TAPPAN ZEE HUDSON RIVER CROSSING STUDY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC HEARING

Palisades Center, Raso Room
1000 Palisades Center Drive
West Nyack, New York

Tuesday, February 28, 2012
8:20 P.M.

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Project Director,
New York State Department of Transportation

DAVID CAPOBIANCO,
Director of the Office of Transportation Planning and Environmental Services at New York State Thruway Authority

RICHARD TOMER,
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ARNOLD BLOCH, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
Session Moderator

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MR. BLOCH: Good evening. My name is Arnold Bloch. I'm a principal of the firm of Howard/Stein-Hudson, and I welcome you to this public hearing on behalf of Joan McDonald, the Commissioner of New York State Department of Transportation, Tom Madison, the Executive Director of the New York State Thruway Authority, Jonathan McDade, the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration New York Region, and Colonel John Boule II, the District Commander of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

I'm serving as the moderator and hearing officer for this evening's public hearing. This is the first of two formal public hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (or DEIS) that has been prepared for the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project in Rockland and Westchester Counties. It fulfills the requirements of Article 2 of the New York State Eminent Domain Procedure Law for Right-of-Way acquisitions required for construction.
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This hearing is also intended to gather information on an application by the project for a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to transport and place dredge material from construction of the project at the Historic Area Remediation Site pursuant to various parts of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, and the hearing is also being conducted in accordance with Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 237.

On Thursday, March 1st, there will be another public hearing from 4 to 9 p.m., or approximately 'til 9, at the Westchester Marriott located at 670 White Plains Road in Tarrytown.

These public hearings are sponsored by two State agencies that are serving as the project sponsors. Those are the same agencies I mentioned before, the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Thruway Authority, as well as being sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, which is serving as the lead...
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agency for this EIS.

The EIS for this project is being prepared in accordance with a number of laws and regulations. I'm just going to quickly mention some of them:

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and its various regulatory language;

The Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures;

The requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act;

And a number of other federal and state regulations and requirements;

As well as Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 325, Appendix B.

And in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Army Corps of Engineers permitting regulations, the Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, is cooperating with the Federal Highway Administration in the preparation of this Environmental Impact Statement. And as a cooperating agency, the New York District is
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coordinating with Federal Highway so that
the resulting EIS can be adopted by the
New York District for purposes of exercising
its regulatory authority.

These public hearings are being
conducted to provide an opportunity to reach
the public and solicit input in response to
the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
These meetings provide one of many
opportunities to make formal statements of
positions before any project decision-making
occurs.

Another opportunity is to make written
comments. And if you were in the other
room, you could pick up one of these comment
forms. You can return that to us this
evening or you can send that to us in many
different ways, and they're all listed on
the bottom of that; by mail, by e-mail, by
fax. And if you want to include other
information, letters, other pieces of
information, please feel free to do that.
The only thing I need to let you know is
that the deadline date is March 15th, that's
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Thursday, March 15th, 2012. And if you're going to mail it, it has to be postmarked by March 15th, 2012.

Based on the findings of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the written and oral comments received during the public comment period, the lead agency, Federal Highway Administration, will prepare a Final Environmental Impact Statement which contains responses to the comments received during the public comment period, including those that we get at this public hearing.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is available, can be reviewed and downloaded from the project website, which is www.TZBsite.com. And it's also available at various public facilities, libraries, town halls, and other locations. And those are listed on a sheet of paper that you can get across the hall where you signed in if you'd like to get that.

The proceedings are being recorded by a stenographer and a verbatim written transcript will be prepared and made
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available for your review on the project website. If you want to make oral comments a little later on or at any point during the evening, there's two ways to do that. You could wait until we finish this presentation and I will call you up, or you can go next door to the Besso Room right next door and there is a court stenographer there who will take your comments as well. It doesn't matter where you make the comments. We'll have them listed and we will be responding to any set of oral comments just as we will be responding to any set of written comments.

If you do want to speak either here or next door, you must fill out one of the small cards, speaker cards. Signing in, as you probably all did, is not signing in to speak. So if you haven't done that yet and want to speak, just go back to that room and you'll get a small speaker's card and that will come to me.

You can file written statements, as I mentioned. And if you've already filed
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written statements prior to this date, there's no need to do it again. Those are already part of the record. They'll be given the same weight and consideration as oral statements.

Just so that we have a chance to make our presentation and allow people to speak, we will not be responding to questions from the floor at this part of the meeting. If you want to speak to someone, you can go to the other hall where we had all the boards up and there will be many representatives of the project team. They'll be more than happen to try to answer any questions or show you information, although that part of the conversation will not be made part of the formal record.

And I will try to ask you, if you could, when you make your oral statements here to try to confine those to two minutes. We didn't have much luck last time, but we'll see what we can do now.

So before I call on some of the speakers, I just want to introduce the
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members of the dais. To my immediate left is Michael Anderson from the New York State Department of Transportation. To his left is David Capobianco from the New York State Thruway Authority. And to his left is Richard Tomer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

So at this time I just wanted to call upon Elizabeth Novak from the New York State Thruway Authority who wanted to make a few brief comments.


