

Mobilizing the Region

A Weekly Bulletin from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Number 518

January 11, 2006

NEWS

Kolluri is NJ DOT Commissioner, Lettiere Out

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign has learned that governor-elect Jon Corzine will soon name Mr. **Kris Kolluri** as the new New Jersey transportation commissioner.

Kolluri is an attorney for a firm in Lawrenceville headed by Phillip Norcross, brother to George Norcross, described by New Jersey newspapers as the “de facto Democratic political boss of South Jersey.” Kolluri previously worked as chief of staff and assistant commissioner of intergovernmental relations for DOT Commissioner Jamie Fox in the early part of the McGreevey administration. Fox came to the NJ DOT from the staff of former U.S. Senator Robert Torricelli.

The New Jersey DOT assignments were Kolluri’s first transportation-related jobs. Prior to that, he was an advisor on India to House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt, and was chief of staff for New Jersey congressman Rush Holt.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign and others had urged the Corzine administration to retain current DOT commissioner **Jack Lettiere**. Under his leadership, NJ DOT developed a new planning framework that used DOT resources to bring municipal land use and transportation infrastructure planning together, producing some of the most ambitious and innovative smart growth-oriented transportation plans in the country. NJ DOT under Lettiere received a smart growth award from New Jersey Future last year for its work in this vein — the first ever such award presented to a state agency.

The *Star-Ledger* reported last week that Lettiere was frustrated about not being contacted by the incoming administration and withdrew his name as a candidate for transportation commissioner.

The director of NJ Transit is not a cabinet position, so no immediate change is expected there. The agency is headed by **George Warrington**, who has established a strong record prioritizing key capital investments, containing costs, improving service and promoting transit oriented development. ❖

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign web site:

www.tstc.org

Region Faces 1,750 Traffic Deaths in 2006

Will the region’s roads be any safer in 2006? The Campaign analyzed five years of federal reports in an effort to answer that question.

Our conclusion: it depends on who you are and where you live. **Worsening situations** in some areas are **offset by favorable trends** elsewhere. In all, we predict about 1,750 people will die on the Tri-State region’s roads and streets this year. That is 1,750 too many, and doesn’t count the thousands of serious, life-altering injuries that others will suffer.

Where’s the broken window theory of traffic crime?

Probably the best chance for safer streets and roads across the region is for police to apply a version of the “broken window” theory of crime control to traffic violations. Police in New York City brought crime down over the past 15 years by eliminating outbreaks of petty crime on the theory that the approach would net individuals likely to commit worse offenses before they happened. Arrests for transit fare-beating, for instance, found many people with outstanding arrest warrants and helped bring down subway crime.

Regarding traffic, the approach has not been widely applied. The NYPD has targeted enforcement at areas with demonstrably high crash rates involving pedestrians, for instance, and reduced overall fatalities with the strategy. But petty traffic crime is rampant across the region, and seems **largely winked at** by police and the judicial system. A 2001 study by then-NYC Comptroller Alan Hevesi, for instance, estimated that drivers in NYC violate red lights **1 million times** per weekday (MTR #319), and experience and reports across the region suggest a largely wild-west environment on the roads. Stepping up enforcement of this sort of violation, and building to a no-tolerance policy is the only way to drive crash rates down and rebuild a culture of lawfulness on the region’s roads.

Recent (2000-2004) trends across the region show:

- Total traffic fatalities and pedestrian deaths are rising in the **northern suburbs** (Orange, Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester counties). If the five-year trend continues, we project total traffic fatalities to be up 25% from 2004 to 2006, to 167, and pedestrian fatalities to rise 14% to 28.

- Fatalities in **Connecticut** have been declining. If the trend holds, 2006 should see about a 7.5% reduction to under 270 from 291 in 2004. Pedestrian deaths are dropping faster still, and could be about 18% fewer over the two years.
- In **New Jersey**, a state that tracks traffic fatalities without the excessive delay and bureaucracy afflicting New York, 2005 data show 739, up slightly from 731 deaths in 2004. Extending this 2000-2005 trend would produce a gradually worsen-

Bronx Stadium Plan Complaints Give Pause

The NYC City Planning Commission took a full day of testimony from supporters and opponents of the new **Yankee Stadium** plan.

Community groups and transportation and parks watchdogs appear to be gaining ground across the city in pointing out that the plan needlessly builds **thousands of additional parking spaces** which will consume parkland and add to South Bronx traffic woes on game days.

The additional parking will result in many more vehicle trips, shifting the stadium's overall travel mix from transit in favor of driving, and pose an added public health risk to a neighborhood with the unfortunate distinction of having one of the highest asthma rates in the nation. Adding insult to injury, the draft EIS for the project nonsensically claims there will be no increase in traffic because the new stadium has slightly fewer seats.

Bronx Community Board 4 voted against the plan in November. Last month, Bronx Borough President Carrión approved the plan but seemed to be begin to acknowledge the impacts of all the parking construction.

The Borough President's land use review comments expressed doubt at the DEIS claims that the additional parking will reduce illegal parking on local streets. In his recommendation, he wrote, "We know from decades of experience that illegal parking represents people **seeking to avoid paying** parking fees, and not from dearth of parking spaces, and that increased parking spaces will not deter fans from illegally parking on streets, sidewalks and parkland." He called for an increase in parking law enforcement and the utilization of **residential permits** to restrict fans from parking on residential streets. He also urged that a Yankee Stadium Metro-North station be returned to the overall plan. However, he fell short of urging that parking construction be limited or excluded.

Written comments on the project will be accepted by the city until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 23. Mail to Joshua Laird, Department of Parks, 830 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021, Fax 212-360-3453 or e-mail:joshua.laird@parks.nyc.gov ❖

ing toll.

