

Harriman Station Area TSD: Notes form Stakeholder Meeting #2, April 3, 2008
May 2, 2008

I just wanted to thank you all for your participation in the Harriman station area stakeholder meeting of April 3rd. Your insights are invaluable and I look forward to the next steps. Clearly this is the right group to tackle these challenges. Here is a brief summary, in no particular order, of the comments. Please feel free to contact me with further additions, clarifications or corrections.

- There was support for the idea of treating the wetlands/floodplain area as an open space amenity and having the developments be oriented towards that amenity.
- Nic Panayotou cautioned that even minor incursions on the wetlands will have to be negotiated with DEP. In particular, this will be an issue where the proposed N-S connecting road is shown crossing a narrow segment of wetlands.
- Using the wetlands for passive storm water management is also an appealing concept. Nic Panayotou pointed out that regulations require storm water run-off to be treated in some way before it is simply dumped into wetlands areas. Some of this could be bio-swale and other “green infrastructure” techniques but he was skeptical that we would do away with the majority of the traditional hard “grey infrastructure”.
- The test plans do not respond to municipal boundaries. They assume that intermunicipal agreements apportion fiscal and service impacts equitably. While this is worth pursuing, several people, including Mayor of Harriman Steve Welle, felt that this might be difficult to broker. Nic Panayotou suggested that in addition to the intermunicipal schemes, there should be an “as-of-right” scheme that reflects the zoning of each of the three municipalities.
- Similarly, the schemes should think about property owners working in concert, but to facilitate implementation, the properties should also be developable as independent phases.
- There is vacant, developable land on the west side of Route 17. This should be considered in the comprehensive design plan.
- There is support for the idea that the north end of the study area could be treated as an extension of the village fabric of Harriman. However, there is concern that the right mix of commercial uses needs to be found to insure that the new neighborhood and commercial areas support and not undermine, the neighborhood-scale retail uses in the center of Harriman.
- There is support for the idea of creating a new north-south connecting road from the station area to Woodbury. But there are challenges: crossing wetlands (see notes above); coordinating among multiple property owners; deed restrictions on the Harriman properties and the Harriman road that leads across the Thruway. It was suggested that Rye Hill might provide a model here: a GEIS for the entire road that is then completed in sections by individual developers.
- In terms of a new north-south connector, the possibility of a new road parallel to the tracks was suggested. RPA/BFJ to investigate the feasibility of this.
- Market issues: Resolution is needed on the likely net fiscal impacts of different kinds of residential development.

- Base maps need to incorporate latest development proposals, including the new senior housing development and a new hotel that has been proposed. Orange County to collect and send to RPA.
- A jitney connection between the station area and Woodbury Commons should be considered.
- The project area would be well served by a multi use path that would tie the entire redevelopment area together without the need for a car and would have a natural terminus at the rail station. This would make the natural areas visually and physically more accessible.

Next Steps

- RPA/BFJ/PPSA will complete another round of research to answer some of the questions raised at the meeting and to provide a more complete assessment of the traffic/transit and fiscal implications of the test schemes we presented.
- RPA/BFJ/PPSA will convene a working session with this stakeholder group plus others who this group feels needs to be there. We will staff this workshop with facilitators who can help draw, model and otherwise articulate ideas. The idea will be to, in a compressed timeframe, and with all of the most knowledgeable and vested interests present, optimize alternative solutions to the various challenges this site presents.