

GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
March 5, 2021

Public Comments Received

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

*Comments were distributed to the Board, posted on the GDC website, and recorded in the public
record.*

Name	Shelley Brindle
Organization	Raritan Valley Mayors' Alliance
Comment Topic	RVL Mayors' Alliance support Gateway
Comment:	The RVL Mayors' Alliance respectfully submits audio comments in support of the Gateway project

AUDIO:

<http://www.gatewayprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/wpforms/4992-f309f9e2bcddf849811f439f9752/RVL-Mayors%E2%80%99-Alliance-Supports-Gateway--60412e83ef50e.mp3>

Name	Brian Fritsch
Organization	Build Gateway Now Coalition
Comment Topic	Support for the Gateway Program
<p>Comment:</p> <p>I'm Brian Fritsch, Campaign Manager for the Build Gateway Now Coalition. Build Gateway Now is a coalition of over 45 civic, labor, business, and elected groups. The common thread that binds us together - is that we know the Gateway Program is the nation's most urgent infrastructure project and essential to the long-term vitality of the New York City region.</p> <p>I'd like to start by congratulating the new GDC commissioners and thanking them for their attention to this incredibly important issue. The coalition looks forward to working with you and hope we can be an asset as you become acclimated to your new roles.</p> <p>We also recognize the importance of the FTA's recent decision to rescind its 2018 guidance wrongly suggesting that Federal loans repaid with local funds did not count toward the local share of project funding. We are thrilled to have an administration in Washington that is signalling its willingness to be an active partner on Gateway.</p> <p>Similarly, we are looking forward to, and anticipating, swift movement by the U.S. DOT to issue a positive Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel Project environmental impact statement that has now been languishing for over three years. This would allow the commencement of important pre-construction work that is poised to begin.</p> <p>Since the last GDC board meeting, the Build Gateway Now coalition has supported the project in a variety of ways. For example the Coalition recently partnered with NYU Wagner to produce a report called Infrastructure for Recovery and Renewal. This report quantified how major investments around the New York City metropolitan area--including Gateway--could energize job creation and economic activity in our region. The report also found the Hudson Tunnel project alone would create over 17,000 jobs and spur over \$19B worth of economic activity.</p> <p>This is why projects like Gateway are crucially important for helping the Tri-State region bounce back from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has never been a better time to build.</p> <p>Gateway is much more than just a jobs and recovery program, however. It is a crucial investment in the infrastructure that supports the New York City region that will continue to pay dividends for the next 100 years. While ridership may have temporarily slowed due to the pandemic, we know we are not building these projects for next year or even the next decade.</p> <p>Gateway is an investment for generations to come that will greatly improve the reliability of our transportation system and increase the quality of life for commuters, travelers, and those who depend on them.</p>	

Many thanks to the members of the Commission for your service, and for the opportunity to submit our public comment to you today.

AUDIO:

<http://www.gatewayprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/wpforms/4992-f309f9e2bcddfeabf849811f439f9752/BGN-GDC-public-comment-3.5-60414cd344f29.mp4>

