I-87 MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STUDY
Fact Sheet #2

www.dot.state.ny.us/i87study

September 2003

Important Dates:

- Sept 12, 2003: Study Advisory Group Meeting
- Fall 2003: “Long List” of Initiatives
- Winter 2003: Preliminary Phase 2 Results
- Spring 2004: Final Report

Current Study Activities

- Development of initiatives is progressing. A report of the long list of improvement concepts will be completed this Fall.
- High Speed Rail Pre-Feasibility Study is in its final stages.
- Close coordination with Quebec Transportation Ministry is ongoing.

ECONOMIC ZONE MEETINGS HELD

Over the past three months, the study team has met with small groups of economic development and transportation sector leaders for each of the three study zones — the Northern Zone (Clinton, Essex, Warren and Washington counties), Central Zone (Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady), and Southern Zone (Greene, Columbia, Ulster and Dutchess counties).

The goal of this study was to work with public and private sector representatives within the study area to identify economic development trends, projections and goals for each zone; highlight factors important in achieving those goals; and assess the relative importance of improvements to the corridor’s transportation network among those factors.

The input from this process will help define those improvements to the corridor’s transportation network that would provide the greatest support for both regional economic growth and the effectiveness of I-87 as a key trade corridor.

ECONOMIC ZONE MEETING FINDINGS:

The meetings identified both near- and long-term improvements that would provide needed support to each region’s key business sectors. Suggested improvements included new interchanges, better signage for key attractions on the Northway, and methods to increase the overall competitiveness of the regions. Many non-transportation issues (e.g., natural gas, sewer/water connections, etc.) were also discussed.

HIGH SPEED RAIL PRE-FEASIBILITY

A pre-feasibility study of high speed rail within the I-87 Corridor is being conducted as part of the overall Corridor Study. Currently in its final stages, the pre-feasibility study has involved close coordination with the Ministry of Transportation Quebec, which is conducting a similar study from Montreal to the New York border.

The goal of the study is to determine the feasibility of 150 mph service in the Corridor. It involves the review of various speed regimes and run times, as well as potential ridership demand. The study will also entail a preliminary review of issues such as double-tracking needs, freight/passenger conflicts, grade crossing elimination issues, and possible need to deviate from existing route along new track.

ORIGIN & DESTINATION STUDY

The study team has recently completed an Origin & Destination survey of passenger cars at the I-87 border crossing with Canada. The survey was completed over a four day period.

The survey consisted of a short interview where the driver was asked to provide the trip origin and destination, purpose and frequency of the trip. The interviewer also noted the vehicle classification and the number of occupants. Approximately 4,600 interviews were completed during the four-day survey period (August 21-August 24).

The results of the survey will provide a better understanding of the types of travellers using this border crossing and travelling in the I-87 Corridor.

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ECONOMIC MEETINGS HELD
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Economic zone meeting participants felt that the Corridor is economically stronger than others in the State that have or are seeking similar Trade and High-Priority Corridor designations.

Southern Zone: Key transportation initiatives in the Southern Zone include conversion and development of the former Air Force base to Plattsburgh International Airport; development of the “Port of Excellence” at the Champlain/Lacolle border crossing; implementation of the NEXUS/FAST programs; passenger and freight rail improvements; accessibility to ferry services; truck rest stops; vehicle turnouts on scenic roadways; bilingual signage and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). Traditional manufacturing has declined, while the paper, pharmaceutical, and transportation equipment manufacturing subsectors have surged. Wholesale/retail trade, finance-insurance-real estate (FIRE), and service sectors have also grown.

Northern Zone: Key transportation initiatives in the Northern Zone include conversion and development of the former Air Force base to Plattsburgh International Airport; development of the “Port of Excellence” at the Champlain/Lacolle border crossing; implementation of the NEXUS/FAST programs; passenger and freight rail improvements; access to ferry services; truck rest stops; vehicle turnouts on scenic roadways; bilingual signage and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). Traditional manufacturing has declined, while the paper, pharmaceutical, and transportation equipment manufacturing subsectors have surged. Wholesale/retail trade, finance-insurance-real estate (FIRE), and service sectors have also grown.

Central Zone: Key transportation initiatives in the Central Zone include better access to Albany International Airport and to the Port of Albany; commuter peak management; access to planned high-tech industry locations; congestion management on shared freight and passenger rail lines; intermodal freight improvements; and ITS on the Northway. The manufacturing sector has experienced a significant decline while the wholesale/retail trade, finance-insurance-real estate (FIRE), and service sectors have grown.

The study website has now been “live” for over three months. For the last month the website received over 2,000 visitors. Most visited pages included the Study Overview and meeting minutes of the first study advisory group meeting. Additionally, all study documents and materials including meeting minutes are and will be posted on the website for viewing and downloading.

Over the coming weeks, new material to be posted on the website include the Existing Conditions Report, results of the Origin & Destination Survey, the first of two study newsletters, an updated Frequently Asked Questions section and an overview of the High Speed Rail Pre-Feasibility portion of this study.

Please visit the study website at www.dot.state.ny.us/i87study.