Well, thank you all for hanging in there tonight. It's been a long day and we're very pleased you're here.

My name is Elizabeth Novak. I'm an Environmental Specialist with the New York State Thruway Authority, a member of the project team.

As Arnie mentioned, the purpose of tonight's meeting is really to garner your input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this very important project,
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and we'd like to welcome you and thank you for attending.

This project is critical not only to the region, but is also a vital infrastructure link for the Northeast.

The Obama Administration has identified this as priority project, and Governor Cuomo's office is in full support.

Given the scale, complexity, importance, and fast pace of this project, it is being administered in a collaborative manner with the support and participation of numerous agencies and consultants.

In particular, the Thruway Authority would like to thank the Federal Highway Administration, the New York State Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for their partnership and collaboration in progressing this important project.

In addition, numerous other federal and State agencies are playing an invaluable role in this project in progressing it.

Federal agencies, for example, the U.S. Army
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Corps of Engineers which we welcome with us tonight. Other agencies include the U.S. Coast Guard, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, which are just a few to be named. A complete list of cooperating agencies can be found in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement online.

While these agencies play a valuable role in the process, no role surpasses the role of yours, the public, elected officials, and interested parties, in this important process.

This brings me back to why we are here tonight. On behalf of the Thruway Authority and the project team, we would like to thank you for taking time to participate, to learn about this important project, and to provide your input. We want to make this the best project possible. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you, Elizabeth.

Now I wanted to call on Michael Anderson, the Project Director, to give a
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brief presentation on the status of the
project.

MR. ANDERSON: Good evening. It's
intended tonight for this presentation to
give you an overview of the project's goals,
a review of what has been studied to date,
and inform you of the process of moving
forward. Tonight's hearing is intended to
provide you information and the opportunity
to comment.

It has been determined that replacement
of the bridge is the only reasonable
alternative. There are many compelling
reasons for this conclusion, including, but
not limited to, issues with the main span
and the approach span.

In the main span, the foundations need
to be replaced. A significant number of
structural members need to be replaced or
retrofitted. There's a need to provide
redundancy for the future, and that is not
possible with the current bridge. And even
if all of those repairs were undertaken,
because of its design, inherent
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vulnerabilities will remain for the life of the bridge.

In the approach spans, extensive work is required in the foundations. In the substructure and steel superstructure, despite the ongoing deck replacement which addresses riding surface quality, other significant underlying problems have not been addressed, and deterioration continues.

The milestones met so far in this project include the Rescinded Notice of Intent on October 12th, 2011. And that was the formal termination of the prior corridor project.

On that same day, on October 12th, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration issued a new Notice of Intent which formally began this revised project.

On October 25th and 27th of last year, we conducted Public Scoping Meetings which provided an opportunity for the agencies and the public to comment on the range of alternatives and environmental analysis framework. That comment period ended on
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November 15th, 2011.


We have two technical projects underway to support the Final Environmental Impact Statement in terms of impacts associated with piles.

We're doing soil borings, and that work began on January 30th. More about that in a few minutes.

We accepted bids for a project that will install test piles of like size and under the conditions that the actual piles for the new bridge will be required to be installed. That was let on February 9th, and we hope to award that project by the end of the week.

And, of course, the public hearings are tonight and next Thursday.

One important goal of the project is to maximize the public investment. And this project will, therefore, provide the infrastructure for future transit on the new highway bridges, and it will do so by
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providing additional width, by increasing
design loadings to make the structure strong
for future loadings, providing certain
constant grades, and potentially spanning
the space between the spans at a later date
to provide infrastructure for future transit
modes.

This public hearing is an opportunity
for you to learn more about and/or comment

The DEIS is a comprehensive multivolume
document. It follows a federally mandated
process that is based upon the project's
purpose and need.

From the project purpose and need flows
the identification of alternatives and
analysis of potential impacts from the
alternatives on environmental, social, and
economic conditions.

Project scoping in 2011 determined that
the study area for the project would include
the four mile extent of the bridge span and
its approaches at the landing areas. The
project limits studied in the DEIS are from
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South Nyack in Rockland to Tarrytown in Westchester County. In Nyack, the South Broadway Bridge will be the limit of work and in Tarrytown, the Route 9 Broadway Bridge will also be the limit of work.

At the Rockland County landing, the new bridge will tie into the existing Thruway property limits, and the extent of the work will require replacement of the South Broadway Bridge and will, in turn, affect several adjacent properties.

In Westchester County, the new bridge will tie into the existing Thruway property limits, and the extent of the work will retain the South Broadway Bridge as the new pavement ties into the existing just west of Interchange 9.

The purpose of the project is to maintain a vital link in the regional and national transportation network by providing an improved Hudson River crossing between Rockland and Westchester Counties. The bridge is an integral element of the New York State Thruway, the interstate highway...
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system, and a critical link in the overall transportation network in the region.