Name	Felicia Park-Rogers
Organization	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Comment Topic	Gateway Program- Hudson Tunnel Project
<p>Comment:</p> <p>My name is Felicia Park-Rogers and I serve as the Director of Regional Infrastructure for Tri-State Transportation Campaign, an organization that fights for safe, fast, and fair transportation options that reduce car dependence in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.</p> <p>As New York City recovers from the crushing effects of the pandemic, I want to speak today regarding one of our region’s most pressing transportation and transit priorities- the Gateway Program, a project which will provide a foundation to build New York, the region, and the country, back better.</p> <p>The previous Administration long stalled the environmental review process for the Hudson Tunnel Project of the Gateway Program in a blatant political attack on New York that bore no relevance to the critical needs of the region. This project is urgently necessary: the existing tunnels under the Hudson River, nearly a century old, were severely impacted by flooding during Superstorm Sandy.</p> <p>Even a partial emergency shutdown of just one tube could cost the economy \$16 billion in losses over four years, in part by shifting rail passengers to roads and causing gridlock that will halt goods movement on Interstate 95. In February 2018, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, in conjunction with Gateway Program projects, submitted the final administrative draft of the Hudson Tunnel Project Environmental Impact Statement. It is vitally important to the future of the region that the Hudson Tunnel project now be allowed to advance, both for economic stimulus in the short-term and for the long-term resiliency of the region’s transportation network.</p> <p>We are thrilled to now have a Federal administration that seems willing to partner with us to advance the Gateway Program and are greatly encouraged by remarks from President Biden, Secretary Buttigieg, and nominee Polly Trottenberg highlighting the need for swift action on Gateway. We hope to soon see a Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement--after languishing for three years, far longer than the 22 months it took to produce, now is the time to act.</p> <p>Not only is Gateway a critical investment in the future of our region for the next 100 years; rehabilitating and expanding the busiest section of the Northeast Corridor connecting 20% of our nation’s GDP will play a vital role in our nation’s economic recovery efforts. Construction of the Hudson Tunnel project alone has been projected to create 17,000 jobs and \$19B in economic activity, while the Portal North Bridge will create another 11,600 jobs. We have already delayed far too long in acting on this project and every day of additional delay adds \$1.2 million in inflation to the project’s overall cost.</p> <p>The choices we make now will shape New York’s recovery for years to come. We must maintain and upgrade our regional transit system to serve the 12 million people in New York, Connecticut and New</p>	

Jersey who rely on this transit system every day, not to mention the millions more from Virginia to Boston who rely on Amtrak.

Morally, we simply cannot continue to risk the safety of thousands of travelers by further neglecting this project. Improving the rail resiliency and by building the Hudson Tunnel Project and other Gateway Program projects is essential to the future economic recovery and success of the region and the entire Northeast Corridor.

The Gateway Program is essential to improve reliability, resiliency, and safety; enable future growth of capacity in the tri-state region; and reduce costly travel delays for commuters and travelers. Post-pandemic, we simply can't go back to the old days of overcrowded trains and massive delays due to a failing infrastructure. To bring riders and commuters back on to transit, we need to make sure our transit system works to its greatest potential. We have a great plan and now is the time to fast track it.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Name	Carlo A. Scissura
Organization	New York Building Congress
Comment Topic	Support for Advancing Gateway Program
<p>Comment:</p> <p>The New York Building Congress continues its strong support of the Gateway Program, which remains the most urgent infrastructure project in the nation and an organizational priority in our 2021 Policy Agenda. As such, we congratulate the Gateway Development Commission on this initial organizational meeting of the Board and the election of its Co-Chairs.</p> <p>In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Building Congress believes the Gateway Program should serve as a cornerstone of the region’s recovery. In conjunction with recent initiatives, the program will revitalize the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and create a world-class transportation rail hub for New York City. Aspects of the program are already underway, such as the Hudson Yards concrete casing and replacement of the Portal Bridge, and we should progress the next phase by taking advantage of the momentum created by Amtrak, New York State and the federal government.</p> <p>In the last quarter, New York State opened the Moynihan Train Hall, adopted a general project plan for the Empire Station Complex, and released renderings of a new Port Authority Bus Terminal. The Biden administration recently rescinded the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) policy on the Capital Investment Grants program, which clears a major bureaucratic hurdle for state transit infrastructure projects, including the Gateway Program. We appreciate those efforts, as this is precisely the type of intergovernmental cooperation we need to modernize our infrastructure and move the economy forward. We hope to see a Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel EIS move forward after three years of inaction.</p> <p>As a candidate, President Biden vowed to invest \$1.3 trillion on infrastructure, and now we are calling on Congress and the Biden administration to put forth and approve a robust and comprehensive bipartisan package that delivers on this promise. We also urge Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Transportation Secretary Buttigieg and Deputy Secretary Trottenberg to earnestly create sustainable funding programs to make America a global leader in infrastructure. Critically, any national infrastructure package must include funding for the Gateway Program.</p> <p>We once again remind our leaders that infrastructure investment has a history of creating jobs and strengthening the economy in this country. Direct government funding has resulted in some of the most transformative infrastructure projects with the greatest lasting effects. We have been delayed in moving this program forward, and every day that we do not make progress adds millions of dollars to the project’s overall cost.</p> <p>Investing in the Gateway Program can pave the way for our country’s economic success, and both the thousands of Americans that will be meaningfully employed and millions of passengers served will be better for it.</p>	

