



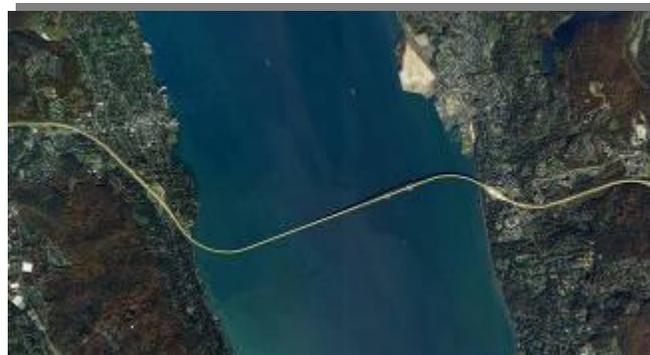
TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE/I-287
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

**DRAFT
Meeting Minutes**

***Stakeholders' Advisory Working Groups (SAWGs)
Joint Land Use/Traffic and Transit SAWG Meeting #6***

Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project



October 1, 2009

Meeting Title: Stakeholders' Advisory Working Group (SAWG)
Joint Land Use/Traffic and Transit SAWG Meeting #6

Meeting Purpose: Exchange of information

Location Date: Krutz Auditorium, Nyack Hospital
Nyack, NY
October 1, 2009 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Agenda: Item 1. Introduction (Page 2)
Item 2. Presentation (Page 3)
Item 3: Discussion (Page 4)

Attendees:

SAWG Members

Philip Bosco
Darcy Casteleiro (representing Ellen Jaffee)
Joan Connors
Harriet Cornell
Ed Dempsey
Bob Dillon
Orrin Getz
Richard Harrington
James Hartwick
Steve Higashide (representing Kate Slevin)
Jane Keller
Naomi Klein
Julius Levine
David Ordas
Alexander Saunders
John Tangredi
Sheila Walsh
Jeffrey Zupan

Additional Attendees

Terri Thal (invited by Harriet Cornell)
Randy Glucksman (invited by Alexander Saunders)

Project Team Members

Yvette Hinds, NYSDOT
Russell Robbins, NYSDOT
Craig Teepell, NYSDOT

Angel Medina, NYSTA
Wai Cheung, NYSTA
Brian Serman, MTA/MNR
Jim Coyle, AECOM
Frank Grande, AECOM
Andrew Parker, AECOM
Allison Davis, Arup
Jim Rashford, CHA
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 working plans of the bus rapid transit (BRT) busway alignment options through Rockland County. The meeting was the sixth in a series of joint Land Use/Traffic and Transit meetings concentrating on the various options of the Transit Alignment Options Work Plan (see Slide 4) and land use implications across the corridor. Mr. Teepell asked participants to introduce themselves and encouraged participation in the group's discussion of the BRT options.

Agenda Item 2
Presentation

James Coyle (Earth Tech) noted where the team is in the DEIS process and provided a brief slide presentation (see attached with annotated notes) recapping the DEIS process, the Transit Alignment Options Work Plan, the Service Plans, and the seven major Transit Alignment Options. These options will be screened using evaluation criteria focused on transportation, engineering, environmental factors, and cost. Mr. Coyle noted that Rockland County would have both a CRT and BRT system but this evening's discussion would focus on one of the two BRT alternatives across the county to be evaluated in the DEIS: BRT in a busway, which could be located in the center or on either side of the highway. .

Frank Grande (Earth Tech) described the features of a BRT system, explaining that a *busway* is a dedicated running way, separated by a barrier from other traffic, used only to carry BRT vehicles. BRT systems typically feature high-tech vehicles, included articulated ones; dedicated running ways; various types of aesthetic transit stations (from Multi-modal Transportation Centers to Bus Shelters); off-board fare collection systems; and complex service planning. Unique marketing and branding strategies also are used to make the BRT systems easily recognizable. BRT systems also incorporate

Intelligent Transportation Systems such as signal priority, automatic vehicle location, system security, and customer information. BRT systems are economical, energy efficient and environmentally friendly and can contribute to sustainable development.