The Tappan Zee Bridge, which opened in 1955, initially accommodated 18,000 vehicles a day. Today, over 138,000 vehicles rely on this bridge daily. The Tappan Zee Bridge is the only limited-access truck route across the Hudson River between New York City and Interstate 84, 45 miles to the north. It also serves commercial traffic between New England and points south and west, and for motorists and truckers wishing to avoid New York City congestion.

The ever-increasing traffic volume, especially commercial vehicles, continues to slow traffic and contributes to the structure's deterioration. Inspections and analyzes have revealed other numerous significant vulnerabilities. Since 2001 over a half billion dollars have been spent on bridge repairs, and it has been determined that it would take approximately $1.3 billion in the next decade to maintain the bridge's viability.
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As I said before, it has been determined that rehabilitation cannot remedy the existing bridge's vulnerabilities, and that replacement is the only reasonable solution. Therefore, this project would address the bridge's substandard structural, operational, safety, security, and mobility deficiencies.

We've identified three important goals that guide the project: Ensure the long-term viability of this Hudson River crossing; Improve transportation operations and safety on the crossing; and Maximize the public investment in a new Hudson River crossing.

Alternatives: There are two alternatives considered in the DEIS: A No-Build alternative and a Replacement Bridge.

The No-Build alternative or the Do-Nothing alternative is a forecast of future conditions which includes all known and funded transportation improvements and major development projects, public and
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The Replacement alternative is a dual-span structure which allows for flexibility in the design of the main span and the approaches.

While the specific design for the preferred alternative will be left to the designer and builder of the bridge, there are specific features that must be included. These are: Four lanes in each direction; Emergency access lanes and shoulders in each direction; A shared use bike and pedestrian path; and the final design for the replacement bridge shall maximize the public's investment by allowing for the consideration, design, and construction of transit modes in the future.

Bridge replacement options, the approach spans. These two approach span options have been evaluated in the DEIS. As I said previously, final configurations will vary based upon the successful bidders' proposal.

The long span and short span options
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have differences between them. The most obvious are the span lengths which in turn reflect in the number of foundations required in the river. A 430-foot long span bridge, for example, will require 64 new piers in the river. A 230-foot short span bridge would require 116 piers. All of the other differences have been identified and are presented in the DEIS.

It is important to understand that the final design must meet the environmental constraints which have been identified in the analysis of these options and will be enumerated in the Record of Decision.

Replacement option, main spans. We especially want to hear from you tonight about your opinion about the look of the new bridge. The character and esthetic of the replacement bridge must be an appropriate gateway for the Hudson Valley region. We ask that you visit the display area where we have presented two general bridge solutions, cable-stayed pictured in this rendering, and arch as shown in this rendering. Tonight
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and during the comment period, we hope that you will make your preferences known so that this can be taken into consideration in the final design.

Replacement bridge profile. The existing bridge has a long, flat grade, followed by a steep incline of three percent. This abrupt change in grade causes trucks and larger vehicles to lose speed, resulting in congestion and contributing to a high accident rate on the bridge. From 2001 to 2009, more than 2700 accidents occurred in this interval on the bridge, twice the current statewide average.

The replacement bridge, as shown in this diagram, proposes a more constant grade which will be manageable in many respects, more manageable than the existing bridge. This constant grade will improve traffic flow and, in turn, reduce accidents.

Identification of impacts in the DEIS involved a wide range of criteria analyzed in the 23 chapters of the study. The project impacts to the physical and social
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environment have been identified.

Most areas of study revealed no adverse impacts, but there were some areas where it was determined that there will be some impacts, particularly during the construction process. These are identified and described in the document.

In terms of visual and esthetic resources, we have evaluated visual impacts to the existing communities and considered the overall esthetic of the design in the DEIS.

The DEIS evaluates the impacts to historic and cultural resources, including two historic homes directly affected, as well as the bridge itself, which is eligible for listing on the National Historic Register.

Noise impacts associated with the project have been modeled and assessed.

And extensive analysis of the impacts to the overall ecology and, in particular, the ecology of the river system has been done. We have evaluated all aspects of the
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interface, including wetlands, fish, fauna, mammals, birds, et cetera.

In order to minimize community impacts from the construction process, the selected bridge designer will develop and adhere to a construction impact mitigation plan known as the Environmental Performance Commitment or EPCs. To date, over 50 specific EPCs have been identified. The public's input is sought and valued in order to ensure that all appropriate measures will be included in the final construction documents to protect the local communities and minimize impacts. These EPCs have been developed in detail in the DEIS, and we have the opportunity to improve and expand upon them with your input. A partial list of EPCs which have been developed include those for transportation, community character, architectural resources, land acquisitions, displacements, and relocations.

EPCs have been proposed for noise abatement mitigation. A number of specific requirements will be included in the
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contract to reduce, muffle, or otherwise mitigate noise from construction activities and equipment.

EPCs have been developed for air quality, which include, but are not limited to, the mandatory use of clean fuels and the best available technology on diesel engines, a prohibition on idling trucks for more than five minutes, and all reasonable efforts must be taken to reduce idling of all other diesel equipment other than trucks.

