

Appendix A:

Village of South Nyack Economic Sustainability Initiative

DRAFT – September 30, 2014

The Village had identified a unique opportunity to further the goals of this Comprehensive Plan for Economic Sustainability and Cultural Sustainability. This initiative proposes to redesign the New York State Thruway (I87/I287) Exit 10 interchange and use the freed-up land for real property development to bring revenue to the Village. It also proposes to create a “cap” or deck over the Thruway to reconnect the two sides of the Village and create a village “green”.

In the 1950’s, the extension of the Thruway to the Hudson River literally bisected South Nyack. A large tract of land was taken from the Village for the oversized Exit 10 interchange. The original intent, as reported in a January 20, 1956 New York Times article, was for the New Jersey Turnpike to connect with I287 at this juncture. This clearly did not happen. Instead Exit 10 has degraded into an unsightly junkyard for Thruway equipment and materials (Figure 1). This use is grossly inconsistent with the Village’s residential character.



Figure 1

New York State's current project to replace the Tappan Zee Bridge stemmed from a larger proposal for improvements to the I287 corridor from Suffern to Port Chester. The corridor project, before it was scaled back to just the bridge, had proposed to redesign and reconstruct the Exit 10 interchange. This would shrink the interchange and free up land. Figure 2 shows a possible redesign the Thruway Authority was considering. Unfortunately, the design proposed to use the freed-up space for a maintenance facility and State Police barracks. This use does not generate any revenue or growth opportunities for the municipality nor does it maximize the value of the space for all stakeholders.

The Village favors redesigning and shrinking the interchange. However that land is rightly South Nyack's and should be returned to the Village.