Name	Bruce Bergen
Organization	Raritan Valley Rail Coalition
Comment Topic	Support of Gateway Project
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Good afternoon Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to address you.</p> <p>My name is Bruce Bergen and I am speaking in my capacity as Chairman of the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition. As such, I address you on behalf of the more than 23,000 daily commuters [at least before COVID], other regular riders, as well as the 1.7 Million residents who live within the service area of the Raritan Valley Line of New Jersey Transit.</p> <p>This is a very exciting time for those of us who care about rail transportation in the New Jersey metropolitan area, and who recognize the devastating impact upon the economy of North Jersey, and well beyond, if one of the more than 100-year-old Hudson River Tunnels, were put out of service for even a limited period of time, much less on a long-term basis.</p> <p>The RVRC was created in 1998 as a non-profit, bipartisan group to advocate for direct service through to New York Pennsylvania Station on the Raritan Valley Line—what we call the one-seat-ride. The Trustees and members of the RVRC include County Commissioners and representatives from four counties, Union, Somerset, Hunterdon and Middlesex, and representatives from many of the municipalities along the line, as well as riders and other private citizens who believe in our mission.</p> <p>We are glad to have the continued guidance and support of many elected officials, including Congressman Tom Malinowski, Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez, and numerous state officials, as we move ahead.</p> <p>But in the end, the final achievement of our goal of full and equitable direct service to NY Penn is ultimately dependent upon completion of the Gateway Project. That is why our organization has been and going forward will continue to be strong and vocal advocates for the entire Gateway Project.</p> <p>With the change of administration in Washington, we look forward, along with many others, to moving full speed ahead with the Portal North Bridge portion of the Gateway project and to the prompt attention to the steps needed to proceed with the Hudson River Tunnels, including release of the long-delayed Record of Decision on the Tunnel EIS.</p> <p>As we look forward to coming out of the COVID crisis, besides securing our future, this project will serve as a catalyst to our slowed economy and create thousands of badly needed jobs.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention.</p> <p>AUDIO: http://www.gatewayprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/wpforms/4992-f309f9e2bcddfeabf849811f439f9752/Gateway-Commisson-Remarks-3-5-21-6040f087cdd7f.wma</p>	

Name	Laura Colacurcio
Organization	Association for a Better New York (ABNY)
Comment Topic	Comments in Support of the Gateway Program
<p>Comment:</p> <p>The Association for a Better New York (ABNY) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the healthy growth and renewal of New York City's people, businesses, and communities. ABNY is a 50-year-old civic organization representing corporations, nonprofits, unions, government authorities, and educational, cultural, and health institutions. We strive to promote connections between the public and private sectors to make New York City a better place to live, work, and visit for all.</p> <p>ABNY presently serves as a member of the Build Gateway Now Coalition. Though we have waited for more than two years, like many of our colleagues, we are once again eager to see the Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement now that we have a willing partner in the new federal administration, and we look forward to moving ahead.</p> <p>As ABNY works toward an equitable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that Gateway is critical to the post-pandemic economy. Construction of the Hudson Tunnel Project alone is projected to create 17,000 jobs and \$19 billion in economic activity. Additionally, the Portal North Bridge is estimated to create another 11,600 jobs.</p> <p>Moreover, Gateway is an investment in the future of our region. The Northeast Corridor is responsible for 20 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. It is critical that the transportation network that facilitates this activity function efficiently and reliably. Additionally, commuters who rely on the current infrastructure deserve the improvements to safety, comfort, and efficiency of service that Gateway will deliver.</p> <p>We have little time to waste: each day of additional delay adds an estimated \$1.2 million in inflation to the project's overall cost.</p>	

