

High Speed Rail Empire Corridor

Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume 5



Department of
Transportation



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement

This Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consists of five volumes:

Volume 1 Environmental Impact Statement, which includes:

- Executive Summary
- Chapter 1, Introduction and Purpose and Need
- Chapter 2, Existing Transportation Conditions and Major Markets
- Chapter 3, Alternatives
- Chapter 4, Social, Economic, and Environmental Considerations
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- Chapter 6, Comparison of Alternatives
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- References, Acronyms, Glossary of Terms, and List of Preparers

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Appendix K Responses to Comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS

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Commenter	Bullock, Doug, Committee Chair of Mass Transit, Albany County Legislator
Comment E-1-1	<p>In September of 2012, the Albany County Legislature passed a resolution in support for restored Bicycle and Pedestrian accommodations on a rebuilt Livingston Avenue Bridge. The County has made significant investment to provide residents and visitors with an attractive, safe, inviting, and healthy network of trails and open spaces along the Hudson River Waterfront. Each day thousands of County residents use the waterfront as a place to play, exercise, and enjoy the scenery of the Hudson River shore. The County has made significant investment to build and maintain the Corning Preserve Bike Hike Trail, and in the near future the County anticipates cutting the ribbon on a 9-mile trail from the Port of Albany west to Voorheesville. This trail could one day connect to the Corning Preserve and via the Bridge, connect to trails planned for Rensselaer County. For decades the Corning Preserve has been a centerpiece of downtown activity and tourism, yet, it is difficult and harrowing for those on bike, foot, or in a wheelchair to cross the river. The replacement of the Livingston Avenue Bridge provides an opportunity to create a more attractive, safer, and more enjoyable non-motorized connection the waterfront on both sides of the river. The existing walkway once provided this access. With a new bridge comes the opportunity for a new, 21st century walkway. Not completing the walkway during the overhaul today, could mean an expensive retrofit down the road--or worse--no future accommodation. Potential conflicts between rail traffic and walkers & bicyclists can be eliminated with proper engineering of the facility. The new bridge should carry on the County's commitment to provide excellent bike and pedestrian facilities to our residents and visitors.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments and support for the upgrade of the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. Including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Livingston Avenue Bridge would be addressed as part of the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge</p>
Commenter	Bullock, Doug, Committee Chair of Mass Transit, Albany County Legislator
Comment E-1-2	<p>The bridge is located in an area of the City of Albany suffering from extreme poverty and high unemployment. This project should be considered an environmental justice issue. What benefit will it provide for historically underserved populations of the county that will feel the greatest impact from its construction and operation? Albany County's support and the benefits of the Walkway must be acknowledged in each and every one of the alternative scenarios put forth in the Empire Corridor DEIS. Furthermore, the report should perform a Title VI and Environmental Justice Analysis of the each of the potential scenarios</p>
Response	<p>Your concerns, relating to environmental justice, are recognized and will be addressed in the Tier 2 assessments. The EA will include a more detailed analysis, including a Title VI/EJ analysis, that would be performed as part of required environmental documentation.</p>
Commenter	Bullock, Doug, Committee Chair of Mass Transit, Albany County Legislator
Comment E-1-3	<p>My name is Doug Bullock, I'm an Albany County Legislature, Chair of the Mass Transit Committee in Albany County and I support the Livingston Avenue Bridge with a ramp, which is really important for connectivity in Albany.</p> <p>The County is building a new rail-trail coming down from Bethlehem to South Pearl Street, eventually to connect up to the trail along the Hudson River, and that trail can be an extension of the Livingston Avenue Bridge and it's very important that you connect with the</p>

community. Not only that aspect, but the aspect of transportation to the rail station in Rensselaer will become a lot easier with a walkway slash bikeway on that bridge and we could have the possibility of alternative transportation directly to the train station, The Albany County Legislator signed a proclamation.

A majority of people on the legislature, a majority of legislatures said we want 28 out of the 39. We want a pedestrian walkway on that Livingston Avenue Bridge.

Response Thank you for your comment on the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. Please refer to our response to your earlier comment (E-1-1).

Commenter **Bullock, Doug, Committee Chair of Mass Transit, Albany County Legislator**

Comment E-1-4 One thing I want to emphasize and I think it's absurd that you're calling it a high speed rail period.
It's a lot faster, but it's really important that we have a dedicated passenger rail. That is very important, and at the highest speed possible. Seventy-seven miles per hour is barely going to compete with an automobile speed.
So let's face it, we got to do better.

Response Your comment was considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to improve the reliability, frequency, trip times and passenger amenities for intercity rail passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter **Fahy, Patricia, Member of Assembly, 109th District, NYS Assembly**

Comment E-2-1 Walkway on the Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge. This Walkway, though inaccessible for many years, is an invaluable resource enabling pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the Hudson River for both work and recreation. Restoration and repair of the Walkway will improve bicycling and pedestrian access without impeding rail traffic. The bridge itself has reached the end of its lifespan and the bridge is slated to be completely reconstructed in 2017 as part of New York State's High Speed Rail initiative. It is essential that reestablishment of the Walkway be part of the plan to replace the bridge.
Restoration of the Walkway will aid in the establishment of a multi-modal transportation network connecting urban centers across the Hudson River. This corresponds to the emphasis on creating "complete streets" and ensuring safe access for people using all modes of transportation, including pedestrians and bicyclists. The restored access is highlighted in several state and federally funded plans including the Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2011), the Albany Bike Master Plan (2009), and the Patroon Creek Greenway Plan (2004). Restoration of the Walkway is a significant Title VI and environmental justice issue. Neighborhoods in the vicinity of the bridge are low income and have high unemployment with a high percentage of families living below the poverty level. These families are more likely than not to need the low or no cost pedestrian and bicycle access on a daily basis that the Walkway would provide. These same families would bear the brunt of any increased noise and emissions created by the High Speed Rail.
This investment in infrastructure to restore the Walkway has additional benefits that include increases in physical fitness activity, tourism, reduced traffic congestion and travel time, safer streets and cleaner environment. The City of Albany hopes to invest \$11 million in upgrades to the Corning Preserve waterfront park, including a new covered stage for events like Alive at Five, a restaurant, kayak launch, bike path improvements, cafe and boat docks. The Walkway is a natural extension to these and other recreational activities along the Hudson.

Reestablishment of the Walkway is an essential part of the New York State High Speed Rail initiative and has my full support.

Response Thank you for your comments regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. Including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Livingston Avenue Bridge would be addressed as part of the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website:
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge>

Commenter **Magnarelli, William B., Member, 129th District, NYS Assembly**

Comment E-3-1 I am writing to add my comment on the proposed High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. I wanted to add my support to this effort. I believe the expansion of high speed rail service in New York will provide needed economic development and better connect our Upstate communities to New York City. I would like it noted that I support the "Alternative 125" proposal that would provide service at a speed of up to 125 mph. I believe that high speed rail expansion is important to the future of New York State and especially Upstate New York. Traveling from Syracuse to New York City can be a very expensive and time consuming experience. According to the DOT's estimates, the "Alternative 125" plan could shorten the travel time by rail from Syracuse to NYC by approximately two hours. Shortening this travel time would make it easier for NYC residents to travel Upstate, especially those that don't own cars. I also believe it would further the Governor's goal of encouraging people from NYC to visit and enjoy our Upstate communities.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and the 125 Alternative. Comments from elected officials were an important part of the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative.

Commenter **Brindisi, Anthony, Member of Assembly, NYS Assembly**

Comment E-4-1 I am writing to you in strong support of the development of a high-speed rail plan along the existing Empire Rail Corridor that would include regular service to and from the Utica and Rome train stations. In recent years, passenger rail ridership from the Utica and Rome train stations is up significantly. However, one of the major issues I hear about often is the reliability of service from the Mohawk Valley to other parts of the state. Currently, the on-time performance of passenger trains on the Empire Corridor is only about 83 percent. Developing high-speed rail service would boost service reliability to well over 90 percent. This would be in addition to the significant reduction in travel time from Utica to other locations on the corridor from high-speed service. Developing a reliable high speed rail system is especially important as the economy of the Mohawk Valley region continues to move forward. By year's end, construction is expected to be complete on the 'Quad C' building which will anchor the new NanoUtica project on the campus of SUNYIT near Utica. Within several years, 1,500 people will be working on

research and development projects at this new nanotechnology center. Rome will soon be the site for one of six federal facilities testing commercial drone flights. I am confident that rail ridership will increase significantly because of new projects in our region, if fast, reliable train service is available.

Separating passenger rail and freight rail lines would not only benefit travelers, but would also encourage more use of freight lines. Both would significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels and of highway congestion. Developing high-speed rail in New York will benefit businesses, encourage tourism, and help the environment. But I would like to emphasize that I will only support a high-speed rail alternative that includes regular passenger rail service from the Utica and Rome train stations.

Response Comments from elected officials were an important part of the selection by NYSDOT and the FRA of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West for the service leg that includes Utica and Rome. Alternative 90B would result in the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered and would increase ridership by 1 million over the Base Alternative. .

Commenter Young, Gregory, Board of Supervisors, Fulton County

Comment E-5-1 Even though neither the current nor any of the proposed Amtrak services directly reach Fulton County, there is service in nearby Montgomery County via the Amsterdam Station. Passenger rail is an important connecting linking our area with the rest of the state. For this reason, I enthusiastically support the Base Alternative, Alternative 90A, Alternative 90B, and Alternative 110. However, I'm opposed to Alternative 125 because this plan would not only exclude the Amsterdam Station, but also the two next stations at Schenectady and Rome as well, meaning that the closest station for residents of this region would be over an hour away. Indeed, this would have the greatest impact on individuals who do not own automobiles, since they have the greatest need for high-speed rail, yet would lack access to it by virtue of being unable to get to a station.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of maintaining passenger rail service to Amsterdam, Schenectady and Rome. Under the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, rail service would continue with more frequent and faster service to Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, and Rome. Alternative 125 has not been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Young, Gregory, Board of Supervisors, Fulton County

Comment E-5-2 In terms of fiscal cost, I support Alternative 110 since it has the lowest subsidy per rider at only \$9.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110. NYSDOT and FRA have selected Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Although Alternative 110 has the lowest subsidy, the subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Alternative 90B's costs would also be less than that for Alternative 110. Its capital cost would be \$720 million (or 12%) less than that for Alternative 110, and annual operating and maintenance costs would be \$2 million lower than for Alternative 110.

Commenter Stammel, Michael and Breselor, Judith,, Legislator, District 6 and District 4, Rensselaer County Legislature

Comment E-6-1 We are in full support of the objectives of the high speed rail project and the improvements that the project will bring to our current rail system.

Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The goals of the program are to improve reliability, trip times, passenger amenities and frequency of service. Comments from elected officials and the public in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Stammel, Michael and Breselor, Judith,, Legislator, District 6 and District 4, Rensselaer County Legislature
Comment E-6-2	<p>We are advocating for the restoration of the walkway on the historic Livingston Avenue Bridge as a part of any project alternative considered by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). A restored Livingston Avenue Bridge walkway would allow for pedestrian and cyclist traffic between Albany and Rensselaer, providing much safer transport than the Dunn Memorial Bridge located to the south. The walkway would further benefit residents, encourage tourism and enhance the local economies of surrounding areas. We believe that the success of the Walkway Over the Hudson, the transformation of the Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge, can be emulated with the restoration of the Livingston Avenue Bridge. Furthermore, in 2011, Governor Cuomo signed the Complete Streets Act, which urges consideration of the convenience and mobility of all users when designing transportation projects. A restored Livingston Avenue Bridge would fall in line with the spirit and vision of the Complete Streets Act and further New York State's commitment to a sustainable future.</p> <p>Local support for the walkway has, and continues to be widespread. The Rensselaer County Legislature, The City of Rensselaer, Albany County, Albany Common Council, The Hudson River Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy have all passed resolutions in support of a restored walkway.</p> <p>We believe that if the walkway is not constructed during the current high speed rail project, then increased costs to add a walkway after the project completion would prove to be too expensive and perhaps render the project unworkable. We implore NYSDOT to consider the economic and environmental benefits that the walkway would afford the communities of Rensselaer and Albany as well as the groundswell of support for improved waterfront access and sustainable transportation.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments in support of the upgrade of the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. Including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Livingston Avenue Bridge would be addressed as part of the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website:</p> <p>https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge</p>
Commenter	Stammel, Michael, Legislator, Rensselaer County Legislature
Comment E-7-1	<p>I am writing to convey my support for incorporating a restored pedestrian and bicycle walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge over the Hudson River between the cities of Rensselaer and Albany. A walkway was an important component for generations of this historic bridge, and a restored walkway will again ensure the Livingston Avenue Bridge is a vital part of the Capital Region.</p> <p>A new pedestrian and bicyclist walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge will strengthen connections between communities in the area and significantly boost tourism efforts, as well as expand recreational opportunities for residents. The walkway will also help showcase the Hudson River and access to this outstanding waterway.</p> <p>Recent media reports have noted the lack of pedestrian and bicycle access over the Hudson.</p>

The reopening of this walkway will help address that growing need.

Reopening the walkway will also position the Capital Region for the same kind of tourism success seen in the Mid-Hudson Valley with the Walkway Over the Hudson. The Walkway Over the Hudson reports thousands upon thousands of visitors each year.

The Rensselaer County Legislature joined with a number of other area municipalities in adopting a resolution supporting re-establishment of the walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. Our resolution, which I sponsored, reflects the strong support and enthusiasm for reopening the walkway on the bridge.

Response As noted in the prior comment, the Livingston Avenue Bridge, although part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, is being advanced as part of a separate project. The Tier 1 FEIS will note the support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.

Commenter Galvin, Patrick M., Senator (Mitch Martin), 59th District, NYS Senate

Comment E-8-1 If you do an alternative option, please include the replacement of the 4 Depew rail bridges and the widening of Transit Road to improve safety and the economy of the village of Depew and the surrounding area.

Response Thank you for your comment discussing the need to improve rail bridges in the Village of Depew. Consideration of bridge replacements will be part of future Tier 2 assessments and constructability analysis for the supporting projects for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Sheehan, Kathy, Mayor, City of Albany

Comment E-9-1 The City of Albany is committed to seeing the Bike and Pedestrian Walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge restored when this bridge is rebuilt or replaced as part of the Empire Corridor project. The benefits of restored access across the river via a walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge has been featured in several local and regional plans, including the City's comprehensive Plan, Albany 2030 (2012), the Albany Bicycle Master Plan (2009), and the Patroon Creek Greenway Plan (2004), and the City's Common Council has passed a resolution of support for the re-establishment of the walkway. The restoration of the walkway is also highlighted in the Corning Preserve Master Plan that the City is currently finalizing. Any new railway bridge that is constructed should reflect the City of Albany's and the Capital Region's commitment to provide excellent bicycle and pedestrian facilities in our urban areas. A multi-modal bridge will link a growing network of multi-use trails, including the Erie Canalway Trail, Albany County's Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail, and the proposed Rensselaer County Trail. Enhancing walking and biking transportation across the Hudson River will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation network and make the riverfront a more attractive and accessible place to visit.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the upgrade of the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. Including accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Livingston Avenue Bridge would be addressed as part of the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website:
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge>

Commenter Sheehan, Kathy, Mayor, City of Albany

Comment E-9-2 For nearly half a century a walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge made it possible for pedestrians and bicyclists to easily and safely cross the Hudson River between Rensselaer and Albany. New York State's High Speed Rail investment, and replacement of this historic

crossing, will provide an opportunity to replace the walkway that provided a vital link between these communities. Please ensure that the Empire Corridor Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement fully acknowledges the planning and development of trails within the region that depend upon the Walkway.

Response Your comments on the Livingston Avenue Bridge have been considered, as noted in the prior response, and the Tier 1 FEIS will note the support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.

Commenter **Franczyk, David A., Councilman, The Buffalo Common Council**

Comment E-10-1 My constituents' concerns are that the remaining plans of the Tier 1 Empire Corridor project neglect Buffalo. My understanding is that this project is about connecting the state and improving our transportation. People in Buffalo want to connect with the rest of this state and people in this state want to come to Buffalo.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The goals of the program are to improve reliability, trip times, passenger amenities and frequency of service. Comments from elected officials supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will better serve travelers destined to and from Buffalo and other points along Empire Corridor West by providing more frequent and faster service. Alternative 90B would double the number of trips on Empire Corridor West. It would also reduce travel times in 2035 by 1 ½ hours between Niagara Falls and New York City.

Commenter **Franczyk, David A., Councilman, The Buffalo Common Council**

Comment E-10-2 Now with plans coming together to spend federal funds on the Governor's goal to revitalize Upstate New York, it seems that EPAC has forgotten one of the region's most significant cities. It seems that EPAC has forgotten the New York Central Terminal (NYCT) in Buffalo, designed in 1929. Buffalo's NYCT would be the perfect site to include in your plans for both transportation and historical preservation goals. Yet when reviewing the Tier 1 options, I see that NYSDOT and the FRA are proposing new or rebuilt intermodal train stations in every city except Buffalo.

As your work continues, please consider developments in Buffalo. This city is a major hub of transportation and has a lot to offer the people of this state. Many will benefit from improvements made here.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the

downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Franczyk, David A., Councilman, The Buffalo Common Council**

Comment E-10-3 ...the Common Council supports the amendment of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program to include the revitalization of the New York Central Terminal on Memorial Drive as an Intermodal Train Station in the City of Buffalo and officially submits this resolution to NYSDOT by the March 24, 2014 deadline.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. As described above, the train station siting committee tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted in favor of a downtown station location.

Commenter **Franczyk, David A., Councilman, The Buffalo Common Council**

Comment E-10-4 The City of Buffalo derives very little economic benefit from the proposed High Speed Rail Corridor plan.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from elected officials have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As described above, the Preferred Alternative and program of improvements for Buffalo include new station investments at both Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street, which is anticipated to result in economic benefits for the downtown area.

Commenter **Franczyk, David A., Councilman, The Buffalo Common Council**

Comment E-10-5 Tragically, the 1929 Felheimer and Wagner 1929 New York Central Terminal is totally and utterly ignored in this flawed plan. That magnificent structure, listed on the Registry of Historic Places, should be the Intermodal hub in Buffalo. This not only revives rail transportation in that facility, but accomplishes the state's historic preservation mission, while revitalizing a struggling East Side community. As Daniel Burnham opined: "Make no small plans"; the omission of the City of Buffalo, once the second largest rail center in the United States, needs to be treated with greater respect as well as a recognition of the vital role it can play in the admirable goal of bringing fast speed rail to the Empire State. Change the plans! Renovate the Central Terminal on Memorial Drive in East Buffalo.

Response Thank you for your comments on the importance of the Central Terminal in Buffalo. Please refer to the response to Comment E-10-1 for information on the results of the train station siting study and committee vote.

Commenter **Rabb, Gregory P., President and Councilman-at-Large, City of Jamestown**

Comment E-11-1 I am concerned that the 32,000 residents of my city in the western most county of New York State are not addressed in your plan.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. These improvements are largely confined to the existing right-of-way with proposed service focused on existing station sites. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will result in improvements in travel time, frequency, and reliability that should result in regional benefits to the traveling public. Suggestions and comments from elected officials, for

improvements to the service, have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan.

Commenter **Rabb, Gregory P., President and Councilman-at-Large, City of Jamestown**

Comment E-11-2 AMTRAK does "pass through" our county, Chautauqua, with the Lakeshore Ltd. with no stops despite a station still existing in Dunkirk with easy access to SUNY Fredonia. For the Empire Corridor we can drive to Buffalo-Depew but increasingly there are not enough parking spaces, despite recent improvements, and Buffalo-Depew continues to be slow in loading and unloading passengers causing significant delays due to a lack of elevated platforms as in Syracuse. Our alternative is to use a bus connection to the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station (perhaps the worst station in the system) involving a two hour bus trip with a nearly three hour layover resulting in a five hour trip for 75 miles. My constituents need and deserve better service as do the students at SUNY Fredonia and so I strongly urge you to not forget us and to make better bus connections and Buffalo station improvements an important part of your Empire Corridor plans and your environmental impact statement.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need to improve service on the Empire Corridor and at Buffalo-Depew. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site close to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. The new station was designed to accommodate potential upgrades in intermodal connectivity in the future.

Commenter **Miner, Stephanie A., Mayor, City of Syracuse**

Comment E-12-1 I am writing to you in support of the development of high speed rail along the Empire Corridor across Upstate New York...

Response Your comments providing support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Miner, Stephanie A., Mayor, City of Syracuse**

Comment E-12-2 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 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. 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.

Response Thank you for your support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from elected officials supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative was selected to provide improvements in travel time, frequency, and reliability, which will provide regional travel and economic benefits to Syracuse and other metropolitan areas served.

Commenter **Crist, Craig M., Lawyer, Dreyer Boyajian LLP on Behalf of the Village of Castleton**

Comment E-13-1 As you may be aware, the Village is located on the Empire Corridor South, just south of the Rensselaer Station.
Mayor Keegan and Village Board are in favor of improved rail service, improvement which they believe will continue to spur economic improvement and growth in the region. However, the Village requests that the subject trains decrease their speed through the inhabited portion of the Village. It is the Village Board's belief that this will promote safety as well as protect the structures immediately adjacent to the existing tracks.

Response Thank you for your comment on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your comments discussing the speed of trains in the Village of Castleton have been noted. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Safety issues related to operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way will be one of the factors considered in advancing the program in Tier 2.

Commenter **Crist, Craig M., Lawyer, Dreyer Boyajian LLP on Behalf of the Village of Castleton**

Comment E-13-2 The Village Board would be in favor of increased accessibility via the now closed Scott Avenue crossing to allow the Village and its residents increased access to the Village's park on the other side of the tracks. This has been the subject of ongoing discussions with NYS DOT.
Finally, continuing project updates are requested, and should be sent to the following address: Mayor Joseph Keegan and Members of the Village Board, 85 South Main Street, Castleton, NY 12033

Response Thank you for your comments regarding operation of passenger trains for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program through the Village of Castleton. We will add the Village Mayor and Members of the Board to our mailing list to receive updates on progress with the program.

Commenter **Leonard, Edmond, Trustee, Village of Walden**

Comment E-14-1 Very impressed with the Tiers--Would hope funding will allow for one of the higher tiers...would hope the project doesn't get bogged down with the approval process

Response Your comment providing support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Doesschate, Judy, Councilwoman, 9th Ward, Albany City Council**

Comment E-15-1 I am a recently-elected member of the Albany City Council, representing the 9th Ward. So no surprise I am here also to support the idea of returning a pedestrian and bike trail to the Livingston Street Bridge.

