

Sunday, February 3, 2019

I believe putting a Welcome Center less than 15 miles from the Welcome Center in Hampton is a waste of money and resources. Those 12 acres are also the only buffer the people across from the sound barriers have from the noise of the turnpike. Most of the trees during this present remodel have been removed. There is just that one small area of trees left by the large collection pond at the present exit 6. Those people who live at the end of that street by that pond were not eligible for a sound wall. If you take down those trees the sound wall across from them at the new exit 6 lights and the sound wall parallel to the Spaulding will create some reverberations.

The other thing to remember is local economics. There are lots of businesses directly at the end of the exits along the Spaulding that rely on the fact that people have to stop to get gas, use the bathroom and eat. Exit 7 has a Burger King and Gas station, Exit 8 has a dunkin donuts, a hotel and a gas station, Exit 9 has lots of food choices, gas stations and hotels. Exit 11 take drivers to the Lakes region and there are gas stations and food there as well. Every rest areas allows people to stop, sleep, eat and possibly get gas *without interacting with the local communities*. The development of Spaulding changed many small towns but they have adjusted and added features to allow for growth and the opportunity to get visitors to come back and stay in each town they normally would pass through.

Including a **Visitor Station** inside one of the existing local businesses would be a cost effective and environmentally friendly way to do this. For example at Exit 13 in Rochester there is a gas stations and a Staples as the end of the ramp. Including a visitor station at a locally owned gas stations would be the best idea because most already have everything a visitor needs. The DOT *could* build a "Tiny house" style building in the Staples parking lot or at Exit 9-property already cleared and owned by the DOT. A Visitor Station should have access to a bathroom, easy food, a place to park and rest, maps and information. **There could be a link for cell phone users to access local info and ask questions via text.** Just think one DOT employee answering questions for two or three visitor stations. The truth is, many of the Welcome Centers close so early now to save on man hours. An unmanned one with cameras and an internet link with longer hours would be very helpful, especially for those traveling alone. Many times driver just want to go to the bathroom, grab a snack or rest an hour or so and get back on the road. Going to an existing exit and building allows for those as well as being able to access local restaurants.

When traveling through PA we go to local restaurants found on the GPS or phone and avoid the Welcome Centers. Other times we go to welcome centers to just find out what there is to see somewhere. A text to a DOT employee would be just as helpful OR you could have a *wall mounted computer with a facetime type of link* so you could actually see a person and they could see you. The good thing about a wall mounted one is the DOT employee could also see the condition of the visitor station throughout their shift if positioned strategically.

I look forward to hearing from the person in charge of this project. Thank you, Liz