In terms of energy and climate change, the use of recycled material, locally-sourced material and renewable fuels must be used to the maximum extent practicable.

In terms of topography, geology, and soils, a specific erosion and sediment control plan must be developed and followed as part of the compliance with this EPC.

There have been very extensive measures considered and will be undertaken to minimize river impacts during dredging and foundation construction. And with respect
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to hazardous materials, although
investigations have not identified any
significant hazardous materials,
investigations and testing will continue as
the construction advances and steps will be
taken to properly remediate any hazardous
materials identified.

I mentioned in my introduction and
discussion of milestones the fact that we're
undertaking soil borings and this Pile
Installation Demonstration Project. These
two contracts are absolutely essential
because the installation of piles is a
critical part of the design and construction
of the replacement bridge. There are
several different and poor quality types of
geological materials that the new bridge
piles must be driven through and founded in
to support the new bridge. The ongoing soil
boring contract will take samples and
testing of the materials which lie deep
beneath the river. These test results will
inform the contractor on what to expect, how
to design, and how to price their proposals.
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The PIDP will collect information about the installation of different sized piles at different locations. The contractor will install piles of similar size anticipated to be used in the actual construction. These piles will be installed as if they were to be permanent, and they will be tested to see their load bearing capability and how they perform.

All of this information will be provided to contractors as they develop their designs and bids and also to seek the maximum mitigation to the environment based upon the effects of pile installations. The PIDP project will be awarded this week, hopefully, and will be completed by July.

Lastly, Section 4(f) is the applicable federal regulation regarding the evaluation of publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife refuges, different wildlife refuges, or public or private historic sites of national significance. The requisite 4(f) analysis has been completed and is included in the DEIS.
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And, finally, comments on the Draft EIS, as you heard many times, will be accepted until March 15th. Based upon the comments received and subsequent findings of the DEIS, a Final Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared and issued in July.

We then expect a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration later this summer, hopefully in August. The Record of Decision will contain the final federal approval and all of the environmental commitments and mitigations that will be required and carried through in the construction contract.

So at this time I'd like to thank you again for your time and your interest and encourage your continued active participation in this very important project. Thank you.

MR. TOMER: I just have a few brief remarks. I am Richard Tomer. I am Chief of the Regulatory Branch for the New York District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
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The Corps of Engineers is here today to obtain information and evidence on Corps concerns to assist in the regulatory review of a permit application submitted by the New York State Thruway Authority for the transportation of approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of dredge material from construction of the replacement Tappan Zee Bridge for placement of this dredge material at the Historic Area Remediation Site in the Atlantic Ocean.

Activities related to the replacement of the construction bridge itself are regulated by the United States Coast Guard. The Corps of Engineers is neither a proponent for nor an opponent of the proposed work. Our role is to determine whether the proposed activity is in the overall public interest. This hearing will play an important part in that determination.

The New York District will issue another Public Notice upon receipt of all required dredge material test results and
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analysis. That future Public Notice will include information, test data, and a determination whether the dredge material is suitable for placement at the Historic Area Remediation Site in the Atlantic Ocean.

That future Public Notice will be posted on the New York District website, which is www.nan.usace.army.mil, M-I-L. We will send out an e-mail when the future Public Notice is available on our website.

If you're not currently on our Public Notice e-mail distribution list and would like to receive the e-mail announcement for that Public Notice, you can provide your e-mail address to one of the staff members at the registration table across the hall.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. So we're now ready to hear from those who wish to make oral comments, oral statements. I have a list so far of those who have signed up. You have to have filled out one of those small speaker cards across the hall, so if you haven't done that and you do want to...
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speak, I'd ask you to just go across the hall and fill out one of those and they'll bring it to me and I will put you on the list.

As I mentioned, we will not be responding to comments here and we would like you to confine your comments to around two minutes. I'll let you know when you're starting to go over.

Once again, written comments will be accepted up until Thursday March 15th.

So I'm going to start calling people up. I'm going to call two at a time. I'd like you to speak at this microphone that I'm pointing to right by the court reporter. She will turn around and take your comments.

Our first speaker is Mike Hogan, to be followed by Steven Alpert.

MR. HOGAN: Good evening. My name is Michael Hogan. I live at Two Livingston Place in South Nyack. And I thank you all for this hearing this evening.

We do, I think most of us, now realize that the Tappan Zee Bridge must be replaced.
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Our chief concerns at this point are as follows: The Tappan Zee Bridge must be part of a comprehensive transportation solution and, most importantly for the long-term, mass transit.

And I would also ask that the whole issue of HOV lanes be considered as well. We must get cars off the road, and the only way to do that is by developing fast, convenient, and cost effective alternatives.

We realize that these solutions are expensive and the planning is complex. We accept that this is not a part of phase one but we expect it will be part of the future development. And we will be monitoring the whole project and DOT and MTSB and so forth to make sure that there is progress in that area.

Our next area of concern, and closest to our homes and hearts, is the area of actual construction.

