

TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE/I-287 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Open Houses

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA), and the MTA Metro-North Railroad (MTA MNR) are holding two open houses, one in Rockland and one in Westchester, to show the public at large the latest progress on the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review study.

The open houses will provide the public with its first look at the results to date of the ongoing preliminary engineering work for all six alternatives under consideration in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This “work in progress” shows each of the alternatives on 50-foot-long maps. Each map includes specific highway and transit features of an alternative including various sub-options for several of the alternatives. The maps convey a level of detail that will demonstrate how transportation and environmental considerations (including factors such as existing infrastructure, topography, structures, etc.) are being addressed at this intermediate point in the project’s design/impact analysis phase.

“While the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review is progressing, it is important to note that there is more work that remains to be done and the public’s continued participation is essential to develop the right transportation solutions for the Corridor,” said Thruway Authority Executive Director Michael R. Fleischer. “The public will be provided with an overview of the work that has been taking place over the past several months, including the preliminary engineering solutions under consideration for each alternative. While the Study moves forward, the Authority will continue to fulfill its responsibility to maintain and operate the Tappan Zee Bridge by continuing to make the necessary investments to assure safe and efficient travel for the millions of motorists that use the Bridge annually.”

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Thomas J. Madison, Jr. said, “The Tappan Zee Bridge and Interstate 287 are part of a critical



Courtesy of the New York State Thruway Authority

transportation corridor for the lower Hudson Valley that must be modernized to more effectively meet the transportation demands of today and the future. Public input is essential to deciding what infrastructure and service options will best improve mobility and safety through the corridor while minimizing impacts on surrounding communities, so we encourage people to continue participating in the environmental review process.”

“Designing an attractive, efficient east-west transit system from Suffern to Port Chester and providing better access to midtown Manhattan for people west of the Hudson River will make the region a better place to live and work by keeping people moving,” said MTA Metro-North President Peter A. Cannito. “We need to prepare for continued population growth in the Hudson Valley and its associated traffic. And as a transit professional, naturally I’m an advocate of public transportation. This is a complex endeavor, but with the help of the public, this planning process will yield the optimum solution for the region’s long-term transportation needs.”

Agency staff and members of the Project Team will be on hand at the open houses to explain the displays and record feedback. Boards explaining the environmental review process, the project schedule, and studies will also be on display. Over the next few months, the agencies will continue work to refine the alternatives.

The open houses will take place on February 27, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., in the SUNY Purchase Performing Arts Center, 735 Anderson Hill Road, in Purchase, and on February 28, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., at the Palisades Mall Adler Community Meeting Room, 1000 Palisades Center Drive, West Nyack.



New York State Department of Transportation



New York State Thruway Authority



Metro-North Railroad

Project Background

The Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review began in early 2001 when the New York State Thruway Authority and the MTA Metro-North Railroad partnered to conduct a comprehensive study of the regional transportation needs and mobility within the I-287 Corridor between Suffern and Port Chester, and to address the structural requirements of the Corridor's most important infrastructure element—the Tappan Zee Bridge. Because of the project's regional significance and importance to New York State's multimodal transportation system, the New York State Department of Transportation joined the Team in late 2005, assuming a coordinating role.

The project is undergoing a comprehensive Federal environmental review and is in the DEIS stage. NYSDOT, NYSTA, and MTA MNR are the project sponsors, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are the joint lead agencies.

An Alternatives Analysis report, published in January 2006, documented the two-level screening of 150 concepts into 16 scenarios and the selection of six alternatives for further study within the Environmental Impact Statement process. The Alternatives Analysis concluded that the demand for travel in the Corridor could not be accommodated by highway improvements alone; it would require the implementation of transit improvements as well.

The Need for the Project

The three-mile long, seven-lane Tappan Zee Bridge is a vital transportation link in the Tri-State transportation region. An integral segment of the New York State Thruway, the national Interstate system, and the 30-mile I-287 Corridor between Suffern and Port Chester, the Tappan Zee is a major cross-Hudson River commuter route between Orange and Rockland Counties on the west and Westchester County and southeastern Connecticut on the east.

The Bridge currently carries 135,000 vehicles daily, sometimes more, and is a source of major congestion during the peak travel periods. The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council has projected that the demand to cross the Tappan Zee daily would reach approximately 200,000 vehicles in 2025.

The substantial increase in traffic, particularly commercial vehicles, over the last few years has taken a toll on the condition of the Tappan Zee Bridge. While the Bridge is safe—the result of a rigorous ongoing program of maintenance and inspection—it will require millions of dollars of repairs and significant rehabilitation to keep it open. Recently, a \$150 million repair contract was awarded to replace 40 percent of the Bridge's deck. In addition, inspections have revealed seismic vulnerability as well as considerable deterioration on portions of the structural deck, walkway, lighting, and electrical systems.

Routine maintenance regularly results in temporary lane closures on the Bridge, and substandard lane widths and a lack of shoulders affect emergency response times; even minor traffic accidents create delays. A lane imbalance in Rockland County and steep grades with no separate lanes dedicated to slow-moving vehicles add to the congestion. Over the years, numerous improvements have been implemented to reduce congestion, including a movable barrier to help improve peak-period traffic flow by providing four lanes in the peak direction, electronic toll collection, and variable pricing for commercial vehicles.

The Six Alternatives

To address these issues, six alternatives are being studied as part of the DEIS.

ALTERNATIVE 1

The no build (**Alternative 1**) would maintain the existing Tappan Zee Bridge and highway. Both Federal and State environmental regulations require consideration of a no build alternative within a DEIS. A no build alternative functions as a baseline against which to measure the "build" alternatives.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 would rehabilitate the Tappan Zee Bridge, including improvements to ensure that it would comply with seismic guidelines, and implement travel demand management/transportation system management (TDM/TSM) measures. These measures include congestion pricing, ramp metering (using signals to control the number of vehicles that can enter the highway), and park and ride facilities, and are included in each of the build alternatives.

