

HIGH SPEED  
RAIL

NEW YORK  
COALITION

STATEMENT OF  
REGIONAL  
IMPACT

JULY 31, 2009

July 31, 2009

Mr. Joseph C. Szabo  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Szabo,

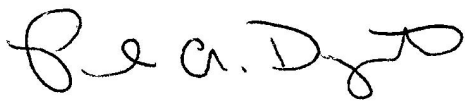
On behalf of the High Speed Rail New York coalition, we submit this report on the regional impacts of High Speed Inter City Passenger Rail along the Empire Corridor in New York State. High Speed Rail New York, a private coalition representing local governments, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, metropolitan planning organizations, and tourism bureaus across Upstate New York, enthusiastically supports New York State's applications for Federal Railroad Administration funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Strongly backed by our over 13,000 member businesses, which employ in excess of 1 million Upstate workers, High Speed New York has been established to support the enhancement of passenger rail service in our state and to promote and provide the associated educational and business opportunities to our constituents.

Our regional impact statement is a product of the extensive research and surveying of local economies by our partners. Focusing on the metropolitan statistical areas of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Albany, and the North Country this report provides statements organized around Economic Development, Research and Development, Urban Development Opportunities, Environment Benefits, Transportation, and Quality of Life. As this report shows, the "New York State Rail Plan 2009: Strategies for a New Age" has the immense potential to impact the way we live and do business in Upstate New York. A product of our coalition's collective research efforts, we hope that you will consider this report a representation of how we may propel this often marginalized megaregion into the future of transportation and the 21st century economy.

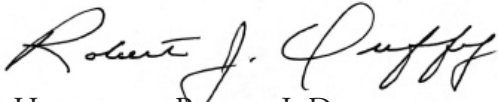
We understand the practical and fiscal considerations you must weigh as you develop your policy priorities for High Speed Inter City Passenger Rail in the United States, but we strongly believe that enhanced passenger rail investment in Upstate New York will produce strong, visible, and sustained results transforming our cities, regions, and rural communities.

Sincerely,

cc: Secretary Ray LaHood



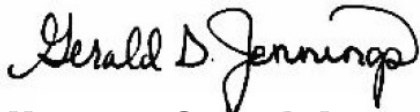
HONORABLE PAUL A. DYSTER  
MAYOR OF NIAGARA FALLS



HONORABLE ROBERT J. DUFFY  
MAYOR OF ROCHESTER



HONORABLE DAVID R. ROEFARO  
MAYOR OF UTICA



HONORABLE GERALD D. JENNINGS  
MAYOR OF ALBANY



ANDREW RUDNICK  
BUFFALO NIAGARA PARTNERSHIP



MARK PETERSON  
GREATER ROCHESTER ENTERPRISE



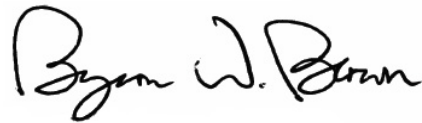
DARLENE D. KERR  
GREATER SYRACUSE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



RANDALL WOLKEN  
MACNY, THE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION



F. MICHAEL TUCKER  
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



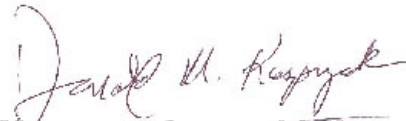
HONORABLE BYRON W. BROWN  
MAYOR OF BUFFALO



HONORABLE MATTHEW DRISCOLL  
MAYOR OF SYRACUSE



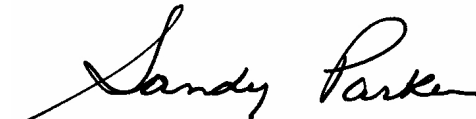
HONORABLE JAMES F. BROWN  
MAYOR OF ROME



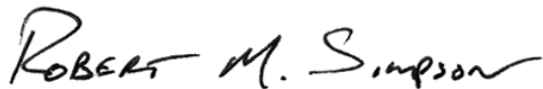
HONORABLE DONALD M. KASPRZAK  
MAYOR OF PLATTSBURGH



TOM KUCHARSKI  
BUFFALO NIAGARA ENTERPRISE



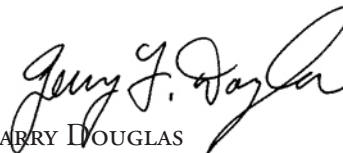
SANDRA A. PARKER  
ROCHESTER BUSINESS ALLIANCE



ROBERT SIMPSON  
METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK



FRANK ELIAS  
MOHAWK VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



GARRY DOUGLAS  
PLATTSBURGH – NORTH COUNTRY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**HIGH SPEED  
RAIL**  

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**NY COALITION**

**T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## REGIONAL IMPACT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, advances in transportation have made New York a world class center for commerce and industry and have enabled the State to live up to the name “The Empire State.” New investments in transportation initiatives such as the High Speed Rail will fuel New York’s economic future.

Past is prologue when it comes to leading the nation in the area of transportation. Many transportation firsts occurred or were put into commercial operation in New York. From Robert Fulton’s historic steamboat trip from New York to Albany in 1807 to the opening of the NYS Thruway in 1956, one of the original superhighways, New York’s commitment to transportation has always propelled it forward. Considered a risky investment when conceived in 1806, the Erie Canal opened in 1825, fostered a population surge to the west, and made New York City the Country’s chief port. To the North, the Champlain Canal, which preceded the opening of the Erie Canal by two years, further expanded New York City’s port by providing direct access to Canada. Opening in 1831, the Mohawk & Hudson Railroad (Albany to Schenectady) was one of the very first intercity railroads built in the United States. And in the field of aviation, New York is host to the nation’s oldest municipal airport. The Albany International Airport opened in 1908 and two years later pioneer aviator Glen Curtiss made the first sustained flight from Albany to New York City.

Today, the Empire State remains a crossroads of America’s shipping and traveling public. The Port New York City / New Jersey brings in more than 5 million containers a year, augmented by smaller harbors like the ports of Oswego and Albany that collectively import more than 1.8 million tons of cargo per year. The City of Syracuse sits at the intersection of Interstate 81 and the New York State Thruway, two of the country’s busiest automobile thoroughfares. The Empire State also has a history of being exceptionally good at transporting its workforce, with a third of all transit trips in the country made in New York State. The New York State Rail Plan continues the Empire State’s excellence in transportation innovation.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Enhanced investment in passenger and freight rail in Upstate through the New York Rail Plan will have both direct and indirect impacts on our regional economies. Not only will rail investment touch businesses and workers employed in these sectors, it will also densify our upstate labor pool and will provide unquantifiable growth opportunities for start-up and existing businesses through the planned expansion of this sector.

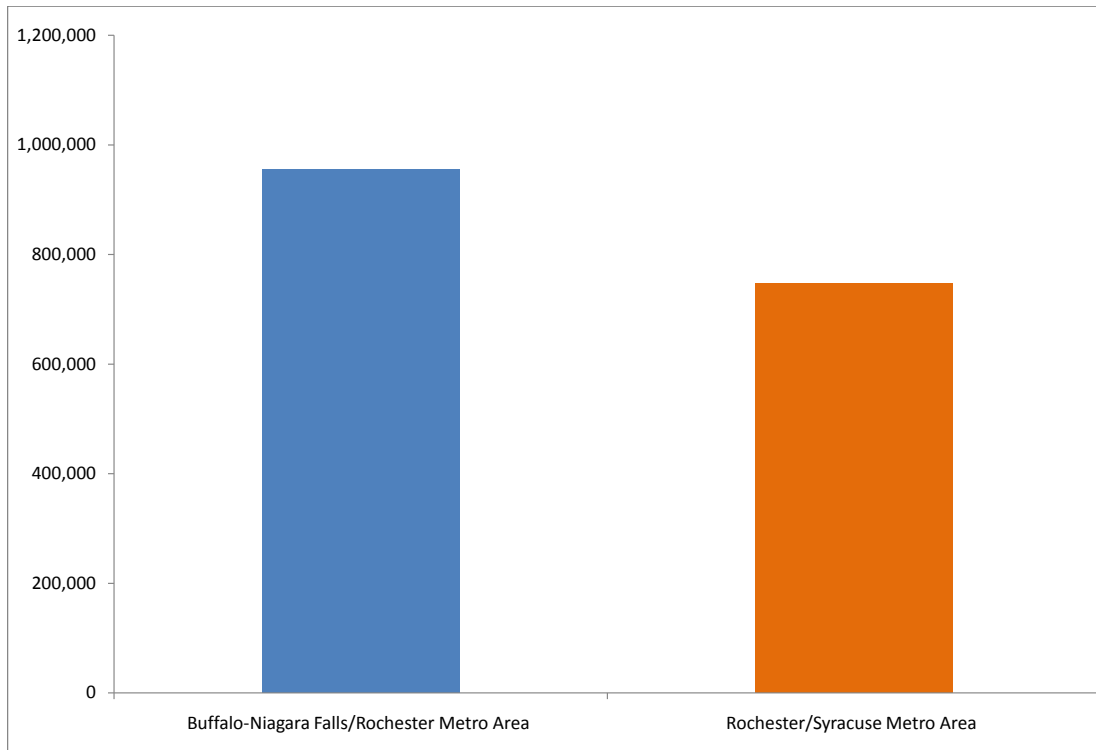
Successful implementation of the New York Rail Plan could ultimately create two new, distinct labor markets: the Buffalo-Niagara Falls/Rochester Metro Area with 955,562 workers and the Rochester/Syracuse Metro Area with 747,292 workers (based on 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates of workers 16 and over who did not work at home), as the central cities of these labor markets would be within one-hour of each other.

It is estimated that around 3,500 workers are employed by 30 companies that manufacture railroad equipment in Upstate New York. While these companies, with sales in excess of \$750 million, provide goods and services directly to the rail industry, an additional 11,000 Upstate workers are employed by businesses that produce and distribute goods to sectors that are heavily relied upon by the railroad rolling stock industry. With the historic decline of our manufacturing sector, the businesses and workers in these sectors represent a bright spot in the future of manufacturing and distribution in Upstate New York.

In the Buffalo-Niagara area alone, over 200 businesses depend heavily on rail for delivery and shipment of goods and products. These companies employ over 27,000 workers and have annual sales of over \$7.2 billion.

Clearly, investments in the railroad industry in New York State will directly impact the businesses and employees of these sectors. However, the densification of labor markets, spurred by enhanced inter-city passenger rail service will have an immense effect on our regional labor pools. Successful implementation of the New York Rail Plan could ultimately create two new, distinct labor markets: the Buffalo-Niagara Falls/Rochester Metro Area with 955,562 workers and the Rochester/Syracuse Metro Area with 747,292 workers (based on 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year estimates of workers 16 and over who did not work at home), as the central cities of these labor markets would be within one-hour of each other. Effectively, this would mean that the Buffalo-Niagara Falls/Rochester Metro Area would be the 26th largest in the nation and the Rochester/Syracuse Metro Area would be the 38th.

## ESTIMATED DENSIFICATION OF LABOR MARKETS



Along the Montreal Corridor the natural economic connections between New York City and Montreal are especially strong, but are limited to too great of a degree by current transportation obstacles. High-speed rail investments between New York and Montreal via Plattsburgh would transform the steadily but unevenly emerging Quebec-New York Corridor region into a dynamic, unified economic unit with unequaled global connections and potential.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

The cities and regions located along the Empire and Montreal Corridors each have world-class institutions of higher learning and research that will not only benefit from, but will also provide invaluable assistance in the development and implementation of high speed rail in New York State. Within the Empire Corridor are institutions whose researchers, faculty and students identify industrial and commercial applications for the discoveries revealed in their labs and classrooms. Immediate opportunities that can be explored include utilization of lighter weight composite materials in the construction of rail cars (Clarkson University Center for Advanced Materials Processing), development of machinery health management and predictive diagnostic systems (Rochester Institute Of Technology Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies) and the identification and utilization of new battery technology and related storage systems (General Electric—sodium based batteries for hybrid

Within just the 12-county Central Upstate region of the State, 35 colleges and universities educate more than 130,000 students—the third highest concentration of college students in the entire country.

locomotive applications; and, New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium).

