

GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
September 11, 2023

Public Comments for September 11, 2023 Board Meeting

(Received as of September 11, 2023)

*The public was encouraged to submit public comments via the comment form on
www.GatewayProgram.org.*

Name	David Rible
Organization	UTCA
Comment Topic	Letter of support for Gateway Project
<p>Dear Members of The Commission:</p> <p>The Utility, Transportation, Contractors Association (UTCA), is a non-profit trade association headquartered in Wall, New Jersey. UTCA represents approximately 1,000 member firms in the public and private sectors, active in all phases of heavy highway, utility, and marine construction, as well as site work including remediation of brownfields and contaminated sites.</p> <p>We would like to testify in favor of the construction of the Gateway Project. More specifically we are in support of the upcoming construction at Tonnelle Ave. and the Hudson Yards Concrete Casing project. These two projects are a significant step forward in the Gateway Development.</p> <p>As you know this project has been recognized as the most important infrastructure project in the United States. We would like to thank Kris Kolorri and his team at the Gateway Development Commission for their leadership and dedication to this worthwhile project.</p>	

Name	Isabel Molina
Organization	New Jersey LCV
Comment Topic	Gateway Development Project
<p>To: The Gateway Commission Board Re: The Gateway Development Project</p> <p>New Jersey League of Conservation Voters (New Jersey LCV) thanks the Gateway Commission for the opportunity to provide comments on the progress of the Gateway development.</p> <p>We are happy to see that the Gateway development project is moving forward, with construction set to begin in the coming weeks on projects on both sides of the river - Tonnelle Avenue and Hudson Yards Concrete Casing. This is not only a big step towards ensuring commuters will have a reliable form of transportation, it will also spur job creation for our region's workers and a boost for our economy.</p> <p>The gateway tunnel's usage by commuters has nearly doubled in two decades, from 200,000 in 1990 to approximately 350,000 presently (RPA). Expediency of this desperately needed project will help prevent hundreds of thousands of commuters from turning to personal vehicles or other car services, congesting other major routes into New York City. New Jersey's transportation sector represents 34% of all CO2 emissions, and an additional hundred thousand or more cars on the road, which are predominantly internal combustion engine vehicles, would cause a significant increase in greenhouse gas and other emissions.</p> <p>Reduction of accessible public transit would result in heavier personal vehicle traffic, which creates more opportunity for exposure to pollutants. The vast majority of vehicles driven right now rely on combustion of gasoline, which releases pollutants including carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxides. It can also lead to the formation of smog, which is an irritant and can worsen existing conditions such as heart and lung problems.</p> <p>The gateway tunnel project is especially critical for low- to moderate-income commuters. The price of tolls and car services from those without personal vehicles can be extremely cost prohibitive. This financial burden may prevent LMI commuters from being able to consistently attend work, which could lead to other forms of financial hardship, including job loss.</p> <p>The Gateway development matters to hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans' health and wellbeing, and to our environment. New Jersey LCV supports the project's progression towards providing safe, reliable and sustainable public transit.</p>	

Name	Jerry Keenan
Organization	New Jersey Alliance for Action
Comment Topic	Construction and construction management contracts for the Tonnelle Avenue Bridge and Relocation Project. Partnership Agreement with the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey for the tunnel boring and framing.

Full comments are in the [attached video](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon to the Board of Commissioners. I am Jerry Keenan President of the NJ Alliance for Action.

The New Jersey Alliance for Action is a non-partisan and non-profit association representing thousands of business, labor, government, utility, education, professional and other New Jersey leaders. Our mission is to improve New Jersey's economy through the promotion of environmentally friendly capital construction and infrastructure investment.

For nearly 50 years, the Alliance has focused exclusively on promoting responsible infrastructure investment in New Jersey and the region including transportation, energy delivery and renewable energy, water, and coastal protection and many other issues.

There is no more significant infrastructure project in the nation than Gateway. None! And for that reason, the Alliance feels it important to be a constant presence at the meetings of the Commissioners.

The Gateway project – which is so much more than a new rail tunnel - is real and there is now tangible proof of that around our region. Today, we congratulate the Commission on two significant steps:

The awarding of the construction contract for the Tonnelle Avenue project. And the awarding of the construction management contract for the same project.

We are delighted that two long-standing members of the Alliance for Action, Conti Construction and Naik Consulting Group, were chosen to move forward on the start of that project.

And congratulations to the Commission on the formalization of a new partnership with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for the Gateway Tunnel boring and framing.

But evidence of the Gateway Project is already in our midst...

When one rides a train - as I often do - you can see the evidence of the preparations for the Portal North Bridge and its accompanying rail improvements in the Meadowlands.

Throughout its history, the Alliance has been an advocate not just for the infrastructure that needs to be built, but also for the women and men who will build it, led by our union building and construction trades.

That will certainly be the case with the Gateway Project in its entirety. It will be the biggest labor project ever for this region.

