



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 #5***

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

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November 8, 2007

**Meeting Title:** Stakeholders’ Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)  
Land Use SAWG Meeting #5 – Focus on Land Use and Project Alternatives in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, NY.

**Meeting Purpose:** Exchange of Information

**Location Date:** Holiday Inn, Suffern, NY  
November 8, 2007

**Agenda:**

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**Attendees:**

**Name**

Vincent Altieri  
Hon. Ellen Jaffee  
Suzanne Barclay  
Hon. Joseph Meyers  
Irene Sandford  
Aaron Schmidt  
Vic Weinstein  
Jeff Zupan

**Alternates and Additional Invitees/Attendees**  
Ed Dempsey  
Hon. Dagan LaCorte (Deputy Mayor of Suffern)

**Members from other SAWGS in Attendance:**  
Joan Connors, (TT, Airmont)  
Don Goldberg (Bridge, Chestnut Ridge)  
Mary Jane Shimsky (TT, Elmsford)  
Joan Schroeder, (Env, Airmont)

And the representatives of the agencies and consultant team.

**Minutes Recorder:**  
Ron Slangen, Earth Tech

*Agenda Item 1*

*Introduction*

Mike Anderson of the New York State Department of Transportation introduced the meeting by welcoming group members and provided an overview of the SAWGs, their overall purpose, and the role of SAWG members. Mr. Paul Stimson then introduced the first presenter of the evening, Dr. Andrew Parker (Earth Tech, environmental consultant).

The first presentation focused on local land use and land use policy in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, New York. The second part of the meeting focused on Project Alternatives, including proposed station locations and adjacent land use issues at these locations.

*Agenda Item 2: A. Parker - Local Land Use in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, NY.*

*Technical Presentation*

Dr. Parker presented a slide show on local land use in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, New York. His slides are presented in annotated form below.

*Agenda Item 3: A. Parker - Local Land Use in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, NY.*

*Questions and Answers*

- Comment      In response to Dr. Parker’s overview of the Piermont Line and its current use, one SAWG member noted that Dyke’s Lumber runs freight trains on a random schedule of approximately three to four times a week, typically on Tuesdays or Thursdays. She also mentioned that the trains are getting heavier and causing more noticeable vibrations.
- Comment      In a separate comment, the same SAWG member mentioned that the senior housing located off Airmont Road is officially called “55 and over” housing as many residents are still working-active adults.
- Comment      Another member mentioned that the current population of Airmont is 9,500 people. He then noted that the Village of Airmont will be adopting an updated comprehensive plan in the coming months, the first since the Village was incorporated in 1991.
- He further noted that the 55 and over housing built in the Village Center was a floating zone that the Village designated for its low traffic impact in an already heavy traffic area.
- Comment      A different SAWG member mentioned that Montebello is the highest income village in the Town of Ramapo.

- Comment        Still another member stated that by focusing on Elmsford, the group was skipping over a large part of Tarrytown and unincorporated Greenburgh that were not included in the previous land use SAWG meeting (Session #4).
- Response        Dr. Parker stated that in the last meeting the team covered an important area of Tarrytown related to the project and showed members the current thinking of the proposed Tappan Zee station. He added that the group would probably focus on Greenburgh at the next session.
- Question        A SAWG member asked if ventilation buildings were considered with tunnel operations.
- Response        Dr. Parker stated that ventilation building construction is considered, however, their locations and configuration are still uncertain. Mark Roche, a project engineer, added later that ventilation buildings are required on both ends of any underground station.
- Comment        One participant noted that a 440-unit residential development is proposed in Greenburgh on the vacant parcel behind the existing Nob Hill condominiums in Elmsford, with access gained from Taxter Road.
- Question        Another participant asked why LRT was not an option for Rockland County.
- Response        Jim Coyle responded by saying that the Alternatives Analysis looked at a variety of alternatives and that LRT was not practical for Rockland from a cost and ridership perspective.

*Agenda Item 2: Mark Roche - Update of Tappan Zee Engineering Efforts in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, NY.*  
*Technical Presentation*

The next presentation, given by Mark Roche (Arup, engineering consultant), gathered the group around two large aerial photographs of Elmsford and Airmont/Montebello to discuss potential station locations and “bigger picture” land use development and transportation trends in these areas.

Beginning in Elmsford, Mr. Roche pointed out some of the physical constraints to new transit lines such as the transmission corridors near the Saw Mill and Sprain Brook Parkways, as well as the Catskill Aqueduct. Mr. Roche then guided members through the area indicating existing traffic flows. He identified the NYSDOT Route 9 Bypass project intended to relieve traffic between Route 9A and Route 119. Mr. Roche then pointed out that three potential stations were being considered within the Village; they focused on CRT and BRT. These station locations were the following: 1) An elevated station adjacent to I-287 along Route 9A, 2) An underground station on Route 119, and 3) An above ground station at the Bed, Bath, and Beyond further east on Route 119. Mr. Roche encouraged members to think about these locations and provide input.

Mr. Roche then moved the group to a large aerial photograph of Airmont and Montebello, NY. He described traffic issues in the area including the heavy traffic that currently exists on Airmont Road at Interchange 14B. Mr. Roche pointed out the proposed Airmont Road Station and encouraged participants to think about the future development of the area and how a station could meet future needs.

Agenda Item 3: Mark Roche - Update of Tappan Zee Engineering Efforts in the Villages of Airmont, Montebello, and Elmsford, NY.

