

TZB-062E

From Milton Hoffman
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I am writing my comments regarding the Tappan Zee Bridge based on my involvement on the Bridge subcommittee of the Stakeholders' Advisory Working Group, extensive experience as a newspaper reporter and editor who covered the Westchester scene for 50 years and of course as a member of the traveling public. These updated comments should replace the hand-written ones I submitted at the public viewing of plans at Purchase College.

Without reservation, I strongly believe that a new bridge should be built and a mass transit component installed over the entire 30-mile section of I-287 from Suffern to Port Chester -- preferably commuter rail. We need a structure that will last several hundred years and an east-west transit system that will connect existing north-south systems in the region.

A new bridge and a mass transit system is desperately needed not only for improved transportation but to save the economies in both Rockland and Westchester counties. Businesses continually cannot cope with extreme lateness of employees victimized by jams caused by bridge defects, accidents or just crippling traffic. There will come a time, if it has not already arrived, when they simply will close shop and move elsewhere -- or refuse to come here at all.

With fuel costs rising, motorists need alternative means of travel. Also, as life expectancy increases, an older population, unable to drive, will have to rely on mass transit. Mass transit is required also to prevent further pollution of the environment, and it stands to reason that trains rather than buses would do more to reach that goal.

By no means should the present bridge be saved. It is being kept operational only through a series of costly patchwork repairs -- and the repairs are becoming more frequent. I have seen the evidence of deterioration both on site and in graphic pictures. Pouring billions more dollars into a rehabilitation attempt wouldn't raise the bridge standards so it can last centuries. In fact, the rehab project would be very risky -- especially when sections under water have to be replaced -- a procedure previously untested.

A new bridge should consist of eight lanes -- four in each direction. There should be extra lanes to handle disabled cars, and lanes to handle walkers and bikers. The bridge should be designed to withstand earthquakes. Also, the designers should take into account possible changes in the water levels of Hudson River due to continuing global warming.

Paths for high-speed buses or trains can be built either on the vehicle level of the bridge or on an under-level of the bridge. If present user studies indicate that there is not yet sufficient potential traffic to justify commuter trains, the system must be designed in a way that, in the future, the bus right-of-way can be altered for trains. Already there is room above ground for either buses or trains on the Rockland side. A commuter train system on the Westchester side could be built underground.



These improvements are not just for Rockland and Westchester or the region. They are for the entire country, because this corridor is a vital connector between the Northeast and other sections of the country. It not only handles cars and people but also the large trucks that bring goods to markets. Furthermore, air travel can benefit if the new integrated system is tied eventually to Stewart Airport in Newburgh, easing the pressure on the existing three international airports in the Tri-state area. Finally, the argument can be made that a dependable link in the interstate system will bolster homeland security. Those facts must be emphasized in convincing the federal government to contribute a great share of the necessary funds for the project.

In reaching a decision, the bridge/corridor study team must recommend what is best for the region, not what may be a more cost-effective remedy. After all, we are planning not just for 50 years, but possibly for hundreds of years.

In conclusion, I must say that I am impressed by the painstaking procedure employed by the professionals on the study team with extensive public involvement. As I recall, when the original bridge was planned beginning in the early 1950s, public involvement was limited to only two hearings, one by the Thruway Authority and one by the Army Corps of Engineers to allow river crossing. This time, no member of the public rightfully can say they were shut out of the procedure.



Scoping Update Comment Form

You are invited to comment on the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project and the accompanying Scoping Update Packet in the space below. Note that in compliance with NEPA and SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, public comments are being specifically requested on the included purpose and need (Section 3.0 Appendix A), range of alternatives (Section 4.0), assessment methodologies (section 6.0), and coordination plan (Section 5.0 Appendix B).

I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW BRIDGE &
A COMMUTER RAIL FROM SUFFERN TO PORT CHESTER. THE OLD BRIDGE SHOULD
BE TORN DOWN BECAUSE IT IS TOO EXPENSIVE TO CONSTANTLY REPAIR IT.
~~WE~~ WE HAVE TO THINK FAR INTO THE FUTURE AND BUILD A SYSTEM
THAT WILL LAST CENTURIES. USE OF BUSES WILL ONLY ADD TO THE
EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. IN MAKING YOUR DECISION, MAKE
THE ONE THAT MAKES SENSE, NOT ONE THAT IS CONCERNED WITH
FINANCING. THE MONEY HAS TO BE FOUND FOR THE SAKE OF
PUBLIC SAFETY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF
A MAJOR SYSTEM CONNECTING THE NORTHEAST & THE WEST & SOUTH

Name: MILTON HOFFMAN

Interest Represented: MYSELF AND MY DESCENDENTS

Address: 66 LAWRENCE DRIVE WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. 10603

Please add my name to the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project Mailing list.

Comments can be submitted in writing through March 31, 2008 to the address listed below:

Mr. Michael P. Anderson
NYSDOT
Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project Director
660 White Plains Road, Suite 340
Tarrytown, NY 10591