These specific examples demonstrate the unique strength of higher education within the geographic area encompassed by the Empire Corridor. In fact, within just the 12-county Central Upstate region of the State, 35 colleges and universities educate more than 130,000 students—the third highest concentration of college students in the entire country. The significant number of higher educational institutions and students translate into not only significant research and intellectual capacity

with potential applicability to high speed rail, but also a ready and “built-in” demographic market for utilization of high speed trains. Further, enhanced connectivity along the Montreal Corridor provides additional opportunities for the educational institutions in the North Country to benefit from student, researcher, and instructor populations in the New York metro area.

High speed rail also has the potential to leverage and enhance the likelihood of success of significant local and regional higher education projects in communities across the Empire and Montreal Corridors. For instance, in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area, capital expansion plans have been developed by the University of Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Center (BNMC) that will significantly increase their enrollment and employment numbers. As part of their plans, connections between campuses and suburban and downtown locations utilizing enhanced transit and light rail have been identified as critical to the success of the overall initiative that will bring an additional 10,000 students to the university’s three campuses, bring more than 60,000 additional patients and visitors to the BNMC each year, add nearly \$2 billion annually to the local economy, and create over 13,000 new jobs. High speed rail service along the Empire Corridor, integrated with local and regional transit options, will be an important element in providing access to hospitals and universities, a critically important industry sector for all of Upstate New York.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

According to proponents of Smart Growth and new urbanism, transportation options have the distinct ability to alter the growth patterns of a region. In particular, high speed inter-city passenger rail adheres directly to the policies of these two development models by delivering passengers, tourists, and workers directly into the central business districts of our metropolitan regions. This new service has the potential to integrate housing and labor markets throughout the region. It could create what economists call ‘agglomeration effects’ by integrating the urban centers and business districts of all of these cities into a cohesive whole. Occurring when a critical mass of buyers and suppliers and workers and firms is created, agglomerations are one of the reasons why large metropolitan areas typically have greater rates of job and wealth creation than smaller regions.

In total, Upstate cities plan to invest more than \$2.25 Billion in their Urban Centers over the next two years.

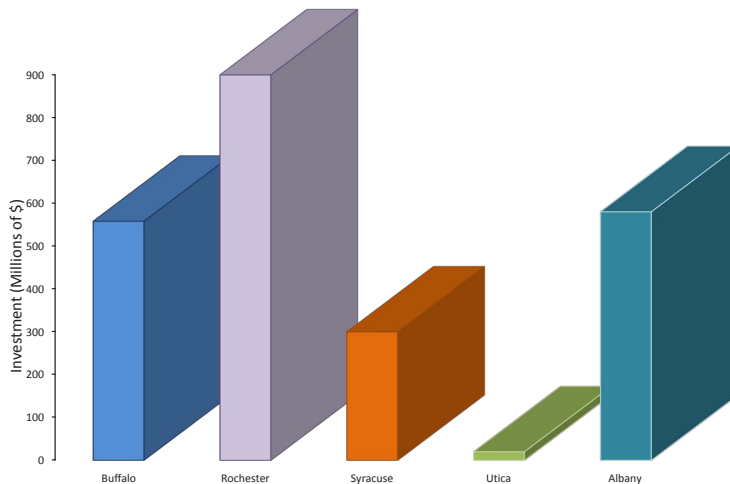
Historically, Upstate New York has experienced the same flight to the suburbs as other ‘Rust Belt’ cities; however, our urban downtowns have begun to see a resurgence of private investment, commercial interest, arts and culture growth, and residential development in the past decade. The ability to quickly and efficiently move individuals into our urban centers, potentially resulting in ‘agglomeration’, is pivotal to

the success of these recent efforts to revitalize our downtowns.

In downtown Buffalo alone over half a billion public and private dollars will be invested in development projects over the next few years. These projects include the expansion of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, a \$237 million project, which will add 1.2 million square feet of new research and clinical space and will bring in an additional 60,000 patients to the central business district each year. Of Syracuse’s over \$300 million in investment over the next 2 years, plans also are included for the expansion of SUNY Upstate Medical University’s treatment capabilities. In addition, SUNY Upstate plans to convert two underused high-rise residential towers to housing for its doctors and faculty. Recently, O’Brien and Gere, one of the area’s premier engineering firms, has decided to move its corporate headquarters out of the suburbs and bring its over 300 engineers and support staff into a new commercial space in downtown Syracuse.

Continuing the trend of downtown reinvestment two large employers, PAETEC and ESL, have announced their intent to locate their corporate headquarters in downtown Rochester. These investments are part of almost \$900 million in downtown commercial and mixed-use investment in Rochester over the next year. In Albany, the anticipated total cost of urban improvement projects exceeds \$580 million and includes new convention spaces and estimates the creation of just over 1,000 permanent jobs. On top of investments of over \$15 million in its downtown Utica Metro Train Station, the City of Utica expects \$20 million of public and private investment in its central business district in the next year.

PLANNED PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS (MILLIONS OF \$)



## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

According to the New York Rail Plan, carbon emissions per passenger mile traveled are much lower for those commuting via passenger rail compared to automobile or airline. Since NYSDOT's proposed High Speed Rail system cuts directly across all of the State's most densely populated urban centers (Buffalo-NYC), the State is poised to capture significant environmental and energy saving benefits from this investment.

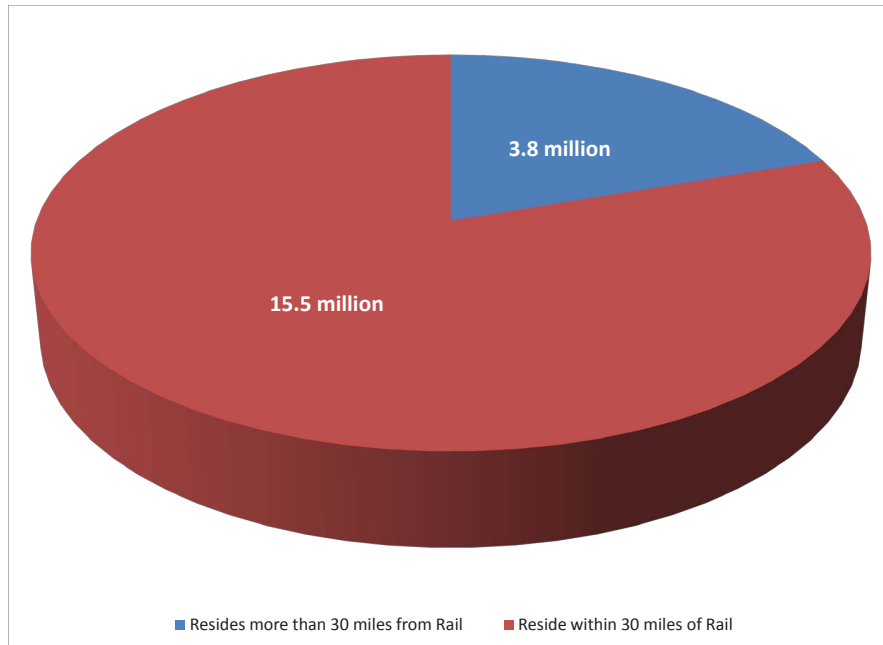
A High Speed Passenger Rail system that is safe, reliable and offers a high frequency of service will draw large numbers of travelers out of their cars and onto trains. When fully operational, the new passenger rail system will:

- Reduce the growth of passenger vehicle trips across the State resulting in lower vehicle emissions and fuel usage.
- Help non-attainment urban areas to maintain conformity with the Clean Air Act standards.
- Give incentives for long distance Canadian travelers to choose trains over passenger cars and reduce congestion international border crossings (14 million passenger vehicles per year).
- Help the State avoid unnecessary and expensive highway expansion projects to reduce traffic congestion.
- Encourage people to live in rail served urban areas and reduce the growth in sprawl.

## TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM

High Speed Rail is an ideal fit for New York's traveling public. The State's major freight railroads (CSX and CP), most heavily traveled interstate highways (I-90/I-87) and busiest waterways (Barge Canal & Hudson River) have nearly abutting rights-of-way between New York City and Buffalo. In many areas, you can encounter all three modes in a corridor that is less than a mile wide. The population of the State has followed suit, more than 80 percent of the State's 19.4 million residents live within 30 miles on either side of this natural right of way.

## LOCATION OF RESIDENTS IN RELATION TO RAIL



In its application to the Federal Railroad Administration, NYSDOT is proposing a multi-billion dollar long term investment in High Speed Rail to create the Empire State Passenger Rail System. The new System will make rail passenger service faster, more frequent, reliable, cost effective and energy efficient. The proposed application will have significant positive transportation impacts on our communities. These impacts include:

- Maximizing recent intermodal passenger investments by municipalities, such as the new Amtrak Station in Rensselaer, the recently built intermodal facility in Syracuse and the historic and rehabilitated Amtrak train station in Utica.
- Speed up planned municipally-sponsored Amtrak station investments in Schenectady and other upstate cities.
- Foster international trade and travel at the State's border crossings with Canada.
- Provide a reasonably priced, accessible and efficient alternative to air transportation for intercity travel.

- Accelerate existing planning efforts for making new intermodal connections to Amtrak using light rail and bus transit systems.
- Provide a new regional intercity commuting option for people to get to work.
- Help to reduce growth in congestion and vehicle hours of delay in urban areas.
- Promote new travel options for business, students and leisure travelers.
- Foster regional partnerships such as the one between Rochester General Hospital and the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Upstate New York’s tourism industry, an over \$12 Billion sector of our economy, will be directly impacted by the increased connectivity and ease of travel to and from our major regions spurred by enhanced passenger rail investment. Through this improved service, all of Upstate’s regions will be able to directly tap into the tourist markets of New York City, one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world, by offering complementary low-cost travel options. With such globally significant destinations like the Adirondack Park, the Finger Lakes, and Niagara Falls the future growth of our regions rely on our ability to attract travelers from adjacent States and Canada.

Further, our world class medical institutions are becoming a destination for the growing trend of medical tourism. In Buffalo alone, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus hosts over 760,000 patient visits a year and plans to further develop its institutions to be able to accommodate an additional 60,000 yearly patients.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Faster and more frequent high speed rail across the Empire and Montreal Corridors can significantly enhance the quality of life for New York’s residents. The New York Rail Plan will expand transit access – the opportunity to use high speed rail as a means of transit when they want to or need to – to more than 15 million people along the Corridors. It will connect metro areas, attractions, businesses, educational institutions, and people across the string of Upstate metro areas in a way that is currently lacking. Upstate cities are too close to conveniently fly and rail is preferable to driving for several reasons.

New connectivity to Canada, the Mid West and New York City and beyond to the East Coast corridor benefit the entire rail path. Taking the train is more comfortable, more productive, less stressful, affordable and much greener than other modes of transportation. This is particularly true for Upstate New York, which suffers from pockets of extraordinary high air fares and limited service. Our interstate highways and major local roads have not been measurably expanded since they were built; the high speed rail initiative brings the possibility of reduced traffic levels during peak periods and could lessen

traffic impacts on failing roads and bridges.

Taking the train has long held a special ambiance, especially if it is reliable and quick. High speed rail across Upstate New York expands our sense of region and connectivity. High speed rail is a means of promoting responsible economic development and land use planning and will renew interest in developing decayed urban areas and reduce sprawl. Many residents will find expanded markets as dedicated high speed rail delivers people and goods in shorter times than ever before. More of New York's attractions, world class athletic events, cultural events, historic sites and conventions will be more easily marketed to a much larger population and geographic area. New employment, business, educational and healthcare opportunities along the Corridors translate to new found levels of opportunity and connectivity.

