Robert Martin Company, LLC

February 26 2003

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OPERATIONS PLANNING

Metro North Railroad
347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Attention: Janet Maniero, AICP
Deputy Project Manager

Re: Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement
Environmental Impact Study Scope

Dear Ms. Maniero:

While a replacement of the bridge will have significant impacts during the life of the construction process, it will not have great impact after it is completed unless some form of mass transit is included. If that should be the case, I believe it is important that the Environmental Impact Review include in its scope the overall changes it might induce on Westchester County. 01

We are currently experiencing a major adjustment in the geometry of the Cross Westchester Expressway which was thoroughly investigated in an Environmental Impact Statement that analyzed overall traffic impacts on it, but not the peripheral roads. As best I can learn, there was no study conducted as to how much congestion on Route 119 might be alleviated when this project was completed. My own consultants have suggested that as much as a 46% peak hour westbound reduction may be anticipated at the intersection with Route 9A, currently a most significant bottleneck. If this proves to be accurate, attitudes toward development in Elmsford would clearly be different. My concern is that Westchester County residents are paying little attention to the concept of rail on I-287 since their perception is that it will only be of significance to Rockland County commuters to get to jobs in the I-287 corridor and transfers to the north/south lines.

I think it is important that the scope of the environmental studies include the changes in pattern that would logically develop for Westchester based commuters. Since they can currently see nothing in a rail program that might benefit them, almost no attention is being paid to the project by citizens outside of the communities immediately impacted by construction or the potential of stations. Primarily, those are Tarrytown, Elmsford, and White Plains. 01

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The study of ridership for a train line will have to be one which delves deeply into the psychology of the commuters in Northern Westchester and land planning in the I-287 belt. Without mass transit in some form from Rockland County, all business growth in Westchester will have to depend on north/south employee supply. As affordable housing becomes less and less available, the service workers who sustain the economy will have to travel further and further with greater impact on local roads as they approach work destinations. It is the nature of business to find lower cost solutions and one may well be that growth in Westchester County will cease under these circumstances and instead we may find employers moving to Rockland County where their potential employees reside. 03

I believe it is critical that the no build aspect of the mass transit component, as well as the build aspect be thoroughly explored with respect to Westchester County in its entirety rather than the 287 corridor alone because of these reasons. I am certain that if assistance is needed in making the projections necessary that there are many Westchester institutions that would be willing to help. In the event you wish to discuss this further, I am delighted to make myself available, but felt it important that I put these questions in writing so as to be certain that they were addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement you are about to prepare. 02

Very truly yours,

Robert F. Weinberg
President

RFW/jh