

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Proceedings

call the first one.

Mr. Orrin Getz, please come up to the podium, and thank you very much.

TZ-049T

MR. GETZ: Okay. My name's Orrin Getz, and I'm representing the New Jersey Association of Rail Passengers. I live in Rockland County, but most people don't know that Rockland County is very, very dependent on New Jersey Transit for rail facilities that are operated through contract with the Metro-North Commuter Railroad or Metro-North Railroad now.

The most important thing that we have to consider in the overall planning of this particular project is that it can't be considered a stand alone project. It has to consider that it's part of a regional system of highways and possibly mass transit. It has to be integrated into that. One of the most important projects that has to be considered, along with this one, is the emphasis on the regions corps project. In fact, Alternative G proposes to bring in a

3  
5

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Proceedings

direct one seat ride for Rockland County residents, not only to Penn Station but also to Grand Central Station. And it would not only help us, but help a much larger population of people on the west side of the Hudson. So we have to look at this thing from an overall perspective and see how these other projects do fit into it.

We also have to look into the needs of the motor vehicles, and where they're actually going when they go over the Tappan Zee Bridge. A lot of them are extending way beyond the Corridor from Suffern to Port Chester. Many of the vehicles are now going to Long Island, because of the toll structure, and there is a critical need to figuring out how we're going to move straight through our region. The Tappan Zee Corridor is only part of that particular plan, and we have to totally think of this from that perspective.

Also, there are many, many, many

85

90

100

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Proceedings

projects -- or, excuse me, plans that could be put into place to reduce the congestion on the Tappan Zee Bridge today, without a major cost, and could have dramatic impact on the traffic congestion. The first thing we have to consider is that parking for the most part is free and subsidized in Westchester County. And as long as you have parking in Westchester County that's subsidized by business, you have a tremendous incentive to encourage people to drive. And you just have to look at all the corporate parks and realize the tremendous subsidy that's put in to encourage people to drive their cars across the Tappan Zee Bridge into Westchester and park, that this is something that is very difficult to overcome. And even if you put in the best mass transit system in the world, it's still not going to totally offset that incentive for having that wonderful, free commuter parking -- excuse me -- free parking right by the work space. One of

70

1 Proceedings

2 the main reasons that people use mass  
3 transit into New York City is because the  
4 cost of parking. It's cheaper to take the  
5 train than park in New York City. And  
6 that has to really be considered.

7 Also, business has not been involved  
8 really in Westchester County in this  
9 problem. It's been a governmental  
10 problem, but it is a business problem too,  
11 and we have to get business involved to  
12 maybe run a van system from Rockland  
13 County, using the park and ride lots here,  
14 over the Tappan Zee Bridge to various  
15 large employers. There is virtually no  
16 guaranteed ride home program for people  
17 who want to car pool over to Westchester.  
18 That has to be put in place, and should be  
19 put in place, and that could have a -- a  
20 profound effect on the congestion on the  
21 Tappan Zee Bridge. Remember that  
22 sometimes all it takes is five or ten  
23 percent reduction in traffic on that  
24 bridge to make the difference between  
25 bumper to bumper gridlock and the bridge

10

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Proceedings

moving quite freely. So you have to really consider that there may be some alternatives that really aren't even being looked into or being seriously considered that could greatly reduce the congestion on the bridge, the way it stands right now.

|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|

07

Another thing is the gas pricing. Gas in this country is very, very cheap, and actually it encourages people to drive themselves. And one of the reasons why so many people drive around in gas guzzling sport utility vehicles is because the gas is so cheap. And one of the things we really have to look at is, you know, we get the short -- the short end of this, because in this area of the United States we have a higher income tax -- we have a higher income, so we pay more in income tax, where in other areas people have lower income tax because they earn less and yet they still drive around in big sport utility vehicles because the gas is so cheap. The one good thing about

|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|  
|

04

|  
|  
|

04

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

## Proceedings

gasoline tax is it's collected. You can't get away from paying gasoline tax. And that may be a way to finance a lot of these projects, including this one, through the use of increased gasoline tax.

The other thing is, if anybody thinks the Tappan Zee Bridge can be just used the way it is or just keep it going for too much longer better reconsider it. The bridge is tremendously overloaded. The bridge was designed for 100,000 a day. Now it's carrying up to 140,000 vehicles a day. The bridge was built with a six and three quarter inch deck. Current standards call for nine inch decks. When the bridge was designed, it was never considered that you'd have trucks carrying 80,000 pounds going across the bridge that were 53 feet long. And now the trucking industry would like to make them even longer than that and go up to 130,000 pounds. You know, this is something that if you're going to do something, you need a new bridge to take care of all these

1 Proceedings

2 monster vehicles that are so heavily  
3 loaded. And there are many, many times on  
4 the Tappan Zee Bridge now where there are  
5 major problems. The bridge has to be  
6 closed for emergency repairs. And it's  
7 only a matter of time that I can foresee  
8 that there's going to be a colossal  
9 failure of the bridge, and I'm just  
10 praying that my wife retires before that  
11 happens, because it's going to be  
12 catastrophic. And I think we have to  
13 think of that. We have to think of a  
14 bridge that can take the or a crossing  
15 that can take these vehicles and take this  
16 load. The current bridge can't, so we  
17 have to think quickly and move quickly.

18 And another thing is, is we're  
19 looking at the possibility of commuter  
20 rail. Well, commuter rail's a wonderful  
21 system. I use commuter rail all the time,  
22 but -- in fact, I use it every day, but  
23 considering the infrastructure  
24 requirements of a commuter rail system  
25 over the Tappan Zee Bridge, you have to

1 Proceedings

2 really think that that would drive the  
3 costs through the roof. And I don't even  
4 think that there's the ridership  
5 justification for a commuter rail system.  
6 A light rail system, like the Hudson  
7 Bergen Line Rail System that was recently  
8 opened, seems to be a more viable  
9 alternative. Light rail does not require  
10 the amount of infrastructure that the  
11 commuter rail requires and could possibly  
12 fit within the current right-of-way and  
13 also accommodate the current grades that  
14 we have for the highways. So I think that  
15 light rail has to be very, very seriously  
16 considered in this particular program.  
17 And I think we have to look at the  
18 discussion of and the alternatives that  
19 were put into access to the regions core  
20 and see how the Nyack, Tarrytown  
21 alternative measured up for commuter rail  
22 versus other alternatives.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. WAITE: Thank you. Our next  
25 speaker, Assemblyman Ryan Karben.