

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter

Intermodal Rail Station Update

December 5, 2012

Thank you Bill for the kind introduction, and thanks to you all for being here.

Before I continue, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the ongoing work of Commissioner Joan McDonald, Mayor Richards and their staffs. I'm proud to stand with these fierce advocates for rail travel and improved transportation throughout our region and our state. I also want to acknowledge City Council Members Dana Miller and Carolee Conklin who have come out to support our efforts.

Today we take another step towards a future of speedy, dependable and affordable train travel for the Rochester region.

When the new intermodal station is complete, it will bring together rail travel, bus service, car rentals, bikes and pedestrians- and serve our city and region for generations to come.

The new station will be a singular hub of transportation, making it the first choice for travelers- whether traveling to Toronto, Albany, New York City or even Washington, DC.

Every single person who walks off a train in Rochester deserves a grand welcome to a great city and when the new intermodal station is complete, they will finally have it.

We cannot complete our work fast enough. Over the last 5 years, train ridership in Rochester has increased 89%. This year alone, ridership increased by another 3%- with 144,000 riders walking through our doors. By 2035, that number is expected to double!

Our current train station simply cannot handle the increasing demand for rail. As of today, it is virtually inaccessible for travelers with physical disabilities, and insufficient infrastructure forces train delays and traveling headaches for anyone traveling by rail.

This project involves more than a modern new building, and will address the numerous problems Rochester rail travelers face today. Thanks to the addition of sidetracks, passengers will no longer have to wait for freight trains to pass before they head on their journey. Likewise, new signaling equipment will reduce delays and decrease travel times, and new platforms will allow **all** passengers to board their trains with greater ease.

Improvements like these are why I fought so hard to secure \$15 million from the federal government to design and build a new station.

I wrote and called U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and laid out the reasons why Rochester was deserving of the money.

I also worked to bring together local businesses, education and transportation stakeholders to show our commitment to a future of rail travel.

Finally, I worked hard to bring Obama administration officials- including Secretary Ray LaHood- NYDOT representatives and Amtrak officials to Rochester to see first hand what a new train station would mean for our city and our region.

In June, we finally secured the money needed to move forward with the project. Starting this month, the work begins in earnest—and we will not be done until we are cutting the ribbon for a new intermodal station.

I'm so pleased that Amtrak has agreed to be the future owner of our new station. Amtrak already owns and operates our current train station, and does a great job serving rail passengers in an outdated facility. Imagine what they can do with a beautiful new station!

The process of building a new intermodal station is good news for our local economy. From research and planning to breaking ground on the new station, this project will create and support Rochester jobs.

I spoke a lot this fall about supporting Monroe County's middle class. If we are to succeed, it begins with creating jobs that pay family-supporting wages and provide our workers with the protections they deserve.

That's why I'm working hard to secure a PLA for the construction of our new train station- and I expect to win!

Today, we stand on the forefront of a new generation of travel. Like a train traveling the Empire Corridor, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel and we head, unwavering, towards our destination. As we enter this new phase of this project, I eagerly look forward to the day when speedy, reliable and affordable rail transportation is a reality for Monroe County.

Thank you.