



County of Rockland
Office of County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef
NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**ROCKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO
NYS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER:
“NEW TZ BRIDGE SHOULD HAVE MASS TRANSIT
CAPABILITY!”**

(New City, NY) In advance of the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project Scoping Meeting, held on October 27, 2011 at the Palisades Mall, Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef held a discussion with State Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald, at which time he emphasized his view that a new Tappan Zee Bridge should “advance the construction of both transit and highway alternatives concurrently.”

“Rockland County considers it a requirement that any alternative must preserve and enhance the quality of life of Rockland County residents because it will shape the future of Rockland and the region for the next 100 years,” Vanderhoef told the Commissioner. “While we recognize the advantages of a project that is focused on the Tappan Zee Bridge itself, the scope of the project must include a dedicated bus/BRT/HOV lane on the crossing and a direct BRT connection from the crossing to the Tarrytown station in order for this project to be acceptable to Rockland County.”

The following statement from the County Executive was presented Thursday evening (October 27th) at the *Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project Public Scoping Meeting*, which was held at the Palisades Mall:

County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef
Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project Public Scoping Briefing Statement
October 27, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project. Given the recent significant change in the scope of the project, it is vital that the project team provide opportunities for the public to express their input and their understandable concern.

Tonight I share some of that concern. I am pleased that the reality of a new Tappan Zee Bridge may finally be upon us. This Hudson River crossing is critical not only for Rockland County, but also for interstate commerce because it connects the Mid-Atlantic and New England states. We need to replace the bridge, and obviously, its safety and reliability is of paramount importance.

When this process began, however, I said that Rockland County considers it a requirement that any alternative **must** preserve and enhance the quality of life of Rockland County residents because it will shape the future of Rockland and the region for the next 100 years. I also said that Rockland County can only support a new crossing project that will advance the construction of both transit and highway alternatives concurrently.

Transit is vital if we hope to reduce travel times and congestion while improving air quality in the region. The new Scoping document for this project omits any reference to immediate transit on the new bridge, as well as any connection to the Tarrytown Rail station. This is cause for serious concern.

- While we recognize the advantages of a project that is focused on the Tappan Zee Bridge itself, the scope of the project must include a dedicated bus/BRT/HOV lane on the crossing and a direct BRT connection from the crossing to the Tarrytown station in order for this project to be acceptable to Rockland County.
- We must not ignore that Rockland County is currently in non-attainment for Ozone. As proposed, this replacement bridge will not improve air quality. This corridor cannot wait for transit, which may be another 20 years. This corridor is ready to be served by an east/west bus lane that meets all the goals of the project.
- Current and future mobility issues must be addressed. I have been calling for early-action projects since this project began. The need to implement early-action projects in the corridor is critical to the economy and quality of life for Rockland, the Hudson Valley and the entire region. In the interim, between now and when a new crossing project is implemented, investments must be made to improve transit from West of Hudson and reduce congestion in the corridor.
- We must ensure that the bridge design does not preclude future Commuter Rail. To that end, we must strengthen the bridge during its initial build at an estimated cost of \$200 to \$300 million to withstand future transit loads. This is discussed in the Scoping document as an option that makes good sense.
- Finally, we must see a financing plan. A real-world financing plan is more vital now than ever, and we must ensure that the cost of this project does not rest on the backs of commuters.

I was very pleased that DOT Commissioner McDonald reached out to me today to discuss this project and look forward to continued communication with her office.

I trust that the project team will seriously consider the concerns I have outlined and act accordingly. My staff will be providing detailed comments on the Scoping documents, which we hope will be included in the Environmental Impact Statement. Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to working with you as this project advances.

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