Response	<p>Thank you for your comments in support of the upgrade of the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge</p>
Commenter	Doesschate, Judy, Councilwoman, 9th Ward, Albany City Council
Comment E-15-2	<p>I'm not sure that I can fully support the 125 alternative, because I haven't been able to look at the issues and of course we want to make sure that it's also safe, and there is a lot of intersections that these train rails might go by that I would have concerns about ...</p> <p>But certainly to remain competitive, we need to connect upstate better with New York City and interconnect our communities more so that they remain competitive, economically competitive...</p>
Response	Your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dyster, Paul A., Mayor, City of Niagara Falls
Comment E-16-1	<p>My name is Paul A. Dyster. I am the mayor of the City of Niagara Falls, New York.</p> <p>We need to work hard for our ability to get projects cleared environmentally, get more projects into the queue in order to speed this process up.</p>
Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dyster, Paul A., Mayor, City of Niagara Falls
Comment E-16-2	<p>Second, I want to make a point that more better and faster train service can be managed throughout New York State. Economic growth of New York State has integrated mobility, better planning, higher speed trains so things plus best of all transportation goals in our area. Trains require less land than major airports which means less pollution traveling per passenger.</p> <p>The City of Niagara Falls was ahead of curve. We started over ten years ago with the idea to build a modern station. With the last five years, we have seen our ridership at the Niagara Falls Station increase 30 percent and that's without all the improvements we're contemplating now.</p> <p>We will open the station in 2016.</p>
Response	Thank you for your support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the new Niagara Falls International Railway Station and Intermodal Transportation Center, which opened in December 2016. Comments from elected officials in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dyster, Paul A., Mayor, City of Niagara Falls
Comment E-16-3	<p>Option 125 would clearly be our favorite with the idea of a six-hour travel time between Niagara Falls and New York City which has obvious appeal. Recognizing that time and money do make a difference, we would basically state our intention to support the highest speed objectives that can be delivered in the shortest period of time/cost that is politically</p>

affordable.

I think our hope is that at least we're able to achieve Option 110.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and your support of Alternative 125, or 110, has been considered by NYSDOT and the FRA in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125. Alternative 90B would have land use impacts in nine areas in six counties, compared to 53 areas in eight counties with Alternative 110. Alternative 125 would impact 2,000 to 3,000 acres for construction of a new right-of-way.

Commenter **Donovan, Dick, Mayor, Village of Minoa**

Comment E-17-1 My village has a distinct, well, pleasure, what have you, of hosting the one section of what's known I think by most of you people as the Dewitt Yard. Thousands of cars go through that yard daily.
Having lived in the Village for 42 years, I've been involved in the fire department, we've had a lot of excitement in that yard. The main switches going eastbound are right in the heart of our village, which, by the way, the yard splits our village right in half, so we've got residents who are primarily of another community and we got homes on both sides of the track, unfortunately. So, as you go forward, I want to ask that consideration -- safety considerations be thought about as far as the speed especially of these units going through populated areas, and I know a lot of improvements have been made over the years and it's less of a concern than it used to be

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In the Tier 1 FEIS, Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Safety issues related to the operation of the high speed trains and interaction with adjoining rail facilities, such as Dewitt Yard, will be one of the factors considered in advancing the program in Tier 2.

Commenter **Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives**

Comment E-18-1 Now, I'm going to be really brief because you know how I feel. I'm going for 125. We've waited well over a hundred years to try to get something done here and I don't want to start small.

Response Thank you Congresswoman Slaughter for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your support for the 125 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Moreover, Alternative 90B would have fewer environmental impacts than Alternative 125 and would also be less costly. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts to 2,000 to 3,000 acres and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 125 would also take the longest time to incur travel benefits due to the time required to acquire and construct the right-of-way.

Commenter **Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives**

Comment E-18-2	In 1893, about a hundred and twenty-five years ago, the Empire State Express, Old 999, reached speeds of a hundred twelve miles an hour traveling between Batavia and Crittenden. Did you know that? We use the same track today by the way. Right now our fastest train goes thirty-three miles an hour, slower at its best speed, which we don't always see, and passengers know that it frequently travels a lot slower between here and New York City.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the historic railroad operation along the Empire Corridor. The intent of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) is to add trackage (approximately 370 miles in total), including along this two-track Empire Corridor West that formerly operated as a four-track line.

Commenter	Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives
Comment E-18-3	Now, don't tell me that we are not going to be able to make some investments in ourselves. The fact is that a hundred forty-six thousand people rode that train through this station and through this city last year, which was thirty percent higher than the year before. And you saw projections. And I've heard from people for years, frankly, of people who really want to ride that train, who really need to go somewhere.
Response	In your comment you addressed the importance of Rochester on the Empire Corridor. A key goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program will be to improve trip times and provide additional trains to the communities along the Empire Corridor in Western New York. A new Rochester Station opened October 6, 2017, with significant help from you. The importance of Rochester as a travel destination, with many schools and high-tech firms is recognized, and ridership forecasts show that an improved service will attract new riders.

Commenter	Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives
Comment E-18-4	It is high time, as one of the most important parts of the transportation in the United States of America, that we spend some money to upgrade rail, that we do something about passenger service. We have people who can't drive anymore, who want to go visit their grandchildren, want to go to graduations, maybe want to go to New York City for a play and come back the next day.
Response	In your comments you outline the importance of intercity rail passenger service in our communities. The Preferred Alternative will better serve travelers destined to and from Rochester and other points along Empire Corridor West by providing more frequent and faster service. Alternative 90B would double the number of trips on Empire Corridor West.

Commenter	Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives
Comment E-18-5	Now, in addition to what we're doing here all these years I've been working on this I've been working with the Canadians. They've been ready with the money from word go. They would like to go up from Albany up to Montreal over to Toronto, back down into Buffalo. We can't go east or west out of Rochester. And the second, third and fourth largest cities in the State of New York, the Empire State, cannot fly to its State Capitol.
Response	Your comment highlights the opportunities for connections to Canada (Montreal and Toronto), along with other cities along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative will improve service to communities along the route, providing improved connectivity to the largest cities in the state and to points beyond. Recommendations from elected officials and public for initiatives to improve service will be considered in the development of the Service

Development Plan.

Commenter **Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives**

Comment
E-18-6 What I would like is -- and, you know, New York Central had four tracks. It is ideal. It's a straight shoot across there. We have no great problems that we have to do with geography. We have all the overpasses, the bridges and everything to accommodate four tracks. Only two are now being used. We need the dedicated third track for passengers. And the idea is that people who live in Buffalo can work in Rochester and vice versa. You can go to school back and forth. And, most important, you might go to New York City and spend about all the time you can stand down there and then make it back home and go to bed in your own bed at night. I love that idea.

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and its goals to improve passenger service and amenities and frequency of service along the route and connect the cities of New York State. The Tier 1 FEIS reviews the operation of multiple tracks for the alternatives considered for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program with the purpose of identifying the necessary infrastructure projects to improve travel times and the reliability of service along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will add approximately 370 miles of trackage to better segregate passenger trains from freight.

Commenter **Slaughter, Louise, Congresswoman, 25th District, U.S. House of Representatives**

Comment
E-18-7 But there was one thing I wanted to say about the college kids and how important they are. You know, this is a treatment center for people who are hard of hearing. We have NTID, which is one of the best schools in the country here for the deaf. We met with students from universities and the colleges and from NTID. And a young woman told me something that I want you to remember what it's like to travel the railroad station in Rochester. She said that when she's in most stations the signage is so poor that what she does is when a huge crowd of people get up to go somewhere, she goes with them, hoping to goodness that they're going where she needs to be. Now, all that signage is going to be taken care of. We are paying attention to that. It's going to be wired for the internet from one end of it to the other. Everything in the world you want is in there. Tracks on both sides. Tracks that are level to the train. We're coming up into the 21st Century.

Response The New York State Department of Transportation, in partnership with Amtrak, CSX Transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration and the City of Rochester, and with significant help and support from you, constructed a new passenger rail station for the Rochester community. The new facility is fully compatible with the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, offering facilities and signage to provide all passengers access to the station and boarding. A key feature of the new station is the high-level platform, which allows passengers to board and exit the trains without the need to use steps. The new high level platform on the dedicated passenger train tracks also improves the reliability of trains stopping at Rochester by allowing two trains to use the station simultaneously. The new facility at Rochester features state-of-the-art technology and wayfinding to facilitate passenger and baggage flow, as one of the newest stations in the Amtrak system.

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Commenter	Striffler, Scot, Bridge Program Manager, Ninth District, U.S. Coast Guard
Comment F-1-1	Please include detailed potential impacts to vessel traffic, and navigation in general, in the descriptions of each alternative during the remainder of the EIS study.
Response	Impacts to navigation or vessel traffic are not anticipated with the possible exception of construction activity. Once the design for the Preferred Alternative is developed in Tier 2, the details of impacts on navigation during construction would be addressed.
Commenter	Striffler, Scot, Bridge Program Manager, Ninth District, U.S. Coast Guard
Comment F-1-2	Ninth Coast Guard District jurisdiction would only appear to apply to the "Empire Corridor West" and "Niagara Branch" sections of the DEIS and project area. Pending additional details as the study progresses this office may exercise jurisdiction or have permit requirements for each alternative still under consideration that includes upgrades or modifications to existing infrastructure, as well as proposed additional infrastructure, for any crossing of the New York Barge Canal System west of St. Johnsville, New York in Montgomery County, New York (mile 69.7). Though not considered a complete or final list, other waterways described in the DEIS that may fall within the jurisdiction of this office include; Cayuga-Seneca Canal Oswego Canal Mohawk River Genessee River Scajaquada Creek Niagara River Buffalo River Black Rock Canal (Buffalo, NY) Tonawanda Creek
Response	Thank you for your comment. If crossings of these other navigable waterways are proposed, coordination will be conducted with the USCG. A number of these navigable waterways were identified within the Tier 1 EIS, but if they were not located within the 300-foot study area, they were not specifically identified.
Commenter	O'Brien, Doug, Acting Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Office of the Under Secretary
Comment F-2-1	We appreciate the opportunity to review this Draft EIS. At this time the Department offers no comment.
Response	The response of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is recognized
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-1	We offer the following comments in regards to protected species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, as well as other species and habitats protected under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) under our jurisdiction.
Response	The comments offered by the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region will be addressed in

the Tier 1 FEIS and Tier 2 analysis, as noted in the specific comments that follow.

Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-2	All of the alternatives discussed in the DEIS except the Base (i.e., No Action) Alternative include railroad crossings over the Hudson River. Specifically, Alternatives 90A, 90B, 110, and 125 include in-water work in order to replace the Livingston Avenue Bridge connecting Albany and Rensselaer, New York. Therefore, below we present information on ESA-listed species in the Hudson River. In addition, we recommend several mitigation measures to be undertaken during in-water construction activities to minimize impacts to listed species and their habitat. Finally, we provide guidelines for engaging with us in consultation under section 7 of the ESA.
Response	The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project () and associated EA is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. Under that environmental review, FRA and NYSDOT are coordinating with NMFS regarding Section 7 of the ESA.
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-3	<p>Shortnose Sturgeon (<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>)</p> <p>A population of the federally endangered shortnose sturgeon occurs in the Hudson River. They have been documented from upper Staten Island (approximately river kilometer [rkm] 4.8) to the Troy Dam (approximately rkm 245). From late fall to early spring, adult shortnose sturgeon concentrate in a few overwintering areas. The largest overwintering area is just south of Kingston, New York, near Esopus Meadows (rkm 139-152) (Dovel et al. 1992). The fish overwintering at Esopus Meadows are mainly spawning adults. Captures of shortnose sturgeon during the fall and winter from Saugerties to Hyde Park (greater Kingston reach) indicate that additional smaller overwintering areas may be present (Geoghegan et al. 1992). Both Dovel et al. (1992) and Geoghegan et al. (1992) also confirmed an overwintering site in the Croton/Haverstraw Bay area (rkm 54-61). Fish overwintering in areas below Esopus Meadows are mainly thought to be pre-spawning adults. Typically, movements during overwintering periods are localized and fairly sedentary.</p> <p>When water temperatures reach 8-9°C, typically in late March through mid-April, reproductively active adults begin their migration upstream to the spawning grounds that extend from below the Federal Dam at Troy to about Coeymans, New York (rkm 245-212) (Dovel et al. 1992). Spawning typically occurs at water temperatures between 10-18°C (generally from late April through May) after which adults disperse quickly down river into their summer range. In fact, Dovel et al. (1992) reported that spawning fish tagged at Troy were recaptured in Haverstraw Bay in early June. The broad summer range occupied by adult shortnose sturgeon extends from approximately rkm 38-177. Similar to non-spawning adults, most juveniles occupy the broad region of Haverstraw Bay (rkm 54-61) by late fall and early winter (Dovel et al. 1992; Geoghegan et al. 1992). Juveniles are distributed throughout the mid-river region during the summer (rkm 38-152) and move back into the Haverstraw Bay region during the late fall (Geoghegan et al. 1992; Bain et al. 1998). Eggs and larvae are expected to be present within the vicinity of the spawning grounds for approximately four weeks post spawning (i.e., at the latest, through mid-June).</p>
Response	Section 4.13.3 of the Tier 1 EIS identifies the presence of federally endangered shortnose sturgeon and habitat within the study area. The comments offered by the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries

Service, Northeast Region will be addressed in the Tier 1 FEIS and Tier 2 analysis.

Commenter **Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region**

Comment
F-3-4

Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*)

Use of the Hudson River by Atlantic sturgeon has been described by several authors. Briefly, spawning likely occurs in multiple sites within the river from approximately rkm 56-182 (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Van Eenennaam et al. 1996; Kahnle et al. 1998; Bain et al. 2000). Selection of sites in a given year may be influenced by the position of the salt wedge (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Van Eenennaam et al. 1996; Kahnle et al. 1998). The area around Hyde Park (approximately rkm 134) has consistently been identified as a spawning area through scientific studies and historical records of the Hudson River sturgeon fishery (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Van Eenennaam et al. 1996; Kahnle et al. 1998; Bain et al. 2000). Habitat conditions at the Hyde Park site are described as freshwater year round with bedrock, silt and clay substrates and waters depths of 12-24 meters (Bain et al. 2000). Bain et al. (2000) also identified a spawning site at rkm 112 based on tracking data. The rkm 112 site, located to one side of the river, has clay, silt and sand substrates, and is approximately 21-27 meters deep (Bain et al. 2000).

Young-of-year (YOY) have been recorded in the Hudson River between rkm 60 and rkm 148, which includes some brackish waters; however, larvae must remain upstream of the salt wedge because of their low salinity tolerance (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Kahnle et al. 1998; Bain et al. 2000). Catches of immature sturgeon (age-1 and older) suggest that juveniles utilize the estuary from the Tappan Zee Bridge through Kingston (rkm 43-148) (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Bain et al. 2000). Seasonal movements are apparent with juveniles occupying waters from rkm 60-107 during summer months and then moving downstream as water temperatures decline in the fall, primarily occupying waters from rkm 19-74 (Dovel and Berggren 1983; Bain et al. 2000). Based on river-bottom sediment maps (Coch and Bokuniewicz 1986) most juvenile sturgeon habitats in the Hudson River have clay, sand, and silt substrates (Bain et al. 2000). Newburgh and Haverstraw Bays in the Hudson River are areas of known juvenile sturgeon concentrations (Sweka et al. 2007). Sampling in spring and fall revealed that highest catches of juvenile Atlantic sturgeon occurred during spring in soft-deep areas of Haverstraw Bay even though this habitat type comprised only 25% of the available habitat in the Bay (Sweka et al. 2007). Overall, 90% of the total 562 individual juvenile Atlantic sturgeon captured during the course of this study (14 were captured more than once) came from Haverstraw Bay (Sweka et al. 2007). At around three years of age, Hudson River juveniles exceeding 70 centimeters total length begin to migrate to marine waters (Bain et al. 2000).

Atlantic sturgeon adults are likely to migrate through the action area in the spring as they move from oceanic overwintering sites to upstream spawning sites and then migrate back through the area as they move to lower reaches of the estuary or oceanic areas in the late spring and early summer. Atlantic sturgeon adults are most likely to occur in the action area from May through September. Tracking data from tagged juvenile Atlantic sturgeon indicates that during the spring and summer individuals are most likely to occur within rkm 60-170. During the winter months, juvenile Atlantic sturgeon are most likely to occur from rkm 19-74. This seasonal change in distribution may be associated with seasonal movements of the salt wedge and differential seasonal use of habitats.

Please note, as the New York Bight distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon is the only DPS of Atlantic sturgeon that spawns in the Hudson River, the information provided above only applies to this DPS. However, other DPSs of Atlantic sturgeon (e.g., Gulf of Maine, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina, and South Atlantic) are known to be present within the Hudson River, approximately up to the 0.5 parts per thousand salinity threshold in the River. As such, subadult and adult Atlantic sturgeon from any DPS may be present within the Hudson River.

Response	Section 4.13.3 of the Tier 1 DEIS/FEIS identifies the presence of federally endangered Atlantic sturgeon and habitat within the study area. The comments offered by the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region will be addressed in the Tier 1 FEIS and Tier 2 analysis.
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-5	<p>Mitigation Measures</p> <p>All but one of the proposed alternatives in the DEIS call for the replacement of the Livingston Avenue Bridge, which spans the Hudson River and connects the cities of Albany and Rensselaer. This bridge is located within the reach of the Hudson River used by shortnose sturgeon as a spawning ground. To avoid impacts to spawning adults or early life-stages, no in-water work should be undertaken from March 1 - June 30 of any calendar year. Outside of these time frames, shortnose sturgeon are not likely to occur in the vicinity of the bridge site. If the above time frame cannot be avoided, we recommend the following measures to minimize shortnose sturgeon exposure to injurious or disturbing levels of underwater noise during pile driving activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a soft start; and • Use of a vibratory hammer. This method of pile installation is non-impulsive and is believed to result in underwater noise levels approximately 10 decibels (dB) less than those levels of underwater noise produced during impact pile driving operations (Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc. and Jones and Stokes 2009). If feasible, we would also recommend the use of dewatered casings or enclosed bubble curtains around each pile to be driven to assist in further attenuation of underwater noise levels. Depending on pile size, these attenuation devices can provide between a 5-20 dB reduction in underwater noise levels (Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc. and Jones and Stokes 2009); or • Use of an impact hammer in conjunction with a wooden cushion block. The use of a wooden cushion block provides approximately 11-26 dB reduction in underwater noise levels produced during pile installation activities (Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc. and Jones and Stokes 2009). If feasible, we would also recommend the use of dewatered casings or enclosed bubble curtains around each pile to be driven to assist in further attenuation of underwater noise levels. Depending on pile size, these attenuation devices can provide between a 5-20 dB reduction in underwater noise levels (Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc. and Jones and Stokes 2009). <p>As shortnose sturgeon are also extremely sensitive to the exposure of elevated levels of noise and pressure levels produced by blasting, we strongly recommend the implementation of the following best management practices during all blasting operations which may occur during demolition of the existing bridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stemming of each detonation bore hole; • Delayed detonations; • Detonating charges with weights that will result in noise/pressure levels that are less than the injury/mortality and behavioral thresholds described above. If the latter cannot be done, blasting operations must be conducted in such a manner that the production of injury/mortality thresholds remains within close proximity to the source (i.e., within 100 feet); • Placement of a weighted turbidity curtain around the areas to be blasted. If injury/mortality thresholds are expected to be produced, we strongly recommend that the turbidity curtain be placed from the source to the distance where injury thresholds will be attained (i.e., at 100 feet). This will act as barrier, preventing any listed species from entering that area from the source where exposure to injurious levels of noise or pressure is likely; and • Development of a blast plan. In advance of any detonation activities, we would require that the applicant provide us with the blast plan for our review.

Response	Section 4.13.5 of the Tier 1 FEIS generally addresses mitigation measures. NYSDOT understands the time-of-year restrictions and the additional mitigation measures recommended by the National Marine Fisheries Service, which have been incorporated into the Tier 1 FEIS as appropriate. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for the Tier 1 assessment, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. Under that environmental review, FRA and NYSDOT are coordinating with NMFS regarding Section 7 of the ESA.
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-6	If the proposed project has the potential to affect ESA-listed species, and it is being approved, permitted, or funded by a Federal agency, the lead Federal agency (or their designated non-Federal representative) is responsible for determining whether the proposed action is likely to affect the listed species. The Federal agency would submit their determination, along with justification for their determination and a request for concurrence, to the attention of the ESA Section 7 Coordinator, NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Protected Resources Division, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. After reviewing this information, we would then be able to conduct a consultation under section 7 of the ESA. Therefore, once an alternative is selected, we encourage you to contact us regarding the need for consultation
Response	NMFS will be consulted regarding the need for a Section 7 Evaluation, if appropriate during Tier 2 analysis. As discussed above, the Livingston Avenue Bridge replacement is advancing as a separate component project with independent utility. If required, a Section 7 Evaluation will be undertaken as part of a federally funded, permitted, or approved project that may affect ESA-listed species.
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-7	If the project may result in substantial adverse impacts to EFH, an expanded EFH consultation would be necessary [§600.920(i)]. In preparing an expanded EFH consultation, we encourage you to include additional information in the EFH assessment such as results of onsite inspections, views of recognized experts, a review of pertinent literature, an analysis of alternatives and any other relevant information [50 C.F.R. §600.920(e)(4)]. Finally, depending on the degree and type of habitat impact, compensatory mitigation may be necessary to offset permanent and temporary effects of the project.
Response	NMFS will be consulted, as appropriate, regarding the need for an EFH (Essential Fish Habitat) Assessment. If needed, an EFH Assessment will be performed. Mitigation measures will be proposed as necessary to offset temporary or permanent adverse impacts.
Commenter	Colligan, Mary A., Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region
Comment F-3-8	While many of the impacts that would accrue to federally managed fishery resources under the MSA also would accrue to FWCA species, it is important to note that the interests of some species would not be represented adequately by relying on the EFH assessment alone. For instance, shellfish do not have an appropriate surrogate among the federally managed fishery resources that have EFH designated in the project vicinity and their needs and those of other nonrepresented species should be discussed at length in this section. Similarly, the

behaviors and habitat needs of diadromous and estuary-dependent fishes may not be represented by a discussion surrounding marine fishes. The discussion for FWCA species should be designed around an ecological guild model that uses locally important species to evaluate the project impacts to organisms or populations associated with the various trophic levels and life history strategies exhibited by FWCA species known to occupy the project site as residents or transients. Focus should be on issues surrounding particular species, life history stages, or habitat components that would be most susceptible to the various potential impacts.

