



TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE/I-287
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

***Joint SAWG/Stakeholders' Committee Briefing
Post-Presentation Q & A***

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



January 29, 2008

Meeting Title: Stakeholders' / SAWG General Meeting

Meeting Purpose: Project Status

Location Date: Marriott Hotel, 670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY (6:00 9:00 pm)
January 29, 2008

Agenda: Presentation on Project Status Update (Page 2)

Post-Presentation Q & A

The following questions and comments arose at the Joint SAWG/Stakeholders' Committee briefing:

Q: What are the factors that led to the 4D option?

A: The 4D option serves two distinct markets, cross-corridor and Manhattan-bound, which were both important for the project to address. None of the other alternatives provides the level of service for both markets.

Q: If there is a new bridge, will you consider aesthetics, and will there be a design competition?

A: There won't necessarily be a competition, but aesthetics will certainly be thoroughly explored.

Q: Where and when will you factor in commercial traffic and interstate trucking, which are crucial to the region's economy and pollution levels?

A: Those factors are being evaluated as part of the study.

Q: Based on the new tiering process, there will be a general decision on transit, followed by rehabilitation or construction of a new bridge. Is there funding for both a new bridge and the transit project?

A: We are committed to identifying funding mechanisms for both the bridge and transit portions of the project. We believe tiering is the appropriate approach.

Q: If a decision is to be made on the general transit mode while the bridge work is commencing, will community concerns be addressed?

A: The Project Team will continue to engage local communities and address concerns throughout the project duration.

Q: Can there be a glossary of terms?

A: A glossary of term will be provided in all future reports.

Q: How are transit stations being handled within the corridor, and how will the community be engaged in this planning process?

A: In sequencing the transit study, we recognize that it will take considerable time to engage communities to the appropriate extent possible. It is an important and necessary interaction. Our intention is to start the Tier 2 Transit study upon receipt of the Tier 1 Transit Record of Decision (ROD), which is anticipated in April 2010.

Q: What is the role of the SAWGs?

A: The role of the SAWGs is to serve as a forum for the exchange of information, discussion of issues, and solicitation of feedback that the team will take under consideration throughout the project.

Q: Do you have the funding to start construction of a new bridge?

A: An independent financial study is underway with the following basic components: a review of best practices, a review of federal requirements for financing plans, an evaluation of current funding streams, and assumptions on funding availability and shortfalls.

Q: What is the timeline for the project?

A: It is anticipated that a ROD will be issued in April 2010. Four years is the best estimate for the duration of construction with the completion in 2015.

Q: Could you begin transit construction earlier if, for example, the bridge is not complete?

A: The bridge and transit construction projects are different operations.

Q: In 2010, will the bus system be reduced?

A: We fully expect all existing bus service to remain in effect.

Q: Will there be a corresponding element to help local communities with rezoning and updates of master plans? Will there be assistance from this project?

A: The tiering of the project provides more time for communities to prepare accordingly. We will assist them on a community by community basis. We are in the process of bringing in a third party vendor to help localities with planning. This effort should be underway in late spring to early summer.

Q: What is the range of issues addressed in the scoping?

A: The range of issues includes a refocused purpose and need, a public and agency coordination plan, the range of alternatives including revisions, and the specific criteria used to make a recommendation.

Q: How is the decision made within the scoping process?

A: All decisions are made based upon project history, input from the public and extensive work from the project team.

Q: Since the scope of the project might be reopened, can we include Stewart Airport in the mix?

A: Unless and until Stewart Airport improvements are included in the transportation improvement plan of the metropolitan planning organization, we can't formally recognize future plans. Nonetheless, the project will not ignore Stewart Airport, and it will be dealt with qualitatively within the study.

Q: What about all the work that has been done? Are you starting over again?

A: Everything we've done stands in the record, and the work done to date will be used as the basis for the next phase.

Q: Who makes the final decision?

A: It will be a consensus decision involving the Commissioner and the agency heads, based on input from the project team and the consultants.

Q: Is there an opportunity to fold land use impacts into the scope?

A: There may be an opportunity. This is one of the purposes of reopening the scoping process.

Q: Does the Long Island Sound tunnel proposal factor into your project?

A: If this were a formal project, it would. The project can't be formally included until it becomes a reality.

Q: In the real world, federal funding is a political process. If we were to extend the project into Stamford, Connecticut, couldn't we pick up more support?

A: As it stands the rail component does make that connection. We plan to engage the delegations in the neighboring states. This is a regional project.

- Q:** Stewart Airport seems real enough...shouldn't this project connect to it? It can have an impact on ridership and funding opportunities.
- A:** We need details to factor them into our forecasting models. As of yet, the Stewart Airport study is not at that stage. We will, however, address the study qualitatively.
- Q:** What happens if you don't include Stewart and it becomes a reality? What if Stewart gets approved a week after the Tappan Zee Bridge plan is approved?
- A:** There is a process for supplemental review and reassessment, which is routine in the NEPA process.
- Q:** White Plains is constantly growing. Does the transit plan take into account future growth?
- A:** Absolutely. The MPO (metropolitan planning organization) gives us data for population and job growth forecasts.
- Q:** Some sightseeing groups have concerns over the vertical clearance of the bridge. Has any thought been given to this?
- A:** We are looking into it and working with the Coast Guard and other agencies on this issue.

The meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.