

# **Summary of Comments from Improvement Priorities Worksheet**

## **Route 9W Corridor Linkage Study**

5/08

The following is a summary of public comments that were submitted to the Town as part of an exercise to rank priorities for transportation improvements in the Route 9W corridor. Participants at the March 11, 2007 Rt. 9W Study Open House were invited to complete a "Rt. 9W Improvement Priorities Worksheet" that was available at the meeting. The worksheet listed the various transportation improvement options identified by the Rt. 9W Corridor Linkage Study and asked respondents to rank the priority of each improvement. Space was provided on the worksheet for additional comments. Those additional comments are presented below. It should be noted that the worksheet was also made available on the Town website, and many response forms were completed and submitted from this source. The comments below have been categorized and, in a number of instances, have been paraphrased from the original text

## **[A] Comments on Proposed Route 9W Corridor Improvements**

### **Roundabouts**

1. Rotaries (roundabouts) are not working out well. At the Slingerland rotaries there are policemen directing traffic because it's so backed up. They are also very confusing for older people. Why do we want to put them in when there is no problem with 9W?
2. To reduce traffic congestion on 9W either build a new parallel road or speed up traffic flow with roundabouts.
3. No roundabout at Creble & 9W!!!
4. Roundabouts at 9W/Creble and 9W/144 will only create more accidents.
5. One circle combining Wal Mart's southern driveway, the school, office building, and Bender is best as it will eliminate two intersections.
6. The use of roundabouts in conjunction with right-in / right-out will create a huge issue for Casa Mia and Bethlehem Preschool. Parents and school buses must turn north out of the preschool parking lot as well as turn into the parking lot from 9W northbound.
7. Agree with the recommendations for roundabouts (especially at 9W/Feura Bush Road), capacity improvements north of Feura Bush Rd and proposed sidewalks in area.
8. Rt. 9W is becoming a nightmare between Price Chopper and Lowes. A roundabout would help, as would additional lanes for traffic.
9. Roundabouts in theory are fine, but in real life with truck traffic, specifically 53 foot trailers, with extended wheelbase tractors & don't forget low profile "car carriers". These vehicles cannot stay in one lane on those roundabouts.

(Also see 24)

### **Intersections**

10. The 9W / Feura Bush Road intersection should have right turn lanes.
11. A major impediment to traffic flow at the 9W/Glenmont Road intersection is the absence of left turn only lanes. Rather than totally redo this intersection by installing a roundabout, rework the light patterns and widen the lanes to make left turn only lanes. While DOT may like the roundabouts, people do not. The Slingerlands roundabouts are awful! They are too small, poorly signed and more confusing than they should be.
12. The 9W Route 32 intersection needs improvement. Traveling north on 32 and turning south on 9W is risky at times.
13. At the Beacon Road intersection with 9W, the eastbound approach is on a slight uphill grade. In the winter snow is piled up so that there is no visibility to the north or south, making a safe exit impossible. I saw no mention of this grade and the problems it causes in the winter in any of the material.

### **Road Widening**

14. Rt. 9W should be 4 lanes with turn lanes from the Albany city line to the Coeymans town line. With no raised medians.
15. I can understand wanting to straighten, widen and improve parts of 9W to accommodate better traffic flow – but widening to the extent you have gone is ridiculous.
16. Need to widen 9W south from 787 to eliminate stopping for southbound travel, and north from Feura Bush Road to 787. Desperately need extra lane north from Normans Kill to 787 ramp.

### **Medians**

17. Raised medians only make sense if you have 2 lanes in each direction.
18. A raised median is another terrible idea that will only worsen traffic and damage homes and businesses along the widened road.
19. Will installation of medians cause people to drive faster?

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

20. Finish sidewalks on Rt. 396 east of the RR tracks.
21. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle access in 9W corridor, and widen road to manage traffic projections.