Response The detailed species evaluations referenced in the comment would be addressed, as appropriate, during any detailed species-specific evaluations that may be performed for the EFH species. Without more details on both the nature and locations of program impacts on waterways, which are not available at the Tier 1 level, such an evaluation is not proposed to be included in the Tier 1 FEIS.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-1 As noted above, Department of the Army permits may be required from both the New York and Buffalo Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement projects under the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your primary contact for projects within the New York District's regulatory area of responsibility is Christine Delorier who may be reached at christine.delorier@usace.army.mil or (518) 266-6354. Your primary contact for projects within the Buffalo District's regulatory area of responsibility is Bridget Brown who may be reached at bridget.brown@usace.army.mil or (315) 255-0143. The following website contains a map of New York State that identifies the boundaries of the regulatory area of responsibility for both districts:
<http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx>
 For projects that span both districts, please be sure to contact both Corps points of contact.

Response The permits that may be required are identified in the resource sections of the Tier 1 FEIS and will be confirmed and obtained during Tier 2 when impacts can be determined based on final design.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-2 According to the Tier 1 DEIS, the Base Alternative consists of eight planned rail improvement projects that have already received NEPA Categorical Exclusions from the Federal Railroad Administration.
 We have no records of issuing any Department of the Army permits for these projects, and they may be required for work at some of these sites. The "Albany Schenectady Double Track Project", for example, proposes earthwork and grading, 19 bridge rehabilitations, 22 culvert repairs, new interlockings, a new signal system between Rensselaer and Schenectady, new 4 quadrant grates at three grade crossings in Colonie, and gated access roads along the right-of-way, all to be done by a contractor, and then the installation of 17 miles of double track by Amtrak forces, and likely requires a Department of the Army permit. We recommend that the proponents of these projects contact us to determine whether permits are required for the eight projects. If permits are required, completed permit applications should be submitted to the appropriate Corps District with sufficient time to allow the appropriate review and processing of the application, and prior to the commencement of project construction to avoid potential violations of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Response Correspondence, dated May 19, 2014 from NYSDOT to the USACE, addressed the permitting

status of the eight planned rail improvements that comprise the Base Alternative. In this correspondence, NYSDOT indicated that in undertaking projects such as these, efforts are made to avoid and minimize the impacts to waters of the United States. In cases where the impacts are unavoidable, the activities are typically authorized under the Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) program. All of the projects contained in the Base Alternative have been screened and delineated for wetlands as part of each individual project's NEPA process. Two of the projects in the Base Alternative involved impacts to waters of the United States that are authorized by the NWP program, the Albany Schenectady Double Track Project, which was combined with the Albany-Rensselaer Station Fourth Track Capacity Improvements project and the Hudson Line Signal Wire Relocation project, which was combined with the Highway-Rail Grade Crossings Safety Improvements project. These projects within the Base Alternative have been completed. The Syracuse Track Configuration and Signals Improvement project (Phase 1) has also been completed, and no wetland impacts were anticipated to occur. The remaining three projects, Schenectady Station, Rochester Station, and Niagara Falls Station have also been completed in urbanized areas and also (as documented in Categorical Exclusion filings) were not anticipated to involve any impacts to waters of the United States requiring permit assessments. The minor impacts to waters of the United States associated with the Albany Schenectady Double Track Project were authorized by NWP #14 – Linear Transportation Projects. The minor impacts to waters of the United States associated with the Hudson Line Signal Project were authorized by NWP #3- Maintenance for minor impacts to waters of the United States. Both of these projects have been completed and complied with the NWP General Conditions and the permit-specific Regional Conditions.

Commenter **McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District**

Comment F-4-3 Section 4.6 of the Tier 1 DEIS identifies and discusses potential effects to surface waterbodies and watercourses, and Appendix G includes information on existing watercourses that have been identified within the project study area. The Regulatory Context section fails to discuss Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act as also being applicable to the overall program implementation. Section 4.6 and Appendix G also focus on whether the identified waterbodies and watercourses are protected by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), without acknowledging that all of these waterways, whether protected by the NYSDEC or not, are likely waters of the United States and subject to jurisdiction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We are also concerned that given the methods utilized to identify watercourses, many smaller streams that may be waters of the United States have yet to be identified. As with the future analysis of wetlands within the study area, we hope that future analysis of waterbodies and watercourses includes the field identification and delineation of these waters. Last, after all efforts to avoid and minimize impacts to these waters have been achieved through any re-designs and proposal of best management practices, we wanted to advise you that mitigation through the restoration, enhancement and/or preservation of water bodies and watercourses may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to compensate for the resulting proposed lost functions and services of these aquatic resources.

Response The "Regulatory Section" of Section 4.10, Wetlands includes discussion of Sections 10, 401, and 404. The "Future Analysis" section, Section 4.6.6 of the Tier 1 FEIS, discusses filing of a joint permit application under Section 10/Section 401/Section 404, as appropriate. This section acknowledges that these waterways are protected and subject to jurisdiction under these regulatory programs. The detailed field identifications of waterways and wetlands would occur during Tier 2 analysis, as appropriate, and impact analysis would be performed using more detailed design, but the information has not yet been developed in Tier 1 to determine which of these waterways will be affected. Future analysis in Tier 2 would also

include efforts to avoid and minimize impacts on affected waterways and development of appropriate mitigation measures, through restoration, enhancement, and/or preservation of waterbodies.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-4 All of the navigable waterways within the study area that are subject to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act have not been identified at this point. Potential additional navigable waters within the study area include the Papsanee Creek, Schodack Creek and Stockport Creek; among others. We anticipate your coordination with us to help identify all waters subject to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act as the program progresses.

Response The information provided by or available from the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding navigable waterways provided the basis for navigability determinations in the Tier 1 EIS. These are all tributaries to the Hudson River, which is identified as navigable in the Tier 1 EIS. The proposed work where the Empire Corridor either adjoins or crosses these Hudson River tributaries in Rensselaer and Columbia counties is anticipated to be constrained to the right-of-way and is not anticipated to involve impacts to navigable waterways. As previously discussed, the Tier 1 inventory of waterways will be refined in Tier 2 analysis, when project plans are developed in more detail. Coordination will be performed with the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Tier 2 regarding any work proposed in navigable waters, as appropriate.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-5 Section 4.10 of the Tier 1 DEIS identifies and discusses potential effects to wetlands, and Appendix G includes information on existing wetlands that have been identified within the project study area. The Regulatory Context section fails to note that federal wetlands may also be subject to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act when those wetlands are situated below the plane of the mean high water in tidal waters, and below the ordinary high water mark of non-tidal waters that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined to be navigable. We are also concerned that the Tier 1 DEIS has underestimated the amount of potential federal wetlands within the study area as USGS Quadrangles and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps were utilized for their identification. These maps are broad scale and NWI maps are not available for many locations within the study area. We recommend that you also consult county soil surveys prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help identify additional wetlands within the study area and more accurately assess the five proposed alternatives before one is selected, which is when the wetlands would be field delineated and likely need verification by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Response The 'Future Analysis' section, Section 4.6.6 of the Tier 1 FEIS, discusses filing of a joint permit application under Section 10/Section 401/Section 404, as appropriate. This section acknowledges that these waterways are protected and subject to jurisdiction under these regulatory programs. The information in Tier 1 relies on existing available mapping (such as NWI mapping), but the detailed mapping and field identifications of waterways and wetlands would occur during future detailed design. Future analysis would be part of the program development in Tier 2, as specific improvements were identified and would include consulting NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) soil surveys and detailed delineations of wetlands, in consultation with the U.S. ACOE.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-6 As outlined in the Tier 1 DEIS, Alternative 125 would have the highest amount of temporary and permanent impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands. Based on what has been submitted to date, we believe the adverse impacts to aquatic resources associated with this alternative are more than minimal and may not meet all applicable provisions of the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines at 40 CFR Part 230, especially in comparison of the limited additional benefits that would be gained by this alternative, which wouldn't be experienced until 2035.

Response Alternative 90B has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, based on consideration of factors such as meeting the program purpose and need, costs, and impacts. The Tier 1 FEIS also indicates that Alternative 125 will involve greater impacts to Waters of the U.S. than the other alternatives under consideration. However, Alternative 125 provides the greatest effectiveness in meeting many program performance measures including on-time performance, travel time reductions, service frequency improvements, ridership increases and automobile trips reductions. Alternative 125 creates a separate dedicated passenger rail alignment over much of its length, which is beneficial to avoiding conflicts with freight traffic. These factors have been taken into consideration in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter McDonald, Jodi M., Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Comment F-4-7 Regardless of the alternative that is selected, we recommend that all efforts be undertaken to avoid and minimize the amount of temporary and permanent impacts to waters of the United States to the maximum extent practicable and that adequate compensatory mitigation plans, developed in accordance with 33 CFR Part 332, be prepared as necessary to compensate for the losses of aquatic resource functions and services for what we determine to be single and complete projects. To do this, we recommend continued consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during future program and project development.

Response Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. In Tier 2, future design, and any wetlands assessments performed, will include efforts to avoid and minimize impacts on waters of the U.S. and development of compensatory mitigation plans, as appropriate, in consultation with the U.S. ACOE.

Commenter Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary

Comment F-5-1 Agency's, 404(b)1 Guidelines, Part 230 (Title 40, 33 U.S.C. 1344(b) and 136l(a)). The Department's comments represent contributions from two bureaus, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) and the National Park Service.

Response The comments of both the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Park Service are addressed below.

Commenter Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary

Comment F-5-2 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Endangered Species Act
On April 9, 2011, the Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service responded to your request for information regarding known occurrences of Federally-listed threatened and endangered species along the proposed route (see enclosure).

The DEIS states that "Information on ecological habitat and endangered and threatened species for study areas within a half-mile of the corridor centerline for all alternatives was obtained from the U.S. FWS, the NYSDEC, and the New York Natural Heritage Program. Information from the U.S. FWS on federal listing status and occurrences by county was consulted (4.13.2 Methodology) and sixteen species were identified within the study area." The Federal Rail Authority (FRA) is responsible for making the final effects determination pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, unless FRA has designated NYSDOT as a non-federal representative. If this is the case, please provide a copy of that designation in the environmental documentation.

The Service recommends that NYSDOT delineate the action area which is defined as "all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action" (50 CFR §402.02). Then, visit our website at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/section7.htm> and follow the step-by-step instructions to obtain an up-to-date, official species list and information about listed, proposed, and candidate species. Then follow the steps to complete initial assessments of whether a species may be present and impacted by the proposed action. This information should be included in the Tier II EIS for our review. Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the ESA, the FRA should "conduct a biological assessment for the purpose of identifying any endangered or threatened species which is likely to be affected" by the proposed action. The Service is available to provide technical assistance in conducting this assessment.

Response

The FRA has not designated NYSDOT as a non-federal representative. USFWS lists of rare and listed species were consulted in performing the Tier 1 environmental inventory for the 1/2 mile buffer on either side of the railroads where work may be proposed. This buffer area was identified to account for indirect as well as direct impacts as a result of the proposed improvements. In Tier 2, if impacts to federally listed endangered or threatened species may occur that warrant further regulatory review, the FRA will conduct a Biological Assessment pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA, as appropriate. As part of Tier 1, the initial steps identified in the step-by-step instructions at the USFWS website (such as consulting with NYSDEC to determine the presence of listed species) have been completed. The later steps would be part of a Tier 2 assessment.

