



TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE/ I-287 CORRIDOR PROJECT

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

Meeting Minutes

Joint Stakeholder Committee/ Stakeholders' Advisory Working Groups Meeting



June 24, 2010

Meeting Title:	Joint Stakeholders' Committee/SAWG Meeting	
Meeting Purpose:	Exchange of information	
Location/Date:	Palisades Center – West Nyack June 24, 2010 6:00 – 7:40 PM	
Attendees:	Bob Baird	The Journal News
	Gerry Bogacz	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
	Edward Bohan	Environmental SAWG Member
	Philip Bosco	Rockland R.A.F.T.
	Deborah Brancato	Riverkeeper, Inc.
	Rich Cassin	American Society of Civil Engineers
	Joan Connors	Airmont Citizens Liaison Committee for TZB
	James Creighton	Town of Clarkstown Planning Department
	Nancy Cutler	The Journal News
	Bob Dillon	Rockland R.A.F.T.
	Jody Fox	Traffic and Transit SAWG Member
	Patrick Gerdin	Rockland County Department of Planning
	Randy Glucksman	Rockland County
	Melanie Golden	Environmental Management, Ltd
	Benjamin Gross	Tarrytown Moderate-income Housing Board
	David Haggerty	Kraft Foods
	Gilbert Hawkins	Hudson River Fisherman's Association, NJ Chapter
	Steven Higashide	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
	Robert Hintersteiner	Bridge SAWG Member
	Dennis Kay	Village of Airmont
	Jane Keller	Traffic and Transit SAWG Member
	Megan Kelly	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
	Barton Lee	New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers
	Marie Lorenzini	SAWG Member (all groups)
	Marilan Lund	New York Botanical Gardens
	Thomas Madden	Town of Greenburgh, Planning Department
	Richard May	Village of South Nyack
	Christopher McBride	AAA
	Jack McLaughlin	East Irvington Civic Association
	Charlie Murphy	Pattern for Progress
	Michael O'Rourke	Institute of Transportation Engineers
	Paul Richards	Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
	Judy Rife	Times Herald-Record
	Douglas Rodriguez	Kraft General Foods
	Scott Rowe	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Khurram Saeed	The Journal News
Stephen Safran	Sierra Club-Rockland County
Jeremy Safran	Stakeholder Committee Member
Josh Schneider	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Joan Schroeder	Airmont Citizens Liaison Committee for TZB
Mary Jane Shimsky	Assemblyman Richard Brodsky's Office
Jose Simoes	Town of Clarkstown, Planning Department
Erik Simon	Harriet Cornell's Office, Rockland County Legislature
Eric Strober	SAWG Member (all groups)
Joseph Tabulka	Joseph Tabulka Home Improvement
John Tangredi	Traffic and Transit SAWG Member
John West	Rockland County Department of Planning c/o BFJ Planning
Janet Zagoria	League of Women Voters of Westchester
Jeffrey Zupan	Regional Plan Association

Project Team

Chris Gatchell	FHWA
Mike Davies	FHWA
Michael Anderson	NYSDOT
Yvette Hinds	NYSDOT
Bob Laravie	NYSDOT
Wai Cheung	NYSTA
Stephen Grabowski	NYSTA
Tom McGuinness	NYSTA
Angel Medina	NYSTA
Rita Campon	Parsons
George Paschalis	HSH
Sandy Pawelczyk	HSH
Sandra Vasco	Aecom

Introduction and Presentation

Michael Anderson (NYSDOT), director of the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project, welcomed attendees. Using a slide presentation (link), Mr. Anderson provided a briefing on the team's progress to date and gave a preview of the public open houses scheduled in Westchester County on June 28 and in Rockland County on June 30, 2010.

Questions and Answers

Mr. Anderson opened the discussion for questions from the attendees.

Q: Will the boards presented at the open houses address the costs associated with the range of foundations required in the various bridge configurations?

A: Yes, that information will be at hand.

Q: Will the open house include information on the transit station locations?

A: Yes, the locations will be indicated on the boards.

[At the conclusion of the question-and-answer session, Mr. Anderson reviewed the location of the three intermodal (CRT and BRT) stations and six BRT stations in Rockland County and pointed out there are seventeen proposed BRT stations in Westchester County.]

Q: I am concerned that air, noise, and visual impacts appear toward the bottom of the list of evaluation criteria. What entity makes the final decision on the options reviewed tonight, as well as the final alternative?

A: All criteria are taken into consideration in the evaluation of each of the alternatives, which is followed by a comparative analysis among the alternatives. The ways in which visual, noise, and air impacts are taken into consideration will vary from case to case, but the position of a particular criterion on a list does not indicate a greater or lesser priority. The decisions concerning which options will be selected and, ultimately, the identification of the preferred alternative will be made by the three agency executives. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be submitted to the federal cooperating agencies, which will review and provide comments. The DEIS will then be available for public review and comment through hearings and an extensive comment period. Any comments on the DEIS received by the public will be cataloged and addressed to the satisfaction of the federal co-lead agencies in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), before the Record of Decision (ROD) can be issued.

