

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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Public Scoping Meeting :  
Re: :  
Environmental Impact Statement for the :  
Proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement :  
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The Staten Island  
Hotel  
Harbor Room and  
Ballroom  
1415 Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, New York

October 5, 2004  
6:00 p.m.

B e f o r e:

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Bridge Program Manager  
The United States Coast Guard

MAURA FITZPATRICK  
Moderator  
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates

KEN HESS  
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For The United States Coast Guard:

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Ernest Feemster

For Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates:

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For Louis Berger Group:

Ken Hess

For Parsons Brinckerhoff:

Judy Versenyi

For Port Authority of New York and New Jersey:

Jim Blackmore

Steve Coleman

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. FITZPATRICK: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, if you would take your seats.

Good evening.

On behalf of The United States Coast Guard, I'm glad you are all here this evening and welcome you to this second half of our Public Scoping Meeting for today. We had a session earlier today and we are getting together tomorrow night in Elizabeth, New Jersey to have scoping meetings there as well.

My name is Maura Fitzpatrick and I am facilitating this evening's meeting.

We are going to begin with a short presentation of twenty-five minutes and after that we will take the statements from the members of the public.

And if you haven't yet and you're interested in speaking, you need to fill out one of these blue cards at the registration desk in order to speak. And we will call you in the order that you sign up.

I'll give the groundrules when

We are finished with our presentation.

But for the moment if you're interested in using the restrooms, if you go by the registration table, they're on your right, and the folks at the registration table can point you in that direction.

And I think that that's it for now except that I want to very much welcome you and introduce you to Gary Kassof, who is the Bridge Program Manager for The United States Coast Guard.

MR. KASSOF: Thank you, Maura.

And I too welcome you all to tonight's meeting for an important part of the EIS process.

For the record, this meeting is part of the environmental review process for the Proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement Project. This review is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, otherwise known as NEPA, and the applicable regulations implementing NEPA as set forth in Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1500.

This is one of two scoping

meetings that are being held in communities nearest to the bridge for this environmental review process. The other meeting will be held tomorrow, October 6th, at the Elizabeth City Hall, Elizabeth, New Jersey, with sessions from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and then again at 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Let me first introduce the participants to you.

I along with Ernie Feemster, who is off to my right, represent The United States Coast Guard which is now an agency within the Department of Homeland Security. The Coast Guard is responsible for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, in accordance with the laws and regulations I cited earlier.

The Coast Guard is directing a team of consultants working on the preparation of this EIS and you have met or will meet many of them this evening.

There are numerous federal, state and local agencies with expertise or jurisdiction in the environmental review process

that will ensure that the studies and evaluations for the EIS are in conformance with existing laws and regulations.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is the project sponsor. The Port Authority submitted a Preliminary Bridge Permit Application to The Coast Guard in June of 2004 pursuant to the General Bridge Act of 1946. In a few moments Ken Hess, the Project Manager for The Coast Guard's consultant team, will be providing you more information on the bridge project itself and some of the Port Authority's reasons for making this application.

You, the public, are an essential part of the process and we are here tonight to hear your comments, your perspectives and your recommendations.

As you have seen, we have informational boards and project staff available in the Open House to listen to your questions and provide answers whenever possible, along with background information. We also have materials about the project at the sign-in area for you to review and to take home with you. And here in

this area of the meeting we will be taking your comments for the formal record following this presentation.

For those of you who have not been to a scoping meeting before, the purpose of a scoping meeting is to gather information to help establish the scope of the environmental review that we are undertaking. As such, we will not respond to your statements here but we will do so in the ensuing scoping and EIS documentation. In other words, we are here to listen to you.

These are some of the laws and regulations that govern this environmental review. Because the waterway crossed by the Goethals Bridge, the Arthur Kill, is a navigable water of the United States, The Coast Guard is responsible for consideration of issuance of a bridge permit and for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

With that as a background, I would like to introduce Ken Hess of the consultant team to continue the presentation.

MR. HESS: Thank you, Gary.

