GOAL OF STRATEGIC PLAN

The goals of the I-87 Multimodal Corridor Study were to:

- **Enhance Person and Goods Movement and Intermodal Operations**, including reliable traffic operations, expanded intermodal connections and more efficient border crossings.
- **Support Corridor-Wide and Regional Growth and Development**, including supporting anticipated growth and related regional and local plans; e.g. better connections to major business and recreational sites.
- **Promote Safety and Security** of both freight and passenger movements and networks.
- **Protect the Corridor’s Environment and Quality Of Life**, including minimizing impacts from transportation actions or facilities, protecting unique resources, and supporting sustainable Quality Communities.

By meeting these goals, the Study could identify those actions that would best prepare the corridor to meet the corridor’s economic development and mobility needs.

The Study’s first phase reviewed existing conditions and needs, and identified and initially assessed a broad range of actions to address them. The Study’s second phase has continued that assessment while further developing a number of these actions that were not already being handled by NYSDOT or other agencies. Finally, the Study would create an I-87 Corridor Strategic Plan to identify how these actions could help meet the overall goals of the Study.

CORRIDOR VISION: SMART CORRIDOR

The vision of the corridor that evolved from the first phase of the Study called for development of I-87 as a “Smart Corridor” to address these broad goals in an efficient and effective manner.

Corridors vary depending on the nature of the major travel markets – commuter, long-distance freight, recreational, etc. The I-87 Corridor is all of these, serving many of the State’s fasting growing economic concentrations, connecting the Greater New York City Area with key Upstate markets, the Catskill and Adirondack natural and recreational areas, and the second largest metropolitan area in Canada. Given this diversity, the Strategic Plan focuses on the corridor’s four principal travel markets:

- **Intercity Passenger** – longer distance trips made for a variety of personal and business trip functions. With longer distance comes a broader range of modal options (air, rail, auto, bus).
- **Commuter** – shorter daily journey-to-work trips, usually by car and compressed along routes leading to and from major employment centers.
- **Tourist** – trips to the Corridor’s important recreational and natural areas attracting travelers from throughout the Northeast and beyond.
- **Trade** – involves truck, rail and other freight trips, including those across the Champlain-Lacolle-Rouses Point crossings, within a heightened security environment.
The Strategic Plan’s array of proposed projects and initiatives to address the mobility needs of these four travel markets efficiently and innovatively are grouped around four major themes; these include

**SMART HIGHWAYS**

The methods available to address congestion and safety on highways have expanded significantly since the boom years of highway construction in the 1950s and 1960s. Rather than simply adding lanes, modern highway planning calls for managing highway capacity, responding systematically to problems that limit its use, and supporting modes that can more efficiently move people and goods at a minimum of public and private costs. Some changes are happening in the corridor, and more are planned:

- **Greater Agency Integration.** New York State, and the nation as a whole, has already been moving strongly in this direction, and numerous initiatives and technologies are starting to be implemented. It is clear that greater coordination among agencies, within the State and nationally, is needed to expedite the rollout of many of these programs. The historic strength of the United States’ economy and its transportation network was its lack of borders among states. As such, corridors and States cannot be isolated, with systems developed for one fully integrated with those around them.

- **Smart Networks.** Within New York State, projects to develop “Smart Networks” where conditions on alternate routes are known to both travelers and agencies before re-routing and system adjustments are made. One of the Study’s Phase 2 projects would demonstrate how this could be done in the Capital District.

- **Including Transit in “Smart Highways.”** Local roadways and highways carry the bulk of the public transit passengers in the corridor, and the ability to carry more in these modes is essential to the corridor’s long-term efficiency. Actions to make Smart Highways must include this as an important element.

- **Create “Smart Capacity.”** As the need to add capacity to the corridor’s highways is considered, any such increases should look to emphasize “Smart Capacity,” including preference for transit modes and highway “pricing” to control highway use. The on-going I-287 Corridor Project is an example of how these elements are being considered in present-day studies.

