



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)
Joint Land Use/Traffic and Transit SAWG Meeting #4***

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



July 30, 2009

Meeting Title: Stakeholders’ Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)
Joint Land Use/Traffic and Transit SAWG Meeting #4

Meeting Purpose: Exchange of information

Location Date: Greenburgh Library Meeting Room
300 Tarrytown Road
Elmsford, NY 10523

July 30, 2009 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Agenda: Item 1. Introduction (Page 3)
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Item 3: Discussion (Page 4)

Attendees:

SAWG Members

Charles Borgman

Len Cardillo

Rose Cardillo

Sherwood Chorost

Jay Fallik

Paul Feiner, Supervisor, Town of Greenburgh

Steve Higashide (representing Kate Slevin/Tri-State Transportation Campaign)

Chris Jewett (representing Ellyn Shannon/Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to MTA)

Jane Keller

Naomi Klein, Westchester Department of Transportation

Jon Marshall

Jack McLaughlin

Maureen Morgan

Irene Sandford

Alexander Saunders

Mary Jane Shimsky (accompanied by son Isaac)

John Tangredi (accompanied by sister Mary Ann)

Vic Weinstein

Cheryl Winter Lewy, Chair, Westchester Planning Board

Jeffrey Zupan, Regional Plan Association

Project Team Members

Russell Robbins, NYSDOT

Craig Teepell, NYSDOT

Wai Chung, NYSTA

Angel Medina, NYSTA
Joe Pasanello, MTA MNR
Jim Coyle, AECOM/Earth Tech
Frank Grande, AECOM/Earth Tech
Andrew Parker, AECOM/Earth Tech
Mark Roche, Arup
Rita Campon, Parsons
George Paschalis, HSH



Agenda Item 1
Introduction

Craig Teepell (NYSDOT) welcomed members of the Traffic and Transit and Land Use Stakeholders' Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs) and introduced the evening's agenda, which focused on the two bus rapid transit (BRT) alignment options from the Tappan Zee Bridge landing area in Tarrytown to White Plains: the busway alternative in the area of Interchange 8; the BRT connection to Tarrytown Station; and the Broadway Station. The meeting was the fourth in a series of joint Land Use / Traffic and Transit SAWG meetings concentrating on the various options of the Transit Alignment Options Work Plan (see Slide 4). Mr. Teepell asked participants to introduce themselves and give their affiliation.

Agenda Items 2
Technical Presentation

James Coyle (Earth Tech, environmental consultant) noted that the evening's discussion would center on the alignment drawings and maps. A brief slide presentation (see attached with annotated notes) recapped where we are in the DEIS process, the Transit Alignment Options Work Plan, the Service Plans, and the major Transit Alignment Options. These options will be screened using evaluation criteria focused on transportation, engineering, environmental factors, and cost.

The segment of the I-287 corridor between Tarrytown and White Plains is characterized by substantial employment centers and several residential concentrations. In addition to residences, some of the environmentally sensitive features in this segment include several parks, the Talleyrand Swamp, and several historic resources.

Agenda Item 3
Discussion

Frank Grande (Earth Tech) rolled out large-scale drawings of alignments and sections to explain the alignments and engineering issues to be considered in the design of the BRT alignment in this segment. Mr. Grande briefly reviewed the BRT alignment alternatives across Westchester County, with a special focus on the options for the busway and bus lane alternatives in the area of Interchange 8, and the busway from the bridge to the Tarrytown Station. (A *busway* is a dedicated lane, separated by a barrier from other traffic, that would be used to carry only BRT vehicles. A *bus lane* is a dedicated in-street lane, with some mixed traffic, but not separated by a barrier.) Mark Roche (ARUP, engineering consultant) discussed the exclusive BRT guideway to the Tarrytown Station, noting that the steep drop from the bridge landing area down to the Metro-North rail tracks places topographic constraints on the alignment..

Questions (Q), comments (C), and responses (R) included:

Q. Does the cost of the BRT trunk service include the feeder routes?

- R. No. Capital improvements for the trunk line were included in projected costs. However, equipment costs would cover the feeder buses.
- Q. When will air quality be studied?
- Q. The potential air quality impacts of all the alternatives will be analyzed and disclosed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Is there a standard distance users are willing to walk to the bus?
- R. Some transit-oriented development studies assume a maximum of ½ mile or a 10-minute walk.
- Q. Will there be a stop at Route 9/Broadway in Tarrytown?
- R. Yes. The BRT system offers flexibility as to exactly where the station could go.
- Q. How much land will be needed for a station at Elmsford?
- R. As we proceed with planning, we will have a better handle on specifics such as this. The final station locations and details will be addressed in the Tier 2 Transit analysis.
- C. Traffic at Route 119 and Benedict Avenue is already terrible and will be worse with the new Stop & Shop.
- R. Detailed traffic analyses of station areas will be conducted as part of the Tier 2 Transit analysis. Transit service, in principle, can alleviate traffic congestion.
- Q. Does the bus lane alternative on Route 119 take away traffic lanes?
- R. No. This alternative would add two new lanes between Broadway and Old White Plains Road and would require some acquisition of private property. We do not anticipate any displacements at this time.
- Q. How many buses will there be? How many jobs will be created? Where will the terminus for the buses be?
- R. It is too soon to address the specific numbers of buses and jobs. BRT vehicles using the trunk line are anticipated to run every 5 minutes during peak periods. Bus terminals could be at either or both ends of the trunk and will be determined in the Tier 2 Transit analysis when the BRT operator is identified. Feeder bus services may already have terminals elsewhere off the corridor.
- Q. Where will the busways be located on I-287?
- R. The busways would have bi-directional lanes that run parallel to each other and to the roadway, sometimes on a structure, sometimes in a tunnel and sometimes at grade, mostly within the existing right-of-way (ROW).
- C. The two alternatives are not sacrosanct; they could be variously mixed and matched as seems most logical.
- R. Yes. The bus lane alternative already has some elements of busway within it, and the goal is to mix and match elements that work best to formulate the alternatives we will study in greater detail in the DEIS. Although the busway and bus lane alternatives would produce little difference in ridership, the estimated cost of the busway alternative in Westchester County would be approximately four times the cost of the bus lane alternative.
- Q. One of our themes has been to avoid or minimize property takings, so how can the new busway, either north or south of I-287, be accommodated?
- R. We anticipate being able to accommodate the busway within the existing ROW except at a few locations where property may need to be acquired, such as stations.
- Q. Will we have a clearer idea of where takings are in the DEIS?
- R. Yes. As planning and design of alignments progress, we will have a clearer understanding of where acquisitions would be required. Property impacts will be fully disclosed in the DEIS.
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- Q. Are you aware of the 440-unit rental property, Avalon II, proposed for Taxter Ridge?
- R. Yes. Vic Weinstein has kept us informed. The entry of Taxter Ridge Road onto Route 119 will be a particular location to study. The Town of Greenburgh has submitted an application to be considered for NYSDOT's transit-oriented development (TOD) training program, and the town's vision of this location may be a prospective topic for study.

Russell Robbins, NYSDOT's Planning and Transit Manager for this project, asked the attendants if they had any preferences among the options reviewed during the session. Additional comments and questions followed:

- C. Busway is the best idea because there is no way to keep traffic out of bus lanes.
- Q. If the busway is four times more expensive, who pays?
- R. Jeff Zupan suggested that one possibility would be to contemplate a hybrid of the two systems [busway and bus lanes], which would result in a lesser cost.
- C. Elmsford is already at peak traffic, so a busway would be preferable there.
- Q. Have you had any discussions with the office owners in the area?
- R. We will be engaging business owners to solicit their input and learn their concerns as part of our process.
- Q. Will the transit facilities be handicapped accessible?
- R. Yes, this is a requirement.
- Q. At what point does the busway to the Tarrytown Station reach the grade of the tracks?
- R. The approximate location was identified on a map. The busway would be below the elevation of the homes at Tappan Landing.
- Q. Would additional ROW be required?
- R. Yes, of about one lane to the east, where the Metro-North has sidings and there is some commercial property.
- C. We need information early on to facilitate planning in the station areas.
- R. Yes, we understand this and hope that the TOD training being implemented by NYSDOT for eight corridor municipalities this winter and next spring will assist in sharpening the local vision for the station areas.
- C. The busway to the existing Metro-North station will be important because it may be many years before the CRT from Rockland is in place, and in the mean time there will be more demand for buses to access that station.
- C. The intersection of Routes 9 and 119 in Tarrytown is already very busy and must not be allowed to deteriorate further.
- R. Understood. The provision of transit and the busway to the station should help the situation.
- C. We have spent time this evening focusing on transit alignment options in Tarrytown but not much in Elmsford and Greenburgh.
- R. The options under consideration this evening were in Tarrytown and at Interchange 8 in Greenburgh, but we will review the general alignment through the Town of Greenburgh.
- C. The alignments, especially at the station areas, will require delicate surgery to avoid impacts to residences and parkland.

- R. Yes. We understand that the alignments are threaded through a fully developed corridor, and our goal is to minimize or avoid potential impacts.
- C. A station at the Bed, Bath & Beyond, which would be either south or north depending on the alternative, should not be precluded under either of the alternatives because of the costs of a flyover.
- C. We will need to understand the station impacts before these alignments are set; and the impacts should fully take into account parking, kiss and ride, taxis, and other elements.
- R. Potential station impacts will be addressed in the Tier 2 Transit analysis.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.