Just give me a moment here to take a drink. I am fighting a cold right now so if I cough or something, please bear with me.

I'm going to briefly go over the topics that are shown up here which is the bulk of my presentation.

I'll begin by talking about the background history of the Goethals Bridge. And then we'll talk a bit about the EIS process that we will be going through.

Then I'll talk about the purpose and need for the Goethals Bridge improvements as well as the related project goals.

Then I'll talk some about the types of preliminary alternatives that we will be evaluating as well as the methodologies that will be going through to evaluate them.

Then I'll be talking about some of the potential environmental issues that we'll be analyzing, and also an upcoming schedule of events. And I'll be finishing up some elements of our public participation program.

Now I want to reiterate that we have more information for you in the Open House

area and I hope that you'll take advantage of the staff there to learn more about all of these items.

Members of The Coast Guard consultant team that you'll see around here tonight are wearing name tags similar to what I'm wearing.

The construction of the Goethals Bridge was completed in 1928 making it one of the early capital projects undertaken by The Port Authority which was created in 1921.

The design of the bridge has remained virtually unchanged since its initial construction, and by the 1990s The Port Authority determined it to be functionally obsolete.

As a result, The Port Authority proposed construction of a second bridge on the south side of the existing bridge. Under this proposal the existing bridge would have carried New Jersey-bound traffic and the new structure would have carried Staten Island-bound vehicles.

A third lane for buses and ridesharing vehicles would have been provided each way, as well as emergency shoulders, a

bicycle/pedestrian lane and the potential to accommodate future transit.

The Coast Guard, as Federal lead agency, then published a Draft EIS in 1995 and a Final EIS in 1997. The FEIS documented serious deterioration of service during peak hours in the No-Action Alternative.

However, the project was ultimately not funded and no bridge permit was issued.

In the years following completion of the FEIS The Port Authority reassessed its needs at the Goethals Bridge taking into account a variety of recent changes in conditions. As a result, The Port Authority proposed a Goethals Bridge Modernization Program in September of 2003.

Now, as Gary just mentioned, The Port Authority then submitted a Preliminary Bridge Permit Application to The Coast Guard for a new replacement bridge on June 3rd of this year. This action officially triggered the need to comply with NEPA, with The Coast Guard to serve as the Federal lead agency once again.

The Coast Guard has made a determination that a full Environmental Impact Statement is required for this project.

Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft EIS was published in The Federal Register on August 10th of this year. As a result of that NOI, we are all here today attending this public scoping meeting.

Now, the chart that you see up here shows the progression of steps that will be undertaken throughout the EIS process until the final decision is made on this proposal. You can take a closer look at this on a board in the Open House area.

We are currently in the interagency public scoping step, which is this one right here (indicating), which will help us to better understand the issues and concerns of the regulatory and review agencies and the general public. The understanding gained during scoping will then help us to formulate the alternatives to be studied and the methods to be used in performing the environmental impact evaluations.

As most of you here probably know, this effort is taking place in a time when Staten Island continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in New York State with many traffic and development issues.

The City of Elizabeth and Union County in New Jersey are attracting new developments and economic activity, in addition to the area's role as transportation hub for the region.

It is in this context that The Port Authority's stated purpose and need for proposing improvements to the Goethals Bridge addresses deficiencies in the existing bridge.

The first issue with the bridge is that its lanes are narrow as shown in all of these photos on this slide (indicating). The travel lanes on the bridge and its approaches are ten feet wide which is below the standard lane width of twelve feet.

There is also a pronounced bend in the alignment of the New Jersey approach to the bridge which tends to cause drivers of wider trucks and buses traveling in the right lane to

encroach on the left lane, similar to the situation shown on the second photo on this slide (indicating).

The next issue is that the lane width hasn't changed since its original construction when vehicular sizes and traffic volumes were much smaller in comparison to today's conditions.

The bridge has seen a marked increase in traffic over the years and an increase in truck and bus size as well.

Also there are no emergency shoulders as you can also see in all of the photos on the slide on both sides (indicating).