Our economic footprint will grow as our carbon footprint shrinks. As a world center of green technology, research and commercialization, our green reputation will be further enhanced as we live and move more greenly. New York needs to be able to claim high speed rail as an asset. Not to have high speed rail is clearly a competitive disadvantage. Communities linked by high speed rail will take pride and tout their advantages. Our connections to Toronto, Montreal, Chicago, Detroit, as well as New York City and the East Coast/Acela Corridor from Boston to Washington, D. C. and beyond integrate our community, businesses, customers, suppliers, and families into the evolving nationwide network of fast, convenient, affordable travel that reduces greenhouse gas emissions as well as regional and national dependence on foreign oil.

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

### BUFFALO/NIAGARA

POPULATION: 1,124,309

LABOR FORCE: 596,600

EMPLOYMENT: 543,300

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Buffalo Niagara is part of a larger binational region comprising the upstate cities in the Empire West Corridor and those of southern Ontario. Collectively known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), this region's population is the third largest in North America.

A substantial number of planning studies have indicated the need for better connectivity within the GGH and with the rest of New York State. The BiNational Transportation Strategy indicated both short and longer term initiatives to strengthen binational trade and travel. The New York State Rail Plan, the New York State Senate Task Force on High Speed Rail and the developing Empire Corridor West Railroad Transportation Plan Study all discuss rail passenger services and potential opportunities for improvements to infrastructure and operations. Further, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) Long Range Plan indicates intercity commuter rail to provide substantial benefit within the region. In support of these plans, an intermodal transportation project is underway in Niagara Falls, New York. GO Transit, the Canadian-owned bus and rail operator, will soon be running several trains per day between Niagara Falls, Ontario and Toronto's Union Station as a summer service. The steady of international trade indicates that north-south corridors should be

improved and expanded to handle increased traffic, including border-crossing facility expansion and improvements to handle future growth in traffic demands.

### GBNRTC Long Range Plan and Rail Passenger Service

The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) proposes new commuter rail service between Buffalo and Niagara Falls, NY. This \$4.9 million passenger service project, is proposed between the Exchange Street Amtrak Station in Buffalo and the Niagara Falls Amtrak Station.

Additionally, plans are under way to expand the current light rail system to include two new transit corridors. These corridors would focus transit ridership and land use development patterns in a manner that would be highly complementary to high speed intercity rail in the upstate corridor.

- **The Amherst Corridor** was selected for a high quality transit improvement in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. An extension would complete the transit improvement originally envisioned for the existing Light Rail Line. It would connect the largest educational institution in the region, the University at Buffalo (UB) with downtown Buffalo. It would provide public transit service to two major employment centers in the town of Amherst (Crosspointe and Audubon). Support for an extension is presently included in UB's 2020 Plan. This improvement also travels through an established area possessing a high population density. Such service options range from express buses to bus rapid transit to a light rail extension.
- **The Tonawanda Corridor** has also been selected for a high quality transit improvement in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. The transit operator owns right-of-way in this corridor that could be converted to use as either a busway or light rail. The improvement is viewed as the first step in implementing a high quality public transportation connection between the two major cities (Buffalo and Niagara Falls) of the region and their associated tourism opportunities. This improvement also travels through an established area possessing a high population density. Such service options range from express buses to bus rapid transit to a light rail extension.

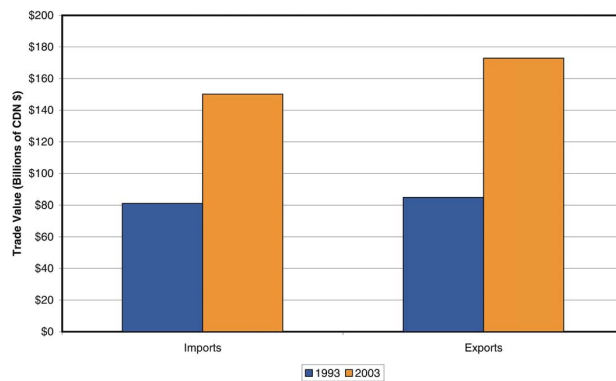
### Bi-national Implications

As previously mentioned the proximity of the Buffalo-Niagara Region to Canada, and the economic influence of the Toronto metropolitan area, form the basis for the Greater Golden Horseshoe construct and emerging bi-national megaregion. The importance of transportation in ensuring economic success within the GGH has been recognized as a significant facet in the development of the region as a whole in the Bi-national Transportation Strategy for the Niagara Frontier. This strategy was a joint effort led by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and the New York State Department of Transportation with participation from federal, regional, local governmental agencies and industry stakeholders from both sides of the border.

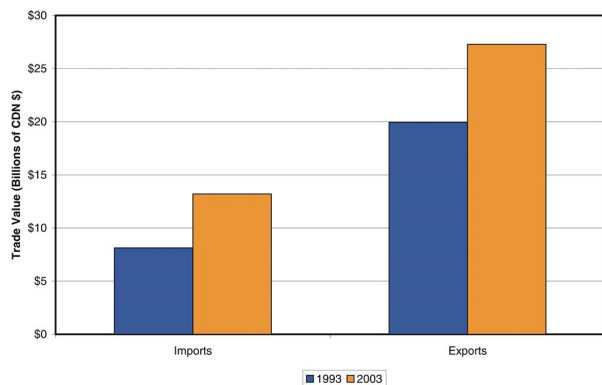
The Strategy determined that Canada and the United States are the largest trading partners in the world, and that their respective economies are highly dependent on cross-border trade. In 2001, the Province of Ontario and State of New York organized a summit conference to discuss these issues. Participants of the Summit acknowledged the acute importance of the Niagara Frontier and created a Bi-national Working Group, comprised of representatives from transportation providers, state, provincial and municipal officials to oversee and set direction for the development of a Bi-national transportation strategy for the Niagara Frontier.

### The Economic Importance

Growth in trade between Canada and the US has tripled since 1993 to total about \$530 billion by 2003. This represents the largest bi-national trade relationship in the world and accounted for nearly 74 percent of all Canadian and 20 percent of all US international trade. Ontario's close economic relationship with the US is illustrated by the fact that it accounts for approximately 60 percent of the total value of surface freight shipments between the two countries. In 2003, approximately 90 percent of all Ontario's exports and 71 percent of imports were reliant on the US market. New York's share of the Canadian market is considerably less with only 8 percent of the total bi-national trade value. Ontario and New York are however, significant economic partners as 54 percent of the state's total value of trade with Canada is with Ontario. With 16 percent of all Canada-US trade crossing at the Niagara Frontier, the region is clearly a key economic gateway between the nations.



ONTARIO'S TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES (1993–2003)



NEW YORK'S TRADE WITH CANADA (1993–2003)

## Rail Usage by Buffalo Niagara Businesses

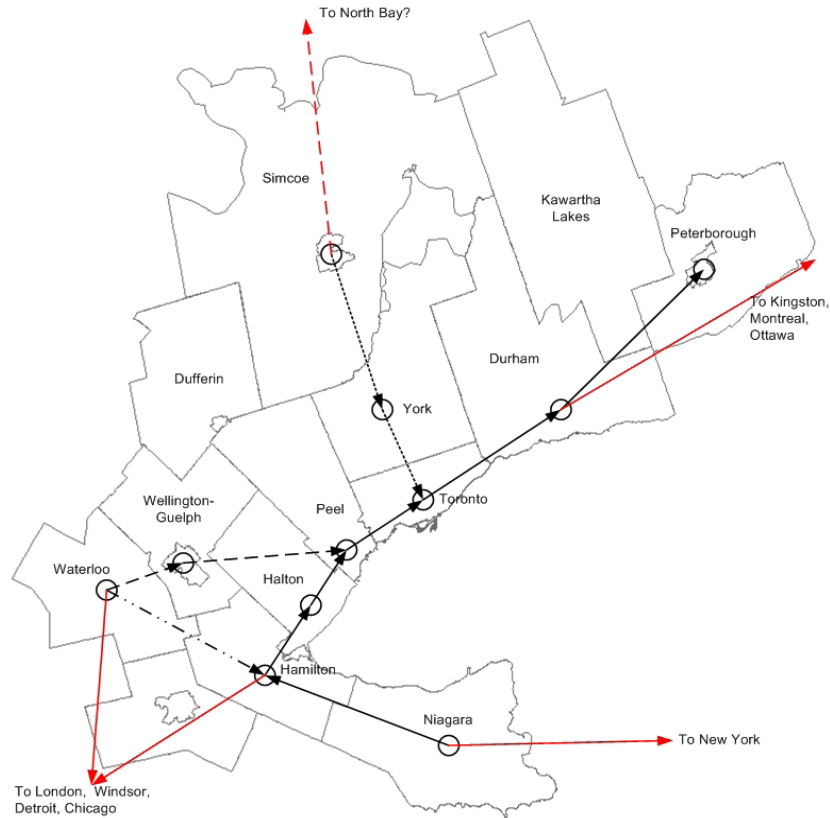
Over 200 Buffalo Niagara businesses across a number of industries – most prevalently advanced manufacturing and agribusiness – depend heavily on rail for delivery and shipment of goods and products. These companies employ over 27,000, and experience sales of over \$7.2B annually. In addition, a number of Buffalo Niagara businesses directly supply the rail industry, employing over 350 workers with sales in excess of \$40 million annually. Significant investment in passenger rail services in the region will improve the passenger rail experience, increase reliability for shippers, and could result in increased employment in the local rail manufacturing industry.

## Potential Linkage to Proposed Canadian High Speed Rail Initiatives

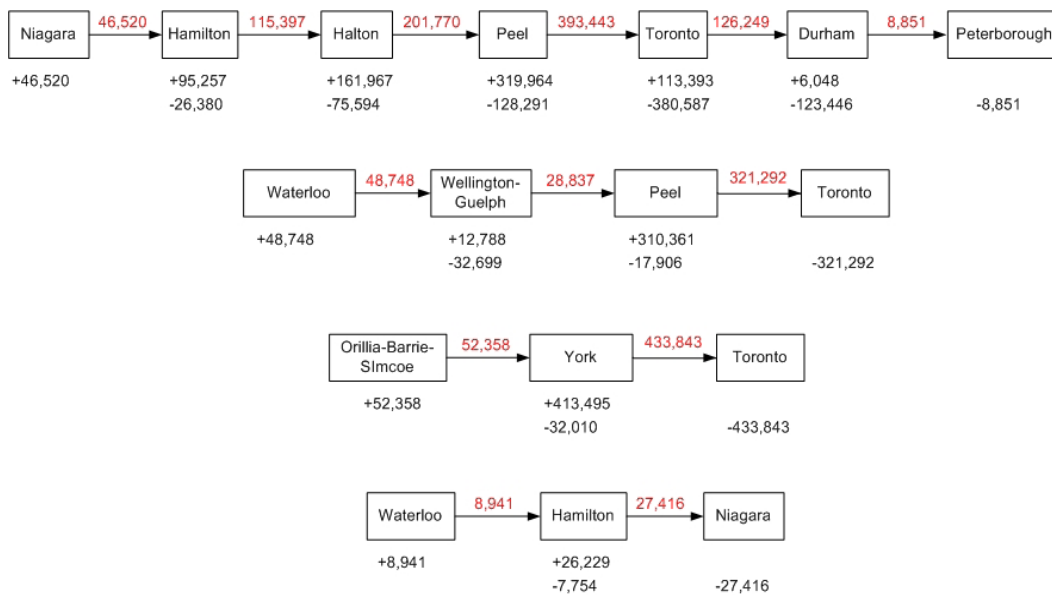
The following documentation is taken from: Infrastructure and the Economy: Future directions for Ontario Working Paper Series: Ontario in the Creative Age

