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**Official Comments of the Board of Trustees Regarding
The Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review Preliminary Recommendations for
Transit Modes and Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement Alternatives**

1) It is of critical importance that the State's study team analyze and consider in full detail (i.e., perform the "hard look" required by SEQRA) the construction of a BRT/Hudson Line transfer station in the Tappan Zee Bridge toll plaza area. Though the design and engineering of such a station obviously would await detailed study, as conceived here, the upper level of the transfer station would be located in the center of the toll plaza area directly above the Hudson Line, would be of a simple, linear, but enclosed design to provide protection against adverse weather conditions, and would connect to new platforms below through elevators, stairs and/or escalators. Such a station should not include provision for automobile parking; rather, it should allow only for the transfer of commuters from BRT vehicles as well as pedestrian access and some sort of "drop-off" capacity near enough to the platforms to provide reasonable access. Consequently, the negative impacts and costs of such a transfer station should be relatively limited. Conversely, the likely benefits should be extensive, including:

- Providing significantly shorter commute times for Hudson Line-bound commuters from Rockland and other west-of-Hudson areas, when compared to the current proposal for an elaborate BRT roadway leading to the existing Tarrytown station;
- Easy pedestrian access to mass transit for the hundreds of housing units within walking distance to the proposed station and the resultant reduction in automobile use and pollution. Moreover, such access would offer a type of mitigation for the various negative environmental impacts generated by the project that are suffered most intensely by the residents in closest proximity to the bridge;
- The elimination of noise, air and visual pollution that would otherwise impact residents along the currently proposed BRT roadway;
- Elimination of negative traffic and other impacts likely to be caused by the proposed BRT roadway in the vicinity of the Tarrytown train station;
- Pedestrian access for reverse Hudson Line commuters to the numerous offices and other employment destinations in the vicinity of the TZB, including 303 South Broadway, the Doubletree Hotel, and the various office buildings along Rt. 119;
- The potential for higher utilization and limited transit-oriented development of nearby underutilized properties, such as the GM Training Center.

(Village of Tarrytown comments, p. 2)

2) In order to properly move the EIS process forward, a variant on alternative 4D that would include a tunnel for express mass transit and non-local truck traffic coupled with a reduced-sized replacement bridge should be studied. The BRT transfer station discussed above would still be part of this alternative. In addition, the tunnel could contain the capacity for the NYC-bound CRT, as provided on the replacement bridge in Alternative 4D, though if funding considerations dictate otherwise, costs could be reduced by eliminating this feature.

Such an alternative would have significantly lower negative impacts than those associated with the tunnel-only (or "Highway Tunnel") alternative analyzed in the Alternatives Analysis Report (the AA report) issued in 2006, since, *inter alia*, the tunnel envisioned here would have reduced ventilation requirements, a smaller footprint, lower costs, and the combined tunnel/bridge would avoid the missed exits/entrances problem. Such an alternative configuration also would reduce the costs and negative environmental impacts of the replacement bridge, since, at a minimum, the bridge would not require the added capacity needed for commuter rail. Moreover, such an alternative would have the added benefit of providing increased security, since it would provide redundant *and* distinct means of crossing the river – if, for any reason, one crossing had to be taken out of service, the other presumably would be available. Other benefits of shifting non-local truck traffic into a tunnel include reduced air and noise pollution, increased safety for autos, and faster travel times for commercial traffic. In addition, if the tunnel were completed prior to the replacement bridge, it could temporarily accommodate a significant portion of automobile traffic during construction of the connecting roadways between the new bridge and the existing landfalls, when traffic impacts are likely to be especially severe.

This alternative also differs significantly from the "CRT Tunnel" option studied in the AA report. Most importantly, the far simpler alignment and elimination of the new CRT transfer station at the existing Tarrytown Metro-North station should result in significantly lower costs and fewer negative environmental impacts. In addition, it would provide the added environmental benefits, as described above, from transferring non-local truck traffic into the tunnel.

Taken together, the above preliminary analysis suggests that the tunnel/bridge option may provide greater mitigation and other benefits, lower overall negative environmental impacts, and lower or similar costs when compared to either the alternative 4D or to the two tunnel options examined in the AA report. Moreover, it is our position that the analyses contained in the AA report, while giving some consideration to tunnel options, neither gave the requisite hard look required by SEQRA, nor are sufficient to allow for the conclusions to be extended to the tunnel/bridge alternative suggested here. Consequently, in order to properly conduct further analysis of Alternative 4d and to accurately gauge its costs and benefits, it is necessary to give a hard look the tunnel/bridge option.

3) Consideration should be given to providing mitigation measures to offset the broad negative environmental impacts associated with construction of the replacement bridge and new mass transit systems, including the likely increase in traffic and, therefore, air and noise pollution. Such measures could include the purchase and/or protection of open space.

4) The negative impacts of building the replacement bridge in closer proximity to adjoining properties, especially the Quay, must be analyzed carefully and consideration must be given to providing compensation and/or mitigation measures to offset those impacts.

(Village of Tarrytown comments, p. 3)

5) The construction of the replacement bridge/highway improvements should be conditioned on the irrevocable commitment to the concurrent construction of the BRT system.

6) Consideration must be given to creating a pedestrian bridge over I-287 linking the now disconnected parts of the Old Croton Aqueduct.

7) Highest priority must be given to creating the express roadway option for BRT in Westchester, therefore mitigating the negative impacts of BRT on already congested local roadways.

8) Provision for noise abatement must be included in the design of any replacement bridge and BRT system, as well as in the construction processes.

9) Mitigation measures for construction-related negative traffic impacts on local communities must be included.

10) Consideration must be given to the separate review and accelerated implementation of non-bridge highway improvements and other demand management measures, including, but not limited to, the climbing lane in Rockland between Central Nyack and the Palisades Parkway.