This condition often results in significant delays as stalled vehicles and those involved in minor accidents have no ability to pull off to the side to allow traffic to continue unimpeded over the bridge.

Safety concerns have also mounted as accident rates on the Goethals Bridge are the highest of the three Port Authority Staten Island bridges and are higher than the rates for comparable facilities in both New York

State and New Jersey.

The design of the bridge is also deficient from seismic protection and security perspectives. Given that earthquake activity is a possibility in the region and that there is need for enhanced measures in light of recent heightened security levels, these concerns have taken on increased importance in recent years.

Also, pedestrian access across the bridge has been unavailable for nearly a decade due to deterioration of the sidewalk and there is a desire to reintroduce pedestrian and bicycle access across the bridge.

There are also extended and continuing service disruptions for essential, periodic rehabilitation, as shown in both the photos on this slide (indicating). This periodic rehabilitation results in increasing costs, which have already averaged \$6.7 million annually since 1987. Repair costs are expected to continue to increase in future years.

The existing bridge configuration also precludes any type of priority transit lanes which could help alleviate growing

traffic pressure.

And, finally, because of the conditions that I've just described, the bridge operates below the threshold of acceptable conditions.

The Port Authority anticipates that without improvements to the bridge traffic conditions will continue to deteriorate in the future. This also impacts the entire regional transportation system. Any type of an incident or closure on the Goethals Bridge has a ripple effect on the other Staten Island bridges as well.

This was illustrated earlier this year when a five-vehicle accident on the Goethals Bridge necessitated closure of the bridge for hours causing traffic to reroute until a second five-vehicle accident on the Outerbridge Crossing further contributed to a massive traffic backup and hours of delay throughout the region.

Now, in response to the various elements of purpose and need that I've just listed, a number of specific goals have been established by The Port Authority. These goals

are:

To eliminate design deficiencies and functional obsolescence of the bridge and its approaches;

To avoid the disruptive and costly rehabilitation required to maintain structural integrity;

To reduce roadway congestion and delays on the bridge and to enhance its operational flexibility;

To address local and regional goods movement needs, especially in light of the revitalization of the Howland Hook area;

To create the capability to accommodate a High Occupancy Vehicle or HOV lane and transit capability should such options become feasible;

To restore and enhance the pedestrian and bicycle access for the bridge;

To improve structural security of the bridge and regional redundancy within the State Island transportation system;

And, finally, to minimize any environmental, economic and social consequences

of the improvement that is ultimately undertaken.

So what happens from here?

Today and through November 5, 2004 we are looking for your feedback on the draft purpose and need and goals for the project, as well as suggestions for potential alternatives that can meet the purpose and need and fulfill the goals. Once this is done, the process of evaluating alternatives involves three separate levels of analysis.

At the first level, which you see up here (indicating), we look at all potential alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, and screen them to determine each one's feasibility and ability to satisfy the purpose and need.

Those alternatives that are clearly infeasible due to major flaws or do not have the potential to minimally satisfy most project goals will be eliminated from further consideration.

Those that remain are developed in terms of alignment, system components, operations and other factors, and in some cases

individual alternatives may be combined to create multimodal alternatives. These then go through a comparative screening process, which is shown right here (indicating), to allow us to identify advantages and shortcomings of each alternative and highlight key differences in terms of their performance.

At the conclusion of the comparative screening process, alternatives that best satisfy the project purpose and need and meet the project goals will be advanced for detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS, down here.

We are identifying preliminary alternatives for the initial screening process through a variety of sources including:

The comments received from agencies and the general public during the scoping process;

Previous Port Authority engineering and planning studies for this bridge as well as other Staten Island bridges and transportation facilities;

The Final EIS prepared for the previously proposed Staten Island Bridge Program

EIS that I described earlier, which provided a very broad set of alternatives within the region;

Also regional transportation plans and studies;

And analysis of existing and future transportation demand in the study area, as well as transportation system gaps and deficiencies.

The alternatives that are currently being identified and which will soon be evaluated via the initial screening process are intended to be broad and inclusive of a variety of modal, structural and non-structural solutions.