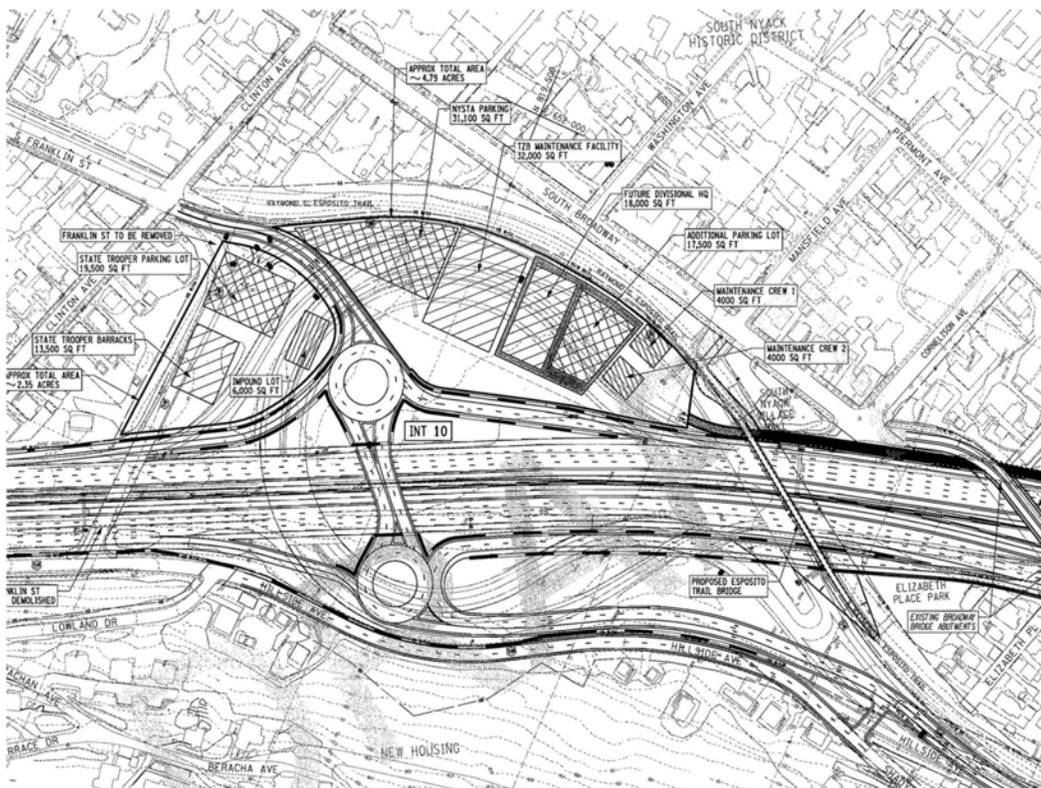


Figure 2

Other interstate highway initiatives across America, implemented since the creation of I287, have demonstrated that smart, innovative, ecologically-sound, and value-enhancing construction that is mutually beneficial to the transportation authorities and their community stakeholders can occur, rather than the imposition of unilaterally conceived stilted and outdated concepts from the 1950's.

The initiative proposed by the Village of South Nyack sees the TZB/I287 project as presenting a unique opportunity to provide a beneficial economic and recreational component to the river villages region. Our initiative is expected to maximize the value to the municipality of this new opportunity being presented by the reconstruction of the TZB and I287.

The Village of South Nyack proposes repurposing the Exit 10 area to build a mixed-use development, including a “cap” or deck, covering I287. This would provide tremendous benefits:

- Reclaims poorly used land for economic development and job creation
- Reconnects South Nyack’s hillside and riverside neighborhoods
- Re-establishes a Village center, becoming a hub interfacing to the new Tappan Zee Bridge
- Provides a unique recreational environment for the region
- A green project that improves the environment

The initiative proposes to use the otherwise wasted prime real estate of over 40 acres of airspace above I287 as it bisects the village, plus the freed-up land from the reduction of the Exit 10 interchange, as a leading example of how to rebuild a community; to create an economically sustainable, ecologically-sensitive, and esthetically appropriate asset. There are many benefits, including re-establishing the physical integrity of the municipality, to provide opportunities for appropriate light commercial activities, a central park and cultural space, as well as helping mitigate the negative impacts to the residents of this municipality caused by the new TZB project.

The initiative proposes to use the area to the northeast of the interchange, vacated by the redesign of the Exit 10 interchange for commercial development. The cap over the Thruway would be used primarily as a linear park, to become a new Village center or “green”. The commercial development provides a revenue stream to Village, replacing somewhat the commercial ratables lost 60 years ago. The cap reconnects the two sides of the Village, healing the gaping wound.

The unique topography of the I287 corridor in South Nyack lends itself to this concept (Figure 3). The hillside neighborhood naturally flows down to the park, providing many points of access. The downhill side presents a sharp drop, which actually presents an opportunity to creatively incorporate structural elements to transition from deck level to street level.



Figure 3

Construction (buildings/facilities) sensitive to this unique environment can provide:

- Commercial property to generate an alternative revenue stream for the Village
- Transitions from the street level to the “cap” level park.
- Opportunities for light commercial uses, serving the complex, the local neighborhood, and visitors.

An example of a mixed-use structure is New York City’s Highline (Figure 4), which converted an abandoned elevated rail line into a park. This example illustrates the use of buildings to transition differences in elevations, similar to the proposal for South Nyack. The adjoining buildings, with their second floors at park level, have enjoyed tremendous increases in value since the construction of the park. The neighborhood has been significantly revitalized.

<http://www.thehighline.org/>



Figure 4

The initiative’s objectives intend to create an income stream to the Village from the new development. In typical real estate development, the property is sold to private entities and the government levies real estate taxes on the property. The Village believes it may be more lucrative for the Village to instead retain ownership of the property and collect rental income.

The Village believes that providing a class A office building in the development would most likely provide maximum value and greatest return on investment for the Village. The only class A office space in Rockland County is the Blue Hill complex in Orangetown. It is believed that there is a demand in Rockland County for additional class A space. This project would provide highly desirable class A office space in a park-like environment with stunning river views. Placing the

commercial development in the park environment enhances its desirability and value. It also helps minimize its aesthetic impact on the community, balancing the economic needs of the village with our desire to maintain the Village's character.

