

NEWS RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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ZWEIG PROPOSES PLAN TO ENCOURAGE RETAIL GROWTH IN ROUTE 4 CORRIDOR

Rensselaer County Legislator Brian Zweig has proposed a three-point plan designed to guide retail development along Route 4 in the towns of East Greenbush and North Greenbush.

"The Route 4 corridor has been a very popular location for developers seeking to locate retail shopping areas, as evidenced by the many projects that have been proposed in recent years. We need the increased tax base and sales tax revenues to relieve the strain on our overburdened taxpayers," noted Zweig. "At the same time, residents have reasons for concern about the impact of all of this development on traffic and the nearby neighborhoods," added Zweig.

The purpose of Zweig's three-point plan is to promote sensible economic growth and also protect the quality of life of residents. The plan includes the following:

- 1) **Encourage future retail on the west side of Route 4.** This will reduce the impact of retail on existing neighborhoods to the east and facilitate transportation improvements that can reduce congestion on Route 4. "Promoting retail and commercial development on the west side of Route 4 is an idea that dates back to the County's last master plan. It made sense then and still does," Zweig stated.
- 2) **Develop an alternative access road that connects Third Avenue Extension to Exit 8 of I-90 to reduce traffic on Route 4.** This can be accomplished by an access road linking the Route 43 connector to Third Avenue Extension. With the proposed extension of Temple Lane to Third Avenue Extension, shoppers would be able to use Exit 8 of I-90 to access all current and proposed retail sites on the west side of Route 4 without the need to drive on Route 4.
- 3) **Attract "destination" retail stores to the area.** Destination stores are stores that shoppers will drive to because they are unique or not available to shoppers in other communities. "Access from Exit 8 of I-90 will make it easy for shoppers from neighboring towns and counties to come to the Greenbush area to shop. In addition, it will also mean a wider variety of shopping opportunities for residents," said Zweig. "The result will be increased tax dollars flowing into the County and an enhanced quality of life for residents," Zweig concluded.

An example of this strategy would be to encourage the location of a Trader Joe's food store in the Greenbush area. Trader Joe's stores are known for offering high-quality and organic food items that are not readily available at traditional supermarkets. "There is a local group already campaigning to bring Trader Joe's to the region and I have contacted them to suggest that the Greenbush area would be a perfect location for the store. I have also spoken to a local developer that would love to provide a site for the store to locate," Zweig stated. "The demographics of the area would seem to support such a store and I am encouraging local neighborhood groups to let Trader Joe's know that they would have a ready market, should they locate a store here," Zweig added.

"I have no illusion that implementing this plan will be easy or inexpensive," stated Zweig, noting that it will require cooperation among town officials from East Greenbush and North Greenbush, and help from State DOT, developers and residents. "The alternative is to try to deal with the traffic and quality of life issues after everything is built. This would be far more expensive both for taxpayers and in the decline in the quality of life for residents," Zweig stated.

Zweig is requesting that impacted governments, businesses and residents consider his proposal and he will be meeting with stakeholders to further explore implementation of his three-point plan.