The No-Action Alternative, as required by NEPA, will evaluate potential impacts of future conditions in the study area if no action is taken to replace or improve the Goethals Bridge other than regular maintenance. This alternative also includes other transportation projects and improvements that are programmed and committed to in the region.

Another option is a bridge rehabilitation for significant extension of the

existing bridge's lifespan.

Another alternative is The Port Authority's proposal to construct a replacement bridge south of the existing bridge and to remove the existing structure.

Other structural replacement or improvement alternatives will also be considered. These may include:

A replacement bridge north of the existing bridge;

A new parallel bridge with continued operation of the existing bridge;

New twin replacement bridges, one either north or south of the existing bridge and one in the existing bridge's right-of-way;

New crossing with fixed-guideway transit or roadway-based transit options;

Or a new crossing with supplemental ferry service.

Finally, a variety of non-structural alternatives will be considered including:

Enhanced traffic demand

management programs;

Use of congestion pricing  
techniques;

Traffic system management  
programs;

And use of transit service  
options that do not require new infrastructure.

Now, this map shows the proposed  
study area levels that will be used in the  
various environmental studies.

The primary study area, which is  
the inner area shown with the solid line  
(indicating), is proposed to cover approximately  
four hundred to five hundred feet north and south  
of the existing bridge right-of-way for assessing  
direct impacts to environmental resources such as  
wetlands and ecological resources, contaminated  
properties and cultural resources. The end points  
of this study area are located at approximately  
the interchange with the New Jersey Turnpike on  
the west and the interchange with the West Shore  
Expressway on the east (indicating).

The secondary study area, which  
is this larger area shown in the dash line

(indicating), is proposed to cover approximately a half mile in all directions from the bridge and its approaches in order to ensure that indirect and socioeconomic impacts are adequately assessed. This area generally extends from a point on Bay Way halfway between the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 1/9 --

MS. FITZPATRICK: You hit the wrong button.

MR. HESS: I hit the wrong button.

(There was a brief pause in the proceedings.)

MR. HESS: -- between the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 1 and 9 on the west, and along South Avenue on the east.

Now, specifically for the analysis of transportation, there are two broader study areas. The Primary Traffic Study Area, which is the area shown on this slide, includes the immediate counties where traffic and transportation impacts may occur. The Regional Traffic Study Area, which is the broadest study area, encompasses all or portions of twenty-eight

total counties in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut that are included in the transportation demand model that is to be used.

The graphic that is shown here is also available for closer inspection in our Open House area.

Now, the key environmental issues that will be examined in the EIS are shown on this list. For each, direct and indirect impacts will be considered as will cumulative impacts as appropriate.

I will not further discuss these issues in this presentation, but you can learn more about these issues from the consultant staff in the Open House area.

Our anticipated schedule for the EIS process is shown on this slide.

The first key date was an agency scoping meeting held on this past September 14th.

Our two public scoping meetings, including this session, are being held this week.

Another important date is the close of the scoping comment period on November 5th. Therefore, we request that you submit any

official comments related to this EIS process by that date. All the comments that we receive will assist us in defining the scope for the EIS.

The next major date is the public release and distribution of the Draft EIS which is targeted for sometime in early 2006. At that time we will hold public hearings similar to this meeting tonight and have a comment period to hear your feedback before finalizing the document.

Now, there's an ongoing role for the public to play as we carry out this Draft EIS process and related studies. I hope some of you have had a chance to look at the project website at [www.goethalseis.com](http://www.goethalseis.com). It will be updated frequently and we welcome your feedback on it. Further information about the website is available in the Open House area.

Those of you on our mailing list have received our first newsletter and meeting announcement flyer. We will keep you apprised of project developments on the website and in future newsletters. Those of you who are here tonight who were not on our mailing list will be added

for future mailings.

We will be holding public information sessions between now and the completion of the Draft EIS to receive public input on our alternatives evaluation process.