Mr. Grande explained the proposed BRT Service Plan, which provides a trunk service from Hillburn to Port Chester, in Westchester County, with other feeder bus lines joining and leaving the system at multiple locations. Using maps of the I-287 Corridor in Rockland County, he explained in general terms the proposed stations and the BRT alignment options in Rockland. The first station would be at Hillburn, other stations would be at: Airmont Road, Route 59 in Monsey, Interchange 14, Parking Lot J at the Palisades Mall, and in Nyack where I-287 crosses Route 59. Multi-modal stations, with both CRT and BRT, would be at Hillburn, Interchange 14, and Parking Lot J. Typical 46-foot cross-sections of a BRT Busway were presented and briefly discussed. Mr. Grande reviewed the pros and cons of these busway options, noting that with most of the options the Thruway would need to be reconstructed and shifted to accommodate both modes. However the option that would place CRT on the south and BRT on the north side of the highway would have an advantage over the other options because it would avoid having to reconstruct the highway, although interchange ramps would need to be reconfigured. It was also noted that most bridges over the Thruway would need to be lengthened under any option.

Mr. Teepell recommended SAWG members review the *Transit Mode Selection Report* and the *Alternatives Analysis for Rehabilitation and Replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge* report provided on www.tzbsite.com to assist in better understanding the recommendations made for developing commuter rail transit (CRT) and BRT alternatives.

Mr. James Rashford (Engineer with CHA) reviewed the initial large-scale engineering drawings showing an option with the CRT on the south side and BRT Busway on the north side. He explained the engineering issues associated with the BRT alignment and how it is possible to stay largely within the prevailing 250 ft. ROW. At several tighter locations where the ROW is only 240 ft., it may be possible to obtain a waiver on the standard 46 ft. requirement for the two BRT lanes and shoulders to about 36 ft to stay within the ROW in certain areas.

Agenda Item 3
Discussion

Questions and Comments:

Q: Can feeder buses get onto the BRT trunk-line?

A: Yes, each designated feeder shown on the service plan will use the trunk to some degree. Riders will also be able to transfer at each of the stations. Rockland stations with feeder buses include, Interchange 14, Palisades Mall and Nyack.

Q. With CRT well in the future, will there be a link to the Tarrytown Station?

A. Yes, we are proposing a dedicated busway from the bridge down to the Metro-North tracks and alongside those to the existing station.

C. The existing park and ride at Rt. 304 is too far from the Thruway.

A. Proposed feeder bus "H." provides a connection to the Park and Ride Lot.

Q. Would there be congestion on the busway with all the feeders?

A. BRT Trunk-line buses are scheduled for 5-minute service during the peak periods and feeder buses would have longer headways, so we would not expect congestion on the busway trunk line in Rockland. There is plenty of additional capacity available in the proposed trunk line.

Q: Does the highway meander from the center line of the ROW?

A. Not much - the center line of the highway is pretty much the center of the ROW.

C: If the CRT were in the center of a reconstructed highway but CRT is never built, would this provide opportunities for BRT?

A. The CRT and BRT modes are being studied jointly. We are not considering a scenario in which the CRT replaces the BRT in the future.

C. The CSX rail line abutments are very close to the ROW.

A. Correct, over and under bridges will need to be lengthened and clearances adjusted if necessary to accommodate the transit components.

Q. Referring to the BRT/CRT alignment options, can there be hybrids where the BRT switches sides?

A. Once all the alignment options are evaluated we may recommend a combination of the alignment segments to maximize the alignment's cost effectiveness.

C. East of Interchange 11 the ROW is very tough.

A. Correct, we recognize the north side of the Thruway is directly adjacent to residences, (Cooper Drive) and so the north side busway will most likely transition to the south side between Interchanges 11 and 10. This area of the alignment is tied closely to the TZB bridge development.