*“The scenario considers fundamental changes to the transportation and land-use planning of Ontario’s expanding urban regions, by envisioning a possible future for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The GGH is the economic heartland of the Province of Ontario, home to more than 70% of its population, and the portion of the province that is most adversely affected by congestion, pollution, urban sprawl and other transportation-related issues. Infrastructure investment in the GGH is essential, not only for the continuing development of the GGH, but for the economic and environmental health of the province as a whole. We believe that it is hard to envision the region in 2021, without any ‘high-order’ transit or ‘express service’ linking the major regions. Such a system should also extend beyond the GGH, by linking it with the cities of London, Kingston, Buffalo (New York) and beyond. A proposed vision for such a network follows. Although obviously very preliminary and conceptual in nature, this figure illustrates potential corridors that could provide high-order, high-speed rail connectivity between major GGH centres, and between the GGH as a whole and the rest of Ontario, Canada and North America. The economic competitiveness of the GGH and the Province of Ontario depends directly on its connectivity to its trading partners and markets in the rest of Canada and the United States. Air and auto travel are the dominant forms of personal transportation connecting GGH people and businesses with Ottawa, Montreal, Chicago, New York and beyond. Construction of a very high-speed rail system between the GGH and these centres creates the potential for the evolution of a trans-provincial, trans-national ‘mega-region’ that could well revolutionize Ontario’s role within the continental and global economic system as well as urban form and quality of life within the GGH.”*

# ENVISIONING A HIGH-SPEED RAIL NETWORK IN THE GGH WITH EXTENSION OUTSIDE



## DAILY TRIP FLOWS ON SELECTED CORRIDORS IN THE GGH



The positive sign indicates that the trips are originating from the county; the negative sign indicates that the trips are destined to the county. The net trips are featured on top of the arrows. (Source, 2006 Transportation Tomorrow Survey)

# ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS / ENERGY

## Air quality status and impact

The Clean Air Act requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency to establish the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for various criteria air pollutants. Areas where air quality monitoring shows a violation of the NAAQS are designated “non-attainment.” By law the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is required to produce a plan, known as the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that details how sufficient emission reductions, including reductions in the mobile source sector, will be achieved to meet the NAAQS. All non-attainment areas are subject to a provision in CAA §176(c) known as transportation conformity. The intent of the transportation conformity process is to fully coordinate transportation and air quality planning to ensure the implementation of transportation plans, programs and projects will not 1) cause or contribute to any new violation of the NAAQS, 2) increase the frequency or severity of any existing NAAQS violations, or 3) delay timely attainment of the NAAQS or any required interim emissions reductions or other milestones in any area. Erie and Niagara Counties were classified as a marginal non-attainment area under the ozone standard for all other Clean Air Act criteria pollutants.

All projects in the 2008-2012 TIP and 2030 LRP were included in the GBNRTC conformity analysis “build” scenario. The rail and high quality transit projects were included and they would act as part of a package to address the air quality concerns of the Clean Air Act. Further, projects recommended in support of a new HSR system would provide an added clean air benefit to the projects that have been approved in the long-range plan.

## TRANSPORTATION

Amtrak is the sole provider of intercity passenger rail service in the area. There are three rail passenger stations in the area located in Buffalo, Depew and Niagara Falls. In 2008, boardings/alightings at the Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street stations totaled 94,619 and 20,797 respectively, with 25,491 boardings/alightings at the Niagara Falls station that year.

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) operates public transportation in the Erie and Niagara region. Serving a population of 1.2 million people, annual ridership in 2008 was over 28 million, up from 25.5 million in the prior year. NFTA provides a variety of transportation services to meet the growing demands of the region. Services offered by the NFTA include fixed route bus service, light rail, Metrolink, seasonal/tourist service (Niagara Falls), paratransit, park and ride and transit centers, and non-Stop Shuttle Service to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

# URBAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Niagara Falls Intermodal Transportation Center

The Cities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo are in the process of rehabilitating and improving their urban infrastructure to support the growth of business, tourism, residential, and mixed-use developments. The Niagara Falls Intermodal Transportation Center Project is a major initiative that supports the City's development goals. The project consists of three independent phases, with a total estimated cost of \$33,254,200. Phase-1 is the restoration of the National Register listed "Customhouse," located in the city's core and adjacent to the international border. This is not only a historic transportation facility, but also a critical building element for the project. Funding of \$2,500,000 has been fully secured and construction is scheduled for Spring 2009. Phase-2 is the railway infrastructure improvements totaling \$13,500,000 [funding partially secured]. Phase-3 is the station construction and relocation of the Amtrak passenger terminal operations and the Department of Homeland Security's Custom and Border Protection operations to a new station at the "Customhouse" location. Completion of this project will result in a number of transportation improvements including: safety enhancements, system capacity upgrades, and new multi-modal capabilities. The new rail station will also provide homeland security benefits by improving customs and border security. This project is fully supported by all public and private stakeholders including GBNRTC, DHS, CSXT and Amtrak. The city has made significant progress on this project, having received federal and state design approval as well as the required environmental reviews.

## High Speed Rail Will Support Regional Growth Opportunities

- University of Buffalo 2020, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and Regional Growth Opportunities

The University at Buffalo, the region's largest educational institution, has plans to grow by over 40 percent by 2020. This growth will bring an additional 10,000 students and 6,700 faculty and staff to the university's three campuses (North, South, and Downtown). It is projected that UB's campus expansion and growth in faculty, staff and students under the UB 2020 plan will add nearly \$2 billion annually to the local economy by 2023-24 and has the potential to create well over 10,000 new jobs in the region. UB's 2020 Plan places strong emphasis on making its "three campuses, one university." This means providing better and more sustainable ways for people to get to UB's three campuses from all over the region and to travel from one campus to another. The UB 2020 plan responds to this need by offering support for high quality transit improvements and by reserving rights of way for future transit expansion in the corridor.

The University at Buffalo's plan for a Downtown Campus involves the creation of a world-class center of clinical practice, medical education, health sciences research, and the translation of new knowledge into practical applications – one that will rival similar urban medical centers across the nation. Approximately 4.2 million GSF will be required to accommodate the academic,

administrative and support, and campus life program for the Downtown Campus, with 2.9 million GSF allocated to academic uses. These investments will more than double the volume of Medical Campus facilities – now at 3.2 million GSF.

The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) is a world-class medical campus located in downtown Buffalo, New York. BNMC is home to the region's top clinical, research and medical education institutions. More than 8,000 people come to work at the medical campus every day. Together, the BNMC institutions host over 760,000 patient visits annually, and account for approximately \$1.5 billion in economic impact each year. It consists of more than 3.5 million square feet of research, clinical, and support space. The BNMC has plans for future expansion and is currently undergoing an update to its 2003 Master Plan and Implementation Strategy. Current and future projects will add an additional 1.2 million square feet of research, clinical, and support space to the BNMC. It is expected to bring an additional 3,000 employees to the BNMC over the next several years, and more than 60,000 additional patients and visitors each year. Much of the planned UB expansion is at the BNMC location, and current regional transit plans are focusing on integrating services to provide improved access to the opportunities. The potential for integration into the Empire Corridor West complex through high speed rail services linking upstate central business districts is significant.

The BNMC developed a master plan in 2003 that will guide the growth of the multiple institutions while coordinating with the neighboring residential communities. Investments include:

- \$150 million Global Vascular Institute – a unique 10 story facility that will house the Kaleida Health Global Vascular Institute and the UB Clinical and Translational Research Center/Biosciences Incubator.
  - \$64 million Skilled Nursing Center – a four-story 300 bed residential-setting facility for long-term patients.
  - \$12 million innovation center – New research and development space for life sciences and biotech companies seeking to be a part of the thriving Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.
  - \$11 million has been allocated for streetscape and infrastructure programs.
- South Buffalo BOA – Smart Growth Spotlight Community

The City of Buffalo is in the process of completing a nomination study for the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA), a master plan for approximately 1,800 acres of strategically located, but largely underutilized land in South Buffalo. The South Buffalo BOA is crucial to the renaissance of Buffalo, and is important for charting the reclamation and redevelopment of these valuable lands.<sup>1</sup>

The South Buffalo BOA has been designated as one of Governor Paterson's Smart Growth Spotlight Communities, which allows additional resources to become available to the many remaining Brownfield sites in the immediate area, and will aid in the revitalization and smart

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<sup>1</sup> City of Buffalo – [http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City\\_Departments/Office\\_of\\_Strategic\\_Planning](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning)

growth objectives.<sup>2</sup>

- Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) is an affiliate of Empire State Development and was created to spearhead the city of Buffalo's waterfront redevelopment effort. The mission of ECHDC is to revitalize Buffalo's inner and outer harbor areas and restore economic growth to Western New York, based on the region's legacy of pride, urban significance, and natural beauty.<sup>3</sup>

ECHDC completed the first two phases of the Erie Canal Harbor infrastructure project in 2008 with an investment of over \$46 million in public funds. The redevelopment of the 12.5 acre site transformed the idle waterfront space into a downtown tourist destination by incorporating historic elements of the original Erie Canal and demonstrated the importance of Buffalo's role as the western terminus of the waterway.

The second part of the redevelopment of Buffalo's waterfront is the Canal Side project, which will focus on developing 23 acres of inner harbor lands for public, commercial, residential, and museum usages. The budget for the Canal Side project is currently estimated to include over \$275 million in public and private investments, and it is anticipated that when completed, the project will generate nearly \$240 million in tax receipts alone, over the course of 20 years.

- Buffalo Green Belt

The City of Buffalo introduced the Buffalo Green Belt, a renewable energy and technology corridor that boasts a strong work force, progressive companies and industries, and serves as an excellent location for sustainable development. The Green Belt moniker will help attract green companies to the area by creating a geographic niche of businesses associated with green technology and renewable energy that will join the current businesses that have already made strides towards sustainability.

- Cars on Main Street

In an effort to stimulate economic development and improve the quality of life in downtown Buffalo, the City of Buffalo, in conjunction with Buffalo Place and NFTA, has submitted a Final Design Report for the preliminary Design of Cars on Main Street, an attempt to increase multi-modal access options and transit ridership by returning vehicular traffic to Main Street in the Downtown Central Business District. This project is estimated at \$75 million, including the restoration of vehicular traffic on Main Street, from Goodell Street to HSBC Arena.

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2      Spotlight Press Release

3      <http://www.eriecanalharbor.com/ECHDCprojects.asp>

Construction on the 700 block of Main Street, the first phase of a multi-year project, is scheduled to be completed in July.

- Potential Diversions

Potential diversion to improved rail passenger service was examined in a Western New York Passenger Rail Opportunities Study undertaken for GBNRTC by Amtrak with ridership forecasting by AECOM. Maximum speeds had been limited to 79 miles per hour in this previous study, and a total of 14 scenarios were tested. All scenarios were forecast to carry new rail passengers, with Niagara Falls-Buffalo airport services showing strongest gains of 125,500 passengers annually. The next best ridership gains were for longer distance services, as described in this application, such as Cleveland-Buffalo-Toronto showing gains of 26,800 passengers on one round trip, and 41,900 passengers with two round trips. It was Amtrak's opinion that the scenarios serving Toronto, Buffalo and Cleveland made the best financial sense, had comparatively low operating costs and relatively high revenues leading to the lowest subsidy requirements on a passenger-mile basis. The ridership projections could be extrapolated to estimate a greater capture of the existing travel market in the corridor based on greater frequency and higher speeds proposed in this application.