We will be establishing a Stakeholder Committee for organizational representatives. This Committee will meet periodically to provide input and to help us disseminate information about the project to a broader audience.

And, lastly, as I mentioned earlier, we will hold hearings to receive feedback on the Draft EIS once it is completed.

We hope you will continue to participate and that you encourage your friends, neighbors and colleagues to do the same.

Now Gary will return to let you know the various ways you can submit your comments.

MR. KASSOF: Thanks, Ken.

Along with providing your oral comments this evening, there are a variety of ways you can provide feedback during the comment

period.

At the registration area you were given a comment sheet such as this (indicating). You can fill that out and leave it with the staff this evening or mail it or fax it as indicated on the sheet.

You can also mail or e-mail your comments to the address on the screen.

All ways to contact us are available on this comment sheet.

The comment period again ends at the close of business November 5, 2004. So please bear that in mind. We do hope to hear from you.

That concludes our formal presentation. So without further delay, Maura will get us started on the public comment segment of the meeting.

I along with The Coast Guard consultant staff will be here available to listen to your comments.

I thank you in advance for your participation.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Okay. thank you.

So as I said earlier, if you are interested in speaking this evening, you need to register with one of these blue cards. And I will call those speakers in the order that they sign up.

When it's your turn to speak, if you could, we would appreciate it if you would come up to this microphone that I'm indicating here and address your comments to the stenographer who is sitting next to it.

If for some reason you have any problems coming up to the microphone, just let us know and we'll bring a mike to you.

Since the purpose of this meeting is to hear feedback from you, in this room we won't be responding to your comments. However, in the Open House area we have staff there to answer questions, to talk to you, to give you background. But just remember that the comments that you make in the informal area won't be on the public record.

And Gary gave you the other options that you can do if you wish to get in touch with us in a way other than coming and

speaking at the mike.

And I'm going to limit your speaking time to five minutes and I'll indicate at the end of it if you've run over your time. However, if we have only a couple of speakers and if you have more to say, you can sign up again, and if time permits, we'll certainly be happy to hear you again.

And -- let's see. If you have a written copy of your statement, if you could give it to our stenographer, that is always helpful.

And this portion of this meeting lasts until 8:30. And we will be here until 8:30. So if we take a break, we don't have speakers, you can go back to the Open House area, and if you change your mind and you want to speak, we'll be here and we'll be happy to listen.

You are also welcome to leave the room. We'll call your name in the other room as well.

So I think with that I will call the first speaker and go over here.

The first person that's registered is Jeff Elmer and then followed by

Lawrence Kudla, please.

So, Jeff, if you could come up to our microphone and introduce yourself and give your organization.

MR. JEFFREY ELMER: Jeff Elmer with the General Contractors Association of New York.

I am pleased to submit comments to the U.S. Coast Guard today on this first hearing on the preparation of the EIS for the proposed replaced of the Goethals Bridge.

My organization, The General Contractors Association, represents the heavy construction industry active in New York City. Our members build the bridges, tunnels, roadways and subway systems that are the foundation of this great City.

It is clear that the Goethals Bridge is obsolete. The lane width hasn't changed since the original construction when vehicle sizes and traffic volumes were much smaller in comparison to today.

You've also heard in the presentation that there are far more accidents on

the Goethals than any other bridge on Staten Island. When vehicles break down, traffic can back up throughout the Island because there is no safe place to pull over.

And as we saw in the presentation, when the Goethals first opened, traffic conditions were far different than they are today. Now there is a crying need for dedicated HOV bus lanes, bike and pedestrian access and future transit access to help address the traffic congestion that plagues neighborhoods throughout the Island and the City.

A new bridge is the only way to allow us to fix these long-standing problems.

With the designation of Howland Hook as a Military Port of Embarkation, it's important that we have a bridge that can also accommodate the movement of large military equipment as well as freight. Thus a new bridge, a modern bridge, is also an urgent matter of national security.

The replacement of the Goethals will also lead to jobs and economic security for the many residents of Staten Island who are

members of the New York City building trades, including many people in this room today.

