

CAPITAL STREETS

Susan Olsen
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Dear Susan,

NYSDOT's Troy-Menands Bridge Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study is focused on an important connector between Albany and Rensselaer County for many transportation modes, but the bridge is especially crucial for active transportation users. The Troy-Menands bridge is the only feasible way for those in South Troy and the surrounding communities to feasibly access the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail, which not only provides residents with a valuable recreational and public health resource, but also a key connection for commuters between two of the region's largest economic centers.

Throughout the public comment period, the community spoke loudly and clearly about the importance of the bridge's location, which has significantly shaped land development and commerce in the region for nearly a century. As suburban sprawl continues to go unchecked across the Capital Region, increased strain is put on the region's transportation system and overall financial solvency¹. Considering how the Capital Region is at a critical crossroads, where it must choose to prioritize reinvestment in its urban centers and provide better multimodal infrastructure to connect them, the concepts prioritizing suburban, car-dependent development were especially jarring.

NYSDOT's unveiling of Concepts 3 and 4B as the most feasible options provided some relief to the thousands of trail users, active transportation users, and South Troy residents who rely on the Troy-Menands Bridge to access the riverfront and get where they need to go. It's hard to overstate how the future bridge's location, orientation and scale will impact these communities. The traffic analysis and modeling provided during the PEL's public meetings showcased just how unsustainable and inefficient a car-centric design would be. The inclusion of safe and convenient routes for active transportation and transit between Downtown Troy, the bridge, and Route 4 are crucial for the success of our local transportation network. Adoption of a plan that includes safe active transportation infrastructure will align this project with climate, social justice, and economic development goals set forth by New York State².

While Concepts 3 and 4 achieve many of the desired outcomes, the elevated interchange shown in 4B is completely inappropriate in an urban context. Instead, these concepts should proactively include infrastructure to encourage a shift towards more sustainable methods of transportation. Including these changes in the PEL is especially important because of the tendency for transportation projects to rely on concepts in previous studies as a foundation for moving forward during the design process.

On behalf of all active and public transportation users in the Capital Region, Capital Streets would like to thank NYSDOT for its commitment to improving the Troy-Menands Bridge corridor for all roadway users and setting a forward-thinking infrastructure precedent for future transportation projects.

Sincerely,



James Rath
Executive Director
Capital Streets

¹ Shane, D 2023, 'Stop Subsidizing Suburban Development, Charge It What It Costs', *Strong Towns*, 6 July, accessed 8 December 2023
<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2023/7/6/stop-subsidizing-suburban-development-charge-it-what-it-costs>

²New York State Climate Action Council. 2022. "New York State Climate Action Council Scoping Plan."
climate.ny.gov/ScopingPlan