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

### ROCHESTER/FINGER LAKES

POPULATION: 1,034,090

LABOR FORCE: 548,200

EMPLOYMENT: 501,900

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Suppliers to the rail industry

The Rochester / Finger Lakes region has a long history of technology and manufacturing excellence in the transportation industry. Construction, engineering, and material suppliers are available in all metro areas to support the design, construction and operation of a high speed rail network. We did not include them in the list provided below. Noted below is a representative list of companies in the Finger Lakes Region that deliver products and services specifically for rail systems, or for remote security management of rail networks. Substantial investment in rail, as proposed by the New York Department of Transportation will potentially create serious benefits for these corporations.

- Alstom Transportation  
Rail signaling and communication systems | [www.alstomsignalingsolutions.com](http://www.alstomsignalingsolutions.com)
- RailComm Inc.  
Control systems for passenger and freight rail | [www.railcomm.com](http://www.railcomm.com)

- Rail Development Group:  
Remanufactured signaling products | [www.raildev.com](http://www.raildev.com)
- Stantec  
Signal system design and program management | [www.stantec.com](http://www.stantec.com)  
(acquired Rochester Signal, Inc. in 2008)
- Bosch Security Systems  
Physical security management systems | [www.boschsecurity.us](http://www.boschsecurity.us)
- Lenel Systems International  
Physical security management systems | [www.lenel.com](http://www.lenel.com)

### Companies that could benefit from the shipment of goods on HSR

HSR provides another means of transport for time-sensitive small packages from Upstate New York to major metro areas such as New York City and Boston. Manufacturers of high value small package goods such as optics companies that produce low volume optical components could utilize HSR for delivery of time sensitive orders. The use of small package delivery via HSR would divert a percentage of small package volume from the following companies:

- Mail delivery service companies (U.S. Mail, FedEx)
- Small package delivery service companies (U.S. Mail, FedEx, UPS)

We have assumed that HSR will not focus on the transport of mid to large size packaged goods, and that they will continue to be shipped via existing transportation channels.

### High Speed Rail benefits for economic development

- Will enable site location near rail stations (offices, housing) for service sector companies that have offices in multiple cities, and personnel that travel between them (e.g., accounting firms, law firms, IT service providers, financial service firms, engineering firms).
- Facilitates city-to-city business travel by enabling an easier means of getting from one center city location to another center city location (e.g., downtown Rochester to downtown Albany or New York City).
- Travelers on HSR will have the option to productively utilize their travel time as though they were at work (follow-up phone calls and emails, schedule appointments, etc.). A two hour trip on HSR will enable an employee to be more productive than the option of devoting the same amount of time to driving.

- Improves companies' ability to attract employees with special skills, by enabling multi-city employment in dual income households.
- Facilitates business related travel for employees who have a fear of flying on airplanes, and as a result are hesitant to pursue assignments and roles that require some travel.

With respect to benefits related to business/workforce development (e.g. densification of labor markets), the Empire Corridor HSR proposal would create two new, distinct labor markets: the Buffalo-Niagara Falls/Rochester Metro Area with 955,562 workers and the Rochester/Syracuse Metro Area with 747,292 workers (based on 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates of workers 16 and over who did not work at home), as the central cities of these labor markets would be within one-hour of each other.

The Buffalo-Niagara Falls/Rochester Metro Area would be the 26th largest in the nation and the Rochester/Syracuse Metro Area would be the 38th. It is important to note that the percent of workers with an average commute of 60 minutes or more averages approximately three percent (3%) in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls, Rochester, and Syracuse metro areas. This stands in stark contrast to the 40 largest metro areas in the country where the percent of workers with an average commute of 60 minutes or more averages more than two and one-half times that amount (8.1 percent).

Reliable HSR would make it possible for employees along the western portion of the Empire Corridor to access a significantly larger number of employment opportunities via a more productive commute of approximately 60 minutes than their counterparts elsewhere in the nation.

## R&D/HIGHER EDUCATION

### Regional Areas of Expertise to Support HSR

- Rail signaling, communication, and control systems
- Machinery health management systems, and predictive diagnostic systems
  - Impact Technologies - [www.impact-tek.com](http://www.impact-tek.com)
  - Rochester Institute of Technology Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies - [www.cims.rit.edu](http://www.cims.rit.edu)

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Conventions: Facilitates access to conferences and events held at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center
- Office Space: May stimulate office development near the train station for multi-city service sector companies
- Housing: May stimulate condo and apartment development near the train station for frequent HSR users

## Central business district investments that can benefit from HSR service

- Downtown convention centers and arenas (Rochester Riverside Convention Center, BlueCross Arena)

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS/ENERGY

As presented on page 127 of the New York State Rail Plan, carbon emissions per passenger mile traveled are much lower for those commuting via passenger rail compared to automobile or airline. The same holds true for energy consumption and emissions of criteria pollutants. Without HSR ridership projections it is not possible at this time to quantify the specific air quality and energy benefits that would accrue from the introduction of reliable HSR on the Empire Corridor.

Given that the only NAAQS not being attained in areas along the Empire Corridor is for ground-level ozone, it is unlikely that HSR would allow these areas to attain the NAAQS for this criteria pollutant absent other projects and programs. However, HSR does provide the opportunity to contribute to a reduction in emissions of ozone precursors (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC) that would otherwise need to be met from other sources.

## TRANSPORTATION / TOURISM

**Existing intermodal transportation options** -- Bus, taxi, airplane, and Amtrak. Regional Transit Service (RTS) Route 11 makes approximately 30 stops at the current Rochester Amtrak Station on its way to the main transfer point in downtown Rochester between approximately 6 a.m. and midnight, providing Amtrak passengers access to the full RTS service network.

**Diversion of travelers from air and highway to rail** – Diversion from air and highway to rail depends on the cost of HSR services and the frequency of service from Rochester to points east and west.

There will be an increase in the number of foreign visitors to Upstate New York, as they opt to visit the Finger Lakes and Niagara Falls via HSR in conjunction with a trip to New York City. HSR can facilitate city to city travel within the U.S. in much the same way as a Eurorail Pass.

### Top tourist attractions

- George Eastman House
- Strong Museum of Play
- Finger Lakes
- JazzFest
- Concerts and performances at Rochester theatres and arenas, such as the Eastman Theatre and BlueCross Arena

## QUALITY OF LIFE

- Better use of travel time, and improved productivity during normal working hours
  - Opportunity to minimize lost work productivity during a trip, by working while traveling on HSR. This reduces the need to work longer hours when traveling.
- Greater employment opportunities
  - Option to pursue employment opportunities from Syracuse to Buffalo that require a longer daily commute, without the necessity to relocate a family.
  - Option to pursue employment opportunities in Albany or New York City that necessitate weekly commutes, without the necessity to relocate a family.

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

### SYRACUSE

POPULATION: 643,794

LABOR FORCE: 338,900

EMPLOYMENT: 309,600

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Information provided by the Manufacturers Association of Central New York and National Grid*

In Upstate New York, companies providing goods and services to the railroad industry employ in excess of 3,500 individuals and have annual sales well over \$750 million. In the Syracuse metropolitan area an estimated 1,300 individuals are employed in businesses that provide everything from ball bearings and hydraulic control mechanisms to engineering and environmental services to the rail industry. Direct investment in passenger and freight rail infrastructure could have an impact on our local businesses in this sector. These companies include:

- Frank Tartaglia, Inc.
- Bo-mer Plastics
- Calsource
- Midstate Spring
- Remick Engineering
- Kilian Manufacturing Corporation
- Young & Franklin, Inc.
- Pelco Component Technologies
- C & S Companies
- Clough Harbour Associates
- CSX
- F.W. Webb

- Tactair Fluid
- CWR Manufacturing Corporation
- New York Air Brake

Further, our overall manufacturing industries heavily rely on the efficient movement of people and goods through rail freight services. These companies include Indium Corporation, a distributor of soldering products used in photovoltaic systems; Air Innovations, a high-tech firm producing indoor environmental control systems; our many food and beverage manufacturers, including Anheuser Busch Brewery; and our stone quarry and aggregate companies like Hanson Aggregates and Kinsella Quarries. Assuming the continual rise in fuel prices, these companies will consistently be looking for the most efficient way to move goods across land. As businesses and individuals increasingly seek to reduce their carbon footprints in response to climate change and consumer market concerns, they will also consciously select rail as the most environmentally friendly means of transport.

Dedicated passenger and freight rail services will ease highway and airport congestion and delays while expanding the capacity for increased use by our Syracuse companies. With enhanced passenger rail services, professionals would be able to commute in a reasonable amount of time to both Rochester to the West, and Utica to the East; a practice that would make attract these professionals to reside in higher density urban areas near passenger train stations. The regional workforce is 20% more educated than the national average. In addition, our regional workforce is consistently rated as one of the most highly productive nationally. With high speed intercity passenger rail service, our over 130,000 students attending area institutes of higher education like Syracuse University, Onondaga Community College, Le Moyne College, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Bryant and Stratton College, Columbia College of Missouri, SUNY Empire State College, Cayuga Community College: Fulton Campus, SUNY Oswego, SUNY Morrisville, and Colgate University could travel easily to internships and employment opportunities within our Upstate cities.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT / HIGHER EDUCATION

The New York Rail Plan will enhance the region’s Essential New York Initiative®, *a unique and innovative plan to accelerate the transition of the Central Upstate region of New York State to a knowledge-based economy*. Central Upstate New York is a 12-county region of New York State that possesses a strong foundation of assets for the development and acceleration of a high-skill, knowledge-based economy.

Since 80 percent of New York State’s population lives within 30 miles of the CSX/Amtrak mainline, more reliable and faster train service will enhance transportation connections between the Central Upstate Region to other NY urban and cultural centers and facilitate the goals of the Initiative.

The Initiative identifies these regional educational strengths:

- 35 regional colleges and universities in the 12-county region educate more than

130,000 students, including 25,000 graduate students, and employ 28,000 “knowledge-industry” workers

- The highest concentration of college students (9.7%) as a percentage of the total regional population in the entire country
- The region’s six largest research institutions Clarkson, Cornell, SUNY ESF, SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse University, and the Air Force Research Lab in Rome have over \$1.2 billion in annual research and development (10% more per capita than the national average)

In addition, Research and Development partnerships in the larger region include:

- The CASE Center for Advanced Systems and Engineering at Syracuse University
- SUNY Center for Sustainable and Renewable Energy at SUNY ESF
- NYS Center for Liquid Biofuels at Morrisville State College; the Center for Advanced Materials Processing at Clarkson University
- The Onondaga Community College Sustainability Institute
- A major Biotechnology Research Center is currently under development as a joint venture between SUNY Upstate Medical Center and SUNY ESF
- New York State Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Innovations

This academic, research and technological asset base positions Central New York well for the innovation economy, and a regional coalition of academic, government, utility, economic development and private sector partners are working together to capitalize these competitive advantages under a common regional brand: “The Creative Core.”

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS/ENERGY

*Information provided by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council*

Onondaga County was designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a carbon monoxide non-attainment area for not meeting established national air quality standards several years ago. Due to concerted efforts between transportation organizations in the area which implemented specific capital projects geared towards emissions reductions and various improvements in vehicle emissions equipment, New York State demonstrated to the EPA that Syracuse and Onondaga County had attained the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and were subsequently redesignated as a maintenance area in 1993. This designation is in effect today and continues through 2013.

To ensure that no transportation project has a seriously negative emissions impact on the regional scale, transportation projects and programs are routinely analyzed. As a modal option which carries large numbers of passengers, high speed passenger rail service could prove beneficial to maintaining the area’s attainment designation and improving air quality in locations along the Empire Corridor should automotive trips be reduced via the rail service. A decrease of automotive traffic on the road network directly corresponds to less vehicle miles traveled, reduced usage of fossil fuels and improved regional

emissions.