Questions and Answers

*(The group began its discussion in front of the aerial photograph of Elmsford, NY)*

- Discussion      A discussion focused on traffic concerns in Elmsford, NY. Mr. Roche stated that I-287 distributes approximately 4,000 vehicles an hour onto the local roadway network and a similar amount is added, indicating major movements in this location. One participant noted that a major consideration is the bottleneck that occurs at Route 119 and Route 9A as well as the traffic build-up on I-287 resulting from the Sprain Brook Parkway. Another participant noted that a lot of trucks pass along Route 9A. Mr. Roche expressed concern that buses currently using the Sprain Brook Parkway experience delays, which indicate to him that in order for a BRT system to succeed, it would need dedicated lanes for uninterrupted service.
- Discussion      Another discussion focused on the specific design characteristics of a CRT station. Mr. Roche explained that a CRT station is typically 180 feet long by 50 feet wide, but that this does not account for other station related structures such as parking, mechanical buildings, ventilation shafts, etc. He also noted that underground CRT stations are very expensive but warned that any cost estimates should be used carefully as estimates range from project to project. Traffic modeling currently being conducted by Earth Tech should provide more information on future demands and uses for proposed stations.
- Discussion      A subsequent discussion focused on potential areas for TOD in Elmsford. Dr. Parker noted that there are no known redevelopment plans for the north side of the Thruway which is characterized by a mix of industrial, auto, and residential uses with fragmented ownership. The south side is characterized with a mix of industrial, commercial offices, and residential uses. Concern was expressed about the importance of leaving the trees in the area intact. Another participant noted that any travel demand estimates should take into consideration future land use changes. Would any new land use changes generate new trips? What would be the impact of TOD? Where are people coming from now?
- Comment        Dr. Parker directed members to the other station location proposed at the Bed, Bath, and Beyond parking lot area. It was noted that this station should not be a park-n-ride station.
- Comment        People will use transit if it is efficient and reliable, and is characterized by longer trips rather than shorter ones.
- Response        Dr. Parker noted that CRT and BRT systems are able to make multiple stops every half mile to meet any short trip demand.
- Question        Participant asked what the federal assumptions were regarding fuel.
- Response        Jim Coyle noted that long-term trends were considered in regards to fuel.

*(The group then moved to the aerial photograph of Airmont and Montebello, NY)*

- Comment        A question was raised regarding the future use of the storage building on Dunnigan Drive. A Rockland County official noted that the building would not be used as a county bus facility as previously considered.
- Discussion      A discussion focused on the heavy traffic conditions surrounding Interchange 14B. A participant noted that automobiles traveling to New Jersey use the Interchange as well as those traveling to Suffern. She also noted there was a lot of truck traffic. Mr. Roche agreed that there was heavy traffic in the areas from Interchange 14B to 14A.
- Discussion      The discussion then shifted to the proposed station at Airmont Road at the Millennium Paper facility. A participant said a station would not solve any of the traffic problems in this area and added that it could make the situation worse. Jim Coyle stated that there were reasons to support and not support a station at Airmont Road. Another participant asked what type of design elements would make it walkable. He added that any pedestrian-friendly solutions would be difficult since there were currently nine curb cuts that would need to be converted into two, and that in general, the station would not work as a park-n-ride. Mr. Roche responded by reminding the group that there could be an increase in commercial activity in the future.
- Comment        Suffern is looking to revitalize. There is potential for TOD in its downtown area.
- Comment        A participant (Suffern official) stated that Suffern wanted to redevelop its downtown with residential development through urban renewal. The village had considered the possibility of leasing space in Hillburn for park-n-ride space. He added that the Village was interested in having a commuter population living in downtown with access to a one-seat ride into Manhattan, and that the future development of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project would provide direct access to Penn Station.
- Responses      Dr. Parker noted that the Tappan Zee project was unique as it added a circumferential transit element that meets future suburban growth in the region. Jim Coyle added that the reverse commute is also a consideration. Mr. Roche said that there is a projection for one million new jobs in New York City, and asked the group where these people would come from.
- Comment        A senior elected official from Airmont added that this project would provide riders with a one-seat ride into Grand Central.
- Comment        Mr. Roche noted that the quarry in Suffern is likely to change in the future. It could be a site of future commercial development. He emphasized thinking of future conditions in the year 2035. Jim Coyle asked how we would handle all of this new traffic.
- Comment        The Airmont official added that Airmont was not looking into adding new development.
- Discussion      A discussion focused on the proposed BRT option in the area. Mr. Roche stated that a BRT line could use the existing Piermont ROW. He added that a potential station could be placed on Hemion Road. A participant responded by saying that very few people would use it because people who would work at any new offices would live elsewhere, and not in the immediate area. He added that residential

development in the area would make more sense for TOD than commercial development. He made the point that having origin data by zip code for Novartis employees would be helpful.

Question Assemblymember Jaffee asked about the potential for a Hillburn Station.

Response Mr. Roche stated that Hillburn could serve as a park-n-ride station and not a TOD one.

Question Assemblymember Jaffee asked what the numbers were saying about future demand.

Response Dr. Parker responded by saying that future demand will be different than today and that densities would support transit. Mr. Roche added that in Rockland there are 24,000 trips in one day.

Response Assemblymember Jaffee added that senior citizens will comprise a lot of the population.

Comment A different participant stated that a case was made for BRT. She added that for CRT, there would be a need for funding from DOT to enhance the local road network. Assemblymember Jaffee agreed and mentioned that people will have a hard time getting to a station and that the roads would need to be reconfigured.

Question A participant stated that White Plains is getting overdeveloped and asked if Rockland would absorb any future growth. Another participant responded, stating that Rockland doesn't want that.

Response Mr. Roche stated that Rockland and Westchester are different, and that Rockland doesn't have a center as Westchester does with White Plains.

Comment A participant requested that the next SAWG focus on White Plains.

Comment Dr. Parker stated that the group did not have time to dig into Mr. Roche's drawings and that at the next meeting the group would need to see the drawings.