



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)
Environmental SAWG Meeting #12***

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



May 28, 2009

Meeting Title: Stakeholders’ Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)
Environmental SAWG Meeting #12 – Noise Analyses

Meeting Purpose: Exchange of information

Location Date: Palisades Mall Conference Center
1000 Palisades Center Drive
West Nyack, NY
May 28, 2009

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Attendees:

Name

Bob Dillon
Melanie Golden
Josh Moreinis
Lee Prisament
Mary Sue Robbins
Alan Rosenfeld
Lydia Rosenfeld
Joan Schroeder
Kathleen Sullivan

And representatives of the agencies and consultant team.

Agenda Item 1
Introduction

The meeting started at 6:15 PM. Mr. Robert Laravie of DOT opened by identifying the topic that will be presented at the next SAWG meeting. Mr. Jim Coyle of Earth Tech then initiated the technical presentation on the noise analyses that will be conducted for the EIS.

Agenda Item 2
Technical Presentation

The slides and their accompanying annotations are attached.

Agenda Item 3
Questions and Comments

Question: Were any noise monitoring sites in close proximity to the bridge?

Answer: Yes, maps of all noise monitoring sites will be shown in upcoming slides.

Question: Were all noise measurements taken at the same elevation to the thruway? How about the places on hill above the thruway where we live?

Answer: The measurements were made at selected receptors and these receptors are not necessarily all at the same elevations to the thruway. It is impossible to measure noise levels at each receptor. The purpose of the noise measurements is to provide discrete existing noise levels along the thruway that can be used for validating a mathematical noise model. This model can then be used to predict both existing and future noise levels at many other receptors along the thruway. With the predicted contours, it will be possible to identify residences within traffic noise impacted areas.

Question: Noise levels are different at different elevations. We have witnessed an increase in noise levels at our house, which is at a higher elevation, after the installation of noise barriers on the other side of the thruway.

Answer: Your comment is noted. However, noise barriers these days are typically made with corrugated rough surfaces for purposes of reducing reflection and dissipating sound energy.

Question: Does the model take into account if a building is taken down along the thruway?

Answer: For existing conditions, we model noise levels for conditions that are present today. For future modeling, we model conditions that would be expected at that time. So if a building block is expected to be taken down then that condition will be part of the future model.

Question: Does the model take into account the effect the river water has on noise?

Answer: Yes, the model can choose the type of surface that is applicable to a particular area.

Question: Is water a more reflective surface?

Answer: Yes, it is treated as a hard reflecting surface.

Question: Does the model measure levels at higher elevations after a barrier is up and is the noise reflected to higher elevation receptors?

Answer: The model considers terrain effects and is able to predict noise levels including barrier effects at houses on the high elevations.

Question: Will there be a light rail component?

Answer: The light rail component was removed from consideration.

Question: Who decides whether the barrier will be constructed?

Answer: The analysis determines whether a barrier will be recommended based on FHWA/NYS DOT impact criteria as well as the barrier effectiveness. However, the opinion from impacted residents will be the key input to make the final decision.

Question: For those already constructed barriers, has someone knocked on the doors of the impacted residences where noise barriers are being installed? Some houses in Nyack have barriers very close to the house.

Answer: There are always mailings and meetings for all impacted residences before a barrier is actually designed and constructed.

Question: For construction noise, if one side of a rail line is residential and the other is commercial, would the criterion be 80dB?

Answer: It is different for each land area. The criteria for the residential area would be 80 dB and the commercial area would be 100 dB.

Question: Does the noise analysis take into consideration pavement types?

Answer: The noise model uses the average pavement type.

Question: Other than noise barrier, will pavement types be considered or used in combination with barrier abatement?

Answer: Pavement options to reduce noise are still in an experiment stage. However, the fact is that pavement is not as effective as a noise barrier. Using a different pavement type alone will not reduce noise levels by 7 dB at impacted areas, which is what we try to achieve at a minimum.

Question: What parameters are most important to noise? How is grade going to affect noise? Does the noise abatement process consider the change in road profile?

Answer: Given the length of corridor, the distance from a receptor to traffic is the important parameter. That is one of the reasons why a barrier is more effective in comparison to a change-of-grade. Cost is also more favorable to the barrier option as compared to a change-of-grade. Therefore changing grade is normally not considered as an ideal noise abatement measure in comparison to the noise barrier.

Question: If the existing condition is already exceeding the threshold, will noise abatement be considered in the future even though the future will not be worse?

Answer: Since this is a Type I project, it triggers the noise analysis to determine whether a traffic noise impact would occur. Therefore regardless whether the future noise condition is worse or better than existing conditions, noise barrier abatement measures will be considered based on either criterion: absolute noise levels or noise increases over existing conditions.

Question: Is barrier visual effect considered in the process?

Answer: DOT does consider the visual effect when a barrier is considered for a residential area. Planting vines and vegetations have been considered for some projects and such plantings can be visually effective.

Question: Will train horn noise be analyzed?

Answer: Yes, train horn noise at grade crossings (if these occur) along the transit alignments will be considered in the analysis.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.