

# FEDERATED CONSERVATIONISTS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY

## POSITION PAPER: TRANSPORTATION IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

### Background

FCWC has a long and consistent record of involvement in transportation issues in Westchester County. FCWC was the leader in defeating the widening of I-287 to accommodate DOT's ill-conceived HOV lane proposal. This was accomplished by sponsoring five conferences to educate the public about the inadequacies of the proposal and the damage our inefficient transportation system inflicts on the environment. We have continued that commitment to transportation issues by hosting regular conferences on air quality issues caused by our vehicular dependency. We are contributing members of the Westchester Healthy Air Task Force and helped to author the Healthy Air Action Plan for the county.

### General Statement

An inefficient transportation system has caused an increasing dependency on the personal vehicle and a corresponding decline in our natural resources as roads and parking lots are expanded to accommodate increasing congestion. This system has also resulted in increasing air pollution caused by vehicles in gridlock, a regular occurrence on the Tappan Zee Bridge; this pollution also contributes to acid rain and global warming. The Environmental Protection Agency has declared the region in non-attainment for ozone and particulate matter.

Two powerful social trends underline the critical need for a comprehensive transit network in the region. The population is rapidly aging with the statistical reality that the elderly will spend eight or nine years without the use of a car and the likely need to work beyond traditional retirement age. Secondly, rising gas prices are a reality, necessitating a comprehensive rail network for future mobility.

Mass transit is critical to the future economic and environmental viability of the region. A comprehensive rail network will reduce the need for more destination parking lots, and more and wider roads; these impervious surfaces contribute to flooding. Replacing vehicle miles traveled with rail will lower

run-off from roads, which pollutes our regional water supply. Fixed rail transit attracts development to the stations and enhances existing development, reducing congestion and controlling sprawl.

Additionally, encouragement should be offered to fleet, bus and other heavy vehicle operators to use better fuels, such as low sulfur diesel to improve their emissions profiles.

**Position**

**FCWC supports the construction of a replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge and a comprehensive rail network linking five existing rail lines. To support such an enterprise FCWC encourages the increase of land use connections such as sidewalks, biking paths, and shuttles to connect all transit systems, as well as transit-oriented development. We continue to support the development of alternative fuels and more efficient use of existing fuels.**

**DOCUMENTATION:**

Approved by FCWC Board 1/31/06