Lower Hudson Transit Link Program

Metropolitan Area Planning Forum

2016 Spring Meeting

June 9, 2016 – Sacred Heart University – Stamford, CT
Over the last half-century, the Lower Hudson Valley region has grown as a popular location for residential and commercial development. So too has the demand for east-west travel between Rockland and Westchester Counties.

For more than a decade, state agencies and elected officials studied options for improving transportation choices in the region. A comprehensive set of transit proposals were developed to serve travelers along the I-287 corridor, but no project advanced beyond the planning stage for various reasons.
In December 2012, at the request of Governor Andrew Cuomo, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) convened the Mass Transit Task Force (MTTF), a 31-member body, and asked them to put forward a transit proposal that could be ready after the opening of the New NY Bridge (NNYB).

Co-chaired by the NYSDOT Commissioner and NYSTA Executive Director, the MTTF represented stakeholders – elected officials, transportation experts, advocacy groups – from around the region who were interested in developing transit in the I-287 corridor and their local communities.
The MTTF built upon previous planning efforts to formulate a list of short-, mid-, and long-term transit recommendations for the I-287 corridor that were **fiscally viable** and had **consensus support** of local representatives. The focus is on an **enhanced rapid bus service** for the region.

The MTTF recommendations meet the travel needs of residents in the region and maximize the existing transportation infrastructure to accommodate changing demand in a cost-effective manner. Since 2015, NYSDOT, supported by regional transportation stakeholders, has taken the MTTF recommendations and created the **Lower Hudson Transit Link** (LHTL) program.
NYSDOT is sponsoring the Lower Hudson Transit Link (LHTL), a program of technology and transportation strategies to improve travel conditions for all travelers in the I-287 corridor. The LHTL won a $10 million TIGER grant from USDOT in October 2015 and is currently undergoing an Environmental Assessment (EA) that is expected to be ready for public review in June 2016.

Over the last year, NYSDOT has been engaging local stakeholders through special working groups and workshops. The public was given the chance to learn more about the project and the EA process at Open Houses in both Rockland and Westchester in May 2016.
Project goals

- Improve reliability and safety
- Offer more transit options
- Increase access to jobs and housing
- Complement investments made in building the NNYB

Project elements

- New transit service
- New bus stations (high quality shelters and amenities)
- Pedestrian safety improvements
- Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) system
The service to launch in 2018 will connect key residential and employment destinations on both sides of the river.
The MTTF recommended a seven (7) route regional system. The potential for system expansion in the future will be dependent on ridership levels and available funding.
LHTL Planning and Procurement

• The Transit Working Group (TWG), represented by NYSDOT, Rockland and Westchester Counties, City of White Plains, and MTA Metro-North, meets monthly to develop and progress the framework for delivering the transit service as part of the LHTL program.
• NYSDOT is to contract with a private transit operator to deliver the service; RFP to be released in late June 2016.
• The private operator will provide vehicles and service as outlined in the Transit Service Plan, currently being agreed with the Governor’s Office and local stakeholders.
• Contract award expected in early 2017.
• New service will launch in November 2018, after the current TZx contract finishes.
The LHTL service includes new transit vehicles, high-quality stations with passenger amenities, an easy-to-understand route structure, more frequent service, and distinctive branding that creates a unique system identity.
New, well-lit, weather-protected bus shelters allow passengers to stay connected and informed, with technology such as real-time bus arrival information and WiFi. The off-board fare collection will speed trips and enhance the travel experience.
New sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and other infrastructure investments will improve access to transit while also making communities more walkable.
Ramp meters use technology to manage congestion on the highway by regulating the flow of vehicles from on-ramps. Ramp meters improve safety and reliability.

*These sensors, along with cameras, continually relay data about the conditions on the roadways to help inform monitors at the region's central transportation management center.
Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Lets Buses Move Faster

Using TSP, the bus tells the traffic signal to hold the green light so that it may pass through the intersection to pick up and drop off passengers.
Queue Jump Lanes Make Space for Buses

Using underutilized right-turn lanes at certain intersections, queue jumps allow buses to move past vehicle queues, increasing transit speed and reliability.
The ICM Concept of Operations for the LHTL requires extensive partnership and coordination across various agencies sharing information and resources.
Technical Advisory Committees represent municipalities in both Rockland and Westchester Counties, and a Transit Working Group includes regional agencies. Open Houses explain project elements and “pop-up” events promote the new transit service.
The LHTL website has newsletters, fact sheets, meeting materials, and other information on the project. Visitors can join the Contact List and leave comments and questions.
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Thank You

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