



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 Group
Bridge and Environmental SAWG 11***

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



June 25, 2009

Discussion

- Question: Two weeks ago there was a Hudson River summit at West Point. Were any TZB representatives there? You may want to get hold of the action plan as it was very informative.
- Answer: We are not familiar with the meeting referenced but we have been collaborating with various agencies. We will contact West Point and source the action plan.
- Question: Are other agencies aware of the work that is going on in these working meetings?
- Answer: Yes.
- Question: Are you aware of the issues regarding sea level rise?
- Answer: We have been in discussions with the Army Corps of Engineers as this is their jurisdiction. It is apparent that they are developing policy that we will incorporate before the DEIS is published. We are also aware of the current studies underway by other state agencies.
- Question: Have we gotten more insight into what this may cost?

Working Group Meeting

- Answer: Everything that we are seeing in the presentation is being used to inform new cost estimates that will be developed in the next year as part of the DEIS. Overall we are taking a conservative view of the construction and deconstruction costs.
- Question: Does the existing bridge provide a unique habitat or support unique aquatic life?
- Answer: Based on the studies we have conducted to date, our data shows that there is no significant difference in species assemblages or fish populations between the existing bridge and reference locations north of the bridge.
- Comment: The Hudson River Fishermen's Association (HRFA) disputes the conclusion that the existing bridge does not provide a refuge for fish. They believe that the structure harbors fish foraging for food. Based on the data published by the Riverkeeper, the HRFA is also aware that the river is experiencing a decline in the shad, blue back herring, eels etc. This may be due to off-shore fishing.
- Answer: We are presenting data based upon studies, sampling plans and a site specific methodology prescribed by the regulatory agencies, with which we consulted prior to proceeding with the sampling.
- Question: How much energy is needed for pile driving? Is there potential for liquefaction?
- Answer: We are working on developing this data as well as looking at the possibility of using other methods than driving to construct the piles. None but one of the many soil samples taken from the deep soils indicates no potential for liquefaction. Liquefaction is not a major concern for this bridge.
- Question: Will the piles be socketed into rock? What methods would be used and what is the sound energy?
- Answer: Some piles will be socketed into rock, where rock is within 300' or so. Numerous methods are possible. Sound energy, if applicable, will be factored into our analysis of the acoustic impact of this construction activity. Where rock is deeper than that, the piles will be friction piles and not socketed.
- Question: What about sediment displacement and resuspension of contaminants? Can we use GE's disposal methods for PCB's?
- Answer: We are modeling sediment suspension and are developing a hydraulic model of the river using the temperature, salinity and flow data gathered over the past number of years. The soil sample results indicate the presence of PCB's at the bridge but in very low concentrations as shown by the results we presented earlier.
- Comment: NYSDOT consultants stated that PCB concentrations decrease as one moves down-river from Fort Edward and they increase as they approach NY Harbor. HRFA questioned the conclusion that PCB's concentration increase towards NY Harbor.
- Question: You should have spoken to the local fishermen by now to supplement or correct your data. Did you speak to the former fisherman and owner of the bait and tackle shop in Nyack before he departed? If you didn't, it would be good to speak to his son...as there are many generations of knowledge available.
- Answer: No the team did not speak with the owner/fisherman but will reach out to his son.

Parking Lot or Actions Items

1. Team to source data presented at recent West Point event
2. Team to reach out to local fisherman for discussion on fish populations around the bridge