My wife and I live about 150 feet from the planned South Broadway Bridge that needs to be replaced and the houses that will be
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demolished. We recognize that this must be done in order to move traffic in the existing Thruway pathway conveniently for construction.

We're asking that the plan of construction respect the homeowners on South Broadway. That is, that there be a very specific timeline for demolition, staging, and construction of that bridge. For example, if it's going to take four months or six months, that this be in part of the planning documents and construction documents and that other document that you were discussing a little while ago.

After construction, the staging area should be landscaped in accordance with neighborhood standards and would not become a parking lot or a storage area or a host to other construction-related activities for what could be four or five years.

Again, we ask that you respect the citizens and the residents of that area. At this present time, you all know we have the pollution, we have the noise, and we're able
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to accept that, but we please ask that you respect us when the construction stages begin.

Our concern is warranted because the Thruway Authority has not been a very good neighbor to this point. The staging area for the current bridge repairs around Exit 10 has not been maintained well and has been out there for several years. And we're asking that this area be looked at carefully, and if it's going to be a staging area for the new construction, that it also be looked at very carefully and that the esthetic concerns of the neighbors and of travelers be taken into consideration.

We've read the Environmental Impact Statements and we expect that this project will meet the highest standards of noise and air pollution mitigation during construction and when construction is complete. And I do want to say I've talked to several of your staff members and I do appreciate the responses that we have received to this point and hope that that continues.
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Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Mr. Alpert, to
be followed by Sandra Rothbard.

MR. ALPERT: Hello. I'm Steven Alpert.
I live in Suffern, New York. My comments
are mostly pertaining to cost and value.

Another speaker in the earlier session
touched on the Ravenel Bridge which crosses
the Cooper River between Charleston, South
Carolina and Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina.
The bridge is eight lanes of twelve feet
wide each. And while the total length is
slightly less than the Tappan Zee Bridge,
the longest span, at 1,546 feet, is longer
than the current 1,202 feet of the current
Tappan Zee Bridge.

The bridge is, without question,
esthetically pleasing. I have been on this
bridge. It's of the cable-stayed variety.
In addition to the car lanes, there is a
separate bike and pedestrian lane. The
bridge is a modern bridge and it only opened
recently, in July of 2005. But here's
what's interesting. It only cost
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$700 million.

The idea that we are being forced to spend 5 to 6 billion minimum plus whatever overruns may happen on a bridge which just a few years ago a bridge could be built of comparable size of the Tappan Zee Bridge for 700 million tells me that somebody on this group is not doing their homework.

Here's the next big thing. The Ravenel Bridge in South Carolina does not have a toll. There is no toll. It is free for the cars to go back and forth and for the people who walk and ride their bicycles and so forth. And, therefore, the economy is not hindered by the loss of revenue that people could otherwise spend on local businesses, bolstering the economy.

The Thruway Authority collects something in the range of $120 million a year from local residents crossing the Tappan Zee Bridge. It might be more. I may have old figures. But regardless of that, that's $120 million that could be spent by people bolstering the economy at this mall.
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and other malls throughout Rockland County. We have a mall in Nanuet that basically nobody goes to. It's the dead mall.

And a lot of this reason and a lot of the loss of economic vitality in this area is because of the high costs of taxes and tolls. It's no secret that people would make more trips, I don't think that's a bad thing, into Rockland County to come to this mall, for instance, if the toll was lower or less. But yet, here we are talking, some of the people have talked earlier at the previous hearing that tolls might be $15 if they build a new bridge to pay for the cost of the bridge, because there is no money, there is no federal money. Someone hinted at $2 billion dollars. That's actually not money from the feds. That's a loan that will have to be paid back by the residents here. And Andrew Cuomo is not making any effort to get real federal money towards this project.

This I find very distasteful because when the bridge opened it was $.50 to cross
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the bridge. Today it is $5. Should I assume in 50 years when my kids are just a little older than myself that it's going to be $50 to cross the bridge? It's unreasonable to base tolls as the way to fund a bridge. That is just not realistic looking in the future.

The last thing I want to say is that there are almost two million residents between Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, and Orange Counties, plus another nearly one million residents in Bergen County -- I'm sorry, around two and-a-half million people north of New York City that would benefit from a good crossing between Nyack and Tarrytown that has the capacity to meet the traffic flow.

However, the current bridge that's being proposed does not have any increase in traffic capability by intentionally creating something no different for the driver than what's today. I think that's stupid because the area keeps growing, economic -- you know, a lot of building going up, a lot of
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construction and all that. People are moving into the area. And while I think mass transit is a good plan, I don't think it should be the only plan. And I think they should build a bridge that has the capacity to meet the demands not only of today but 50 and 100 years from now.

Finally, I want to say, I think taking down the Tappan Zee Bridge, the current Tappan Zee Bridge would be a waste. At very minimum, it should be kept as an opportunity for emergency traffic to cross, if need be, at very minimum. And I personally think that it should be kept in a capacity to have minimal traffic of cars only during peak periods because it's not so much, in my opinion, not so much the day-to-day wear and tear of the weather, but the day-to-day wear and tear of the cars and trucks that are over capacity of the bridge that are causing the bridge to deteriorate.

