



**EDWARD A. DIANA**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

February 27, 2008

Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Study Project Team,

On behalf of Orange County, thank you for conducting a scoping session here. We have agreed to participate in the environmental review process and will work to review study materials and provide comments as the study proceeds.

We applaud the efforts of the Governor's Office, the New York State Department of Transportation, the New York State Thruway Authority, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to move the Tappan Zee Bridge / Interstate I-287 Corridor study effort forward, including the recent decision to use the new environmental review process which will allow the bridge and highway project to proceed more expeditiously. The Tappan Zee Bridge, the I-287 corridor, and the other highways which connect with it are critical linkages across the Hudson River. It is imperative that a safe, secure and uncongested replacement be constructed for this aging bridge and that the transportation and transit linkages on both sides of the river be improved to facilitate safe and uncongested movements of people and goods.

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The new environmental review process and the selection of a transit mode or modes within the next few months clearly places great pressure on this aspect of the decision. If money were no object, the obvious transit mode choice would be multimodal, leaving all transit modes as an option, including commuter heavy rail. In an economic environment with greatly increased construction costs and questionable fiscal outlooks, any project plan may be difficult to find funding for, let alone a bridge and corridor plan that includes heavy rail. Obviously the planning decisions and investments which will be made are very long term ones, with a term that likely exceeds fifty years. While it may be that heavy rail cannot be justified economically in the next ten or twenty years, designing the bridge structure or structures so as to not preclude the installation of heavy rail at some point in the future has great merit. The question is or will become, what is the value of that merit in relation to the value or cost of providing that flexibility? That is a key question that must be quantified in some manner by the project team as soon as possible in order to inform this choice.

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We understand and support the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project by New Jersey, New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which would double the rail capacity between New Jersey and Manhattan. The improved rail access which ARC will provide to west of Hudson travelers is undeniable – a one seat ride. A rail connection at Tappan Zee, while providing another means for a one seat ride to New York City from Orange and Rockland Counties, would also provide improved cross-Hudson transit connectivity and, together with ARC, heighten the potential benefits from enhanced rail access in eastern Orange County and potentially a rail connection at Stewart International Airport. Bus Rapid Transit through the project

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corridor has its own set of advantages and benefits. While dependent on overall system configuration of course, for Orange County, rail access could be more convenient since transfers to another transit mode might be reduced or eliminated.

If at all feasible and economically justifiable, keep the option open for commuter rail when preparing the bridge and highway record of decision.

Thank you again for conducting a scoping session here in Orange County. We look forward to working with the members of the project team on this important project.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Diana  
County Executive

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2 Representatives of organizations and  
3 individual citizens will then be called  
4 upon to make their statement in the order  
5 in which they are registered.

6 If you have already submitted  
7 comments in response to the Department's  
8 publication revised Notice of Intent, you  
9 do not have to resubmit them, because they  
10 are already part of the record.

11 Again, to remind you, written  
12 comments will be accepted by the  
13 Department until March 31st, 2008.

14 We have one elected representative  
15 from Orange County, sir.

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TZB-017T 16 MR. CZAMANSKE: Hi. My name is John  
17 Czamanske. I'm the Deputy County Planning  
18 Commissioner here in Orange County, and  
19 staff to the Orange County Transportation  
20 Council. I would like to read to you a  
21 letter that has been submitted today by  
22 County Executive, Ed Diana. So...

23 It's to the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287  
24 Project Team.

25 On behalf of Orange County, thank

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1 Proceedings

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