The Village does not foresee creating a new "downtown". The Village of Nyack's business district serves South Nyack residents sufficiently and South Nyack does not want to compete with Nyack. The traffic and parking associated with retail uses would most likely be an undue burden on the Village. However, some light retail may prove beneficial, for example to serve the office building and the local neighborhoods, and weekend park visitors. Class A office spaces require a certain level of retail services. Types of retail uses suggested include café, patisserie, convenience mart, dry cleaners, and bicycle rental.

The Comprehensive Plan's goals include enhancing the relationship of Nyack College with the Village. Nyack College has expressed an interest in the promotion of incubator businesses associated with the college. An office facility in the village center could be used to host such businesses. This provides an ongoing tenant market for the building and enhances the college's presence in the Village.

The new Tappan Zee Bridge includes a "shared use path" (SUP) for bicycles and pedestrians. Originally, the plan had the path end on a dead-end street in a quiet residential neighborhood. The Village objected to the plan and was concerned that there was little planning to address the many impacts of the SUP on the Village. These include accommodating the expected SUP visitors, traffic, parking and restrooms. Recently the Village and State have engaged in planning to alleviate some of these concerns. The SUP is now proposed to terminate at the intersection of South Broadway and Cornellison Avenue with support facilities possibly located at the site currently occupied by Village Hall or somewhere in the Exit 10 area.

The Village's initiative would incorporate the SUP into the Exit 10 redevelopment. The Village green becomes a hub, connecting the new east-west route to the existing north-south routes, including two of the major hiking trails that transverse South Nyack: the Esposito Trail and the Long Path (Figure 5). The park will enhance the experience for these casual visitors, and enable South Nyack to continue to not only provide superior services in support of these visitors, but also may provide revenue generation opportunities from these activities.