**SMART/SAFE DRIVER**

Drivers want advanced knowledge about roadway conditions, transit options to complete the same trip, and real-time information as conditions change so plans or routes can be effectively altered to avoid delay and improve trip reliability. For personal trips, this avoids hassles and inconvenience, while for freight shippers improved reliability translates to reduced costs. There are a variety of programs that agencies in New York State, and along the corridor, have already started, with many new areas and technologies to be tested:

- **Improved Pre- and In-Trip Information and Communications Systems.** New York State is making a variety of moves to insure that travelers are better informed about the trips they make. This includes methods to provide information before the trips are made, to pick the best mode, route and time of day, as well as during those trips, to best deal with unexpected problems that arise. The Strategic Plan
emphasizes the expanded use of available mechanisms to inform travelers (Variable Message Signs [VMS] and Highway Advisory Radio [HAR] messages for highway drivers), while also looking longer-term to more advanced methods of traveler communication.

- **Expanded Collection & Sharing of Data.** The Strategic Plan calls for further expansion in the collection, sharing and use of data, both among agencies and with travelers, along with systems to better distribute that information among agencies and provide it to travelers. On-going development of the Information Exchange Network (IEN) will help in this area.

- **Safety Detection and Information Systems.** Some of the Plan’s Safe Driver initiatives look to use combinations of ITS tools to both protect travelers and partially mitigate highway safety problems by detecting causes of those problems, warning travelers about them and providing information about how to avoid them. Several Phase 2 projects (e.g., US-Canada Border Queue Detection System) are examples of this approach.

### SMART FREIGHT

I-87 is a critical international trade route, and the events of September 11th have substantially complicated the handling of international freight, with increased delays and public and private costs. A variety of Federal programs have identified better ways to facilitate the processing of rail and truck freight at borders, often involving increased public-private partnership to collectively address these problems. Similar methods are needed to expedite truck inspection, weighing and credentialing activities by the State, and NYSDOT and other agencies are already moving in these areas:

- **Expanded Truck Inspection Technology & Facilities.** New York has been one of the leaders in the development and initial implementation of programs to use technology to expedite truck freight inspection and credentialing activities. The Plan includes the near-term development of a full truck inspection station on the Northway, applying the full range of Commercial Vehicle Operation (CVO) ITS tools, while a permanent facility is planned and constructed at the border.

- **Greater Public-Private Partnership.** A key to efficient CVO management by State and Federal agencies is expanded public-private partnership agreements to allow firms and agencies to develop coordinated data collection and tracking systems, matching the anti-theft and inventory control needs of firms with the driver, vehicle safety, and homeland security demands of government agencies. Many agency efforts (e.g., One-Stop Credentialing and Registration [OSCAR], Free and Secure Trade [FAST]) are built on this type of cooperation, and several of the Phase 2 projects (E-Seal tracking and “Safe and Secure” Transportation System) aim to test and develop these further.

- **Expanded Rail Freight and Intermodal Services.** It is clear that expanded use of rail freight in the corridor is important to reduce dependence on truck freight and to take advantage of the cost-efficiencies that rail and intermodal operations can provide for businesses. The Plan includes a number of near-term projects to upgrade existing rail corridor infrastructure and improve the capacity and efficiency of intermodal operations.

### SMART PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Smaller urban, suburban and rural areas such as those located along the I-87 corridor, with their “many-to-many” travel patterns, are difficult environments for public transit operations. They require providing travelers with better information about available transit services, using a wide variety of available media. Public transportation needs to be more fully integrated into highway planning efforts, both managing existing highways and planning new ones.
• **Build on Strong Intercity Rail Markets.** The area in which public transportation has been strongest in the corridor is in the intercity passenger market, with the continued success of Empire Corridor service, especially between New York City and Albany. Upgrades in trackage, rolling stock and key stations are in place or underway, and the Plan calls on Amtrak and others to continue to build on those successes.

• **Expand Rail Market Coverage.** The Capital District is the corridor’s central hub. While service to Albany/Rensselaer has been good, direct connections to Saratoga County – the fastest growing portion of the District -- are very limited. The Plan includes a number of moderate-cost actions that could improve service to that area, while also enhancing overall passenger and freight service in the corridor.

• **Improve Rail Infrastructure.** The Study’s High Speed Rail Pre-Feasibility Study identified a number of incremental actions to improve the reliability and travel times of both passenger and freight service in the Albany-Montreal corridor. The Plan supports these actions, which when combined with similar modest-cost proposals in Quebec could provide significant near-term travel time savings. Further improvements in the future will provide further benefits for both the freight and passenger markets.