

TZB-168E

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To Whom it may concern:

I am writing in reference to the studies and possible solutions to the I-287 corridor. I am a Computer Consultant who for the last 26 years has traveled to all parts of the NYC/suburban area. I know the roads and the region very well, and understand many of the issues.

I-287 corridor goals – 5 lanes plus Commuter Rail one-seat ride to Manhattan:

The goal of any change should be to increase the capacity and safety of this corridor. The introduction of mass transit will certainly help, however, that addition should not be viewed as a substitute for using this planning/construction opportunity to increase the width of I-287. The number of homes and businesses in the region warrant a much wider highway. We are losing many businesses and skilled persons to other parts of the country, where, among other things, highway delays do not erode profits. If you had a business would you move to the Hudson Valley only to have your employees stuck in volatile traffic? Why do other parts of our country have the ability to execute major highway projects on FREE roads, and we are tripping on our shoelaces... The standard of living in the Hudson Valley has already been severely compromised, and is destined to degrade if something is not done. A wider road is a safer road. As evidenced by the increase in road-rage, accidents, injuries, and deaths, I-287 is dangerously unable to support today's volume - and certainly tomorrow's. If politicians fail to recognize these capacity requirements now and for the future, then they do not deserve to be in office.

The I-287 corridor MUST grow to at least 5 lanes each way from the Garden State Pky to the Hutchinson River Pky, this includes a new Tappan Zee Bridge. The ability to do this exists today, I know this is more than being discussed, but yes – it is necessary. 3 lanes simply cannot handle the volume in this corridor – even if mass transit is implemented. The new Tappan Zee Bridge must be built in such a way that it can be widened further, when future demand shall certainly warrant. The addition of a mass transit commuter railroad from Rockland County MUST offer a single-seat ride directly into Manhattan via a connection to the Hudson Line. Anything else will not work, since car travel will then be more attractive. Light rail and buses are a joke. Westchester and Connecticut residents enjoy full CRT corridors – why not Rockland/Orange? A second span



supporting rail would work. If a new bridge is multi-level, then the traffic level heading East to Westchester should be on the lower level to eliminate the morning sun glare.

The proposal to cross Westchester with rail is riddled with issues, because Westchester, like Rockland, is a suburb. Destinations are not in the immediate vicinity of the I-287 corridor. How will people commute to/from points like Stony Point, or Somers? Non-rail surface transportation will be required on both ends of a commute - which will certainly be the demise any "grand" scheme of lightening the load. Mass transportation has never worked in a suburb-to-suburb scenario. New rails to Manhattan will definitely help, but not enough to ignore the width of I-287, or the Palisades Pky for that matter. I also recommend as an ancillary project that the Palisades Parkway be widened to 3 lanes from exit 8 to exit 10. This is an especially congested and dangerous section of highway. No overall increase in capacity has been introduced since these roads were built. The population has increased dramatically, so any widening must be viewed as a mandatory, overdue "correction".

When planning one must consider that the I-287 corridor is a mainstream for interstate travel and travelers who intend to spend money travelling or vacationing in NY State. Do we want to scare away everyone to other destinations because it takes them an hour to go 10 miles on a Sunday night??? Thus type of travel warrants the substantial road widening I mentioned above, mass transit does not come into play here.

We MUST avoid the NIMBY factor:

I am a progressive environmentalist, a hiker, a volunteer, and monetary supporter of environmental organizations, and monetary donor for purchasing open space. There are many people who conveniently claim to be environmentally astute, but do not understand the larger picture with regard to the region and the I-287 corridor. They always seem to be the people who are heard, written in the papers, and considered more than the harried commuter. This has to stop. They are one vote just like you and me. Many of these people have an agenda to save only their back yards, and forsake the region. These same people have exhibited their selfishness by being non-existent when other threats to the region surfaced. The bulldozing of Sterling Forest resulting in the construction of thousands of new homes (and introduction of thousands of cars) went uncontested by the people who claim to be so concerned now. They were also obviously missing from the past fight to stop the Torne Valley power plants. We have seen thousands of new homes built, from Tuxedo to Smith Farms (New City) - and where are these concerned people? They haven't even considered the demand these projects will place on the environment and the roads. They only care about their "quaint riverfront" towns (on either side of the river), which incidentally, have impacted the environment, quite drastically themselves. Wouldn't it be nice if Clausland Mountain's forests extended down to the river - but we won't go there now... Luckily for us they are a great minority versus the 135,000 vehicles each day on I-287. This must be recognized. You will have people who will complain about a noisy highway next door - let's see...they moved there voluntarily! If they were there before the highway, then they have had over 50 years (and much home value gain) to move! I do not feel sorry for them, I fear the region's demise. Politics as

usual is a threat - any political posturing and favoring this NIMBY/special interest minority is as unforgivable as failing to plan and build what this region needs to thrive.

The ridiculous cry of “build it and they will come” is true: not for highways, but for houses. Houses create traffic, but I do not see any TZB NIMBYs stopping home construction in the Hudson Valley. Yes, a home built in Washingtonville *will* place cars on the I-287 corridor... I certainly think a highway built in the Yukon won’t magically create cars. In my opinion, the cry should be “nothing has been built, but they’re here!”

The greater population and their children will certainly remember those who had the vision and courage to do something to make their lives better, and safer - or who degraded their freedom to travel, and placed them in greater danger. Robert Moses we need you now.

Sincerely,

Richard Loeb