Commenter

Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary

**Comment
F-5-3**

Pursuant to Section 7(a)(4) of the ESA, federal action agencies are required to confer with the Service if their proposed action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (50 CFR 402.1 O(a)), a species currently proposed for listing as endangered under the ESA. We expect a listing determination in October 2014. Action agencies may also voluntarily confer with the Service if the proposed action may affect a proposed species. Species proposed for listing are not afforded protection under the ESA. However, as soon as a listing becomes effective, the prohibition against jeopardizing its continued existence and "take" applies regardless of an action's stage of completion.

If the FRA retains any discretionary involvement or control over on-the-ground actions that may affect the species after listing, Section 7(a)(2) applies. Therefore, if suitable northern long-eared bat habitat is present within the proposed project area, we recommend further coordination with our office to avoid potential project delays should the species be listed. Additional information regarding the northern long-eared bat and conference procedures can be found at: <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/index.html>.

Response

The Tier 1 FEIS has been updated to include the listing, documented occurrences, and range of the northern long-eared bat, which was listed on April 2, 2015. If listed species or species proposed for listing, such as the northern long-eared bat (listed as both federally and state threatened species), may be affected, consultation will occur in Tier 2 with USFWS in

accordance with Section 7 of the ESA.

Commenter	Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary
Comment F-5-4	Until the proposed project is complete, we recommend checking our website every 90 days from the date of this letter to ensure that listed species presence/absence information for the proposed project is current (http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/section7.htm).
Response	The Tier 1 FEIS has been updated to reflect the listing of the northern long-eared bat, and the latest endangered and threatened species mapping data from the New York Natural Heritage Program was obtained in 2021. The listing status of species will be updated for any subsequent environmental documents prepared as part of Tier 2.
Commenter	Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary
Comment F-5-5	Any additional information regarding the proposed project and its potential to impact listed species should be coordinated with both this office and with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) office in Schenectady, NY (telephone 518-357-2450).
Response	In Tier 2, when the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, is advanced into final design, further consideration of potential impacts to listed species will occur. Further analysis with respect to project impacts will include coordination with USFWS and NYSDEC Regional offices.
Commenter	Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary
Comment F-5-6	<p>Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act</p> <p>The Department is concerned that the proposed conversion may result in potential effects on fish and wildlife resources. These effects may include an increase in wildlife mortality and injury from being struck by trains, indirect impacts from noise, vibration and visual impacts, habitat fragmentation, and connectivity (both terrestrial and aquatic). In addition, we are also concerned with the potential for railroad crossings (culverts, bridges), rock rip-rap along stream and riverbanks, pollutants, and surface runoff into waterways. Subsequent documentation should include an explanation of how NYSDOT plans to address impacts to fish and wildlife as a result of increased train speeds. The Department recommends that NYSDOT specifically address the potential for any impacts to the Hudson River, the Erie Barge Canal, the Mohawk River, the Genesee River, the Harlem River, and Ellicott Creek in the Tier II DEIS.</p> <p>The Department recommends that the project is designed to protect fish and wildlife, ensure fish and wildlife passage, incorporate avoidance and minimization measures and mitigate for adverse impacts as appropriate. The Service will provide technical assistance and comments during the Tier II DEIS review as well as during the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's, 404(b)1 Guidelines, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.</p>
Response	Tier 2 documentation will consider means of designing proposed improvements to minimize ecological impacts, such as use of fencing along the right-of-way for safety and measures to minimize impacts on waterways crossed. Ways to avoid or minimize ecological

impacts will be examined, as appropriate, in conformance with the Section 404(b)1 Guidelines as part of Tier 2 and permit approvals required under Section 404 and Section 10.

Commenter **Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary**

Comment
F-5-7

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act/Migratory Bird Treaty Act
Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were federally-delisted in 2007, but remain protected under the MBTA, the BGEPA, and by the state of New York (State) as a threatened species. There are several bald eagle nests, breeding and concentration areas, and roost sites within the project corridor. The highest concentration of bald eagles in the State is along the Hudson River. In addition, two national wildlife refuges, the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge located in Seneca Falls, New York, and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in the Town(s) of Alabama and Shelby, New York, are located along the proposed high speed rail line. The refuges provide safe areas for bald eagles during the breeding season and during migration. Bald eagles, especially immature eagles, are attracted to carrion found on railroad tracks. We have witnessed an increase in the bald eagle population in the State since 2007. An increase in train speed, especially along the Hudson River, may increase eagle mortality.

The Service recommends that all bald eagle nests, roost sites, breeding, migration (including golden eagles), and concentration areas within the project corridor are identified and NYSDOT plans to minimize impacts to eagles are addressed. Refer to and follow the Service's National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines found on our website:

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/ecologicalservices/eagle.html>, and contact the Service and NYSDOT to determine if permits are required for the proposed high speed rail project. If you have any questions regarding federal permits under the BGEPA, please contact Sarah Nystrom at the Service's Regional Office in Hadley, MA at 413-253-8952.

The MBTA protects over 1,000 species of birds which includes numerous species that are not considered to be state- or federally-listed threatened or endangered species. As such, the MBTA does prohibit the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Service. The unauthorized taking of birds is legally considered a "take" under the MBTA and is a violation of the law. Neither the MBTA nor its implementing regulations, 50 CFR Part 21, provide for permitting of "incidental take" of migratory birds. However, we recognize that some birds may be killed, even if all reasonable measures to avoid it are implemented. To minimize impacts to migratory birds during the breeding season, important bird areas and, hawk watch sites should be identified, and the breeding bird atlas along the proposed corridor should be consulted. Specific avoidance, minimization, and conservation measures should be included in the Tier II DEIS (e.g., no clearing of vegetation should occur for the proposed project between March 31 to July 15).

Response

Exhibit G-18 in Appendix G identified the presence of state-threatened bald eagle habitat in the Hudson River counties and several counties along Empire Corridor West. In Tier 2, when more detailed plans are developed for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B), the potential impacts to bald eagle habitats and any appropriate avoidance or mitigation measures will be identified. However, it is anticipated that impacts to bald eagles and other protected species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible. Any Tier 2 environmental documentation prepared will address the potential impacts to bald eagles and other protected bird species and proposed mitigation measures.

Commenter **Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary**

Comment The Service recommends that the applicant visit the Service's Migratory Bird website for

F-5-8 more information (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/dmbmdbhc.html>). If you require additional information or assistance regarding fish & wildlife resources, please contact Sandra Doran, U.S. Fish & wildlife Service, at 607-753-9334. Future correspondence with the Service on this project should reference project file 2009-TA-064611 0-CPA-0003.

Response The project file number will be referenced in future correspondence with USFWS relating to the New York State High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter **Raddant, Andrew L., Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Office of the Secretary**

Comment National Natural Landmark Program
F-5-9 There are ten National Natural Landmarks (NNLs) in proximity to the project corridor. As such, it is recommended that a map be prepared to document the conclusion that only Moss Island NNL occurs within the 2,000-ft wide study area. It should also be noted that Montezuma Marshes carries the NNL designation, and that the Albany Pine Bush Preserve has recently been evaluated and deemed to contain nationally significant resources, and is presently awaiting Secretarial signature for designation as a NNL. Furthermore, the DEIS states that the Empire South section is not expected to have any impacts to natural areas. If this section includes the "Conrail" (as labeled on topographic maps) line along the Hudson River, potential impacts to Iona Island Marsh NNL should be further assessed. It should also be indicated in the table on page 4-176 that Hart's Woods and Bergen-Byron Swamp are National Natural Landmarks.
Please correct the spelling of the Northeast Regional NNL Program Manager's name in the footnote in section 4.16, and in the references, if it appears there. It should read "DiQuinzio," not "DeQuinzio." For questions regarding these specific comments, please contact Deb DiQuinzio, (617) 223-5064, deb.diquinzio@nps.gov.

Response Exhibit G-28 in Appendix G contains a map that shows parklands and National Natural Landmarks that have been designated on the overall study area map. The detailed map for each NNL obtained from the NNL Program Manager was reviewed to identify those NNL's within the 2,000-foot-wide study area for parks and recreational areas. The Montezuma Marsh NNL is shown on this map in Appendix G, but is outside the 2,000-foot-wide study area and located more than 4 miles away. Empire Corridor South extends along the east side of the Hudson River, the Iona Island NNL is on the west side of the Hudson River (more than 1,000 feet from the Empire Corridor) and will not be directly affected by the program. Hart's Woods NNL is also located at least 1 mile away from the Empire Corridor program alternatives. Alternative 125, which is not selected for advancement, would impact the Bergen-Byron Swamp NNL, and the NNL designation has been added to Exhibit 4-36. The Empire Corridor passes to the north of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, which has been designated as a National Natural Landmark and has also been added to the table. In addition to the parklands section, these three NNLs (Iona Islands, Moss Island, and Bergen-Byron Swamp) within the ½-mile study area for ecology are also referenced in Section 4.13.3 (General Ecology and Wildlife Resources). In addition, the spelling of the NNL Program Manager in Section 4.16 has been corrected.

Commenter **Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2**

Comment The Base Alternative is limited in its capability to support the project goals. EPA lacks objections to implementation of the planned improvements.
F-6-1

Response	We agree; the Base Alternative ranks last in meeting performance objectives of the program.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-2	However, without detailed impact information, this alternative is rated EC-2- Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information.
Response	Alternative 90A is not being advanced for further consideration. However, since the work is anticipated to be contained within the right-of-way, it is not anticipated that Alternative 90A will involve substantial environmental impacts, particularly relative to the other alternatives being considered.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-3	Physical changes would extend outside of the existing rights-of-way, but due to the nature of a Tier 1 DEIS, these impacts cannot be quantitatively defined. It is for this reason that Alternative 90B is rated EC-2 - Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information.
Response	Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. In Tier 2, further evaluation, more detailed plans, and an environmental impact evaluation will be performed, and any required Tier 2 environmental documentation prepared.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-4	Physical changes would extend outside of the existing rights-of-way, yet cannot be quantitatively defined in a programmatic DEIS. It is for this reason that this alternative is rated EC-2 - Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information.
Response	Alternative 110 has not been selected for further evaluation, more detailed plans and an environmental impact evaluation will be performed, and any required Tier 2 environmental documentation prepared.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-5	The environmental impacts of a new corridor would be substantial, while the DEIS does qualitatively discuss the impacts, EPA is concerned that the use of a 300-foot (from the centerline of the track) study area, the same as the other alternatives, is not adequate to even qualitatively define the impacts of a higher speed rail alternative. This alternative is rated EC-2- Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information.
Response	Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration. The study area for each alternative, including Alternative 125, varied depending on the parameter being evaluated. A 300-foot buffer on either side of the corridor was used for identifying potential impacts on land uses, farmlands, surface and ground waters, and wetlands/floodplains, but the buffer was wider for other evaluations, expanding out to 1,000 feet for community/public facilities and parklands and 1/2 mile for ecological impacts and contaminated sites.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2

