



NEWS RELEASE

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New Study Examines how Planned Transit Stations can Most Benefit Rockland Communities along I-287 Corridor

Provides Recommendations for Transit-Friendly Development

Concludes State and Municipalities Must Work Together to Determine Final Plans; Urges Public Engagement Workshops

A new study released today by the Regional Plan Association examines how four possible sites for new transit stations along the Rockland Corridor of I-287 as part of the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement or rehabilitation can be designed to maximize ridership and benefit the communities they will be built in.

The 19-page study – the result of a day-long “charrette” with local stakeholders and professionals – issues recommendations for transit-friendly development around future commuter rail or bus rapid transit station areas in Suffern, Airmont/Montebello, Nanuet and the Palisades Mall.

The recommendations for the four areas studied include:

- **Suffern:** Creating an open-air station in the middle of the Village of Suffern and promoting mixed-use redevelopment around the new station;
- **Airmont/Montebello:** Creating a slow-speed parkway to relieve traffic at the Airmont Road/Route 59 intersection and promoting better parking design strategies to make the area more pedestrian friendly;

- **Nanuet:** Anticipating new development between Nanuet Mall and Route 59 and remaking the Route 59 “strip” by promoting street-level, pedestrian-friendly uses.
- **Palisades Mall:** Move the station farther to the east to minimize interference with mall “ring road” traffic and providing a direct pedestrian link across parking lots to the upper level of the mall.

A full list of recommendations, along with design sketches, can be found in the full report here: <http://www.rpa.org/pdf/RPATZCorridorFinal.pdf>.

“These recommendations should stimulate investment in underutilized properties around the planned stations, create new transit connections and promote pedestrian-friendly spaces,” said Jeffrey M. Zupan, report co-author and Senior Fellow for Transportation for Regional Plan Association.

The recommendations arose from a day-long workshop where over one hundred local elected officials, citizen activists, county and municipal planners and the New York State Department of Transportation convened in the Orange and Rockland auditorium for a briefing and a bus tour of the four study areas. Attendees were then organized into working groups for each area and, with the help of a facilitator and designer, sketched out a set of design and planning ideas for future station area plans.

The report concludes that there are many challenges in matching land use with transit options and that the New York State Department of Transportation must work with local municipalities to iron out land use and zoning issues. The report urges the State to use a similar workshop model to engage stakeholders in determining final plans.

“There is strong interest from the community to sensibly design these new stations,” said Rob Lane, Director of Design for Regional Plan Association who conceived of the workshop. “We hope State DOT continues to work with stakeholders to gain consensus. We’ve seen this type of public engagement workshop work in other areas of the region – it can work here as well.”

The New York State Department of Transportation is in the final stages of selecting the whether the Tappan Zee Bridge is to be replaced or rehabilitated and to

decide on which transit mode would be built into the Bridge. Station locations for new transit service – either Commuter Rail or Bus Rapid Transit – have been identified only tentatively and comprehensive planning for the land uses around the stations have not been conducted.

RPA wishes to extend thanks to Orange and Rockland Utilities, United Water New York and Provident Bank, who, through their generous support, made this study, “Rockland County Tappan Zee Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Study” possible. The initiative was guided by a steering committee convened by the Rockland Economic Development Corporation. The full report can be found at <http://www.rpa.org/pdf/RPATZCorridorFinal.pdf>.

- 30 -

Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent, not-for-profit regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business, and government sectors to take action.