

HOGAN & ROSSI

Attorneys At Law

3 Starr Ridge Road - Suite 200
Brewster, New York 10509

John J. Hogan
Donald M. Rossi
Michael T. Liguori*
Jamie Spillane**
Courtney J. Day**
* Also Admitted in CT
** Also Admitted in NJ

Telephone: (845) 279-2986
Facsimile: (845) 279-6425
(845) 278-6135

Of Counsel
Nancy Tagliafierro*
Mary Jane MacCrae
Scott J. Steiner
Bonnie N. Fienzig

January 20, 2021

Hon. Tom LaPerch, Chairman
Town of Southeast Planning Board
1 Main Street
Brewster, New York 10509

Re: Public Hearing Comments – Route 22 Master Plan Update

Dear Chairman LaPerch and Members of the Board:

It was nice to see everyone's faces on January 11, 2021 at the public hearing zoom call. As I stated on the call, I am really looking forward to seeing everyone in person and I hope that we can return to normal as soon as possible.

At the outset, I would like to note that even though I was unable to participate in the overall Route 22 Master Plan Update (the "Update") process the way that I would have liked to, I sincerely appreciated the ability to comment on the plan. The more times that I have been able to review the Update, the more that I have grown to appreciate the proposed changes as well as the effort and volume of work that has gone into it.

While my verbal comments are on the record, I felt that they were only the highlights and did not contain more thoughtful analysis so I have restated my comments below and elaborated in areas that I felt required more support.

I support the resolution of the non-conforming uses located in the Route 22 corridor. I believe that there is enough professional planning guidance available to us that indicates that designating a use as non-conforming has the opposite of its intended effect. The typical effect is that the use may wither on the vine, but it never dies. Converting the uses back to conforming and regulating the uses under the conditional use permit process or the special permit process is a much better alternative.

I support the addition of housing in the Route 22 corridor north of the Milltown Road intersection. I believe that housing (population) is necessary to accomplish the intended vision of the plan. The Town of Brookfield's Four Corners (Exit 12 off of Route 7 Extension) Project is a perfect example of what appears to be intended here on Route 22. It contains commercial, residential, pedestrian access, sidewalks, lighting, etc.

I support pedestrian improvements from Milltown Road north. To the extent possible, they should be made at one time instead of piecemeal. We spoke of the portion of Route 55 Lagrangeville as a goal.

I support the consolidation of driveways for the uses on Route 22. Directing traffic to boulevard entrances and exits that have traffic lights would greatly improve flow and would be the only way to achieve safe pedestrian flow.

I support the addition of accessory uses in each of the Districts, the increase in principal uses proposed in SR-22, Rural Commercial and Rural Commercial 2, and suggest that we compare our list of permitted uses to those listed in other codes to make sure that we capture as much as possible while we are in this particular process. I also support flexibility provisions for commercial zones that state that if a use is not specifically permitted, that it could be approved by a special permit of the Town Board.

While I have support for all of the above items, I do not support the concept of locating pedestrian improvements between Interstate 684 and Milltown Road. It is obvious from the survey that pedestrian access is a goal, however, I think it is most appropriate for the Planning Board to state that it acknowledges those comments and would consider them in a separate study and possibly as part of a more regional plan or just a larger plan for the Town. Simply stated, the portion of Route 22 between the end of Interstate 684 and Milltown Road is a highway and is no place for pedestrian traffic.

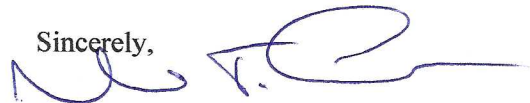
There is no doubt that the expansion of the rail trail across Putnam County has been fantastic for the residents of Putnam County and the State and that is what is driving the desire to connect that part of Route 22 to it, but what makes the trail attractive is that it is safe and it is safe because it contains limited road crossings and limited interaction with any other surrounding roads. Any proposal to route traffic off of the trail and onto a public road or alongside a public road in a bike lane or to construct a new trail section that was not previously a railbed requires in-depth safety analysis. Driveway locations, intersections, speed limits, traffic lights, turning radius, volume and type of vehicular traffic, volume of pedestrian traffic and emergency vehicle response all need to be considered together with a cost benefit analysis to compare construction cost with benefit to be gained.

Instead of connecting the portion of Route 22 between Interstate 684 and Milltown Road to the rail trail, I would place my support in increasing infrastructure around the trail where it currently exists such as increasing parking areas, adding compacting trash cans to those areas, increasing places to sit or a bathroom facility similar to what is located on the Walkway over the Hudson, and supporting more flexible uses for those businesses located near to the trails so that they can cater to those who use the trail. For example, the OTB facility would make an excellent regional parking facility and pedestrian rest stop.

I would estimate that more people would visit the businesses on Route 22 by car after they use the trail than they would if they had to ride their bikes to that section of town. As I stated on the call, I do not believe people use the rail trail to go shopping, however, with appropriate advertising, the business could all still benefit. All of this requires greater study and analysis and deserves for it to be done as part of a larger plan for the Town instead of part of this version of the Update.

I thank you again for taking my comments on the Update.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. T. Liguori", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael T. Liguori