Q. Is there no direct BRT link to the Hudson Line?

A. We are proposing a direct busway connection from the replacement TZB Bridge to the Tarrytown Station in all alternatives. This would be a dedicated guideway that would travel north from the bridge on the east side of the Hudson Line to the existing Tarrytown Station.

Q. How much of the current housing stock will be lost?

A. Although we anticipate building out to most of the ROW, there is no large scale acquisition or displacements of housing proposed. However, it is anticipated property acquisitions will occur at the CRT and BRT station locations.

Q. How close to the nearest home?

A. Whether it is the reconstructed highway or the CRT or BRT busway there will likely be infrastructure near the limits of the Thruway ROW. Please note there will be noise studies and noise walls will be constructed where warranted.

C. Notes that trains are often in tunnel.

A. Trains cannot achieve the 3% grade that vehicles on the Thruway can, so tunnels are required to cross under the two major hills and viaducts will be used to cross over the low valleys in Rockland.

C. Need to take into account the flooding on roads; everything needs to be raised immediately.

Q. How do feeder buses work at ramps?

A. Feeders would enter the stations from side roads and then directly access the trunk line.

Q. How much parking will be provided for cars?

A. When we model the demand at stations in the EIS, we create a “box” based on projected ridership, and address impacts, such as traffic and other environmental issues. We will also estimate parking needed at various stations based on the modeling and ridership estimates.

Q. What are the capacities of the BRT buses?

A. Because BRT buses will be running at high speed, capacity is limited to seated passengers only - no standing. Seated bus capacities for standard BRT buses are approximately 40-60 people; articulated buses may accommodate up to approximately 62 seated people.

C. If transit connectivity is a major goal, why are we not connecting to the Pascack Valley Line (PVL)? And why are there no feeders from the south?

A. A connection to the Pascack Valley Line was investigated and found not to generate ridership because there is no northbound AM peak service on the PVL which would be the source of ridership. There are also engineering issues related to the alignment and grade of the two rail lines at the location where the transfer station would be located. For these reasons it was dropped from further consideration as an option.

C. Cannot be all things to all people, there could be other options such as a bus service to the Nanuet Station, where there could be a lot of potential for transit oriented development (TOD). This has come up many times and we should look at a MTC just south of home depot that can connect the TZ CRT with Pascack in my opinion RWR this would also be a great site for TOD

Q. Did we look if the connection fits at Middletown Road?

A. Yes, the alignment fits, although the noise barriers may need to be relocated.

Q. How big is the viaduct approaching the Palisades Mall?

A. It would extend approximately 7,600 ft. long and rise to height of about 47 ft above the Thruway. For reference: Parking lot J is about 20 feet above the thruway.

C. We need to bring BRT across to the Palisades Mall Parking Lot J Station and would be best with BRT on the south side here going east.

A. We will be examining which will be the best – to have both CRT (which goes into a tunnel east of Route 303) and BRT on the south side through this segment. Issues include the Mountainview Nature Preserve on the north side and residences on the south side of the Thruway.

C. With the cheap technology available for tunneling nowadays, we should put the BRT beneath the highway the whole way and avoid much of the disruption.

A. The busway will be a surface running transit system. A BRT tunnel in Rockland would present transit connectivity problems, excessive cost, and environmental impacts and therefore will not be considered.

Q. How will South Nyack and other Rockland County waterfront communities be served by the BRT?

A. We will be meeting with the mayors of Nyack and South Nyack to present these options next week and look forward to their comments. The Tappan Zee Express will have the ability to utilize the trunk line. In addition Feeder Bus Route J (or another new feeder route) could pick up passengers in Nyack and South Nyack, These feeder buses would connect with the BRT trunk line at the Nyack Station and utilize the BRT infrastructure provided by this project.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.