

The New Millennium Group

Position Paper as of September 2003

The New Millennium Group feels there is room for significant improvement in the public process. From observations, it seems the Public Bridge Authority may have put this project into legal jeopardy by navigating through the EIS towards a predetermined alternative. We recommend that the process, goals, and interpretation of the results be clearly defined for future workshops

We believe an improved two-way dialogue with the BNCAC is essential to success. If the BNCAC is treated as a partner, it could champion this project and its potential benefits to the community. To date, this has not happened. Improved communication is required to build trust between both the PBA and BNCAC.

The Public Bridge Authority seems to be operating under the premise of "how can we do the least harm," instead of "how can we produce the most benefits" to the community. The roadmap to success will be much easier if the PBA adopts the role of *neighborhood advocate* for the lower West Side.

The following is a list of environmental design criteria to produce the most benefits to the surrounding community. (Note: We do not list any specific financial recommendations, but we agree in principle to the idea of a portion of toll revenue being allocated for neighborhoods in some fashion):

FAVORED PLAZA ALTERNATIVE:

- Build an all-new plaza north of the existing structure.

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION

We do not believe the PBA can implement too many mitigation measures. If air quality cannot be substantially improved, then other opportunities must be pursued at the IRR or Tonawanda locations. We echo the community's #1 concern from the first Public Workshop: Impact on human health. We advocate the following land use, engineering, and technological improvements:

Shared Border Management (SBM). If unable to achieve SBM, then commercial processing facilities and queuing should be located west of Niagara Street. It should be below grade to the extent possible and surrounded by particulate absorbing plant life.

Traffic management through Congestion Pricing is a real-time, market-based approach to smooth-out demand "spikes." Congestion Pricing captures more revenue during higher demand, increases air quality, and gives users an economic choice. A portion of the increased revenue can be allocated towards neighborhood initiatives in Buffalo and Ft. Erie.

Covered commercial inspection should be considered where possible to contain harmful particulates.

Continuous measurement of air quality. Before air pollution reaches an unsafe level, commercial traffic should be detoured to other crossings and/or be orderly queued with engines turned off at an off-site location.

Deck over I-190 to increase air quality by capturing particulates, reduce noise, and connect Front and LaSalle Parks.

DESIGN CRITERIA

- **Restore Ft. Porter and Front Park.**
- **Remove all Peace Bridge and Thruway connectors from Porter Avenue.**
- **Create a Niagara Street gateway of visual significance into the City of Buffalo.**
- **Create buffer zones that adhere to good *urban* design.**
- **Reduce light and noise pollution.**
- **Build a new signature bridge.** With information from the Public Consensus Review Panel, we conclude a single new bridge would be better, faster, and cheaper than a companion span alternative.

CONCLUSION

We feel the above recommendations are essential to the successful completion of this project. This can be a world-class project with many human benefits to our region. We strongly urge the Public Bridge Authority to implement these suggestions in order to become an agent for positive change for the lower West Side.