GROW
NEW YORK TRANSIT
Connecting the Economy & Community Growth
Clean, reliable and efficient public transportation is key to the economic vitality of communities throughout New York, particularly upstate. We are fortunate to have many well-run, forward-looking local and regional transit systems that drive job creation and development. However, they need additional support. We must ensure our communities receive the funding necessary to meet ever-increasing demand and maintain system flexibility.

Heather C. Briccetti, Esq., president and CEO, The Business Council of New York State, Inc.
MAINTAIN EXISTING ESSENTIAL TRANSIT SERVICES

The cost of providing transit services increases over time. As transit systems adapt to the challenges of a growing economy, the cost to provide service continues to increase, as expenses to operate the system rise with inflation. Transit systems have maximized their efficiency, but many expenses are beyond their control. Predictable growth in operating support is necessary to continue essential services that are so important to millions of New Yorkers.

Annual STOA increases are needed to maintain existing services.

A 2% increase in state operating assistance would match growth rates in state funding for upstate and downstate transit systems and allow current transit service levels to continue operation. With the state as a reliable funding partner, New York transit systems can meet the demand for service, support sustainable growth and keep pace with the growing economy.

New Yorkers ride public transit more than 3.8 BILLION times annually.

Public transit lessens our dependence on foreign oil and saves 1.3 BILLION GALLONS of gasoline in New York State annually.

Public transit is a VITAL LINK for over 3 MILLION New Yorkers with disabilities.
The sustainability of the economic development investments we have made in the Finger Lakes region depends on a robust public transit system that connects residents to jobs and job training. The best way to knock down the barriers to sustainable growth is to knock down the barrier to reliable public transit by providing the necessary investment in this key component of our infrastructure. Continued State support will allow RGRTA to expand its role as the preferred transportation choice for employers and business partners in the Finger Lakes.

– Danny Wegman and Anne Kress, co-chairs, Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council

ROCHESTER AREA

The del Lago Casino in Seneca County will open in February 2017 with 1,800 jobs. While the resort is a regional draw for employees, it is in an area that is not currently served by public transit. New service is needed to get workers from Rochester to the casino, and that doesn’t include the cost of expanding local service to the casino within Seneca County. (Cost: $970,000)

The STAMP campus in Genesee County will provide low-cost power for companies with high electricity needs. The firm 1366 Technologies is moving to this new complex, which will eventually house more than 10,000 jobs. The location is currently outside the Regional Transit Service area. While it is not yet known which firms will occupy the STAMP campus, RTS anticipates the service will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. (Cost: $500,000)

Maximus is hiring more than 2,000 employees at a location in the outskirts of the RTS service area in Monroe County. The company is not yet fully staffed, and RTS is spending approximately $50,000 to operate service for those who have been hired so far. The operational demands on RTS will continue to grow until Maximus is fully staffed. (Cost: $250,000)

In the fall of 2017, Monroe Community College is moving its downtown campus, which will compromise the direct access to the RTS Transit Center in downtown Rochester. MCC has 15,000 students and faculty and is a critical part of local workforce development efforts. RTS is anticipating bus service to connect the main MCC campus in the Town of Brighton with its Transit Center and the new downtown campus. (Cost: $850,000)

Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua is building satellite locations to accommodate a growing student population and demand for new programming. RTS is working with the college to add bus service, to linking to campus locations in Victor, Geneva and adjacent Wayne County, allowing student access to all FLCC programs and services. (Cost: $790,000)

Rochester Institute of Technology with nearly 17,000 students and faculty, is expanding technical programming and enrollment, which is creating a demand for new off-site housing. Several sites are being developed in areas not currently served by public transit. RTS anticipates additional routes and buses to meet this new demand in 2017. (Cost: $750,000)

The annual funding need for these service expansions exceeds $20 million.
Growing ridership on the Capital District Transportation Authority’s busiest trunk routes has many of them at or near capacity. Increased resources are needed to readily respond to customer demand. Severe and persistent overcrowding eventually results in choice riders leaving the system and returning to driving their cars. (Cost: $1.9 m.)

The development of the high-tech industry in the Capital Region is occurring at a phenomenal rate. The demand for new transit service is at an all-time high. CDTA is unable to respond to these developments, most of which are on the fringe of our service network. (Cost: $1.0 m.)

Expansion of large medical complexes in Albany (at Albany Medical Center and St. Peter’s Health Partners), in Schenectady (at Ellis Hospital) and in Troy (at St. Peter’s Health Partners), is resulting in demand for more and better transit service. (Cost: $1.5 m.)