Name	Monica Casiello
Organization	U.S. Title Solutions
Comment Topic	Support of the Gateway Program
<p>Comment:</p> <p>U.S. Title Solutions provides nationwide title insurance services for the Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional real estate industries. It is also the leading provider of informational title reports for telecom, wind, solar and right-of-way sectors.</p> <p>We join with business, labor and transportation groups, as well as elected officials from both sides of the aisle in emphatic support of the Gateway Program.</p> <p>Gateway will create 72,000 jobs and create \$19 billion in economic activity: facts that take on a heightened sense of urgency after a year of tragic losses and uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. These new jobs and dollars invested will have a ripple effect throughout the region's industries and trades. Gateway will modernize the busiest stretch of passenger rail line in the country between Newark and New York Penn Station. Regular delays will be eliminated, travel times reduced. More direct routes and faster, more frequent service along the Northeast Corridor will bring our rail infrastructure into the 21st century. No less urgent are Gateway's critical preventative and protective aspects. If one or both of the Hudson tunnels fail, rail capacity will be reduced by 75 percent, resulting in billions of dollars in economic losses, not to mention millions of stranded commuters.</p> <p>The Gateway Program is, without a doubt, the nation's most important infrastructure project. It is critical to both the short-term recovery and long-term health of our region's economy.</p>	

Name	Joseph M. Clift, jmclift@alum.mit.edu, 917-284-5491
Organization	Individual
Comment Topic	Statement to the Inaugural Meeting of the Gateway Development Commission
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Good afternoon GDC commissioners! Finally, a meeting of the Gateway Development Commission 17 months after your appointments were announced and 20 months after the bi-state act creating this important entity was signed into law. You have a lot of catching up to do!</p> <p>Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Joe Clift. I have been bird dogging the Gateway Program and the predecessor ARC Project since 2005, working alongside fellow rail transit advocates for a trans-Hudson rail project that maximizes mobility benefits for west-of-Hudson riders bound for Manhattan at a cost that can be afforded by taxpayers. As a past Director of Planning for the Long Island Railroad, I bring a special perspective and expertise to this effort.</p> <p>Here are your marching orders from the bi-state Gateway Development Commission Act of 2019: to undertake projects necessary to create passenger rail capacity under the Hudson River, rehabilitate passenger rail infrastructure, maintain current levels of long-distance and commuter rail service between the two states and provide additional reliability, safety and security;</p> <p>You four new commissioners have a crucial decision to make in your efforts to be true to those marching orders: what role you choose to play as members of the policy making and governing body of GDC. Your choice is stark and the impact far reaching:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Passive</u>: Continue in the tradition of the Gateway Program Development Corporation board members to serve simply as boosters of construction projects, with no concern for their benefit to the riding public, cost to taxpayers or true likelihood of being funded and built. 2. <u>Active</u>: Participate in policy making for the Gateway Program, beginning with a review of all planning work undertaken to date to determine what changes will increase the benefits to riders, reduce costs for taxpayers and increase the likelihood of being funded and built, with an especially alert eye to changed circumstances that present new opportunities on projects whose design dates back 15 years. <p>I vote for #2! To give you a taste of the impact of changed circumstances on Gateway:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The program has ballooned from a 2011 price tag of \$11 billion to \$30 billion today, with no increase in mobility. No effort to date has been made to find a way to reduce this cost. 2. The project has been designed so that all \$30 billion must be spent before a single additional train can cross under the Hudson in the peak hour, despite this increase in cost. 3. Phase I --- the Portal North Bridge and Hudson Tunnel Projects --- will add ZERO trans-Hudson rail passenger capacity, despite an expenditure currently budgeted at \$14 billion. 4. All local funds and likely federal funds available over at least the next decade will be spent on Phase I, leaving the \$16 billion balance of the project to some far off future. 5. Portal North Bridge is still designed as a \$1.8 billion high-level fixed bridge, despite bridge openings for maritime traffic averaging only one/month for the last two years and never during peak periods, with the US Coast Guard's change in opening rules in March 2019; this makes PNB, the replacement for Portal Bridge, a perfect candidate for a modern movable bridge at one-quarter to one-tenth the cost of the current design. 6. The finally released London Bridge Associates report demonstrates that the existing Hudson 	

