



# Public Scoping Update for the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review

Winter 2008

## Introduction

As you make yourself familiar with the information presented in the Scoping Update Packet and at the Public Scoping Update Meetings, there are some important changes that you will notice since the last public meetings in February 2007. These changes include the following:

## New Options Added to the List of Alternatives under Review

In February 2007, the public was shown the six alternatives under study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):

- **Alternative 1** – No-Build.
- **Alternative 2** – Bridge Rehabilitation with Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Systems Management (TSM).
- **Alternative 3** – Full Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with a new Bridge and highway improvements in Rockland.
- **Alternative 4A** – Full Corridor Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) with a new Bridge and highway improvements in Rockland.
- **Alternative 4B** – Manhattan-bound CRT with Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Westchester and with a new Bridge and highway improvements in Rockland.
- **Alternative 4C** – Manhattan-bound CRT with BRT in Westchester and with a new Bridge and highway improvements in Rockland.

As a result of input from the public and additional study, we are considering three new options to these six alternatives:

- **Option 3A** – This enhanced version of Alternative 3 includes a more robust BRT service plan and shows the BRT operating along the corridor like a trunk route, similar to a rail system.
- **Option 3B** – This option includes the enhanced BRT service plan/trunk route of Option 3A and replaces the combination of dedicated bus lanes on local arterials and busway sections in Westchester County (from Alternative 3) with a high-speed busway along I-287 between the Tappan Zee Bridge and Port Chester.
- **Option 4D** – This option combines full corridor BRT and Manhattan-bound CRT service. It includes the BRT system of Option 3A and CRT between Suffern and Tarrytown, with a direct CRT connection to the Hudson Line.



## **A Two-Tiered Approach to the Environmental Review Process**

In accordance with state and federal environmental regulations, the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review will be conducted as a two-tiered process. An initial Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will evaluate plans for improving the I-287 corridor (including the Tappan Zee Bridge) and assess transit options for the corridor, identifying a transit mode for the corridor, its general route and its termini. A second EIS will focus on the details of integrating that transit mode into the communities it will serve, including route specifics and transit station locations and designs. A final decision on the first EIS document will initiate work on the second.

Continuing the study in this way is expected to save several years and at least \$500 million each year in project costs. Highway and bridge construction (including elements needed to support transit) will be under way while detailed transit plans are being developed through the second EIS. The transit system construction will follow once its details are reviewed and approved.

## **Changes in Federal Law Mean More Public Input, Streamlined Environmental Review and Less Potential for Project Delay**

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was enacted in August 2005, modified the federal legislation that governs studies such as the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review. Section 6002 of this act is intended to streamline the environmental review process and expedite project delivery, encourage early and frequent public involvement, and limit the potential for project delays. Key features of Section 6002 include:

- Increased opportunity for comment and involvement from agencies and the public. The public and agencies may comment on the following items (in addition to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Final Environmental Impact Statement):
  - Public and Agency Coordination Plan
  - Purpose and Need
  - Range of Alternatives
  - Methodologies
- Identification and engagement of Participating and Cooperating Government Agencies that have an interest in or jurisdiction over this study.
- A formal process for agencies to resolve issues.
- Establishment of a 180-day period for legal challenges to the Record of Decision (ROD) and other federal actions (such as federal permit decisions).