I think a small investment in the bridge moving forward and having a new bridge, but the old bridge with just a
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limited amount of traffic could be
maintained another 100 years for very
reasonable costs. Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Okay. Our next
speaker is Sandra Rothbard, to be followed
by Bert Dahn.

MS. ROTHBRD: Good evening. My name is
Sandra Rothbard and I am a transportation
planner. I was born and raised here in
Rockland.

Like many urban planners, I chose that
career path after spending my youth in the
suburbs frustrated by the lack of fully
walkable downtowns and mass transit, which
is why I'm here today.

The thought of building a replacement
Tappan Zee Bridge without transit is, as has
already been mentioned numerous times, not
acceptable.

Appendix A of the Draft EIS states that
the costs of the BRT are simply too high.
But where did these numbers come from? The
Transportation Research Board has published
several documents that explain an average
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cost for a BRT system.

In 2002, the costs for a busway were about $7 and-a-half million per mile. In today's dollars, the 30-mile busway that was planned would add up to only $277 and-a-half million, which is nowhere near the estimates provided in the White paper.

In addition, no information is provided regarding the return investment we would see from new transit oriented development, new jobs, many more of them than without transit, the increase in property values and the economic boon local businesses would feel.

And while BRT is a wonderful transit option, I am concerned that when we refer to the rail alternative, we only say "transit". Providing a rail line on the new bridge cannot only provide commuter opportunities, but freight as well, of which there is plenty demand.

Currently, if a train of goods needs to cross the Hudson from the main domestic lines, there are two options. They must be
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floated laboriously across the Harbor, New York Harbor, or travel 150 miles north to Selkirk, New York. In order to avoid going out of the way, trucks are often deployed to do the work.

There are currently freight lines that exist on both sides of the Hudson in Rockland and Westchester, and many are already co-located with passenger rail. Adding rail will not only result in the previously mentioned transit benefits, but it will improve our local economy by taking trucks off the bridge and our local streets, improving congestion and air quality. By diverting some of the 5,000 trucks that cross the bridge every day, we can generate an additional revenue share from private railroad companies and prevent new deficiencies. As was just mentioned in the presentation, commercial vehicles have done great damage to the current bridge.

It is so rare to find suburban communities that are in support of mass transit, and we are fortunate that the
residents of Rockland and Westchester are smart and forward thinking enough to demand this.

Section F66 of the Executive Summary of the DEIS states that this project must be consistent with New York State Smart Growth requirements which, quote, must be intended to limit sprawl, maximize efficiency, and promote environmentally and socially conscious development.

The current plan without BRT or a joint freight commuter rail line is the exact opposite of smart growth. We should not go back to the drawing board, but simply use innovative planning lead by a much scaled down and thus more effective and efficient team of agencies and consultants that take the important quantitative and qualitative data collected and use creativity and timely energy to give these counties and the region a world class bridge. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Or next speaker is Burt Dahn, to be followed by Marvin Baum.

MR. DAHN: Thank you and good evening.
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I'm Burt Dahn. I am a member of the West Nyack Hamlet Revitalization Committee, right here. And to say that the Tappan Zee Bridge and the Thruway are an important part of our infrastructure and our daily life is an understatement.

I am a native of the area and well remember the construction of the New York State Thruway in the 1950s and the massive upheaval that that created. And I must commend you on being able to shoehorn all that you're doing into largely existing rights-of-way.

That being said, let me then mention that I'm afraid that you are about to join a very select group, the group of people known as penny wise and pound foolish. The more notable members of that committee are already Nelson Rockefeller and Bertram Tallamy, who were here during the building of the interstate highway system and, more particularly, the New York State Thruway.

I was here when Bert Tallamy decided to use the caisson approach and, in effect --
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not in effect, actually stated that the construction methodology for the current Tappan Zee Bridge was a lesser standard than, for instance, that employed for the George Washington Bridge, which has lasted 100 years and probably will go 100 more.
This was penny wise. It was pound foolish. We are here tonight paying the price for that foolishness.

Nelson Rockefeller's membership in that unique committee comes as a result of the building of the bridge two bridges north of here at Interstate 84, the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge. I recall also then, and I was just a kid growing up, but it made a point, that they said that when -- they built the Interstate Highway 84, four lanes right straight across Orange County and into Connecticut, but they put up a two-lane bridge to cross at Newburgh-Beacon. And Rockefeller said, we know that we're doing it wrong. We know that it's going to cost more. We know we should be putting four lanes in. And they didn't. And sure as
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heck, one year after that bridge opened, it was already exceeding their design specs.

I believe I'm correct there. That bridge cost $22 million. Thirteen years later, they commenced planning for something they knew darned well they had to do anyway, building an identical bridge, essentially identical parallel.

Isn't there a chilling parallel there to the current situation, building a parallel bridge to the existing span?

And that was opened in 1989 and it cost $88 million, something they knew darned well had to be done, just like we know now, and it cost four times in just a 13 year span.