Q: How has the project schedule been affected, and when do you estimate construction of the bridge can begin?

A: We anticipate that the DEIS will be ready for federal agency review by the end of this year. Once that review is complete, the DEIS will be published, followed by a comment period and public hearing in early 2011. The start of construction is dependent upon the work currently underway by our financing team and the eventual consensus that can be reached by the various stakeholders on funding.

Q: What are the costs associated with the project?

A: Last June, the announced cost of the project was approximately \$16 billion dollars, based upon building the entire project in 2012. We will be updating the cost estimate when we know which bridge configuration will be selected and when we have a better understanding of when construction might commence. The project team will propose a funding package to pay for the corridor-wide project, but the first order of business is securing funding for a transit-ready bridge and highway. We'll be talking more about financing later this summer.

Q: This is the first time I've heard you use the term "transit-ready bridge." Is that a reflection of tiering? It seems you are taking on a lot of risk planning for a transit system that might not come to fruition.

A: From the onset, this project has been about replacing the bridge and implementing a transit system. This Environmental Impact Statement is going to evaluate the replacement bridge and how it would accommodate the future transit system. Part of the bridge configuration analysis currently underway has to do with how much of the structure should be built now and how much can be built later. For example, if a three-span configuration is advanced, we don't want to build a complete bridge with the third span today for something that might not come for another 10 or 15 years.

Q: Will the varying degrees of environmental impacts associated with the number of piers in the Hudson River be a factor in the decision about which bridge option will be advanced?

A: Potential impacts to the Hudson River will be a very prominent consideration.

Q: How close are you in identifying the number and locations of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations?

A: We have determined where we believe the stops will be.

Q: The Village of Nyack is currently evaluating potential locations for the BRT station. Should we be looking at a location north of the Thruway, or south?

A: The Village should assess both options. For this EIS, the project team may indicate a north-side location for the station. In the following EIS, after allowing for community input and further analysis, we may become convinced otherwise. This is another good example of why the transit is following the bridge and highway improvements.

C: That causes a lot of problems because what is available on one side of the highway is not what is available on the other side.

A: We understand your concerns and will work with you as best we can—as we have been—moving forward.

Q: What is the main span going to look like?

A: We are compiling a series of technical reports on bridge issues ranging from foundations to visual impacts to main span configurations. We are currently focused on defining the remaining 85 percent of the bridge rather than on the main span. The main span is only 2,400 feet of the three-mile-long structure; however, it's an important aspect of the bridge and we remain committed to an iconic structure befitting the nature of the Hudson Valley. We will be releasing that particular report later in the year, and we'll be talking about possible cable-stayed bridges, arch bridges, and we'll even have some virtual imagery to share with the public. While we don't think we are going to settle on the final bridge type in this DEIS, we are going to evaluate the range of impacts so that the main span solution becomes a design detail.

Q: Will the improvements at Interchange 13 include a direct connection to Route 304?

A: That has not been under consideration, but we can speak to that in detail at the open houses.

Q: What are the costs associated with maintaining the existing bridge for another extended period of time, and how does that play out in the financing question?

A: The New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) spends a very significant portion of its capital programming maintaining the bridge. The agency recently awarded a \$150 million contract for a second phase of a deck replacement project. There are multi-million dollar structural steel repair contracts underway and contemplated for subsequent years.

Q: Is the cost for highway improvements from Interchange 12 to Suffern included in the \$16 billion dollar figure?

A: Yes, it is. The cost to rebuild the Thruway from the bridge to just short of Interchange 15 has been estimated to be approximately \$1.8 billion, assuming the construction of an HOV lane. If an HOV lane is not pursued there is a potential for a significant savings.

Q: Will we be taking measures now to secure property for the future transit facilities?

A: There are no plans to do that prior to the completion of detailed subsequent technical and environmental processes which will help us to understand what would be required.

Q: Does this DEIS allow us to move forward with just the bridge?

A: Yes, that is all we are seeking approval to do. But we will be seeking approval to build a bridge that can accommodate commuter rail in the future. With regards to the highway improvements, there will be some locations along the highway where we are going to make an overpass a little bit longer and a little bit higher to leave room for the commuter rail to pass through in the future.

Q: Is there is a risk with this approach?

A: There is a risk in everything that we do. However, we want to minimize that risk by thinking through all the work that needs to be done now. It would be far worse if we have to come back and re-do work at a higher expense and at a greater impact in the future.

The meeting ended at 7:40 p.m.