Comment F-6-6	Chapter 4 Exhibit 4-2-Land Use/Land Cover in the 90/110 Study Area. There are no definitions of "rangeland," "barren land" or "forest land." This should be clarified.
Response	The USGS land use/land cover information categories include the following: rangeland (herbaceous, shrub and brush, mixed), forestland (deciduous, evergreen, mixed), and barren land (dry salt flats, beaches, sandy areas other than beaches, bare exposed rock, strip mines/quarries/and gravel pits, transitional areas, mixed barren land). USGS publications define these categories further. Rangeland historically has been defined as land where the potential natural vegetation is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs and where natural herbivory was an important influence in its pre-civilization state. Forest Lands have a tree-crown areal density (crown closure percentage) of 10 percent or more, are stocked with trees capable of producing timber or other wood products, and exert an influence on the climate or water regime. Barren Land is land of limited ability to support life and in which less than one-third of the area has vegetation or other cover.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-7	For those alternatives that would require additional construction (i.e., alternatives 125, 110, 90B) EPA recommends that the equipment used for construction meets at a minimum Tier 4, if available, or the most stringent engine standard available at the time. We encourage the use of the Northeast Diesel Collaborative Model Construction Contract Specifications and Best practices for Clean Diesel Construction: http://northeastdiesel.org/construction.html#ModelContractLanguage .
Response	In Tier 2, consideration will be given to the Best Management Practices to be used during construction, including the use of the Northeast Diesel Collaborative Model Construction Contract Specification and Best Practices for Clean Diesel Construction.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-8	The air quality impacts to communities during the construction phase, especially communities with Environmental Justice concerns, should also be considered. To minimize emissions resulting from construction activities, in addition to using best available technology, an idle-reduction policy should be implemented and enforced during construction operations.
Response	NYSDOT intends to implement an idle-reduction policy, the details of which will be developed in Tier 2 and final design.
Commenter	Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
Comment F-6-9	Even though the Tier I air quality analysis indicates that there is no net increase for criteria pollutants, except for a minor increase in nitrogen oxide, the increase in train service may ultimately increase diesel locomotive emissions at the local level, due to idling. Train idling has been a common concern of communities living near rail yards and train stations. An idle reduction policy and idle reduction technology should be implemented by the train owners and operators as part of a mitigation strategy, in addition to the use of the highest Tier engine available at the time of project completion.
Response	In the formulation of the program's Service Development Plan, consideration is being given to changes and potential increases in diesel locomotive emissions. Overall, the program is

anticipated to reduce automobile use and would result in a net beneficial impact on air quality emissions, when these reductions are factored in.

Commenter **Mitchell, Judy-Ann, Chief, Sustainability and MultiMedia Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2**

Comment F-6-10 Section 4.19.1 - General Conformity discussion. While the Conformity discussion is adequate, it presumes that funding will come only from the FRA. If any funding for the project comes from either the Federal Highways Administration or the Federal Transit Administration, Transportation Conformity would apply, and therefore, should be discussed as well.

Response If project funding is provided by the Federal Highways Administration or the Federal Transit Administration, it is recognized that the Transportation Conformity would apply, and it will be discussed as part of the Tier 2 program documentation.

Commenter **Wertz, Trent L., Technical Assistant, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation**

Comment F-7-1 This type of activity is not one that the NRC regulates and therefore is not in a position to provide comments on the draft document.

Response The response of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is recognized relating to the New York State High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter **Chambers, Tom, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area**

Comment F-8-1 Excellent and much needed project. I prefer the 125 Alternative as the best way to create a competitive transit option that will attract additional visitors and spur economic development, the NGNHA, a unit of the National Park Service, supports this Initiative, pending consultation with local communities and tribal entities.

Response Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B.

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Commenter	DiMura, John, NYS Canal Corporation
Comment S-1-1	In general, please change all references to the Barge Canal to the New York State Canal System or Erie Canal.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program as both the canal and the rail share a common corridor across the State of New York. The Tier 1 FEIS has been revised with updates to references to the New York State Canal System or Erie Canal. However, the references to the New York State Barge Canal Historic District have been retained, as the official name of the National Register Historic District. Appendix I contains a record of agency correspondence, and a list of streams and waterways was appended to the agency correspondence. Since this list is part of the actual correspondence record, it is not appropriate to change this list.
Commenter	DiMura, John, NYS Canal Corporation
Comment S-1-2	In addition, please make the following changes noted below in red. Deletions are bracketed and additions are underlined: [DETAILS IN LETTER]
Response	<p>The Tier 1 FEIS has incorporated the changes and corrections provided by the New York State Canal Corporation. These include the following revisions identified in your comments that were made as follows to the Tier 1 FEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections 4.6.3 and 4.14.4: Correction was made to replace "barge canal" with New York State Canal System, in two locations: • Sections 4.16.3 and 4.23.3: Text was corrected as follows: "...Canalway Trail System is comprised of a network of more than 300 miles of existing multi-use, recreational trails across upstate New York." • Sections 4.16.3 and 4.23.3: Text was corrected as follows: "The Canalway Trail System is comprised of four major segments: the Erie Canalway Trail, including the Old Erie Canal State Park Trail in Central New York; the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail, the Champlain Canalway Trail, and the Oswego Canalway Trail. Stretching from Buffalo to Albany the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail, 277 miles of which are presently open to the public, closely follows much of the present and proposed Empire Corridor alignment."
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-1	Overall OPRHP supports the idea of High Speed Rail in New York State
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program in the context of potential impacts to parklands. Your comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in moving forward with plans for high-speed rail by identifying the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B).
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Comment S-2-2	While it appears that this project will have an overall positive impact for the state's rail transportation system, negative impacts may occur in the longer term for state park and site visitors, particularly from noise, vibration and visual impacts. OPRHP also serves as New York State's agent in administering the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) for the National Park Service (NPS). The Department of Transportation (DOT) must work with the Alternate State Liaison Officer (ASLO) in all matters pertaining to the conversion of LWCF Section 6(f) protected lands.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Noise and vibration were addressed in Section 4.21 of the Tier 1 EIS, and visual impacts are addressed in Section 4.17. In the Tier 2 process, if conversions are anticipated of Section 6(f)-protected LWCF properties, we will work closely with the Alternate State Liaison Officer of NYSOPRHP to mitigate any potential impacts with parklands or other properties that are managed by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-3	Pg. ES-2 -- Second bullet on page Monroe County is listed twice in the paragraph once as an urban county and once as a "more rural" county. It should only be listed once.
Response	This page references both urban centers, such as Rochester within Monroe County, and, in the second reference to rural areas, Monroe County has been deleted.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-4	Exhibit 3-12 and 3-13 are difficult to compare and identify corresponding projects from table to map.
Response	The scale of the mapping in Exhibit 3-12 is intended to geographically show the general locations of proposed improvements, more information on the proposed improvements is provided in the table (Exhibit 3-11).
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-5	Exhibit 3-12 Descriptions should include identification of any work or staging areas required outside the rail corridor ROW
Response	At the Tier 1 (conceptual) level, these work or staging areas are not yet known, but would be identified in Tier 2 final design.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-6	Exhibit 3-13 scales of maps and keys are difficult to read and understand.
Response	The intention of the mapping in Exhibit 3-12 is to geographically show the general locations of the proposed improvements. Descriptions of the proposed improvements are provided in the table (Exhibit 3-11).

Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-7	SRP-3 Metro –North--New 3rd track. (Mp 53 – 63.5). This section of track appears to run through Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. All construction activities must stay within the existing rail ROW to avoid impacts to parkland.
Response	Thank you for your comment that the new third track between Mileposts 53 and 63.5 passes through the Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. It is not anticipated that any construction activity will occur outside of the existing railroad right-of-way, which formerly was built with four-tracks. More detailed plans will be developed in Tier 2.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-8	ES-13 Metro-North Poughkeepsie Yard... (Mp 71 – 75.8). This project travels through Quiet Cove Riverfront Park. This park is owned by OPRHP but operated and managed by Poughkeepsie. Impacts to parkland are of concern.
Response	Project ES-13 would be constructed entirely within the existing railroad right-of-way, which once supported multiple tracks and would not have any impact to the surrounding parklands.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-9	ES-05 Hudson Line Reliability Improvements (CP82). This Control Point is within close proximity of Mills Norrie State Parks. A map with better detail would assist in impact analysis. Perhaps showing the project locations in relationship to state lands would provide a more complete picture. Likewise, with the base track improvements between CP99 and MP 105.3 the rail ROW passes through Clermont State Historic Site. More detailed plans and maps are required for these areas to ensure impacts to parkland are avoided. Additionally near MP 130 the rail lines pass under a bridge at Schodack Island State Park. While it is difficult to determine from these maps, it appears that this area is slated for base track, signal, and grade crossing improvements.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment discussing the possible impacts of a new interlocking and track work on the Hudson Line. Reviewing your comment more closely finds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new interlocking at CP 82 near Staatsburg, New York. This new interlocking would be located to the south of the community and away from the Mills Norrie State Park. • It is not anticipated that any of the changes to the track work for CP 99 would be near the Clermont State Historic Site and would not be outside of the existing right-of-way. • The improvements at CP 130 would be within the existing right-of-way near the Village of Castleton south of the bridge for the park.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Comment S-2-10	ES-14 Hudson Station/Track Geometry Improvements (MP 114.5-115). The Ferry Street Bridge is also used for access to the Hudson Boat Launch, which is OPRHP owned property managed by the City of Hudson. Access to the boat launch must be maintained during construction.
Response	Improvements to the rail station at Hudson would be further evaluated in Tier 2. The importance of the Ferry Street Bridge to the community and access to the boat launch is recognized, and would be maintained in studying the constructability of the program.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-11	Exhibit 3-13 – Alternative 90A (Maps 3 & 4). On Map 4 the existing Empire Corridor appears to transect the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park in at least 2 locations. This is not illustrated by this map. Putting the state lands on maps such as these would help to illustrate impacts to state lands as a result of construction, operation, and maintenance of the new track.
Response	The locations of parklands are shown in Exhibit G-28 in Appendix G, Environmental Inventory and Impact Assessment. The intention of Exhibit 3-12 is to geographically show the general locations of improvements proposed as part of Alternative 90A. Putting all resources on these maps would render them unreadable due to the scale of the maps. Further analysis will be conducted in Tier 2, when more detailed plans are developed for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B).
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-12	Pg 4-177, State Parks and Recreation Areas, The Canal Corporation is also a land owner of recreational facilities as indicated in comments on Exhibit 4-30 and should be listed along with the Heritage Areas System, State Parks System, State Forests, and Wildlife Management Areas. The Canal Corp. not only manages the NYS Canal System but the series of Canal Lock Parks and the Canalway Trail.
Response	The Overview section in the Existing Conditions, Parks and Recreation Areas includes a description of the New York State Canal System and describes the ownership of the canals and adjoining lands by the New York State Canal Corporation. This upfront section was included to highlight the importance of the canal system as a park/recreational resource in the study area and its integration with other parks and recreation areas. The title of Exhibit 4-37 has been modified to delete NYSOPRHP.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-13	[Exhibit 4-30] Table row 9 “underwater State Park”, the first three columns should read as follows: Hudson Highlands State Park underwater lands State Park Preserve Dutchess County
Response	Thank you for your comments and review of Exhibit 4-37 listing NYSOPRHP State Parks, State Preserves and State Historic Sites. The correction to the row 9 that you shared in your comment was corrected to display the correct title as you shared in your comment.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Comment S-2-14	[Exhibit 4-30] Table rows 21-23 “Schodack Island State Park (undeveloped)”, should have the parenthetic “undeveloped” deleted from all three rows.
Response	Exhibit 4-37 listing NYSOPRHP State Parks, State Preserves and State Historic Sites (rows 21-23) was corrected deleting the reference "undeveloped" for Schodack Island State Park.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-15	[Exhibit 4-30] Table row 24 “Lock 9 State Canal Park”, this facility is not an OPRHP facility and should not be in this table. The facility is under the jurisdiction of and operated by the NYS Canal Corporation.
Response	Exhibit 4-37 has been retitled to delete NYSOPRHP, and your comment is acknowledged that the park at Lock 9 is part of the New York State Canal System.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-16	[Exhibit 4-30] Table row 25 “Guy Park”, this facility is not an OPRHP facility and should not be in this table. The facility is under the jurisdiction of and operated by the NYS Canal Corporation.
Response	Exhibit 4-37 listing State Parks, State Preserves and State Historic Sites (row 25) was corrected for the park at Guy Park at Lock 11 that is part of the New York State Canal System.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-17	[Exhibit 4-30] Table row 31 “State Fairgrounds”, this facility is not an OPRHP facility and should not be in this table. The facility is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and Markets. The OPRHP facility is “State Park at the Fair” and is a 0.7- acre field within the fairgrounds with a reflecting pool, tent, and exhibit area.
Response	We have revised Exhibit 4-37 in the Tier 1 FEIS to note the correct ownership of the "State Fairgrounds," as noted in your comments.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-18	Pg 4-181, Section 4.16.4 Environmental Consequences. In cases where the track passes through state park lands but has no direct construction impacts, there are still impacts to state park lands resulting from increased frequency of trains and higher speeds. Seeing trains and train noise could impact the visitors’ experience in a negative way.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. Noise and vibration are addressed in Section 4.21, and impacts on visual quality are addressed in Section 4.17. The potential for visual and noise mitigation was noted in Section 4.16.5. However, acknowledgment of potential impacts on parks and recreation areas from train passbys has also been incorporated into the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Comment S-2-19	Conservation Funds can also be awarded to municipalities for acquisition and development of municipal parks. These parks, in addition to State Parkland, are also afforded 6(f) protection against conversion to non-park purposes. OPRHP acts as an agent of the National Park Service for conversions under the LWCF. OPRHP must approve all conversions and mitigations (replacement lands) prior to submission to the NPS. Alienation is a restriction by the State on municipal park lands that are proposed to be disused for public park purposes. This requires approval by the State Legislature. There is no requisite for the grant of federal LWCF funds for municipal parkland alienation. A handbook to parkland alienation and conversion can be accessed here: http://nysparks.com/publications/documents/AlienationHandbook.pdf
Response	Thank you for your comments on the alienation of parklands and the availability of further information. In the Tier 1 EIS process, GIS mapping was used for identification of municipal parks that have received Section 6(f) funding. These parks are identified in Exhibit 4-40. In Tier 2, the assessments will further refine, if applicable, parkland identification and impact assessments, including identification of LWCF-funded and municipal parks. If impacts to Section 6(f) parklands may occur, coordination will be performed with NYSOPRHP. If alienation of municipal parkland will occur, approval from the State Legislature will be sought.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-20	Pg 4-262, Section 4.23.3 Existing Conditions, Parks and Recreational Areas. Please correct this section and Exhibit 4-30 to correctly identify recreational facilities and their jurisdictional entity (e.g. OPRHP, NYS Canal Corp, etc.).
Response	The Tier 1 FEIS was revised to correctly identify recreational facilities and their jurisdictional entities that you outlined in your comment.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-21	Pg 4-264 Exhibit 4-59 – National Memorials National Natural Land Marks, National Wildlife Refuges, and National Historic Sites and Preserves within Study Area. The “Federal Land within Hudson Highlands State Park” refers to the “Appalachian National Scenic Trail Corridor” and should be identified as such in this table. It is not part of Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. Also, “Federal Land within Schodack Island State Park” is not recreational land and is not within Schodack Island State Park. It is adjacent to Schodack Island and is owned by the Army Corps of Engineers. It is used as a dredge spoil deposition site. It should not be identified in this list.
Response	Revisions were made as indicated in your comment, to the Tier 1 FEIS exhibit discussing National Memorials, National Natural Landmarks, National Wildlife Refuges, and National Historic Sites and Preserves within the study area.
Commenter	Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Comment S-2-22	Pg 4-265 Exhibit 4-60 – NYS OPRHP State Parks, State Park Preserves, State Historic Sites. This table should be corrected according to comments made above on Exhibit 4-30.
Response	That particular table was not also included in the Section 4(f) section.