It is estimated that the construction alone will put six hundred men and women to work with an additional seven hundred jobs for construction material suppliers and other support services for the project.

The people that work on this project are the backbone of so many middle class neighborhoods in the borough. Many of the men and women who will work on this job will, in fact, be Staten Island residents and many of the businesses that will benefit will be local companies.

We fully understand that the residents of Staten Island need to be sure that the plan for building for this new span includes all possible measures to ensure that impacts are minimized on local communities. On other projects The Port Authority has insisted that ultra low sulfur diesel fuel is used in construction equipment to reduce diesel emissions.

The PA has also developed and implemented comprehensive plans that prevent

unnecessary dust and noise at construction sites. Our contractors have a lot of experience in projects like these and they'll take all steps needed to be good neighbors if and when this construction moves forward in the future.

And the EIS should certainly include a full range of measures that The PA and its contractors will have to take to make sure that this construction project is environmentally friendly and respectful of the impacted neighborhoods.

It costs more and more to maintain and repair the Goethals. In fact, one of our members, Kiska Construction, is redecking the bridge now. While the contractors in our Association will gladly do this work to keep the Goethals standing and in service, it is simply poor public policy to redeck and patch and fix the span without making a plan to replace the structure in the long run.

Bridges can't be designed to last forever and this one appears to be nearing the end of its useful life.

We have to move quickly through

the EIS process and get a new bridge into construction on as fast a timeline as possible.

Thanks for your time.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you,  
Mr. Elmer.

(Applause.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: Okay. Next up is Lawrence Kudla, please.

MR. LAWRENCE KUDLA: Yes. Good evening. My name is Lawrence Kudla. I'm the Recording Secretary of Local 282 of the Teamsters and the Business Representative for the Staten Island area.

Local 282 represents around eight hundred men and working Teamsters and their families in Staten Island and we speak in favor of this project.

Staten Island has long been considered the forgotten borough. Right? The major projects here are major sewer projects. And we see this as a new renaissance, as new growth - right? - because this bridge will create almost \$70 million in wages that will be paid to around twelve hundred and ninety working jobs. And the

ancillary jobs will be around three hundred and eighty jobs which will create about \$328 million.

As you know, New York is in economic crisis and the only way that we can come out of that is by creating more jobs and creating good-paying jobs that we in the unions and the New York City building trades create.

Our workers make excellent money. And by making that money we can put that money back right into the mainstream of Staten Island. People can go out and buy cars, spend their money in malls.

And even that money now creates money for schools - right? - raises in the teacher's salary, fireman's salary and policeman's salary.

And as Jeff said, it's a seventy-eight year old bridge. It's in need of major repairs.

Kiska now has a \$60 million project going on on the bridge. And I was reading in one of the future Dodge Reports there's a \$250 million project slated for the rehabilitation of the Goethals Bridge.

We see a new span as the only alternative - right? - to give easy flow between Jersey and Staten Island. As everyone knows that goes to the Jersey shore, coming back is a nightmare at night. Right? You run from the Outerbridge, you run to the Goethals Bridge, you run to the Bayonne Bridge. I think we need a bridge that's going to have a multitude of lanes and that is going to be easily accessible to motorists, that we don't get road rage sitting in two lanes if cars break down.

And we see it as economic growth and impact for Staten Island.

And, in closing, I'd just like to read a short quote.

Just let me put my glasses on. That's what happens when you get old.

It's: A road that does not lead to other roads always has to be retraced unless the traveler chooses to rust at the end of it.

So let's not rust. Let's create new growth. Let's create jobs. And let's make a better society for everyone.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you,  
Mr. Kudla.

And the next speaker Richard  
Gualtieri.

MR. RICHARD GUALTIERI: I  
speak as a private citizen.

I'm in favor of this study.  
However, I would hope that the agency could also  
look at the, at least at some future point at the  
Outerbridge which has many of the same  
deficiencies and problems and carries a similar  
traffic load.

So that would be my first area  
of concern.