Environmental Impact Statement Process

Notice of Intent

Scoping Process

Alternatives Analysis

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Record of Decision

We are here

Public Participation Throughout

The Path Forward

Over the next few months, the Project Team will continue to refine the alternative alignments presented at the open houses, taking into consideration public comments. The Project Team will analyze, and make all efforts to minimize, the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives. As the study moves forward, there will be more opportunities for the public to participate in the process, including additional public meetings and open houses.

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 would construct a new bridge, with eight general-purpose and two high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, that would carry a cross-corridor, exclusive-lane bus rapid transit system (BRT). Highway improvements in Rockland County would include climbing lanes for slow-moving vehicles and HOT lanes for smoother traffic flow and reduced delays.

ALTERNATIVES 4A, 4B, AND 4C

In addition to a new bridge and the same highway improvements in Rockland County described above, **Alternatives 4A, B, and C** feature an identical commuter rail transit (CRT) system in Rockland County, but vary as they cross Westchester County. In all three alternatives, the commuter rail would branch off Metro-North's Port Jervis Line and travel across the bridge to a new Tappan Zee commuter rail station in Tarrytown, with a one-seat ride down the Hudson Line to Grand Central Terminal (GCT).

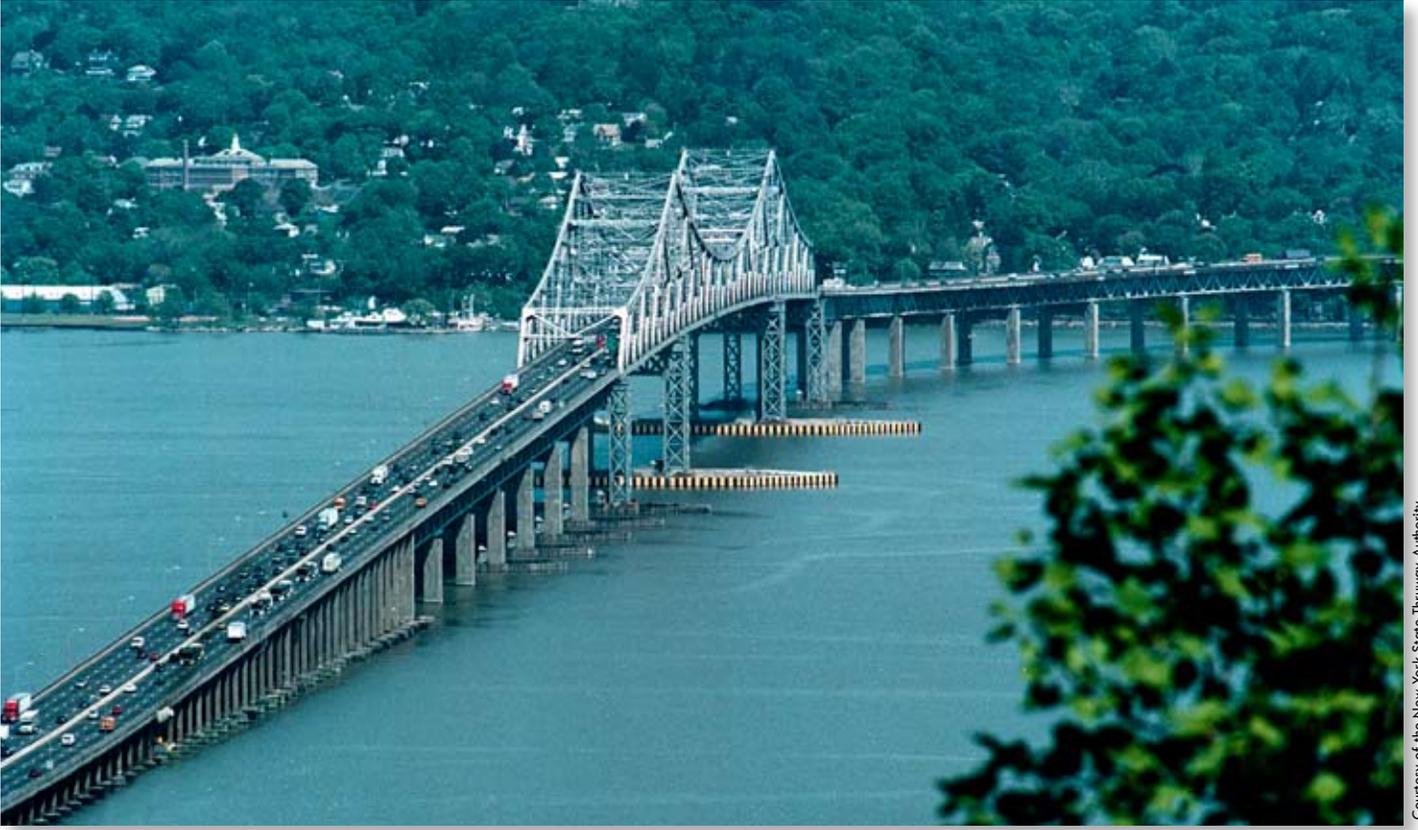
ALTERNATIVE 4A would extend the CRT across Westchester and onto the New Haven Line to Connecticut.

ALTERNATIVE 4B would construct a new light rail system between the new Tappan Zee commuter rail station and Port Chester.

ALTERNATIVE 4C would offer an exclusive BRT between the new Tappan Zee commuter rail station and Port Chester.

Both 4B and 4C would offer a transfer to the New Haven Line.





Courtesy of the New York State Thruway Authority



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