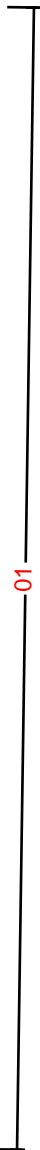


TZB-094E

Dear Michael Anderson,

Having attended one of your presentations on the Tappan Zee Bridge in Greenburgh, NY, some time ago, I feel somewhat frustrated at the way this project has proceeded. As I look at page 15 of the Scoping Update Package, there is a passage where it is written that any rebuilding of the current structure would not yield "meaningful congestion relief". None of the alternatives proposed would meet this same criteria. When I asked you about the life expectancy of a replacement bridge, you answered that it would most likely last 50 to 100 years. I take that on its face value as reasonable. Yet, even the most cynical concept of traffic patterns in this span of time would make any and all of the alternative visions you have presented totally inadequate to deal with the added volume of traffic that would result over that period of time based on growth curves more conservative than what we have seen over the past two decades alone. So I must ask, why are we designing a structure that would cost so much money at a time of economic downturn if it will not meet the demands of the next thirty years let alone not to mention a century? Mass transit is not a replacement for automotive traffic, rather it is an auxiliary mode of travel that works for a limited population with specific needs. It fails to address commercial traffic whether it be trucking, independent contractors, vacationers, sales people, families in crisis, and others. Mass transit is a collateral issue not the core issue of whether we are building a bridge that is already inadequate in its ability to relieve congestion. Yet it appears that too much emphasis is being placed on mass transit and little thought has been addressed to the core issue of congestion. Mass transit will foster population shifts that in of themselves will add to those who use automotive traffic on the bridge, whether for themselves or through the required services their communities will require (i.e. commercial deliveries to meet their needs). It is a well documented vicious cycle. Build a new artery, create a new community, deal with the new vehicular traffic. Rather than decreasing congestion you find yourself adding to it.

The current structure has seven lanes. All the alternatives being proposed appear to add but a single lane. Have you ever driven across the bridge at rush hour? Do you think that one or two additional lanes would remediate the traffic? And even if you do, do you honestly believe that it would be at all adequate in a decade or a century? So why are we considering this endeavor if it is already obviously inadequate before it is constructed? What will our legacy be? We spent billions on a bridge that failed to have the capacity needed? When the current bridge was constructed, its designers believed it would be able to meet the demands of its foreseeable life span. Clearly, they were



wrong. But at least they built something that seemed to be in proportion with the traffic patterns of its time. All the current plans seem to be in denial of any traffic growth at all which simply boggles the mind. Why build something that is already inadequate and will only prove to be overburdened in a very short time?

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At the public presentation I attended I listened to the talk about this being part of the grand vision of the late Robert Moses's master plan. I cannot help but think of myself now cast in the role Jane Jacobs found herself in when Mr. Moses attempted to build a highway east to west in lower Manhattan. It is a clear goal of the people who are managing this project to provide an east west corridor across both Rockland and Westchester counties. They only see this in a pragmatic engineering traffic management way. But it is much more. It will be a gouge tearing though the very fabric of these communities and permanently disturbing and destroying their ways of life in much the same way as the Cross Bronx Expressway destroyed the once vibrant communities it cut through.

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The idea that simply opening up an artery is a positive form of progress that lifts up communities has been proven to be a specious argument. It fails to address both the character and integrity of the communities it crosses. Communities take decades to evolve and act as a self sustaining ecosystem preserving a way of life that provides familiarity and security to those living within. Injecting mass transit across these communities will only act to disturb the close knit ties that exist in therein and slowly bring about their demise. There is little good to be derived from making healthy communities extinct.

The people who are designing this new infrastructure are only looking at our communities as a statistic and look to numbers of people moving across a corridor rather than understanding the realities of living here. It is a cold and antiseptic approach and robs us our our very humanity. An engineer who does not live here comes in and views us as a problem in need of a solution that would be imposed upon us as if we were nothing more than pieces on a Monopoly board. But we are much more. We represent the vibrancy of our towns and villages. We know each other. We live together, raise our families together, attend our respective places of worship, support our schools, and build our communities. To simply look at us as a means to an end is not only misguided but wrong. The people who live here are not crying out for a mass transit artery in our back yard. We are not looking to have our communities become transit hubs. Nor are we looking to see population shifts disrupt our communities. We are interested in our environment. Very much so in fact. But this is not the panacea it is being decried as.

I find this project deficient on many levels. It inadequately addresses the traffic congestion it was purportedly created to resolve. It plans to change the character of two counties by turning them into a major east west corridor. And like those who innocently attempted to change the flow of a river, time proves that such attempts later are understood to be naive and lead to disastrous consequences.

Before any attempt is made to build a new structure, it would be far better to rehabilitate the current one until such time as you are prepared to actually build something that addresses the true need for additional lanes that the future will clearly call for.

Respectfully,

Jason Sapan
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