverse these same areas.

Agenda Item 2: Andrew Parker - Local Land Use in the Villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, NY

Presentation

Agenda Item 3: Andrew Parker - Local Land Use in the Villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, NY

Questions and Answers

- Comment During the presentation of land use in Suffern, the Hon. Joseph Myers noted that the village is reviewing preliminary plans for condominium development near the NJ Transit station on Orange Avenue (Route 202).
- Comment Jeff Zupan said that there are a number of places in New Jersey where development is occurring adjacent to rail lines to take advantage of location. These areas include Bergen, Rutherford, Park Ridge, and Hillsdale, New Jersey.
- Question A SAWG member asked if there is any opportunities to increase density in Suffern or if the village was already built out under the existing zoning. A follow up question asked if there were height limitations.
- Response Dr. Andrew Parker (Earth Tech) responded that there are opportunities to increase the density of land through upzoning, but that there might be resistance to increasing the height of buildings.
- Comment Joseph Myers made three points regarding issues in Suffern: (1) parking in Suffern is a commuter parking shortage problem, (2) downtown residential areas have a potential to be destabilized because of a large illegal immigrant population, and (3) the Good Samaritan Hospital has a brand new facility built next to its existing building.

- Question A member asked whether origin-destination data is available for major employers in the Suffern area. A follow up comment indicated that perhaps employers may provide trip distribution data by zip code for their employees.
- Response Dr. Parker noted that the project's transportation team has this data; however, employers could be contacted if it becomes a focus of further studies.
- Question Joseph Myers was asked whether there was interest for a station in Suffern.
- Response Joseph Myers responded that Suffern is interested in a station, perhaps near Novartis or the Tilcon Quarry.
- Comment Jeff Zupan referenced the results of a Rockland County Economic Development Corporation/Regional Plan Association charrette on transit-oriented development (TOD) that identified three possible locations for a station in Suffern on the Piermont Line: (1) Novartis/Quarry area; (2) closer to the downtown; and (3) near Avon closer to the Mahwah River.
- Question A member asked what the political climate in Suffern was like.
- Response Joseph Myers said that there is a strong desire in Suffern to gentrify.
- Comment The quarry site would have a potentially big impact on Suffern.
- Response Andrew Parker noted that the town of Ramapo has acquired the quarry and that the Army Corps of Engineers was studying the potential of the quarry to serve as a flood mitigation measure to the Mahwah River.
- Comment Jim Coyle noted that the spacing of stations between Suffern and Hillburn is an issue. Both stations serve different purposes, with Hillburn serving as a connection/transfer hub, while a Suffern station could serve as a catalyst for transit oriented development
- Discussion A discussion focused on the potential for TOD in Suffern. A concern was expressed about whether there was enough demand for commuters traveling to White Plains. Joseph Myers stated there could be interest in TOD and that other development was occurring in the area, including Tuxedo Reserve (1,100 new units). It was also noted that environmental groups have expressed concern about new development in the Ramapo Valley because of water shortages and increased traffic congestion. Dr. Parker noted that there were many environmental positives to TOD including energy savings. Jeff Zupan questioned if opportunities to cluster development near stations really exists, as most of the proposed stations are for park-n-ride. He also said that there is local resistance to a station in Airmont.

Agenda Item 4: Mark Roche - Update of Tappan Zee Engineering Efforts in the Villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, NY
Presentation

The next presentation, given by Mark Roche (Arup, engineering consultant) began with a discussion of engineering considerations for transit in Tarrytown. The first slide displayed a previous bus rapid transit (BRT) alignment that directed buses onto the south side of the Thruway in order to connect to the Hudson River en route to the existing Tarrytown Station. Because of concerns regarding potential environmental and property impacts in the bridge landing area, as well as a pedestrian walkway to the Hudson River, this alternative was eliminated from consideration. Mr. Roche then displayed a later drawing of an alternative BRT alignment on the north side of the Thruway with a proposed roundabout at the Route 119 and Broadway intersection. Mr. Roche described the two options that have been considered and said that more traffic modeling is being conducted to clarify the various options in Tarrytown. One benefit of this new design, he added, was that most of the proposed infrastructure (i.e., pedestrian walkway and roadway) is within the existing right-of-way (ROW) with limited property impacts.