# TRANSPORTATION

*Information provided by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council*

Syracuse and Onondaga County are fortunate to have several transportation services available in the community for persons seeking other modes of transportation beyond the automobile (i.e., air, rail and transit). Passenger rail service in the area is provided by Amtrak along the Empire Corridor. The number of passengers that use the service initially increased (table below), with enhanced accessibility provided by the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center which opened in 1998.

TOTAL ARRIVING AND DEPARTING RAIL PASSENGERS  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER  
1980-2005

1980	1990	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005
120,547	118,147	125,459	132,173	127,589	108,650	107,434	95,331

SOURCE: AMTRACK

Located adjacent to Interstate 81, the Central New York Regional Market, Alliance Bank Stadium and Carousel Center, this intermodal facility owned by the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA), the regional transit provider, brings together all ground transportation services, including regional rail, intercity bus, local and regional bus and taxi service. The Regional Transportation Center provides improved interconnectivity between bus and rail transportation modes for the first time in this region, as well as a greater presence for Amtrak in the Syracuse area. The most recent monthly figures released by Amtrak (e.g., May 2009) for the Empire Corridor service west of Albany show a decrease of 10.5% in ridership from the previous year, however, ridership over the last eight months has increased 2.5% when compared to prior year numbers.

If high speed rail service is implemented along the Empire Corridor, changes will be required in the configuration of the CNYRTA intermodal facility to accommodate high speed trains and the resulting likely increase in the number of rail passengers. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) anticipates that approximately \$23.5M is necessary to reconfigure the transportation center and surrounding facilities in order to improve future passenger rail service.<sup>1</sup> This value does not incorporate associated capacity improvement costs along the lines.

The Syracuse/Onondaga County area is also the site of Hancock International Airport, the only such air passenger service in the region. The facilities are attractive and space is available to expand or meet new opportunities. The City of Syracuse, who owns and operates the facility, has initiated work to expand and modernize the airport to increase the number of enplaned passengers.

1 Appendix B Long Range Service and Investment Program for Passenger Rail. New York State Rail Plan. New York State Department of Transportation. 2009.

The number of enplaned passengers through an airport generally fluctuates in response to changes in the economy. The full utilization of the airport has been impacted by high airfares. The City of Syracuse is continuing its efforts to attract more competition in the Syracuse market to provide lower airfares. The table below shows forecast data available for enplaned passengers for 2007, 2012 and 2017.

FORECASTS OF ENPLANED PASSENGERS AT HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
 PROPOSED PREFERRED ENPLANEMENT FORECASTS

2007	2012	2017
1,070,004	1,242,667	1,442,297

SOURCE: CITY OF SYRACUSE DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION

Several agencies in the Syracuse metropolitan planning area have taken interest recently in park and ride availability and geographic distribution of said facilities. The CNYRTA which currently operates 13 park and ride lots throughout Onondaga County has been examining the potential of increasing this number to accommodate heightened community interest in transit and the services they provide (see attached map). Beyond the park and ride lots, CNYRTA is currently in the process of moving their existing Downtown Syracuse Common Center (i.e., transfer hub) to a new location in downtown Syracuse. The new \$15M facility will provide a safe off-street transfer area where passengers can transfer without having to cross traffic and provide a sheltered area to protect passengers from inclement weather. This facility, as described above, provides a necessary connection between the Regional Transportation Center and other destinations throughout the area. Additionally, the NYSDOT who owns and maintains a facility adjacent to Interstate 81 in northern Onondaga County is also interested in establishing a network of park and ride lots along the interstate highway to provide varying transportation options for those that commute to and from Syracuse.

Data from the 2000 US Census approximates that 80% of persons in the Syracuse metropolitan area drove alone to work. Overall, those that made use of the automobile for their daily commute to work increased 5% between 1990 and 2000. Although these numbers are for persons who work in Onondaga County from the three county planning area (i.e., Madison, Onondaga and Oswego), it's probable that others who work in Onondaga County from areas outside the planning area use the automobile as their primary mode of transportation to work. According to the 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package 245,278 persons that reside in New York State work in Onondaga County. Of this number, seven percent (7%) live outside the three county metropolitan area. High speed passenger rail service in the Syracuse area has the potential to shift trips from automobile and air travel to rail depending on the convenience of service being offered, cost and speed. Continued improvements to intercity passenger rail service, specifically those that reduce travel time, increase reliability and/or make pricing more competitive with other modes, will increase the attractiveness of this invaluable asset.<sup>2</sup>

2 New York State Rail Plan. New York State Department of Transportation. 2009.

## TOURISM

Hospitality and tourism is one of the largest sectors of Syracuse's regional economy. In Onondaga County alone visitor spending totaled in excess of \$775 million in 2008. For the entire metropolitan area visitor spending was just under \$ 1 billion dollars in 2008, this is an increase of around 3% over 2007.

The top tourist attractions that are expected to experience increased attendance with more frequent and faster passenger rail service are:

- Armory Square
- The Museum of Science and Technology
- The Carrier Dome at Syracuse University
- Caoursel Center
- Dinosaur Bar-B-Que
- The Erie Canal Museum
- The Everson Museum of Art
- Onondaga Lake Park
- Onondaga Historical Association Museum & Research Center
- Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park
- Tipperary Hill Neighborhood & The Upside Down Traffic Light
- Hospitals and Medical Centers
- Alliance Bank Stadium
- OnCenter Complex
- Franklin Square
- Inner Harbor
- Eastern Finger Lakes
- New York State Expo Center
- Syracuse Stage
- Syracuse Symphony
- Syracuse Opera Orchestra
- Cultural Festivals
- Erie Canal Museum
- Salt Museum and Saint Marie among the Iroquois

The New York Rail Plan will provide faster forms of connectivity with key potential feeder marketplaces, including New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, DC. The enhanced ease of travel has the potential to bolster intercity tourism as well as bringing in visitors from outside the State.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

The New York Rail Plan has exciting potential to dramatically augment Central New York's already high quality of life by enhancing numerous existing assets, as well as bring new elements and opportunities to the Syracuse MSA's 643,794 residents, students and visitors. The benefits would extend further to Syracuse-Auburn Combined Statistical Area with a total population effected of more than 770,000 individuals who would be served via the Syracuse James T. Walsh Regional Transportation Center. True reliability, convenient scheduling and commutes that are faster,

more comfortable, less stressful and greener than planes and automobiles make the regional characteristics of the New York's Creative Core – real, smart and easy - even truer.

Greater employment opportunities will emanate from the increased access for the population as the labor force region is “densified” to encompass Syracuse – Rochester commuting to the west and Syracuse-Utica commuting to the east. Syracuse employers would experience increased productivity from this larger pool while simultaneously expanding the diversity of accessible job openings for residents of the five county area. Intercommutability for medical care and educational purposes will configure a new service area for patients seeking services from the healthcare services based in Syracuse and Rochester. Already well known as a nationally ranked concentration of higher education opportunities, the New York Rail Plan will increase the diversity and densification of the educational opportunities available in the interconnecting metro areas through a larger number of colleges and universities that will be convenient and comfortable commutes.

The State's Rail Plan directly translates to the sharing of combined cultural resources, events and attractions. Residents will be able to choose to go to Syracuse University Sporting events, take a day trip to a Buffalo Bills Game, go to a Chiefs game in Alliance Bank Stadium (right next to the Walsh Regional Transportation Center and Carousel Center shopping mall), see an exhibit at the Everson Museum, participate in the dozens of festivals that take place in downtown Syracuse throughout the year.

The levels of passenger service the Rail Plan will create can send more visitors to and from New York City with greater frequency. Whether the trip is business, shopping or culturally related, the new facile connection to all that is The Big Apple enhances the quality of life for Central New York and NYC.

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

UTICA/ROME  
POPULATION: 293,790  
LABOR FORCE: 145,300  
EMPLOYMENT: 134,400

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Potential suppliers to the rail industry

High Speed Rail investment in New York state will directly impact the local manufacturers, distributors, laborers, and service providers that deal directly with the rail industry. In the Utica-Rome and Mohawk Valley Region there are a number of small to large sized companies that rely on their business with the rail industry. These companies are listed below:

- Revere Copper Products, Inc.
- Empire Recycling
- Harbor Point Minerals
- Utica Mack Truck
- Suburban Energy Services
- Murphy Excavating
- Thermo Petroleum Products
- Carbone Auto Group
- Eggers, Carl & Corrigan, Inc.
- Northland Communications
- American Allied Steel
- McQuade & Bannigan, Inc.
- North Paving Company
- Rockford Auto Glass

- Spohn's Disposal
- Carefree Lawn Service
- Vennaro Welding Service
- Riverhawk, CO, LLC
- Carl Mundy Contractors, Inc.
- Yocume Full Service, LLC
- Fire Fighting Equipment
- Reliable Bus Parts, Inc.
- Patrick Heating, Inc
- Bick & Heintz
- Canfield's Radiator Shop
- M&S Auto Electric
- Utica Plumbing Supply
- Cavo Builders' Supplies
- K&K Train & Hobby
- Gauthier Fabrication
- F. J. Pugliese, Co.
- Utica General Truck
- Nathan Steel
- Adirondack Scenic Railroad
- Rome Strip Steel
- Color Ad Sing Corp.

### Companies that could benefit from the shipment of goods on HSR

Enhanced rail investment in New York State will not only provide substantial improvements to the passenger rail system, but will also provide complimentary benefits to rail freight infrastructure in the corridor. In the Utica / Rome region the following manufacturers and distributors currently use the rail industry to ship their goods and may increase their use of this incredibly efficient transportation system after improvements have been made:

- FX Matt Brewing Company
- SCI Plywood
- McCraith Beverage
- Smurfit-Stone
- Louis Gale & Sons
- Carolina Eastern Vail
- Baillie Lumber
- Sherburne Metals
- DI Highway Sign & Structure
- The Fountainhead Group
- Jay-K Lumber
- Blue Seal Feeds
- Oneida Asphalt
- Growmark FS
- Chenango Valley Pet Foods

### Other Impacts on Economic Development

#### *Griffiss Business and Technology Park (Formerly the Griffiss Airforce Base)*

The park is currently home to the Air Force Research Laboratory, and 70 other companies with over 5,000 employees. The Utica-Rome MSA is currently not supported by a commercial airport; the introduction of HSR service will have a significant economic impact on the travel in and out of the region

## *Adirondack Scenic Railroad – Gateway to Northern New York and the Adirondack Region*

Continuing public investment and private donations to the reconstruction and operation of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad project is producing regional benefits and employment. One method of measuring that benefit is through the use of RIMS II methodology; this Federal EDA-approved method uses operating budgets, visitation statistics, and county-sensitive factors to determine an equivalent number of resulting ‘full time jobs’ resulting from an activity. This is a relatively standard approach for many projects. It’s most important, and most valuable, when a project is being compared to other activities that have been calculated in the same way. For example, which project has higher economic impacts – reconstruction of an historic bridge, or assisting in opening a new museum? If both have used RIMS II methods, they are directly comparable. It provides a standard method and an answer to what the public ‘gets for the money’ when investing in projects such as the reopening and reconstruction of the Adirondack Scenic. They get jobs. It seems logical to most that various types of government spending tend to leverage themselves in various ways beyond just the direct payrolls for the people involved. Buying supplies means you need suppliers.

One of the most significant statistics of any excursion railroad is the impact of the overall program on overnight stays. The extreme length and separation of this railroad is nearly unique as a single entity which tends to retain visitors at the distant points. An overnight stay percentage of 25% was used for total annual riders, which is likely conservative but comparable to other excursion railroads nationwide.

The study produced the following conclusions based upon current budget and attendance factors:

- The direct impact of railroad operations is just over \$2 million in activity, and almost 50 regional fulltime jobs.
- The secondary economic impact of operating the railroad – through the supplier and visitor impacts levels - created another \$3.7 million of economic activity and almost 90 full-time jobs.
- The overall annual economic impact of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad is a total of \$7.7 million of economic activity and 140 full-time jobs in the region.

