

Charles Klaes Tues. Feb 14, 2005

In general the Thruway has created a barrier that has divided and cut off parts of Guilderland from the whole. There is a long strip of Guilderland south of Curry Road that remains isolated from the rest of Guilderland and from infrastructure improvement. McKownville is divided by the I-87 portion of the Thruway. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic between the Stuyvesant Plaza area and the Church Road/ Crossgates Mall area is difficult, and dangerous. The I-87 and I-90 components under over and intersecting with Route 20 cut off portions of McKownville from the rest of the Guilderland Community. I can only hope that the decision making process related to actions evolving out of this Corridor Study will be more sensitive to the community of people impacted than the flow of traffic or bond covenant language.

I was most disappointed to learn that those who wrote the bond covenant funding the Thruway's construction, gave the bond holders greater authority over construction decisions than the communities through which the Thruway passes. My concern is that the bond holders, if intransigent, may be in a position to impose options on the capital district that are not preferred by members of the community impacted..

If the bond holders will permit options that are income neutral, but permit sections of the Thruway to be toll free, the choices become much clearer.

For instance let me suggest an additional option not currently provided.

Variation of the Main Barrier Concepts:

Insert a Harriman type toll booth somewhere south of Exit 23 and another one somewhere west of Exit 25a. The Thruway in between would be toll free. The toll booths at Exit 23, 24, 25 and 25a would be eliminated, permitting toll free traffic from I-88, I-87 north, I-90 east, I-787 and I-890 along the Thruway. Thruway lanes between Exit 23 and Exit 25a may need to be added, but the Thruway would redirect a great deal of through traffic off of Route 20, and Central Avenue.

This proposal would also seemingly eliminate the need to construct new toll booths in between to collect all the 20 cent tolls now collected for local traffic use. The toll for each section of the Thruway immediately on either side of the new Harriman type toll booths could each be increased, perhaps disproportionately to compensate for permutations of 10-20 miles of lost tolls that would otherwise be collected by through and local traffic. For most people currently using or passing through that portion of the Thruway their total costs probably wouldn't change. New regular users currently using local streets would benefit but so would residential quality of life and commuter times. With the elimination of the current toll booths traffic would pass more quickly through those exits. Any envisioned increases in traffic over the next 25 years could probably be accommodated.

(It would be interesting to learn the net-net income loss vs. costs saved of this proposal over 20 years. Local Property tax payers might be willing to pay a surcharge to cover any difference)

<http://www.Thruway.state.NY.us/feedback/index.html>

Public Infr. & Thruway, State, NY, US

I-87 North/I-87 South connection

If the toll booths at Exit 24 and the Tandem Hub at Exit 24 are eliminated traffic might flow well enough without needing to add either of the EZ-PASS modifications. Since there would be no EZ-PASS issues to deal with the fly over and underpass EZ-Pass options would not be necessary. If the above option for some reason doesn't make sense or win the day, my vote is for the underpass EZ-Pass connection that passes through "vacant" land associated with Crossgates Commons.

Tandem Hub

My first choice for the tandem trailer hub to be moved somewhere down near the port of Albany. There is a concept called Environmental Justice which is used to review the appropriateness of siting noxious enterprises in and near poor and minority neighborhoods. There was a recent article in the Times Union dealing with complaints from Albany South End residents to infringements on their quality of life by some Port of Albany enterprises. A Port of Albany tandem hub might prove to be an inappropriate burden on Albany South End residents.

My second choice would be to transfer the current Exit 24 tandem hub to somewhere near the Harriman type toll booth south of Exit 23.

Rensselaer Lake and Watershed- Pine Bush:

Once the NL Industry Super Fund site is cleaned up, hopefully the communities bordering Rensselaer Lake and it's watershed will consider completing its development as a public Pine Bush sensitive park easily accessible to surrounding residential neighborhoods and SUNYA students. Pathway and bicycle paths could be extended to other positions of the Pine Bush. In retrospect the Thruway has had a devastating impact on the Pine Bush. Every effort to reduce that negative impact should be part of any decision making resulting from this Corridor Study.