22. Bike lanes and off-road connections would encourage people to bike to nearby commercial areas. Right now the roadways are very unfriendly to bikers and pedestrians.
23. Need sidewalks from Wal-Mart to Price Chopper and along Feura Bush Road from Jefferson to Price Chopper
24. The Rt. 9W / Feura Bush intersection should be a high priority for pedestrian access. Therefore, a roundabout would not be a good idea here. The steady stream of traffic would make it very problematic for pedestrians.
25. Bike lanes are a terrible idea for 9W – will cause accidents.
26. Use of expanded shoulders for pedestrians is cheaper than doing sidewalks and is cheaper to clear in the winter.
27. Priority should be given to sidewalks and bike lanes if we are to have a more walkable and green community ... If you insist on continuing to encourage development at least give the communities nearby the ability to visit (use) it without a car!!
28. We need more sidewalks in Glenmont. Feura Bush Road between Elsmere Avenue and 9W is dangerous for the growing number of kids, bikers and joggers on the road. Driving at morning rush hour on Feura Bush Road towards 9W is particularly dangerous, as the sun blinds driver's vision .. Someone is going to get hurt or killed if we don't provide sidewalks.
29. There must be better sidewalks and bike lanes to link various parts of town. People already use 9W, Feura Bush & Beacon Road for walking, running, bike riding. It is only a matter of time before a bad accident happens.
30. Bike lanes are very important, as well as bike paths. This will encourage bike commuting. Presently, it is too dangerous.
31. Regarding the 9W pedestrian and bicycling amenities, I suspect negotiating the roundabouts on a bicycle will be hair raising. Cozying up to a Wal-Mart on a bicycle with the intention of picking up a few small items is extremely unlikely; same goes for bicycling and shopping at Price Chopper. As a bicycle commuter, I've yet to see the imagined groundswell of interest in cycling anywhere as a commuter/shopper. In fact, I don't know why you are even bothering with this on 9W. The resources should be directed to the urban areas and first ring suburban communities, which have two lane, slow moving travel, but hazardous conditions, with lots of people around (potential cyclists).
32. Whenever a road is built or improved bike lanes should be added. We need to make our Town a leader in promoting environmentally friendly transportation and exercise. Same with sidewalks and shared use paths.
33. We need "share the road" with bicycle signs on all main roads and on signs entering the Town.

### **Mass Transit**

34. Restrict use of mass transit to Town use – not to bring in city dwellers who drain town resources.
35. Enhance linkage via bus between town centers within our town.
36. I favor all options that promote mass transit, bike and pedestrian accessibility, and safety.

### **Visual Environment**

37. Ban billboards, especially the one on 9W near 396.
38. No trees in the center of 9W. That's crazy.
39. How do you plan to make 9W residential looking – when you want to accommodate business.
40. Need more trees along 9W to blot out noise and visual pollution year round.

(Also see 42)

### **Other**

41. If Rt. 32 Bypass traffic lights were synchronized so trucks were not stopping at every light, more trucks would use this route instead of 9W.
42. 9W should be improved to move traffic as quickly and safely as possible. This is a state highway and improvements should focus on moving traffic not beautifying the road.
43. You must do something to make it easier/faster/safer to go south on 9W from Price Chopper Plaza.
44. Reduce speed limit on 9W south of Creble.
45. Business needs access for trucks and deliveries. Driveways don't attribute to accidents, drivers do.
46. Need to repave 9W between Post Office and Creble Road where it is "wash boarded out". Heavy truck traffic has wrecked the road.
47. Good idea to improve night time lighting for safety of both pedestrians and drivers, particularly from Feura Bush Road to Wal-Mart plaza.
48. Ban use of Jake brakes on highways near residences. These are rude and annoying. Other Towns have done it.

49. I support some of the proposed improvements but am extremely concerned about the tax implication of these improvements. Many people may support the improvements, but would not support a tax increase to pay for it. The Town should not try to take on too much at once. The Town needs to put more pressure on the businesses in Glenmont to help pay for these improvements.
50. ..It surprises and bewilders me as to why in 2008 there is still no real “town” of Glenmont ... the small town pedestrian friendly “Hamlet” potential has been so neglected and I don’t believe that Famous Footwear or Bed Bath and Beyond do much, if anything, to encourage it. At the Feura Bush / 9W area we should plan for a walkable, mixed retail and recreational use – mini-town within the larger Town of Bethlehem.
51. We need to coordinate the various goals of the many committees when choosing a traffic development plan.
52. To install 9W as planned does not help congestion it will only increase it – under economic development.
53. There are too many conflicting ideas. What problem are you trying to solve?
54. The 9W Committee has not done a good job. They have not focused on the automobile problem – excess traffic on outmoded highways.

## **[B] Comments on Selkirk Bypass Alignment**

### **Traffic and Pedestrian Safety**

1. Even with new sidewalks I feel very nervous walking along Maple Avenue due to the large volume of tractor-trailers... It would be such a relief if a bypass of Selkirk could be built... Every time I’m on the sidewalk I have an escape route of where I’m going to push the stroller should I hear a truck veering toward us.
2. Maple Avenue between 9W and River Road is way too narrow, windy and residential for tractor-trailers to be on... Come springtime, take a look at any of the sidewalks on the turns, and you will see tire marks actually on the sidewalks... Please try to make the Selkirk Bypass a priority.

### **Quality of Life**

3. I am against the bypass due to the direct impact on my quality of life. I bought my home on a low traffic road. The bypass will change this.
4. We don’t want the Clapper alignment. What about all the noise and pollution? Put this by your house!!

