



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVES ANNOUNCE SUPPORT FOR NEW TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE, AGREEMENT WITH GOVERNOR ON MASS TRANSIT FRAMEWORK

Westchester County Executive Robert P. Astorino, Rockland County Executive Scott Vanderhoef and Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell today announced their intention to vote yes at the next New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) meeting to include the new Tappan Zee Bridge project in the region's long-range transportation plan. A unanimous vote qualifies the project for federal funds.

The county executives said they support the project based on a framework developed in conjunction with Gov. Andrew Cuomo that addresses the need for mass transit on the bridge when it is built and in the future.

Under the terms of the framework:

- Dedicated bus lanes will be incorporated on the bridge from the start.
- The bridge will be constructed with mass transit capacity compatible with a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and Commuter Rail Transit.
- A Regional Transit Task Force will be created to study costs and options for regional transit, including commuter rail and a BRT system on the bridge and key portions of the Westchester-Rockland corridor.
- The Task Force will issue recommendations in one year, with a plan for short-term steps that can be considered for immediate commencement, as well as long-term plans for transit solutions.
- Incentives will be created for contractors that could be used to reinvest in regional mass transit or to moderate impact on toll-payers.

"I have been a strong supporter on the need for a new bridge but I've been equally strong on the need for some form of mass transit as a way to reduce congestion and pollution," said Astorino. "Under the framework we announce today, mass transit will not be an afterthought in the building of the bridge. With plans to have

mass transit as part of the new Tappan Zee Bridge we're not waiting five years to start thinking about it, we're moving forward now."

"I am pleased to join with the governor and my fellow county executives in this important TZ Bridge agreement which outlines steps for constructing a mass-transit ready structure, as well as committing to moving forward in the future to address the region's mass transit needs," said Vanderhoef. "This agreement also commits to exploring toll discounts for regional residents."

"The new Tappan Zee bridge project is going to provide a jolt to the economic vitality of the region, both in terms of the thousands of construction and engineering jobs, as well as the increased commerce for the region that will result from having a state-of-the-art new bridge," said O'Dell.

In addition, the governor and county executives agreed to establish a working group of Thruway, state, federal and local officials to examine ways to keep toll increases to the minimum necessary, including maximizing federal support, expanding discount programs for regional residents, and financing mechanisms that lower the cost of credit and borrowing.