This makes ongoing investment in the project a good investment for New York State, providing much-needed jobs in an environmentally-friendly manner, and celebrates fifteen years of continuing confidence in the effort.

## **URBAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Experiencing the same fate as comparable post industrial cities across the country, Utica and Rome both saw suburban sprawl reduce the amount of private and public investment in their central business districts over the past decades. With the location of the train station adjacent to Downtown Utica, this region has the potential to leverage the ongoing resurgence in downtown residential,

commercial, and mixed use projects with the onset of High Speed Passenger Rail Service. In total, Utica plans to invest \$20 million of both public and private dollars in its downtown. These projects include: the building of a multimodal transportation facility in downtown Utica, the reconstruction of several bridges and main transportation routes within the region (Rt 12 North and South) \$60 million.

During the past several years there has been considerable reinvestment in the Utica Metro Train station. From 1995 – 2007 there was over \$15 million invested in intercity rail transportation for passenger service.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS / ENERGY

It is expected that a safe, effective passenger rail transportation system will draw individuals from commuting and traveling in automobiles and take them off our already deteriorating roads and bridges. Passenger rail service provides the most environmentally efficient means of transporting our workforce throughout the state. Any transportation option that can effectively reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled in our region will have substantial impact on our national ambient air quality standards under the US EPA Clean Air Act and reliance on foreign oil.

Currently, Utica is in attainment status, however, passenger rail, as a portion of our overall transportation strategy, will be a key component in alleviating this classification.

## TRANSPORTATION / TOURISM

Existing intermodal transportation options

Centro Transit Service (CTS) makes approximately 30 stops each day at the current Utica Union Station between approximately 6 a.m. and midnight, providing Amtrak passengers access to the full RTS service network.

### PASSENGER RAIL IN UTICA:

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Outbound</b>	21,509	20,222
<b>Inbound</b>	18,281	17,676
<b>TOTAL</b>	39,790	37,898

## **Diversion of travelers from air and highway to rail**

Diversion from air and highway to rail depends on the cost of HSR services and the frequency of service from Utica to points east and west. Although we don't have sufficient information at this time to development a more complete response, our expectation is that real service improvements and lower fares will drive an increase in ridership.

## **Potential for Increased Tourism**

There will be an Increase in the number of foreign visitors to Upstate New York, as they opt to visit the Finger Lakes and Niagara Falls, Adirondack Park via HSR in conjunction with a trip to New York City. HSR can facilitate city to city travel within the U.S. in much the same way as a Eurorail Pass.

### *Top tourist attractions:*

- Turning Stone Casino and Resort
- Fort Stanwix and Revolutionary War Trail
- Adirondack State Park
- Adirondack Scenic Railroad
- Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute
- Stanley Performing Arts
- FX Matt Brewing Company
- Vernon Downs Horse Racing and Casino
- 15K Boilermaker Road Race
- Great American Irish Festival

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

### ALBANY

POPULATION: 853,919

LABOR FORCE: 464,100

EMPLOYMENT: 429,800

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Rail Industry – Companies and Employment

Albany Area companies that will directly and immediately benefit from HSR service include GE Turbines, Super Steel, the Port of Albany and the Glenville Industrial Park. There are several industrial parks that have older rail spurs, depending on how new track work intersects with their locations, there may be increased freight activity.

At present in Albany, there are four companies that actively supply the rail industry, employing 17 people and earning \$1.39 million in 2008. The main employer is the Albany Port Railroad Corporation, but others include Access Transit Service that provides switching equipment. Other companies with a local presence include CSX and Amtrak; also MTI and IEM are two companies that develop electronic sensors for switching equipment. Clough Harbour, a national engineering firm based in Albany provides numerous services to the rail industry; this firm employs 775 people in 28 offices.

While job and revenue figures for rail in this area are not strong right now, with HSR there are significant opportunities for start-up companies at the Arsenal Business and Technology Partnership in Watervliet, [www.arsenalpartnership.com](http://www.arsenalpartnership.com) and at the Rensselaer Technology Park, [www.rpitechpark.com](http://www.rpitechpark.com)

## **Economic Development Benefits of HSR**

The main economic development focus in the capital region has been to attract high technology and create a multi-county Tech Valley filled with companies developing cutting edge technology. This venture has been very successful, starting with the College of Nanoscale Science at the State University at Albany (SUNY) and culminating recently with the start of construction on the Global Foundries chip fab plant in Malta, Saratoga County. New jobs will be created as a result of this effort and HSR, particularly the Albany to New York City route, will open up the area to New York City in terms of new businesses and job opportunities.

Many local economic development officials have asked what's next for the region, what comes after the technology effort and how can the region sustain itself in terms of employment opportunities. The high speed rail effort will help the region because it provides job opportunities for a multitude of professions, from the development of specific technology related to sensors and similar devices to engineering and construction jobs. Also, without investment in rail infrastructure, it will be increasingly difficult to sustain manufacturing jobs and to retain the 21st century workforce that area colleges are producing.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS/ENERGY**

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the metropolitan Planning Organization for the four county region, including the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady. The CDTC New Visions Plan calls for investments in transit, bicycle and pedestrian modes, reduction in auto vehicle miles traveled (VMT), urban reinvestment and encouraging smart growth patterns of development. High speed rail would support these objectives and would reduce auto VMT and associated emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO) and greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>). Reduction in auto VMT would also reduce fuel consumption.

Effective June 15, 2004 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified Saratoga, Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer, Montgomery, Greene, and Schoharie Counties as a Clean Air Act Subpart 1 Basic non-attainment area for the 8-hour ozone standard. To ensure that no transportation project has a seriously negative emissions impact on the regional scale, transportation projects and programs are routinely analyzed. As a modal option which carries large numbers of passengers, high speed passenger rail service could prove beneficial to improving air quality in the Capital District as automotive trips are reduced via the rail service. A decrease of automotive traffic on the road network directly corresponds to less vehicle miles traveled, reduced usage of fossil fuels and improved regional emissions.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Capital District already has excellent access to Amtrak service and a strong history of investing in improvements to Amtrak stations and service. The Capital District's "REVEST" program links a number of inter-related rail initiatives to improve rail service and to improve the synergy between various projects. Linked projects include construction of the Albany-Rensselaer train station (completed); renovation of the Saratoga Springs train station (completed); construction of a second track between Rensselaer and Schenectady to improve rail freight and passenger capacity; the rehabilitation of the Livingston Avenue Bridge over the Hudson River; and Western Gateway Transportation Center intermodal facility /Amtrak station reconstruction in downtown Schenectady (subjects of this application).

### The Albany-Rensselaer Station

In 2007 the Albany Rensselaer station ranked as the tenth busiest Amtrak station in the nation. The CDTC provided funding for this \$53 million station. The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) administered construction of the new station and currently operates the station, which features a wide open waiting room, cafe, full checked baggage service, newsstand, Post Office, and other amenities. In 2008, the Albany Rensselaer station served 830,740 passengers (boardings plus alightings).

### The Western Gateway Transportation Center

CDTC, CDTA and the City of Schenectady are supporting and seeking additional funding for the Western Gateway Transportation Center, a project to purchase the Schenectady Amtrak Station and construct a new intermodal facility. The Center will be important for the revitalization of Downtown Schenectady; it will replace outdated rail and bus facilities and link intercity rail and bus service, local bus service, commuter rail, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic at a single location in downtown Schenectady. The Center will support the introduction of high speed rail service between New York City and Buffalo.

The Western Gateway Transportation Center will include a four-story building (80,000 square feet), transportation-related museum, restaurant/retail shop (20,000 square feet), and a public plaza. The public plaza will serve as a front door to the intermodal facility and the museum on Erie Boulevard. A key issue raised by the public during the planning process for this project is the need to reestablish a sense of civic pride for the architecture of the City's transportation facilities. Thus, the architecture will be sensitive to the historic character of the city and the stature of civic facilities, much like the prior rail station.

In 2008, the Schenectady Amtrak station served 49,659 passengers (boardings plus alightings).

## The Saratoga Springs Train Station

The renovated CDTA Saratoga Springs Train Station, opened March 2004, serves 23,000 passengers each year, primarily for travel to New York City. The new station also serves the Empire Corridor with the Adirondack route to and from Canada, and the Ethan Allen route to and from Vermont.

Saratoga Springs Train Station is a regular stop on many of CDTA's NX Northway Xpress commuter bus routes. With the addition of Greyhound Lines ([www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)), the station is an intermodal hub providing customers with connections within the region, as well as to destinations throughout the state and beyond. Amenities include canopied entry shelters, coffee/news stand, ATM machine, information kiosk, and an outside patio with benches and a children's play area.

Tailoring transit service to meet the overall transportation needs of the 21st century includes improved intermodal passenger connections. Efficient transfer between private operator transit service and CDTA service is one component. Effective connections of local transit and taxi service with inter-regional bus, rail and airline services are another.

For connections to the inter-regional passenger system, the Rensselaer Rail Station improvements will provide better connection to downtown Albany, improved circulation and layover areas for CDTA buses and better accommodations for taxis at the station. The project also supports a long-range game plan for increased mixed-use development near the station.

Grade crossings are considered a constraint to rail movement because of safety and liability considerations, particularly for high-speed train operation. An inventory of railroad grade crossings in the Capital District is included in Goods Movement in the Capital District: A Performance Report, a New Visions technical report.

Grade crossing elimination has multiple transportation system benefits:

- improved railroad and highway safety,
- improved efficiency of freight movement, and
- allowance for technological advances that would otherwise be impeded.

High speed passenger rail service in the Capital District area has the potential to shift trips from automobile and air travel to rail depending on the convenience of service being offered, cost and speed. Continued improvements to intercity passenger rail service, specifically those that reduce travel time, increase reliability and/or make pricing more competitive with other modes, will increase the attractiveness of this invaluable asset.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New York State Rail Plan. New York State Department of Transportation. 2009.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The CDTC New Visions Region Transportation Plan strongly recommends urban investment, concentrated development patterns, smart growth and multimodal transportation investments. The Plan was developed in consultation with residents, businesses, transportation providers and state and local government leaders.

CDTC and its partners, the Center for Economic Growth, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, and the University at Albany, studied the impacts of different regional growth patterns. The study evaluated impacts of growth on transportation systems, primary and secondary education, potable water supply and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, and fire protection and emergency services. Based on this study and the development of the New Visions Plan, a consensus emerged among the business community, the public and elected officials that urban investment, transit oriented development and smart growth patterns would support economic growth while protecting the quality of life that this region is known for.

High Speed Rail will represent an investment in our urban centers that will support the New Visions Plan. The associated investments in rail stations in the urban centers (Albany-Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Saratoga Springs) provide direct benefits to urban vitality. Access to High Speed Rail from these downtown stations will make the cities more attractive to employers and job seekers. High Speed Rail, along with other transit investments, will support smart growth for the Capital Region. In fact there are several public and private investment opportunities being investigated that will benefit from investments in High Speed rail. A mixed use condominium proposal has been proposed along the Hudson River waterfront adjacent to the rail station in Rensselaer. Certainly the introduction of high speed rail will be an additional asset in the marketing of this site to potential residents and business owners. As noted above, the proposed multimodal transportation center in downtown Schenectady will be a cornerstone in the redevelopment of that part of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

High speed rail will enhance quality of life for the Capital District. It will increase the attractiveness of the region, provide residents with a viable alternative to the automobile, and encourage economic vitality in the urban centers.