Another area of concern would be  
that we consider looking at adding rail, where we  
have the lift bridge presently between Staten  
Island and New Jersey, but that's opened a lot of  
the times and it's only a one track bridge. So I  
think that consideration should be given to rail.

As well as there should be a  
lane for special use such as bus-only perhaps or,  
you know, freight or some other special use.

Besides the two mixed-use lanes in each direction, there should be one lane in each direction dedicated for special uses.

There should also be consideration given to the transportation facility that would be feeding into and off of the bridge so that these do not become unduly burdened.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Gualtieri.

(Applause.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: So that is everybody that we have registered to speak. So we will stay here until 8:30. If you change your mind and you want to speak, by all means just fill out a blue card.

Otherwise, I recommend you go back to our Open House area, visit with the staff, have a cookie, have some tea, and enjoy the rest of your evening.

And go Yankees.

(At 6:35 o'clock p.m. there was a recess in the proceedings.)

(At 6:48 o'clock p.m. the

proceedings were resumed.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: Okay.

Anthony Mattei.

MR. ANTHONY MATTEI: Correct.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.

MR. ANTHONY MATTEI: I'm not a  
real speaker.

MS. FITZPATRICK: You're fine.  
Don't worry.

MR. ANTHONY MATTEI: Okay.

I don't know all your plans but  
I read a little article in The Advance. And I was  
thinking as an idea that instead of tearing down  
the bridge, because we seem to tear down things  
that are old in this country instead of keeping  
things and rebuilding, possibly - I don't know  
what the economics are involved, I have no  
numbers - but keep the bridge, rebuild it if we  
can and just use it for cars, not trucks.

And possibly build a tunnel  
close to the bridge, the existing bridge, make it  
maybe a six-lane tunnel, three lanes for trucks,  
three lanes for cars, going in one direction  
only.

And you have the rail in between in that tunnel itself so you could have trains coming through into Staten Island.

There is an existing railroad right-of-way that goes to St. George. You could possibly use it. It's been out of service for fifty years so it would need to be rebuilt.

But in Jersey you can probably have parking areas where guys or commuters can park their cars and hop a train instead of bringing cars in.

It seems to me if you build more roads and just build bridges, you're just going to have backup ten/twenty years down the road. It's happened on Staten Island. It's happened to Brooklyn.

I think we have to get away from the idea of cars and trucks all the time. It's okay to build a tunnel for the traffic, but I think we need a train also and make a commuter train, have it going either to the Mall or to St. George ferry. That's the two key spots on Staten Island. And people from there can take the ferry to Manhattan, or the central location, the Staten

Island Mall.

That's just an idea that I had instead of just tearing down things.

Okay?

Thank you very much.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Mattei.

Again, that's it for the moment. We will stay though and look forward to any other comments.

(At 6:52 o'clock p.m. there was a recess in the proceedings.)

(At 7:25 o'clock p.m. the proceedings were resumed.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: This is James Gavin.

MR. JAMES GAVIN: Hi! Greetings, everyone.

I saw -- the whole thing was very interesting about the new -- it's going to one span - right? - not two? That was the --

MS. FITZPATRICK: James, let me explain because you weren't here for our --

MR. JAMES GAVIN: Yeah. I wish I

had been here.

MS. FITZPATRICK: --

presentation.

This part of it where you are making a statement is not interactive. We can't answer your questions. If you go out into where the boards were, people will chat with you and it's fine.

What we are here today to do is to just take your formal statement and comment. So if you have a recommendation or if you an opinion on it, you can tell us here and you'll be on the record.

But we can answer your questions in the other area. It's just how the meeting works.

MR. JAMES GAVIN: Oh, yeah, I know. The MTA and the other City, the DOT meetings are like that too.

And I just thought, because I was thinking about this for a long time too, and I thought if you had one -- whether it's one or two bridges, I thought it would make sense if you had one side just for car traffic with a lane for

emergency vehicles like you have on the Route 35 bridge that took the place of the drawbridge in Perth Amboy. They have a -- it's a really nice bridge they've got there. It took -- there's one middle lane for like emergency vehicles or if a car breaks down or something. And they have two lanes on both sides, one going south and one heading north towards the Outerbridge and to North Jersey.

