

## Hundreds Debate FASNY At White Plains Public Hearing

by Brian Donnelly Schools 10/17/12 Comments (1)



White Plains residents who oppose the French-American School of New York's proposed campus wore "Stop FASNY Now" stickers, while the plan's proponents wore green shirts that read "YES." Photo Credit: *Brian Donnelly*

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. – Maria Fricke's main concern over the French-American School of New York's (FASNY) proposed White Plains campus is how it would impact traffic, which school representatives tried to address during a 30-minute presentation of its traffic analysis at the beginning of a public hearing on its environmental impact Wednesday night.

Traffic analysis done by FASNY for its [draft environmental impact statement](#) (DEIS) found that the addition of its approximately 1,200 students and 250 faculty members coming and going each morning and afternoon would delay traffic by "dozens of seconds," said Mischa Zabolin, chair of the FASNY Board of Trustees.

The study identified 26 intersections overall that might be affected by these additions and measured current traffic rates, taking into account annual growth of traffic volume and other factors, to project what they would be in 2019. They compared those projections with and without the FASNY campus in existence, then identified traffic improvements that would mitigate the time of delays. Those measures, the DEIS finds, would minimize the traffic delays at the affected intersections to less than one minute in most cases.

Some improvements include a left-turn lane and right-turn lane on Ridgeway Avenue at the intersection of the campus driveway and Hawthaway Lane, both of which would receive traffic signal systems. Hawthaway Lane would also be widened to include a south-bound left-turn and right turn lane and a receiving lane.

FASNY identified in the DEIS seven other intersections where there would be additional traffic improvements. The school said it would also stagger its start times to reduce the number of cars coming in at one time during peak hours – 8 to 9 a.m.

"It's not a popularity contest, this is about facts and we have the facts on our side," Zabolin said.

Like the [previous Sept. 20 public hearing](#) on the FASNY DEIS, hundreds of supporters wearing green shirts reading, "Yes," and detractors, many wearing red stickers reading, "Stop FASNY Now," filled both

the first and second floors of City Hall.

The Gedney Neighborhood Association, which opposes the FASNY proposal, had a bulk of its presenters speak Wednesday, including Mary Manning, a traffic consultant and John Ciallella, a hydrologist. Many more residents voiced concerns that, despite FASNY's traffic simulations for 2019, the additional traffic would overburden the Gedney Farms neighborhood.

The neighborhood association has also said the campus would overburden the sewage system and ruin the character of the neighborhood.

The school has said the remaining 84 acres would become a "Green to Green Conservancy" that would have a permanent easement. FASNY has said it would maintain it at cost to the school and would include trails open to the public 365 days a year.

Ellen Dupuy d-angeac agrees with Zobotin that the 84-acre "Green to Green Conservancy," which represents 85 percent of the total property, amounts to a gift from FASNY to the city.

"People are often disconcerted by change and we realize they're afraid we will overwhelm their community," said Dupuy d-angeac, who has two children in FASNY's upper school in Mamaroneck. "We feel so strongly about this campus and I've never heard of an offer that is so generous."

The public comment period is open until Oct. 29. Written comments can be directed to the city clerk at White Plains City Hall, 255 Main St.

The school [applied for a special permit](#) from the city to operate at the former golf club at 400 Ridgeway Ave. and hopes it will be approved by the end of 2012. If that happens, the school would begin a 10-year, \$60 million to \$80 million construction of its new campus. If approved, all 870 students from its three current schools in Mamaroneck, Larchmont and Scarsdale would be brought together to one location, said Patrick Croze, director of finance and operations for the [French-American School](#).