The region attracts a number of students from the New York Metropolitan area to its area colleges and universities. Upon graduation, many leave the area and relocate to New York City. The region is aggressively pursuing strategies to retain these young professionals. Though the Capital Region emphasizes many of its own quality of life assets, the region can not compete with the cultural venues that a much larger urban area has to offer. However, with the introduction of high speed and more frequent rail service to the New York Metropolitan area, in particular, there will be greater access to

these assets which can be touted as another of a number of reasons for young professionals to consider beginning their career in the Capital Region. In turn, by having a talented labor pool, it makes it easier for the region to market and attract potential employers to the region. A number of studies in recent years have shown that a region's quality of life ranks near the top in both an employer and employee's decision to locate to a particular region. To further reinforce the importance of a rail link between Albany and New York corridor, cumulatively since 2000, based on IRS data, the largest number of persons moving into the Capital Region came from Queens County, (ranked #1) , Bronx (#3), Kings (#4), Suffolk (#5) and Nassau (#6). The number two county was Berkeley, South Carolina primarily due to Military transfers. No doubt the introduction of high speed rail will positively impact the quality of life of existing and future residents in the Capital Region. In addition, by offering frequent, reliable, and cost effective service, it would be the preferred alternative to driving or flying into the Metro area resulting in significant environmental and energy related benefits.

In fact, quality of life has been identified by the Capital District as an important asset of the region and an important consideration for investment and economic development. The CDTC Regional Transportation Plan is called "New Visions for a Quality Region" in recognition of the importance of quality of life considerations in transportation investments and regional development. High quality transit service, walkable communities and vital urban centers have been recognized by the New Visions Plan as important attributes of quality of life.

The New Visions Plan recognizes the connection between quality of life attributes and the region's potential for economic development. Firms are very aware that an attractive region will help them recruit and retain high quality employees. Representing the Capital District as an attractive place to live makes the region more attractive to national firms and their employees. High Speed Rail would increase the quality of life for Capital District residents by increasing the access to New York City, other cities in the Empire corridor, Montreal and the North Country, and the East Coast/Acela Corridor from Boston to Washington, D. C. and beyond. This is a significant factor for a firm recruiting employees. In addition, a firm will find that high speed rail access to New York City (Washington, Boston, Chicago, and Toronto) for business meetings will also make the Capital District more attractive to firms.

Another benefit of High Speed Rail for the Capital Region is the prospect of residents actually commuting to New York City, especially if, with the assistance of telecommuting, they only needed to travel to New York City two or three days per week.

CDTC has developed a performance measure called transit access. It is defined by how many people have the opportunity to use transit when they want to or need to. An individual may choose to use transit only once or twice per week, or per month, or even less often, but transit access is still a real benefit for them. Extending this concept to high speed rail, 800,000 people in the Capital District would be afforded access to high quality rail service and would have the opportunity to make important connections to business and recreational opportunities.

# HIGH SPEED RAIL

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## NY COALITION

PLATTSBURGH  
POPULATION: 236,265  
LABOR FORCE: 121,100  
EMPLOYMENT: 110,500

*Information provided by the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce.*

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Plattsburgh's guiding economic principle is as follows: "Where things move is where prosperity occurs."

For 200 years, the thrust of development in both the U.S. and Canada was east-west, including canals, railroads and highways. However, post-NAFTA, the U.S. and Canadian economies have been rapidly integrating, resulting in the emergence of 4 to 6 newly dominant north-south corridors which will be of increasing importance to the U.S. in terms of movement and economic development of all kinds. Of these, the "Quebec-New York Corridor" from Montreal to Albany to New York City is of special significance because of what it connects and its passage through what remains the world's richest market.

In 2001, the Quebec-New York Corridor Agreement was signed, creating a public-private partnership co-lead by the Governor of New York, the Premier of Quebec, the Plattsburgh-North

Country Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Quebec Chambers of Commerce. The aim is to further economic growth within the bi-national Quebec-New York Corridor region, with an emphasis on transportation as the pathway to enhanced prosperity. And in a succession of bi-annual Quebec-New York Summits since 2002, the achievement of high-speed rail between New York City and Montreal has consistently remained a top priority for economic development.

This has included the Quebec-New York High-Speed Rail Pre-Feasibility Study completed in 2004 by the N.Y.S. Transportation Dept. and Transports Quebec, part of a much broader I-87/Quebec-New York Multimodal Corridor Study. This study concluded that high-speed rail in the NYC-Montreal corridor has merit and would have an enormous positive impact on the movement of people and on the regional economy. Both governments have been committed to incremental enhancements over the past several years, and at the 2008 Summit in Montreal, agreed to name personal representatives of the Governor and Premier to coordinate a joint action plan, pursued in the context of the fresh commitment of both federal governments to high-speed rail.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Plattsburgh stands uniquely as “Montreal’s U.S. suburb”, as a key economic hub and gateway for the broader Quebec-New York Corridor region, and also as the gateway to the adjacent Adirondack region and its extensive tourism and recreational assets.

Plattsburgh’s relationship with Montreal is a key indicator of the economic stakes involved in facilitating movement up and down the corridor. Located one hour south of Montreal, the Plattsburgh area hosts more than 300 U.S. subsidiaries of Quebec corporations and, according to a bi-annual “Assessment of the Economic Impact of Quebec on Clinton County” (the county on the border that includes Plattsburgh), the direct annual impact of crossborder movement and commerce on this one area of 85,000 people exceeded \$1.53 billion as of 2004. This is without extrapolations or multipliers, and doubled from the finding of \$784 million in 1994.

Though most visible in Plattsburgh, investment and economic integration is rippling up and down the corridor between Montreal and New York City, impeded only by travel times. The natural economic connections between New York City and Montreal are especially strong, but again are limited and confounded to too great of a degree by the current failure to meet modern business travel needs, with choices consisting of long drive times, even longer train times, or costly and limited flight options from airports difficult to access.

High-speed rail between New York and Montreal via Plattsburgh would transform the steadily but unevenly emerging Quebec-New York Corridor region into a dynamic, unified economic unit with unequaled global connections and potential. The attraction of investment and growth would be absolutely predictable, “spreading the wealth” to all areas in-between the two major metropolitan cities at each end.

## TOURISM

Passenger rail service and its improvement are important to all places within this corridor, but most especially to the Adirondack region adjacent to Plattsburgh. The Adirondacks are one of the great destinations of the world, featuring the 6 million acre Adirondack Park (the largest park by far in the lower 48 states) and world class resorts such as Lake Placid, host to the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics. And we note that National Geographic magazine has branded the Adirondack service as “one of the ten most scenic train journeys in the world”.

Currently, this vast tourism region is nearly 100% dependent on road travel for its millions of annual visitors, including many from the New York metropolitan region. The only other means of travel is via the existing Adirondack Amtrak service on this rail corridor. As we look to the future, it will be increasingly crucial to the tourism economy of the Adirondacks that high-speed rail provide a connection to its greatest markets, in order to preserve its attractiveness and competitiveness and to expand its visitation numbers. Even with present slow service, ridership has been increasing significantly.

The Quebec-NY High-Speed Rail Pre-Feasibility Study projected significant time savings in the present rail service -- severely hindered by slow conditions in many segments -- potentially shaving up to 3 hours from the current 4:35 travel time from Albany to Rouses Point (the border). With such improvements would come, according to the study, up to 175,000 new riders annually on top of the current 90,000+ level. While much of this would be city to city, the Adirondacks would clearly emerge as a newly accessible destination for millions of people in the New York City region and beyond.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Presently, some 3 million people annually cross the Quebec-New York border, almost all in cars and largely on long distance trips spanning the corridor between New York City and Montreal. This includes passage through the environmentally sensitive Adirondack Park. Without the alternative choice of high-speed rail, this dominance by car travel cannot change, or at least cannot do so without the economic devastation that would accompany decisions to not travel.

Similarly, as noted, the Adirondack Park is almost wholly dependent on cars, with the single exception of this rail corridor and the opportunities inherent in furthering the use of trains to move tourists in and out of one of America’s most extensive and precious wilderness areas, reducing the future carbon footprint with each movement by rail instead of automobile.

## TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT

The development of high-speed rail in New York State, in both major corridors, is of further

significance to Plattsburgh as one of the nation's emerging centers for the manufacture and assembly of transportation equipment. Plattsburgh's large and growing cluster of such companies offers a highly qualified and proximate source of high-speed rail equipment of all kinds, with more than twenty manufacturing operations including:

- Bombardier Transportation (railcars and locomotives)
- Curtis Door (railcar door systems and platform doors)
- MULTINA USA (composite components)
- Railtech Composites (composite components)
- WABTEC (rail and bus air conditioning systems)
- General Composites (composites)
- B3CG Interconnect (cable)
- Imeco Cables America (cable and harnesses)
- Cintube International (stainless steel components)
- Calmo (disabled access lifts)
- Spencer ARL (transportation components)

This does not include more than twenty other transit equipment and component producers, as well as machine shops, consultants and specialized service providers in the Plattsburgh region. All would be expected to share in the direct benefits and contract opportunities linked with high speed rail investment in New York State.

## OTHER IMPACTS

The region around Plattsburgh is also home to several major universities, colleges and research institutions, presently reached only by car. High-speed rail would greatly enhance connectivity between these institutions and all areas of New York State, especially the greater New York metropolitan region which is a natural source of students, instructors, researchers and other visitors. Among the institutions in the immediate Plattsburgh vicinity which would use and benefit from HSR are the following:

- State University of New York at Plattsburgh
- Clinton Community College
- Paul Smith's College of the Adirondacks
- North Country Community College
- Trudeau Institute
- Miner Institute

In addition, it is notable that Plattsburgh is just across Lake Champlain, and just a one-hour drive by car and ferry, to Burlington, Vermont. There is no question that the presence of high-speed rail to New York City from Plattsburgh would also serve the Burlington metropolitan area, drawing substantial ridership and additional economic impact for both adjacent regions.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Final Report:

Charles Lattuca  
Senior VP, Public Affairs Group  
Praxiis Business Advisors  
POB 393  
Fairport, N.Y. 14450

## Buffalo/Niagara:

Buffalo Niagara Partnership  
665 Main St., Suite 200  
Buffalo, NY 14203-1487

Erie County Industrial Development Agency  
275 Oak Street  
Buffalo, New York 14203

Buffalo Niagara Enterprise  
665 Main St  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Greater Buffalo Regional Transportation Council  
438 Main Street, Suite 503  
Buffalo, NY 14202

## Rochester:

Greater Rochester Enterprise  
100 Chestnut Street  
One HSBC Plaza  
Suite 1910  
Rochester, NY 14604

Rochester Business Alliance  
150 State St  
Rochester, NY 14614

## Syracuse:

Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce  
572 S. Salina Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council  
126 North Salina Street, 100 Clinton Square,  
Suite 100  
Syracuse, New York 13202

Metropolitan Development Association  
109 South Warren Street  
Suite 1900, State Tower Building  
Syracuse, New York 13202

MACNY, The Manufacturers Association  
One Webster's Landing, Fifth Floor  
Syracuse, NY 13202

Syracuse Conventions and Visitors Bureau  
572 S. Salina Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202

**Utica/Rome:**

Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Radisson Hotel, 200 Genesee Street  
Utica, NY 13502

**Albany:**

Center for Economic Growth  
63 State Street  
Albany, New York 12207

Capital District Transportation Committee  
One Park Place  
Albany NY 12205-1606

Capital District Transportation Authority  
110 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, New York 12206

**Plattsburgh - North Country:**

Plattsburgh – North Country Chamber  
7061 Route 9  
P.O. Box 310  
Plattsburgh, New York 12901

**For more information about this report, please contact:**

Deb Warner, Vice President for Public Policy  
and Government Relations

Benjamin Sio  
Director of Economic Development

Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce  
527 S. Salina Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202  
315.460.1800

Tom Blanchard  
Senior Vice President  
Metropolitan Development Association of Central New York  
109 South Warren Street  
Suite 1900, State Tower Building  
Syracuse, New York 13202