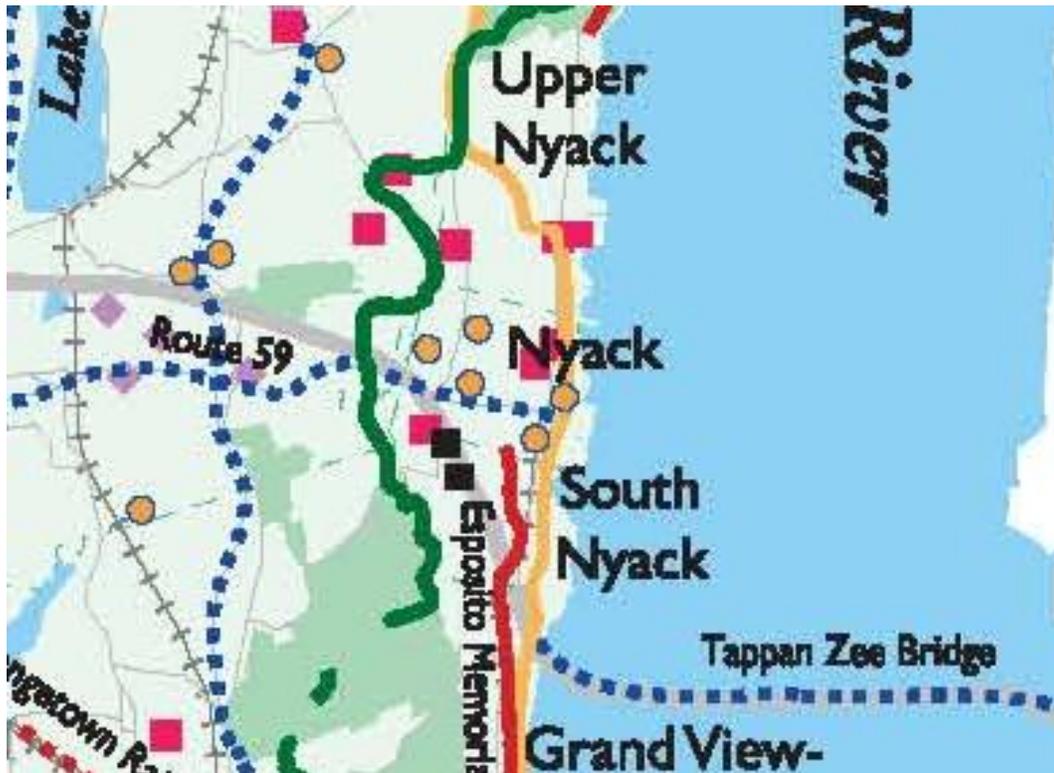


Figure 5

The original I287 corridor project envisioned adding new mass transit to the corridor. In February 2013, the Governor's Mass Transit Task Force recommended studying the inclusion of a Bus Rapid Transit station as part of this initiative. Parking and mass transportation facilities would serve dual purposes, serving the commercial uses on weekdays and the SUP recreational uses on weekends.

The initiative proposes to employ state-of-the-art green building methods and technologies. This can be an ecologically-sensitive (green) project and become a model for future projects. Covering the highway (I287) provides environmental benefits:

- Visual improvement (both local and Hudson River viewshed)
- Air pollution reduction (eg, capture and scrub)
- Noise reduction
- Vibration reduction
- Incorporating the buildings where feasible under turf (green roofs) is ideal for employing energy-saving green technologies.

The concept of covering major highways that bisect urban communities is not new. In fact since the 1960's across the United States, there are been proposals and actual construction of over 60 such "caps". Implemented projects include, but are not limited to the:

- I-10 Papago Freeway: Hance Deck Park, Phoenix, AZ
- Lighthouse Avenue Tunnel: Lower Plaza and Custom House, Monterey, CA
- I-15 Mid-City Bridge Widening and Park Deck, San Diego, CA
- I-91/I-84 Interchange Improvement: Riverfront Plaza and Founders Bridge, Hartford, CT
- I-93: Central Artery/Tunnel, Boston, MA (aka The Big Dig)
- Copley Place and Prudential Center, Boston, MA
- Route 1/93 – CA/NA Project: City Square Park and Tunnel; Charlestown, MA
- I-35 Extension: Lake Place and Leif Erickson Park, Duluth, MN
- I-80 Platform, Reno, NV
- Atlantic City/Brigantine Connector, Atlantic City, NJ
- Park Avenue, New York, NY
- Trans-Manhattan Expressway & George Washington Bridge, New York, NY
- I-287: Brooklyn-Queens Expressway Promenade, New York, NY
- I-71: Fort Washington Way, Cincinnati, OH
- I-71: Lytle Park, Cincinnati, OH
- Commerce Square, Philadelphia, PA
- I-66 Extension: Gateway Park, Rosslyn VA
- I-5: Freeway Park, Seattle, WA
- I-5: Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seattle, WA
- The Portals, Washington, DC.
- Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, TX
<http://www.klydewarrenpark.org/>
- I-90 Completion Project, Aubrey David Park (formerly Park on the Lid), Mercer Island, WA (Figure 6)
<http://www.mercergov.org/Page.asp?NavID=613;>
[http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=k&ll=47.592258,-122.244895&spn=0.008769,0.021865&z=16\);](http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=k&ll=47.592258,-122.244895&spn=0.008769,0.021865&z=16)

Lid Park - Mercer Island, WA



Figure 6

What each of these projects has demonstrated is that there exist in urban and major metropolitan areas significant tracts of space above major freeways or highways that, if they can be reclaimed, represent fresh opportunities to create value. Some are parks, some address esthetics, some mitigate the impacts of the freeways, and yet others add commercial opportunities. But unquestionably, all have been a success in adding value, new opportunities for growth, and improving the quality of the lives of those most affected by these much needed transportation corridors.

Improving communities and transportation development need not be mutually exclusive. These projects as executed already have shown that transport oriented development can enhance the communities through which it must pass. There are many such projects currently being considered today in metropolitan areas to address existing freeway construction. The Hollywood Freeway Central Park feasibility project (2008), to utilize a deck to cover a one mile long, 40 acre freeway that bisects Hollywood, was developed by AECOM, the same consulting engineering firm employed on the TZB project! <https://hollywoodcentralpark.org/>