Mr. Roche then displayed drawings illustrating Alternatives 4A (full-corridor CRT) and 4B (Rockland CRT with connection to the Metro-North Railroad's Hudson Line and LRT from Tarrytown Station to Port Chester) in Tarrytown, and addressed issues surrounding the proposed Tappan Zee Station location.

Mr. Roche finished his presentation with a look at possible station locations in Hillburn and Suffern. He noted that the Hillburn Station would use land on both sides of 4th Street for a station and storage yard. Possibilities for a station in Suffern are possible on the Piermont Line near Avon and the Tilcon Quarry. It was also noted at the end of Mr. Roche's presentation that the Traffic and Transit SAWGs should be made aware of any station location suggestions.

Agenda Item 5: Mark Roche - Update of TZ Engineering Efforts in the Villages of Hillburn, Suffern, and Tarrytown, NY
Questions and Answers

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| Comment | Jeff Zupan suggested that the toll plaza designs at the bridge landing in Tarrytown should consider the possibility of advanced fee collection technology, which would make toll plazas obsolete in the future. A discussion ensued amongst members regarding the various methods of toll collection and the broader implications on travel behavior (some people don't want to be monitored) and paying in cash or adapting to new technology (such as EZPass). |
| Response | Jim Coyle noted that there is potential to slowly phase out toll plazas as new options present themselves. |
| Question | Vic Weinstein asked for elaboration on the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Route 119 and Broadway in Tarrytown. |
| Response | Mark Roche indicated that the roundabout would keep the access ramp to the bridge from Route 9. He noted that traffic modeling is currently being conducted to provide a clearer sense of the effectiveness of the proposed roundabout. |

- Comment Concern was expressed that traffic is a major issue on Route 9. Existing traffic data exist for other development projects, such as Ferry Landing.
- Response Mark Roche noted that he is well aware of the heavy traffic volumes on Route 9 and that the project will attempt to minimize any impacts to traffic.
- Question Jeff Zupan asked who the proposed CRT Tappan Zee station would serve.
- Discussion A discussion focused on the specific design, location, and purpose of the proposed Tappan Zee station. Concern was expressed by several group members of the traffic impacts created by a new station, as well as other perceived impacts such as vandalism and crime that could occur in the station’s parking lot. Mark Roche noted that the proposed station would divert automobile traffic from existing Tarrytown Station, thereby relieving traffic on Route 9 north of Route 119. He also stated that the proposed Tappan Zee station would act as a transfer point to the Hudson Line, but that more studies are being conducted to determine if the station is in the right location. Jim Coyle noted that traffic studies are examining these questions. Jeff Anzevino asked if the station could be located farther east, on Route 119 near the office complexes. Mr. Roche noted that the station location was limited to straight lines and could not be situated on curves, such as where the tunnel curves south towards the Hudson River near the Reckson building. Dr. Parker noted that the station in its proposed location could spark TOD development in the surrounding area as pockets of vacant land exist.
- Comment In response to discussion of the Hillburn Station, Dr. Parker noted that Hillburn is an environmental justice community and that the loss of the industrial park would have an impact on local tax revenues. Dr. Parker also noted that this area is sensitive because it is a sole source aquifer location and that the team would need to mitigate any potential impacts.
- Question Vic Weinstein asked if buses would be stored in Hillburn.
- Response Mr. Roche said that bus operators would need to take vehicles off-line for storage but are not limited to location in the way that rail is. Dr. Parker added that BRT would have a loop within Suffern onto the Piermont Line, the use of which would result in reduced property impacts.
- Comment Discussion about a potential Suffern Station noted that a cut-and-cover tunnel through Suffern is not desirable to locals. Mr. Roche noted that the potential Wayne Avenue alignment option would displace several structures, including residences and businesses. The possible Suffern Station locations are limited because of curves and grades, which is partly why a Hillburn Station option exists.