5. Why are we pursuing the most expensive alignment when the bypass can be done for a lot less? You are merely moving the truck traffic problem from Selkirk to Clapper Road.
6. Plan the Selkirk Bypass so that no homes or as few as possible are destroyed.
7. We do not want to sell our land as has been said by members of the Town. (Clapper Road area resident)

### **Open Space and Natural Resources**

8. Open space priority should be higher than bypass.
9. We need to protect the open space resource if at all possible. The Selkirk Bypass would open the Vlomankill Valley to development. I strongly recommend that the open space plan be completed before plans are made for the bypass.
10. The Town needs to complete the open space plan before moving forward on any further development. The Comp Plan is not enough to create such a major change to our community. The Comp Plan was incomplete because it lacked the open space component.

### **Becker School**

11. How will the bypass impact the elementary school?
12. Bypass extension from Creble will destroy the nature walk of the school and take too many homes.

### **Alignment Alternatives & Preference**

13. A lot of the truck traffic on Rte. 396 is actually connecting to the Mass Pike via the Berkshire Spur. If you look east down the RR tracks from Rte. 9W by Wickes Lumber you can see this spur and there is nothing in between on the south side of the tracks. If you look west this is where the car carriers come from. Truck traffic could travel parallel to the RR tracks from where they are loaded, straight to the Thruway via a "RR bypass". This would also get tankers loaded with, who knows what, away from Rt. 396, Creble Rd. & Rt. 9W.
14. I oppose the northern alignment. It is not the preferred route. It is the longest, most expensive and impacts the most land. I ask that the committee revisit the southern route or other alternative (ie., improving Wemple or Beaver Dam Road, or using the RR right-of-way)
15. No northern bypass through the open areas. If by-pass is needed – put in southern part of Town – in that somewhat developed area – where residents "are use to the truck traffic". Take into account the feelings of long-term town residents who wish to stay on their land.

16. Do the southern bypass and use the existing interchange. No need for a new interchange. Just expand the one at Exit 22.
17. There are shorter and cheaper routes. Why is the Town focused on the Clapper/Weisheit area? What benefit to anyone is this?
18. I'd like the Bypass to be built first.

### **Bypass Not Justified**

19. The Selkirk Bypass is unjustified. There is very little truck traffic in Selkirk right now. Good planning would suggest moving a thruway exchange toward the northern part of town where traffic congestion is likely to get worse.
20. The bypass is expensive and will not remove truck traffic from Selkirk... Listen to the people and improve current roads. It was clear at this meeting that people see the bypass as expensive, destructive to residents, land, and it is not wanted. The comp plan should be revised to protect this area from the excessive planned economic development.
21. Selkirk bypass is not necessary and is being pushed on the theory that people in Selkirk want it, although no one in Selkirk spoke in favor of any alignment [at the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting]...
22. No new bypass or access to Thruway. Use current roads – minimal financial and residential impacts.
23. Who benefits from the proposed Selkirk Bypass? The proposal runs through an area zoned residential. If we accept the original rationale for the By Pass (divert trucks away from Maple Ave), why are we building another truck route through a residential community?

### **Cost & Funding**

24. The whole Bypass idea is a huge waste of money.
25. After spending \$ 50 M I would like to see a Town that is greener, more biker friendly with off road connectors, than to build big truck routes. I do not like the way the Town is headed.
26. The Town should be directing its resources toward addressing its current infrastructure needs rather than spending money for something that is not needed.

### **Economic Development**

27. What is the vision for economic development along Clapper Road/MED area? Who and what type of development is the Town really trying to court in the MED area and why?

How can we set it up so the Town purchases some of this land? Couldn't the Town own and run the farm?

28. I'm all in favor of developing mixed economic areas along the Thruway, but why does this have to be done at the expense of a greener friendlier environment that connects communities...

### **Other**

29. Who is the driving force behind the Bypass (Selkirk)?
30. It appears that there is only \$7M available for the Bypass on the TIP. Isn't there a huge and confusing qualifier related to that cash, in that if you want to use it all for anything, it means that the Route 396 has to be kept open as State highway, available to truck traffic. Why do we want the TIP money? Is it to build a road to N I-87 exit, which would undoubtedly open up the southern part of town to all kinds of development? Is that what the Town at large really wants?
31. What happens if the Town turns down the TIP money? Wouldn't that potentially allow the Town to take the genuinely less expensive path and convert Route 396 to another type of road (County or Town), which could be designated as a no truck roadway? How come Town staff, the 9W corridor study committee, and the various consultants Haven't mentioned it?
32. If the real Clapper Road By-Pass objective is to use state money to build a road to a new exit on I-87, explain that directly to the public now, and don't assume that SEQR will adequately address the genuine environmental issues associated with "opening up" that part of town. ... Evasive misinformation regarding all of the alignment options is annoying and ultimately problematic in a Town where there's a high level of very positive transparency.

J.L.