



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: April 30, 2014

CONTACT: Alexander Marion
Press Secretary (315) 448-8044

**MINER TO NYSDOT: KEEP SYRACUSE ON
TRACK FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL DEVELOPMENT**

*Miner, in Letter Submitted to NYSDOT, Reiterates Support for
Developing High Speed Rail through Upstate New York*

Miner: High Speed Rail Can Be an Economic Catalyst in our Region

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Mayor Stephanie A. Miner today submitted comments to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and Federal Rail Administration (FRA) as part of the public review of the draft environmental statement for the development of high speed rail in Upstate New York.

“High speed rail can be a tremendous economic catalyst in our region and I encourage the federal government to study the best ways we can implement this,” said **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner**. “Syracuse was built largely because our early leaders had the vision to establish the Erie Canal as the major transportation infrastructure of its era. We must continue to explore the potential for high speed rail to open new opportunities for Syracuse and all of Upstate New York.”

In March, NYSDOT and FRA held a series of public information sessions outlining the various alternatives under consideration for high speed rail construction. In her comments, Mayor Miner declined to endorse a specific alternative, allowing federal and state agencies to conduct more research on the feasibility of each option and to allow more time to engage stakeholders and constituents.

Mayor Miner has long been supportive of developing high speed rail along the “Empire Corridor,” a passenger train route running between Niagara Falls and Albany, linking to hubs in New York City. High speed rail would dramatically reduce travel times between Upstate cities and major East Coast cities.

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A copy of Mayor Miner's letter can be found below:

April 30, 2014

Mr. David Chan, Project Manager
High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Project
New York State Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road, POD 6-1
Albany, New York 12232

Dear Mr. Chan:

I am writing to you in support of the development of high speed rail along the Empire Corridor across Upstate New York. I appreciate the efforts of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), as well as the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), to hear the opinions and concerns of Central New York residents as you prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a high speed rail plan across Upstate New York. While several options are currently being evaluated, my comments are of general support for the development of high speed rail in New York State. Faster rail service through Syracuse has the power to be a major economic catalyst for our entire region and I encourage you to fully discuss all possible options.

The City of Syracuse has a long history of being home to innovative transportation. We were the birthplace and one of the biggest beneficiaries of the development of the Erie Canal. It was the essays of Jesse Hawley—a flour merchant who had been sent to debtor's prison because of the high cost of shipping his goods—that caught the attention of Syracuse Assemblyman Joshua Forman who became one of the Canal's earliest advocates. He took the idea to Washington, where his efforts were rebuffed by President Thomas Jefferson. He persisted and, with the help of leaders across the State, a revolutionary canal connecting the Port of New York with Upstate cities and the Midwest was created. This engineering marvel would go on to transform the economy of the nation and spurred the growth and development of communities like Syracuse, which evolved from a small village to a bustling city.

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We again have the chance to open up this storied passageway across our State. High speed rail presents another opportunity to revitalize the economy of Upstate New York. The City of Syracuse sits as the center of a unique region: we are within 8 hours—a day’s drive—of tens of millions of people. New York, Washington, Toronto, Boston, Montreal are all close neighbors. High speed rail will serve to reduce the time it takes individuals to travel to and from Syracuse, better connecting our city to communities and markets from across our region and beyond. That interconnectivity within cities and between cities can lead to exponential, super linear growth.

Syracuse has distinctive potential for growth. According to a recent study on American cities by McKinsey and Company, “middleweight cities,” those defined as being the anchors of metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) between 150,000 and 10,000,000, are home to 70% of the nation’s population and produce 70% of the nation’s gross domestic product. The Syracuse MSA is approximately 660,000. Syracuse is home to growing higher education, technology, and medical research industries. We have also seen our urban core undergo rapid expansion in recent years, with over three quarters of a billion dollars in new construction taking place in the City of Syracuse since 2010. This new development is a sign that the private sector understands what we have to offer and wants to see Syracuse realize our potential. With the implementation of high speed rail as another agent of growth, we will be able to see continued economic expansion across our city and our region.

High speed rail can be the spur for 21st century economic development that the Erie Canal was to the 19th century and interstates were to the 20th. I encourage you to continue your exploration of options that can advance this cause, and look forward to working together to develop the transportation infrastructure of the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Miner
Mayor

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