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Statement from Tri-State Transportation Campaign Executive Director Veronica Vanterpool in response to New York State's announcement that there will be a dedicated rush hour bus lane on the Tappan Zee Bridge

Bus riders and drivers crossing the Tappan Zee Bridge received some encouraging news yesterday: the New York State Thruway Authority will convert an “emergency access lane” on the new bridge to a dedicated bus lane. This is an important first step, and a small victory, to improve bus commutes for hundreds of existing daily bus riders who idle in gridlock along with cars and trucks. Disappointingly, the dedicated bus lane will only be in operation on the bridge itself, not within the I-287 corridor, and only during rush hour.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign has repeatedly called on the state to convert this lane, which is exclusive of shoulders and breakdown lanes, into a lane just for buses. But, with limited hours of operation during rush hours only, the measure falls short of meeting the mobility needs of the corridor.

According to state documents, projected ridership for a bus rapid transit system in the I-287 corridor is 50,000 daily passengers—a not insignificant number for a bridge that sees 138,000 vehicles per day. Modern buses, new signal technology, off-board fare collection, and dedicated bus lanes—the key elements of a bus rapid transit system—speed bus commutes and incentivize people to ride the system. Without these combined amenities, bus riders will not benefit from an improved system, only brief congestion relief while crossing the bridge. Commuters and residents have indicated they want more. And the state should commit to doing more.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign applauds the state’s effort to be more accountable to the public process by responding to the thousands of pleas for

transit on the new bridge. However, the Campaign calls on the New York State Thruway Authority to expand dedicated bus lane service beyond peak hour periods and to expand the dedicated lane into the I-287 corridor in both Westchester and Rockland Counties. Small steps such as these would not cost \$5 billion, as has been recently suggested but never substantiated by the state, but a few hundred million dollars.

Other amenities for a bus rapid transit system can be developed as more funding mechanisms become available.

Tri-State thanks those that have spoken out for transit on the Tappan Zee Bridge, a group that includes Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef, numerous local partners, advocacy groups, and countless Hudson Valley residents.

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.