I think there's a strong message there.

I heard Mr. Anderson say at one of the earlier shows that you put on here -- and by the way you folks do a great job of positioning and showing us what's going on, not that we particularly like some of the decisions. But you said that we couldn't build a bridge that was big enough to take all of the maximum traffic plan there, or
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essentially that we've got so much traffic
that it would be hard or extremely expensive
to accommodate that in its maximum form.

There's another parable here besides
penny wise and pound foolish. It's, if you
can't raise the bridge, then lower the
river.

MR. BLOCH: Can I ask you to begin to
wrap up?

MR. DAHN: Certainly. We can lower the
river by putting mass transit in. We can
lower the demand and the quantity of traffic
by putting a mass transit component in right
now, not some time in the future at four
times the cost. We've got to find a way to
do it now.

I hope that I don't see your name on
the list of members of the penny wise and
pound foolish club. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. The next
speaker is Marvin Baum, to be followed by
Grey Johnson.

MR. BAUM: Good evening. I'm a
resident of Clarkstown and I've been very
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heavily involved in open space preservation,
upgrading some of the recreational
resources, particularly the Long Path Hiking
Trail, which will be moved over West Hook
Mountain. West Hook Mountain has
spectacular views of the whole Tappan Zee
area, the Hudson River and the bridge
itself.

I wanted to deal with an issue, I don't
know if it was dealt with earlier or if it
will be dealt with tomorrow, but there have
been some proposals for a new park to go
across the existing bridge with the initial
idea of saving some money on the tear down
of the existing bridge.

Now, having been involved in
preservation and in park development and
recreation development, I'm here tonight to
speak against that proposal.

I personally believe that the bridge
park has many problems and very huge costs,
particularly over the long-term, while
offering little advantages to residents of
Rockland County.
Before I get into details, I just want to answer one thing that Mr. Anderson had asked us to comment on, which was the design of the bridge. And I'd like to say based upon -- not based on what I saw here tonight. It was kind of hard on the screen here to make a judgment. But what I'd seen previously of the two bridges, I have a strong preference for the arch design. I believe that it is reminiscent of the hills surrounding the area and it just looks generally more attractive.

If we were to go ahead with this bridge park concept, I think what we need to do is ask a lot of questions and have a very detailed technical analysis and environmental impact study for the proposal.

Here's some of the questions. What is the cost, the projected cost of converting the existing bridge to a park, including providing access such as parking lots, elevators, walkways, on-bridge shuttles, bathrooms, storm shelters, security, et cetera? Would we need to change local roads
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and condemn any residential properties to
make way for parking lots to provide access? 
How do local residents feel about that? Are 
we going to be building a parking facility 
that would really accommodate the kind of 
volume that you'd have to have to even 
justify having this bridge park project, at 
least on the Rockland side? What will be 
the ongoing costs of maintaining the 
existing bridge as a park, painting the 
bridge, and maintaining the structures in 
the water?

What is the estimated usage of the 
park? How many people will use it each 
year? What will the difference in usage be 
between the walkway and bike lane on the new 
bridge, which I strongly support, versus the 
usage of the old bridge for those same 
purposes?

What will be the impact of the proposed 
bridge on the existing park and 
recreationally resources on the Rockland 
side, such as Rockland Lake State Park, 
Congers Park, Nyack Beach State Park, the 

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Piermont to Nyack rail trail, Blauvelt State Park, Buttermilk Falls Park, et cetera? All these resources I just mentioned happen to be just minutes away from the proposed bridge park.

Now, when you go to a park, you want a little bit of quiet enjoyment. What will the noise level be for people using this new bridge park from the adjoining major highway?

Will a thorough view shed analysis be done? I saw that there's going to be a difference in the grade between the two bridges. It seems like there's going to be a lot of conflicting site lines and pilings and just a lot of things that don't look very attractive. And so I hope that that would be done as part of any analysis, the view shed not only from the top of the local mountains like West Hook Mountain and Hook Mountain, but from the river itself, from residential properties and from each of the bridges themselves.

MR. BLOCH: I ask you to start to wrap
Supporters of the bridge park say that it will be very beneficial from the economy standpoint and that it would generate hotels and other commercial development. And I'm kind of curious as to where that would be. Mainly right now, the bridge landing is on residential sites of Rockland County.

So I'd like to conclude by paraphrasing a famous quote of President Ronald Reagan when he stood next to the Berlin Wall and said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

Governor Cuomo recently made some comments that seemed favorable to maintaining the bridge as a park possibly. And I would like to say to him, Mr. Cuomo, tear down this bridge. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Our next speaker is Grey Johnson. Is he here? No.


Next speaker, Joanne Mongelli. No.

Next speaker, Doug Willinger.
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MR. WILLINGER: Right here.

MR. BLOCH: Okay. After Doug, Justin Davidson.

MR. WILLINGER: My name is Doug Willinger. I live in Mt. Kisco, New York. I've lived in Westchester County most of my life.

And the point I want to make is I want to follow up about that penny wise, pound foolish and about the need not just for passenger, but freight rail.