- Traffic deaths on **Long Island** are also likely to continue to increase steadily to about 305 in 2006 from 289 in 2004, in line for a 5.4% overall increase and a 9.8% worsening in the number of pedestrians killed.

- Finally, if trends hold, fatalities in **New York City** will continue to fall, to all-time lows that are nearly 10% down from 2004 in overall terms, with 8% fewer pedestrian deaths.

Overall, according to the identified trends, the metropolitan region is likely to hold steady at about 1,747 deaths in 2006, down slightly from 1,750 in 2004.

To ensure consistency, our analysis is based on data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System database for 2000 through 2004. We calculated the average rate of growth (or decline) in fatalities over those five years, and used that rate to extrapolate an estimated number of traffic deaths for 2005 and 2006. As noted above, more recent data is available from the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, and we have used 2005 data in estimating where the state could end up in a year's time.

New York City also tracks traffic fatality data, publishing the figures in the Mayor's annual Management Report. In fiscal year 2005 (ending in June), citywide traffic fatalities dipped below 300, to 297, a 10 percent decline from fiscal year 2004. These figures are more or less in-line with the Campaign's analysis. ❖

Finally! A Mega-Development Looks to Transit

Forest City Ratner told the *New York Post* recently that it is considering **building the price of transit fares** into Nets basketball game tickets for the proposed 19,000 seat arena in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. Next to the arena, Forest City Ratner has plans for office, retail uses and 7,500 units of housing in 16 skyscrapers on 22 acres along Atlantic Avenue.

Linking transit fares to sports tickets is a good method to reduce car use to the arena. If fans have already paid for transit fare by the very act of buying a game ticket, they will be more likely to use transit. Other stadiums, such as the ice hockey and NFL Europe stadiums in Duesseldorf, Germany, have had similar programs for years.

But even if Ratner reduces car trips to the arena, that will only be a start in solving the transportation impacts of the project. Most of car and transit trips will be spurred by other uses, like housing, stores, and offices. More will have to be done to reduce the impacts of those projects on the community.

For example, the developer could consider a less dense alternative that reduces the bulk or height of

buildings. It could also implement stringent **traffic calming** to correct the dismal pedestrian environment in and around Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues. **Reducing parking** will also go a long way to promote alternative modes of travel. Unlike much of Manhattan, where caps exist on parking construction, Brooklyn has minimum parking requirements for residential and commercial facilities.

Recent reports have said Forest City Ratner may be considering a smaller alternative for the project, though the public environmental review for the full proposal started in the fall. ❖

Stockholm Tries Congestion Charge

News reports from the first days of Stockholm's new congestion charging experiment said early results reduced central area traffic by about 16%. With about **13,400 fewer vehicles** entering the Swedish capital's central area.

Charged from 6:30am to 6:30pm, with the highest rates (20 Swedish Kroner, or roughly \$2.60) from 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 4-5:30pm. Some "shoulder" and mid-day hours charge as little as 10SEK, and the most any vehicle can be charged per day is 60SEK.

Stockholm's program is a test that runs from now until the end of July, with a **public vote** on the plan on **September 17**. The road pricing system uses a mix of E-Z Pass-like transponders (about 400,000 drivers around Stockholm have acquired these) and camera recording of license plates if a transponder is not detected. Central Stockholm is built on a series of islands, making it relatively easy to monitor points of entry. Motorists have five days to pay after driving into the central area.

ABC News said implementing the charge is part of a political deal for the national Social Democrat minority government to win the support of the **Green Party** in parliament.

Stockholm mayor Annika Billstrom and fellow local Social Democrats ruled out congestion charging during their election campaign in 2002, according to various news reports. Billstrom now emphasizes the economic, environmental and social costs of traffic congestion. The city has bolstered public transit with 200 additional buses.

IBM's Business Consulting Services division is the prime contractor for the charging system.

News sources have also said opinion polls in the city show 60% of residents opposed. The trial was supposed to run longer, but the contract award was challenged in court by a losing bidder.

Officials have said they are confident that support will pick up as the benefits of the system are realized. ❖

MTR#518

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CALENDAR

January 12, 12:00-2:00pm. Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council. 347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor Board Room. 212-878-7087.

January 19, 6:30pm. Kosciuszko Bridge Project Stakeholders Advisory Committee. Jennings Hall, 260 Powers Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-482-4683.

January 23: Written comment deadline for "Yankee Stadium Redevelopment and Parks Improvement Project." Mail to NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation, The Arsenal, Central Park, 830 Fifth Avenue, Room 403, New York, NY 10021.

January 25, 9:30am. MTA Board Meeting. MTA Headquarters, 347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor, Manhattan.

January 26, 12:00-2:00pm. NYC Transit Riders Council meeting. MTA Headquarters, 347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor. 212-878-7087.

January 31, 5:00-6:30pm. Women's Transportation Seminar-NY Chapter's 26th annual meeting with Joseph Boardman, Federal Railroad Administrator. Club 101, Park Ave & 40th St, Manhattan. RSVP: 212-973-2923 or rsvp@wtsgny.org.

February 16, 8:00am. Women's Transportation Seminar-NY Chapter & Transportation Research Fund present "The Port of New York & New Jersey: Preparing for the Future" with Peter Zantal. PANYNJ. Newark Club, One Newark Center, RSVP: 212-973-2923 or rsvp@wtsgny.org.

February 28, 9:30am. MTA Board Meeting. MTA Headquarters, 347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor Board Room, Manhattan.

March 8: Written comment deadline for "50th St. Facility Environmental Assessment Notice of Clarification" (LIRR E. Side Access project). Mail to Joseph Petrocelli, Chief Administrative Officer, MTA LIRR East Side Access, 469 7th Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

[More calendar items at www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org)

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