Next year the Alliance for Action will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. We were forged in the midst of the mid-70s recession, because working together is always much more effective than working separately. We are proud over the years of our role in helping establish policy landmarks such as the NJ Transportation Trust Fund, various higher education bond issues, and many other infrastructure milestones for our state.

We are pleased to continue our unwavering support to the Gateway Development Commission. As we approach the second quarter of the 21st Century, decisions made over the next few years will continue to benefit residents of this region as that same century draws to a close.

We look forward to continuing to be an advocate and effective partner.

Name	Joseph Clift
Organization	Citizen and past LIRR Director of Planning and Strategic Planning
Comment Topic	Current HTP design must be changed to produce an increase in trans-Hudson train capacity without the expenditure of another \$20+ billion for all of the Gateway Program!

Good afternoon, commissioners and Chief Executive Officer Kolluri.

Before commenting on today's agenda, I would first like to thank GDC Public Affairs for emailing me the Sept. 1 notice of today's meeting, but then failing to email me notice of the Sept. 8 posting of the meeting agenda on the GDC website AND failing to email me notice of today's Sunday noon (approximately) posting of the 117-page Resolutions and Supporting Materials document on the GDC website. Noon today, by the way, is at least 2 days later than your Open Meetings Policy requires and ONLY 5 hours before the Sunday 5pm deadline for submitting public comments for today's board meeting.

My first ASK of all of you commissioners: demand that GDC staff stop making a mockery of the intent of your Open Meetings Policy (legally required by both states), which is to provide the public with information on GDC actions and performance in sufficient time that interested parties can provide thoughtful, useful comment. Do any of you believe that providing 117 pages of one long run-on backup document, which are absolutely essential to understanding proposed board actions, only 5 hours --- on a Sunday afternoon --- before public comments are due is a fair and professional way to communicate with the public? I sincerely doubt it!

My second and third ASKS today are regarding today's action items.

My second ASK: Please be aware that the \$29 million construction contract for the Tonnelle Avenue Bridge Project is 47% higher, inflation adjusted, than the 2009 contract for essentially the same scope of work. Possibly more thorough value engineering could have reduced this major increase.

My third ASK: Please demand that the current design of the Hudson Tunnel Project be modified so that additional trans-Hudson train capacity can be achieved without completing the entire \$40 billion Gateway Program. The current design as a separate 2-track railroad south of the 2-track Northeast Corridor with only a single track connecting the two new tunnel tubes to existing NY Penn Tracks above Track 8 and a poor second track connection to Tracks 1-7 precludes that, as stated again in today's documents --- 24 trains/hour is the current and future limit without all of Gateway.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Name	Brian Fritsch
Organization	Regional Plan Association
Comment Topic	Support for all 11 Gateway Program project as an issue of economic vitality
<p>Hi, my name is Brian Fritsch, and I manage the Build Gateway Now coalition and serve as Communications Director for Regional Plan Association. Our coalition comprises over 45 civic, labor, business, and elected groups united to support the nation’s most urgent infrastructure project.</p> <p>Thank you to the Gateway Development Commission for inviting public comment today. We are convening at yet another exciting moment for the advancement of the Hudson Tunnel Project. In a matter of weeks, construction is going to start on early works projects on both sides of the river: Tonnelle Avenue in New Jersey and Hudson Yards Concrete Casing in New York. Project partners are moving forward with the steps to make this possible, including today’s board meeting. Thank you to the GDC and all involved in getting us to this point.</p> <p>Moving from planning to reality signifies a number of things. For one, it means the project is really happening. With shovels in the ground, we get closer to the point where we will feel secure about the project is happening beyond the whims of political winds. Secondly, construction means more jobs for our region’s workers, bringing the promise of tens of thousands of jobs to life, and providing a boost for our region’s economy.</p> <p>Relatedly, at RPA we have been working on researching the economic interconnectedness between New York City and the surrounding suburban regions. This economic link formed by commuters who live in a subregion but work in New York City, or vice versa, and the wages that they bring back to their communities is strongest between New York and New Jersey. We’ll be releasing this research as a short report in the next few weeks, but I can tell you now that the numbers are big, and despite an increase in remote work, the flow of money and workers between New York and New Jersey is abundant. This is precisely why we need state-of-the-art transportation to keep this regional interconnectedness alive and well. We cannot allow for poor transportation to be the reason that the flow of people and capital slows. It is in the best interest of New York, New Jersey and the entire tri-state region to make getting around sustainable, reliable and accessible. The Hudson Tunnel Project is the centerpiece of that goal.</p> <p>But it doesn’t stop there. We need to see through the completion of the entire Gateway Program, all 11 projects of both phases of the project, to double capacity under the Hudson. This will require immense coordination between the many project partners and many other private and public entities. Our coalition is committed to this goal, and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners at GDC.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	

Name	Jeff Heckman
Organization	US Bank
Comment Topic	Presentation
Looking forward to the presentation	