The resurgence of the downtown communities and the return to urban living in downtown Albany, Troy, Schenectady and Saratoga Springs are bringing new demand for more and better transit services, especially in the evening and on weekends, outside of the traditional peak transit ridership periods. (Cost: $1.9 m.)

The development of the Rivers Casino and adjacent construction of apartments and hotels requires new infrastructure and better transit services. (Cost: $750,000)

"Our economy is in one of its most exciting periods of growth in decades with nearly $30 billion in investment over the last 10 years. As the Capital Region grows, so does the demand of mobility options. CDTA is a regional leader, focused on bringing innovative and expanded mobility options to our area, positioning it for continued growth and success." - Mark Eagan, CEO, Capital Region Chamber

"It’s an exciting time in Schenectady County as we continue to see progressive growth and development throughout our area. The development of the Rivers Casino is just one example of how transit is playing a key role in making a development attractive and accessible to the community. The demand for better mobility options throughout the Capital Region is at an all-time high, and CDTA is there offering thoughtful solutions to meet the needs of the 21st century traveler." - David Buicko, CEO, Galesi Group
The NFTA has requests from community leaders to add east-west weekend service in Lackawanna to improve travel opportunities to a low-income and minority community. (Cost: $175,000)

Service expansion along Niagara Falls Boulevard, which connects a suburban corridor with the City of Buffalo, would extend the northern terminus of this route and provide residents with access to new employment and retail opportunities. (Cost: $425,000)

"Public transportation services provided by the NFTA connect thousands of local residents to current and emerging employment opportunities across Western New York. As our economy continues to evolve and grow, the NFTA will play an integral role in ensuring people have affordable, efficient, and convenient transportation options to access new jobs throughout the community."

– Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, president & CEO, Buffalo Niagara Partnership

Centro needs additional operating aid to reinstate transit services in Syracuse and Utica that were cut during past fiscal crises. The estimated cost to these services is $860,000 in Utica and $2 million in Syracuse.

Changing travel patterns are requiring more transit service, especially at off-peak times. New demand includes service to the Onondaga County Amphitheater, (Cost: $200,000), expanded park and ride to the State Fair, (Cost: $200,000), new service to Hancock Airport, (Cost: $218,000), service for a multi-unit Social Service Agency complex in Auburn, (Cost: $70,000) and service that responds to Syracuse City School District walk zone changes, (Cost: $350,000).

"The services that Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro) provides are essential for the University Hill areas continued sustainability. Currently, more than 25,000 people are employed at the medical and educational institutions on the Hill, and more than 26,000 students attend these universities and colleges. This represents an extremely high volume of daily travel to the area from points throughout the entire Central New York region that would not be possible without public transit. This becomes more critical as development continues and the ability to accommodate vehicle parking is more difficult. Linking employees to their workplaces, students to their classrooms and area residents to their destinations in this dense urban area requires mobile access through alternative means. The future of University Hill’s economic health is directly related to the mass transit options provided by Centro. Further, the economic impacts associated with continued investment and expansion of services are significant."

– David Mankiewicz, president, University Hill Corporation
Tompkins Consolidated Area Transportation (TCAT) Route 30 connects downtown Ithaca, Collegetown, Cornell’s Campus and large shopping centers, transporting Cornell employees to work, students to class and workers to the shopping centers and allowing convenient access to dining and shopping. Increasing congestion in downtown Ithaca and Cornell’s campus has increased the travel time and reduced the reliability of this highly used service. Additional operating aid will allow TCAT to provide 15-minute service all day. (Cost: $200,000)

Route 10 provides essential links between downtown Ithaca and Cornell’s campus. Congestion also affects this route. Additional operating aid will allow TCAT to decrease trip times, add to midday service and offer weekend service. Weekend service will be a huge plus for tourists who want quick and easy service to Cornell’s central campus and to employees and students who work on weekends. (Cost: $150,000)

The Town of Lansing is home to several shopping centers on its border with the Town of Ithaca, several key institutions and services, and a small village center. There is no midday transit service to medical offices in Lansing, banks, the Lansing Town Hall and Library, low income housing developments, and the Tompkins County Jail. Additional assistance is needed to expand this service. (Cost: $125,000)

“Tompkins and Tompkins County are blessed with an excellent small city transit system - TCAT. Without a doubt, TCAT is the backbone of our transportation system and an integral part of our economic development infrastructure. Good as TCAT is, there remains much to do strengthen and build a more robust transit system for the future. Adding technology, strengthening key routes and expanding service require the help of the State and Federal governments. TCAT runs one of America’s premier small city transit systems. Together with the State we can ensure that this system is able to meet the needs of 21st century Ithicans.”