River Tunnels can be rehabilitated to state of the art nights and weekends, eliminating the need to build a new tunnel first, making obsolete the HTP EIS process and current plan.

As I said, you have a lot of catching up to do! Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Name	Chris Boylan
Organization	General Contractors Association of New York
Comment Topic	Gateway Support
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Good Morning Chairman Zaro, Members of the Commission. I am here on behalf of the General Contractors Association of New York (GCA), which represents nearly 300 heavy civil transportation and infrastructure contractors and related firms in the New York Metropolitan area.</p> <p>Those companies employ over 25,000 unionized craft and professional workers who have built – and continue to build -- the very underpinnings of the New York metropolitan region....from its building foundations, to its roads, bridges, water and sewer systems and -- most relevant to our discussion today -- its railroads and tunnels.</p> <p>As you know from our previous comments at earlier Program Development Corporation Board Meetings, we have been an ardent supporter of the Gateway project as far back as 2012.</p> <p>We have obviously been concerned over the last few years about securing a federal commitment for the project and we have spent a lot of time on the Hill to help make the case for it.</p> <p>We have also been an active member of the Coalition for the Northeast Corridor (CNEC) which not only advocates for Gateway, but for supporting projects such as the Portal Bridge in New Jersey that would help facilitate efficient use of new Hudson River Tunnels. We are pleased that our efforts, along with those of others, helped advance that project late last year. But as you know, it was long in coming.</p> <p>Accordingly, we are particularly pleased that there is positive and renewed interest and support from Washington to advance what is one of the most critically needed mobility projects in the country.</p> <p>That support couldn't come any sooner, since the clock is ticking on a potential failure of the existing 112-plus year-old North River Tunnels that were not only aged before Superstorm Sandy, but further weakened by the salt water intrusion it caused. The fragile regional and national economic recovery from COVID could not survive an additional hit of as much as \$80-\$100 million a day if they did fail.</p> <p>Our support is not solely premised on the fact that our members and their unionized workforce would likely do the work, as much as it is that as residents of the bi-state region ourselves, we understand the critical importance of this project to the mobility of our members and their families.</p> <p>In that regard, we want to commend the Development Corporation, Amtrak and New Jersey Transit, as well as the Governors of both New York and New Jersey for all the work you have collectively done to prepare for the opportunity that we now look forward to with cautious optimism.</p>	

We also applaud Senators Schumer, Booker and Menendez who have been busy over the last few years lining up initial resources for both Amtrak and transit systems to access for the project.

Despite all the prospective good news the New Year has brought, there are never any guarantees in Washington, so we will be keeping our eye on the ball and will continue to work with the new Administration and all our representatives in Washington to ensure that environmental approvals are provided expeditiously and that sufficient resources are made available to you when you need them in order to build this game changing project.

In closing, we look forward to continuing to partner with you in this effort and, as always, we thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Name	Chip Hallock
Organization	Newark Regional Business Partnership
Comment Topic	Get Gateway Underway
Comment: The case for the Gateway Program has been clear for many years – the Hudson River Tunnels were put into service 110 years ago and Gateway-related infrastructure requires reinvestment to retain about \$3 trillion dollars in economic output in the Northeast Corridor megaregion. The Biden Administration recognizes that some 20% of U.S. GDP is at stake and it appears that we are closer than ever to seeing this national economic imperative become a reality. We urge all of our public officials – federal and state - to coalesce around Gateway and get the full program underway as soon as possible. Chip Hallock, President & CEO, Newark Regional Business Partnership	