And I thought the new bridge to replace the Goethals should have something like that I guess on the far sides for emergency situations.

And also, in addition, to like one side just for car traffic, the other side should be maybe for like, like one or two lanes for just trucks and buses, and then reserve -- have enough room on there to handle like trains, like freight lines, commuter trains, light rail like the subway-type trains so that you could have commuter and freight traffic between Jersey and Staten Island.

And also maybe like a walkway on there for pedestrians and cyclists. Like in

San Francisco they have that on the Golden Gate Bridge, like they have on there.

And -- because I guess -- first they were saying two and now it looks like, the paper says it's easier to do it with one, just one big bridge instead of two because of the geography and the -- the typography and land and all of that.

But that's basically it.

And I thought -- I guess I was imagining like a ten-lane bridge maybe. I know the paper said six. But I figured you might need a lane for emergency problems or emergency vehicles, I mean anything that could happen.

And enough room for a train and enough lanes for trucks and buses, like one area solely for trucks and buses and maybe for taxis.

But that was just my opinion on it. And that's all I really wanted to say.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you very much.

MR. JAMES GAVIN: You're welcome.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Good night.

(At 7:30 o'clock p.m. there was a recess in the proceedings.)

(At 7:50 o'clock p.m. the proceedings were resumed.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: This is John Luisi.

MR. JOHN LUISI: Thank you.

I come here as a concerned resident, community activist from the St. George area of Staten Island where we are lucky enough to have the transportation hub for Staten Island - the ferry, the bus lines and the currently only one train line terminates there.

Essentially, the bridge, as everybody is aware, is tremendously uncomfortable at the very least to drive across, although I was commenting that there is a certain perverse pleasure on seeing some of the people driving Lincoln Navigators trying to fit into one lane.

(Laughter.)

MR. JOHN LUISI: You know, be that as it may, the structure is very inadequate, and not only for the width of the roadway. In order to bring the transportation concept to

anywhere near where it should be today, where the reality is today, we need to plan for more public transportation, especially a railway, perhaps a dedicated express bus lane. Even if it is completely empty when there are times when the other road lanes are backed up, let people think that maybe if they were on an express, they might be moving along.

And then another really key issue, especially with the perspective of both recreational use as well as for, everything's being phrased now in terms of, in the event of an emergency.

There should also be pedestrian and bicycle access across the bridge in a meaningful way, the way it is across the George Washington Bridge.

And it also ought to be planned in such a way that it doesn't necessitate some bizarre decision like was recently made with the George Washington Bridge to close access from eleven p.m. to six a.m. every day for security purposes, although I'm not sure quite how pedestrians and cyclists pose more of a treat to

the existence of a bridge than trucks that can carry tremendous cargo across, have that explode or whatever.

But in any event, we really need to make sure that we plan for the direction of the future, which is alternatives to cars simply traveling in ever greater numbers to the extent that the roadways and bridges can accommodate them.

Certainly there is a choke point there now to some degree. There's a greater choke point at the Outerbridge Crossing where more people tend to come back into Staten Island.

But simply allowing for a bridge that can handle more traffic without providing for alternatives will do everybody a disservice.

Thank you.

MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you,  
Mr. Luisi.

(At 7:55 o'clock p.m. there was a recess in the proceedings.)

(At 8:30 o'clock p.m. the proceedings were resumed.)

MS. FITZPATRICK: This is the

official close of this public scoping session,  
October 5, 2004.

(At 8:30 o'clock p.m., the  
proceedings were concluded.)

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COUNTY OF NEW YORK    )

I, ROY A. SELENSKE, a Certified Shorthand  
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public  
within and for the State of New York, do  
hereby certify that the foregoing pages 1  
through 81 taken at the time and place  
aforesaid, is a true and correct  
transcription of my shorthand notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
my name this 12th day of October, 2004.

---

ROY A. SELENSKE, C.S.R.

\* \* \*

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