

THE CONCERNED CITIZEN

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CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

It's time that the N.Y.S. Department of Transportation got realistic about the proposed Hudson River crossing and leveled with us.

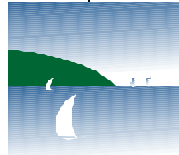
The plans currently on the table will be the greatest disruption to this area since the TZ Bridge was originally built. No information has yet been released on the elevations of the alternative bridge designs, including landfalls and foundations. This information, together with the doubling of the bridge's width, could be met with strong public objections because of serious land encroachment, increased noise levels, environmental contamination and resulting in reduced land values.

With an expected increase to 160,000 vehicles per day, we can look to a corresponding rise in the deafening roar of traffic, the pouring of more tons of pollution into our air, already grossly out of compliance with federally mandated standards, and a cost to the public of many billions of scarce dollars. In addition, a wider and/or raised highway will emit more noise and air pollution to a greater number of people.

Rockland and Westchester counties are ranked among the dirtiest counties in the U.S. in terms of dangerous cancer causing pollutants. The primary source of these poisonous toxins is from vehicle tailpipes. This situation can only worsen under current plans. There is no planned mitigation of these problems, nor has any effort been made to determine the level of illness, such as asthma, emphysema and heart disease which is related to pollution levels. When the N.Y.S Thruway was asked a few years back to conduct epidemiological studies to determine the extent of illness in this area, they refused.

Is it reasonable for the D.O.T. to claim that the air quality problem will be mitigated by a commuter rail while it is highly questionable that these funds would be available? The money wasn't there before the financial crisis and now it is even more unlikely.

The transportation and construction components of the Tappan Zee project were originally joined but have since been separated. The D.O.T. is now positioned to repeat what happened to the lower level of the George Washington Bridge. That level was originally intended for rail but is now used for more cars and trucks, many of which feed directly into the Cross Bronx Expressway (an area notorious for its high level of air pollution and related illnesses). It is highly conceivable that Rockland and Westchester could suffer the same fate as the Bronx. If the D.O.T. was truly concerned about mitigating these



problems, while still addressing our transportation needs, a tunnel option would not have been rejected.

Tunnels afford the best opportunity to scrub the air clean of disease causing pollutants. Further, tunnels are being built all over the world for less money and in less time than bridges. The tunnel option was dismissed for eleven reasons cited in the Alternative Analysis Report. These reasons have been rebutted and challenged by expert opinion (*see May, 2008 Newsletter, available on request*). But no defense was ever offered by the D.O.T.

On a recent tour of the bridge, an official from the Federal Highway Administration raised the question about using a tunnel for rail. The D.O.T. cited the same questionable eleven reasons for not considering a tunnel. Five of these reasons depend on a bridge design with realistic foundations. To date there is no such design, thus rendering these arguments invalid. Yet the D.O.T. continues to cite them as valid objections to building a tunnel. *Why?*

Bored tunnels offer the following advantages: they eliminate weather hazards and sun glare to produce safer passage; they require less maintenance and lower operational costs; they have a longer design life and can eliminate noise and air pollution. In addition, a tunnel can preserve the river bed and the scenic beauty of the Hudson River, while minimizing construction noise, dust and traffic disruption.

In this age of terrorism, a refurbished bridge and a tunnel tandem for trucks and mass transit would offer more safety and transportation alternatives than a new and larger bridge alone. In addition, wear and tear on the bridge would be greatly reduced, thereby extending its lifespan.

If you are concerned about your health and the health of your family and friends please contact your local government representatives and ask them to question the N.Y.S Department of Transportation about their refusal to include a tunnel option as an alternative solution.

Concerned Citizens for Responsible Development

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"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