You must not build that thing without that lower deck. That lower deck is our most cost effective thing for getting more capacity across the bridge, particularly rail capacity.

You need to have a plan that also has the approaches where you can make the transition, because the railroad is not going to be in the median, so it's got to swing out to one side.

Now, this plan you have where you're going to build something between the bridges, how is that supposed to work when
railroad can only take a one percent grade change? It's got to be at a lower level.

But since your bridges are not -- your lower -- your other bridge that doesn't have a lower deck is going to be a lower bridge, so how are you going to have it at a lower level without interfering with the shipping crossings?

You must build the thing with the lower deck. You could easily run at least, what, two rail tracks on each side? You could ultimately have another freight line, which we don't have anything going into Manhattan.

And we just canceled -- they want to build a rail tunnel basically from I78 in Jersey to Long Island, Brooklyn, but it's like going to be like billions of dollars.

What's so much more expensive to build the thing with the lower deck? That should be like totally nonnegotiable that the thing have a lower deck on it so that it can have rail added to it in a practical way and that you also build short railroad approaches so you don't have to rip up the freeway again
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to add it later.

My blog is Cosmobile Cosmopolitan Transportation. And this is the sleeper issue that all of these environmentalist groups aren't getting, because I had a conversation with some of the gentlemen here about how the approaches work and no one had any pictures.

I understand on the Westchester side you've got a high bluff, so that's relatively easy to have it come off the bridge. But on the other side, it's all lower, so you need to have a shore -- you know a railroad -- there may be no rail for 10 or 20 years, but at least you need to build the short passages for it off a short tunnel so it could swing out to one side of 87 or the other. And I don't see any of that approach work done.

It's the same thing in Alexandria, Virginia where people wanted to add rail to the bridge later, but they're all oblivious to the fact that all the interchange ramps block aiding rail. So this needs all to be
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thought out a little better.

Please build it with the lower deck.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Actually,
Joanne Mongelli is back, so I give you a
chance to talk.

MS. MONGELLI: Thank you. I appreciate
that. Thank you for holding these public
hearings. I'll be brief.

I live in South Nyack on Mansfield
Avenue. I don't believe that I'll have any
more adverse immediate effect to my own
home, so this is not a question for me of
not in my own backyard.

I've been very impressed with the
quality of the remarks here tonight, talking
bowing what would be good public policy and
not really self interest. And it's in that
spirit that I address you.

One of the earlier speakers mentioned
that we want to make this the best project
possible, but a lot of what I'm seeing and
hearing I think is really a project that's
being done the fastest and least expensive
way. And those seem to me to be the two
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major parameters of this project the way it's currently conceived.

My areas of concern, and I dare say those of my neighbors in the Village of South Nyack, are, I guess, three main categories.

One, I heartly endorse, and won't repeat, this need for public transportation. It is very shortsighted. We want to live in an environment that is progressive and where there's clean air, where we're encouraging public transportation, not discouraging it.

There's been lots of reference to the truck traffic on the Tappan Zee Bridge which didn't exist several years ago before the connection with 287 in New Jersey existed. Many of us came out and said this is shortsighted and will have an enormous impact on the quality of life in Rockland. That exchange went through and now we have the brunt of the truck traffic that we can't undo. Again, please don't be shortsighted.

Mass transit is not a frill.

I'm concerned about the esthetic
quality of the bridge. It, again, was very hard to tell by those two rough schematics. The Hudson River Valley is one of the key national resources in the country, not just on the east coast. This bridge should be nothing less than spectacular. It should be commensurate with the value of the Hudson Valley area as a national resource. I don't see that -- at least at this point I don't have confidence that a project that's being fast tracked with the least expensive ways, that we're going to get a bridge that is really a stellar work of architectural design.

Finally, community impact. I think there were some thoughts addressed to adverse community impact. This is an opportunity to have positive community impact. The Village of South Nyack was devastated when the Thruway came through with the first Tappan Zee Bridge, and that ridiculous -- I don't know what to call it -- the circular entrance and exit ramp that now defines South Nyack instead of the
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heart of the Village that was once there. There was a plan to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance the community life, and that's now I guess off the books because of a constrained notion of what this project should look like.

I urge you to do whatever we can. There were plans that would call for a park. But that circle exit and entrance ramp is ridiculous and there should be a heart of a village there.

So what I've heard tonight does not encourage me that this is a very forward-looking opportunity to enhance both the quality of life for what is a vital village, not just a traffic corridor, nor for the way the bridge itself will be constructed. I urge you to take second thoughts on all of this.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker, Justin Davidson. No.

And Philip Musegaas?

They spoke at the earlier session so I think they have left.

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That is it. If there's anyone else who expected to be speaking and you didn't hear your name called, it's because I didn't get a card.

So if there is no one, I'd like to thank you very much for coming and to adjourn this public hearing. Thank you.

oOo
THE FOREGOING IS CERTIFIED to be a true and correct transcription of the original stenographic minutes to the best of my ability.

____________________________
Kathleen Stala

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