– Gary Ferguson, executive director, Downtown Ithaca Alliance

“Ithaca is poised to be a bright spot economically in upstate New York, but we cannot succeed unless we increase public transit options in our downtown. TCAT has helped us become a desirable community to live in, and we now have hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment underway that will rely on bus service to move people through our community.”

– Svante Myrick, mayor, City of Ithaca

FINGER LAKES
Expansion of Broome County Transit service to Tioga county would serve employers in Owego, a Best Buy Distribution Center, the new Crown, Cork and Seal facility and the newly expanded Tioga Downs.
(Cost: $224,000)

Increased service to the Conklin/Kirkwood Industrial area would provide for three shifts, 6 days per week and would serve multiple companies facing staffing shortages (Frito Lay, Felchar manufacturing, Masonite) as well as provide workers for the upcoming Dick’s Sporting Goods facility (500 workers).
(Cost: $270,000)

In Elmira, preserving service to DeMet’s Candy Factory in the suburban Airport Corporate Park costs $150,000 annually. Additional funding is needed to serve the developing new Airport Corporate Park businesses and a community college tech campus cost $100,000.

Expanding transit service from Chemung to Tioga County to serve the new Tioga Downs casino and other employers along the Elmira-Owego route including a CVS distribution center, Best Buy distribution center, new manufacturer Crown Holding Inc; and the Fed Ex freight depot now under construction will require new resources.
(Cost: $100,000)

Greater Glens Falls Transit operates service every two hours on routes to West Glens Falls and South Glens Falls. This level of service is marginal at best. Additional resources are needed to increase service to operate hourly. GGFT also has demands for expanded Saturday service to area senior housing complexes and to Lake George during non-summer months.
(Cost: $85,000)

Transit is a key factor for economic development. Regional transportation systems like Greater Glens Falls Transit provide an ongoing lifetime of mobility for residents, creating employment opportunities, recreational uses and spurring development of offices, shops, residential living and public service organizations.  
- Edward Bartholomew, president of the Warren County Economic Development Corp. and former mayor of Glens Falls
Mount Vernon and New Rochelle want improved east/west bus service, and the county is undertaking a study to examine ways to improve Bee-Line service to these communities. Additional funding will result in additional service, queue jumps and other traffic improvements to shorten travel times and improve service.
(Cost: $500,000)

In March 2016, fiscal difficulties forced Westchester County to reduce service on feeder routes to Metro North stations, and riders have expressed concern about the reduction in service. Additional operating aid would restore these services and relieve demand for costly parking at MTA’s commuter railroad stations.
(Cost: $500,000)

Dutchess County plans to expand Sunday service between Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park, Fishkill, Beacon and the Town of Poughkeepsie (including Dutchess Community College and Marist College); add new service connecting Poughkeepsie, Boardman Road, Red Oaks Mill, the Dutchess County Airport and the Galleria; and expand four routes inside the City of Poughkeepsie and Town of Poughkeepsie. This will provide service to the under-served areas in the county and city, as well as provide Sunday service for customers who need to get to work or to shopping. This will improve access between residential areas and business, education, tourism and medical services throughout the Poughkeepsie area.
(Cost: $900,000)

New bus service is needed to serve new jobs in the Port Washington area of Nassau County. NICE Bus needs additional resources to meet this growing demand.
(Cost: $480,000)

Several major Nassau County bus routes, including the heavily used Hempstead to Jamaica and Freeport to Jamaica routes, need additional service to relieve overcrowding and to accommodate growing demand.
(Cost: $11.2 m.)

Suffolk County Transit increased vehicle miles of service from 7.2 million in 2012 to 7.7 million in 2015 with new Sunday service, extension of two bus routes to a multimodal terminal at the Patchogue Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) station, and restoring service to a corridor abandoned by Nassau County. Rising costs and dwindling local resources forced the county to curtail service on eight routes in October 2016. Increased operating assistance is needed for Suffolk County to restore services.
(Cost: $14 m)

Good public transit has many benefits, including: enhancing communities by promoting more commerce around transit centers, connecting major research hubs, downtowns and multimodal hubs; and helping the environment by reducing vehicle miles traveled and supporting efficient growth patterns, thereby offsetting suburban sprawl and the associated infrastructure costs.”

– Gil Anderson, commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Public Works

HUDSON VALLEY

LONG ISLAND
Communities throughout New York State are demanding more and better transit service. Today, more than ever before, we need high quality transit service to allow our citizens to fully participate in expanding economic opportunities. The growing popularity of transit requires a growing investment so that transit systems can provide the mobility and connections that keep our state moving.