Commenter **Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Comment S-2-23 Pg 4-274 Base Alternative claims no impacts to parks or recreational areas because the alternative is “entirely within the right-of-way, no land acquisitions are anticipated, no impacts to parklands are anticipated.”
 Pg 4-274 Alternative 90A asserts that all work can be contained in the existing ROW and no impacts to parklands are anticipated.
 Pg 4-277 Alternative 90B explains that there will be no impacts to parklands along the Empire Corridor South because no work beyond Alternative 90A is proposed for this segment. The Empire Corridor West/Niagara Branch claims to have no impacts to parklands even though the rail passes by and through several parks.
 Pg 4-281 Alternative 110 claims no impacts to parklands along the Empire Corridor South because no work beyond Alternative 90A is proposed for this segment. Along the Empire Corridor West/Niagara Branch the rail passes nearby or adjacent to parklands but will not directly affect them. Potential impacts are identified for a county recreational facility.
 Pg 4-284 Alternative 125 again claims no impacts to parklands along the Empire Corridor South because no work beyond Alternative 90A is proposed for the majority of this segment. A one mile segment from Albany-Rensselaer Station across the Hudson is proposed to be new 125 mph track. No parkland is within this alignment so no parkland impacts are expected. Along the Niagara Branch no additional work beyond Alternative 90A is proposed and thusly will not affect park land. The Empire Corridor West section will have the Alternative 90A projects applied to the existing corridor and a new 125 mph track will be constructed on a parallel alignment or elevated above the existing rail. The segments of parallel alignment may have direct impacts to portions of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, Old Erie Canal State Historic Park and a handful of municipal parks that have received LWCF funding.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 FEIS describes the potential direct impacts to parklands as a result of the Preferred Alternative and the other prospective alternatives. In Tier 2, the impacts of individual project components of the Preferred Alternative will be further studied and analyzed on adjoining parklands, and, if appropriate, mitigation strategies will be identified. Other impacts (noise, visual) were addressed in other sections of the Tier 1 FEIS. Noise and vibration are addressed in Section 4.21, and impacts on visual quality are addressed in Section 4.17.

Commenter **Alworth, Tom, Deputy Commissioner for Resources and Partnerships, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Comment S-2-24 Be advised that the scale and description of the projects and alternatives identified in this Tier 1 EIS cannot definitively say that there will be no impacts to parkland.

Impacts such as noise, vibration, air quality, access, and visual/scenic impacts will occur temporarily and permanently. These impacts to parks and park visitors will need to be addressed in the future planning/EIS steps.

Alternative 125 will have physical (land related) impacts in addition to those temporary and permanent impacts listed above. The level of detail provided in this Tier 1 EIS is insufficient to identify and analyze those impacts properly. Further detailed information and analysis will be expected in subsequent EIS Tiers as this project progresses.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the conceptual designs for the prospective corridors for Base, 90A, 90B, 110 and 125 Alternatives. In the Tier 1 FEIS, noise and vibration are addressed in Section 4.21, and visual impacts are addressed in Section 4.17. Air quality impacts are addressed in Section 4.19, and greenhouse gas emissions are addressed in 4.20. Tier 2 will further define the different supporting improvements that will require further analysis as the program moves to design and construction. A more detailed analysis will be performed in the pre-construction phase of each improvement. Alternative 125 is not being advanced for further consideration. In Tier 2, the analysis will address the extent of direct impacts (both temporary and permanent) to parklands of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B).
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Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-1	On page 2-9 (Section 2.2.1), please note that in addition to the PDCTC, the Poughkeepsie-Newburgh Middletown, NY MSA is also served by the Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC).
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the Tier 1 FEIS.

Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-2	The 2035 population projection for Dutchess County (page 4-16) seems aggressive. The County's population grew by 52,000 during the 30-years from 1980-2010--a period of relatively strong economic growth, larger household sizes, and greater amounts of developable land when compared to current conditions. Yet, the project shows a growth of 61,000 from 2010-2035, which is a shorter time period that has begun with modest economic growth, smaller household sizes, and more constrained land.
Response	The population growth projections for Dutchess County in the Tier 1 FEIS for the period from 2010 to 2035 were reviewed and are consistent with the population projections available from the Dutchess County Planning and Development Department and provided through the PCTC. These projections forecasted an increase of approximately 40,000 between 2010 and 2025, which would correlate to an even greater increase in 2035.

Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-3	For Exhibit 4-6 (page 4-17), please note that the Census Bureau has corrected the 2010 Census data for the City of Poughkeepsie. The correct 2010 population equals 31,045, which is an increase of 995 or 3.3 percent from the 2006 estimate.
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.

Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-4	On page 4-20 (Section 4.3.3), the description of the City of Poughkeepsie as the "de facto center" of the Hudson Valley should be rephrased as "the City and Town of Poughkeepsie," since the Town has a higher population than the City (45,032 compared to 31,045) and the referenced IBM facility is actually located in the Town of Poughkeepsie--the Town is also home to Marist and Vassar colleges, Dutchess Community College, Saint Francis Hospital, and a regional shopping mall. It should also be noted that the cities of Middletown and Newburgh have comparable population totals to the City of Poughkeepsie and are centers in their own right.
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.

Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-5	Please correct the minor typographical error in Exhibit 4-18 (page 4-101), under the column for LWRP Municipalities: "Poughkeepsie (T)."
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-6	For Exhibits 4-30 (page 4-178) and 4-60 (page 4-265), please note that Quiet Cove Park is a Dutchess County Park and should instead be listed under Exhibits 4-32 (page 4-180) and 4-62 (page 4-267).
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-7	As indicated in Section 4.21.4 (Environmental Consequences), potential noise impacts will occur under all of the alternatives for Segments 1-4 (New York City through Schenectady), which includes the length of Dutchess County. We therefore request that a detailed noise and vibration analysis be conducted as part of any subsequent Tier 2 study for affected communities within Dutchess County. Special consideration should be made for high-density residential areas and national/state historic sites and parks along the corridor (e.g., Franklin D Roosevelt National Historic Site).
Response	Thank you for your comment pointing out the need for further Tier 2 studies noise and vibration analysis, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and national and state historic sites and parks along the corridor. In Tier 2, the environmental studies required will include analysis of noise and vibration, as appropriate.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-8	Please note that the PDCTC approved a new Metropolitan Transportation Plan, titled Moving Dutchess, on November 18, 2011, which supersedes the referenced plan on page 7 of References. Moving Dutchess is correctly referenced in Appendix G (page G-15).
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-9	Under Appendix B (Ridership and Revenue Forecasting), the 2035 population projection for Dutchess County (page B-24) appears aggressive, considering historic growth trends.

Response	Your comment discussing future population growth has been reviewed and the Tier 1 FEIS is reporting a conservative population growth. The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council projections for Dutchess County indicate an increase in population of 78,656 from 2010 to 2035, which is higher than the Tier 1 FEIS projection of 61,000 for the same time period.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-10	Under Appendix G (Existing Conditions Supporting Documentation) (page G-2), we request that the hamlets of New Hamburg (Town of Poughkeepsie) and Rhinecliff (Town of Rhinebeck), both located along the Hudson River, also be listed as communities within the Empire Corridor study area.
Response	The section of the Tier 1 FEIS document you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-11	As mentioned earlier, the Census Bureau corrected the 2010 population for the City of Poughkeepsie (31,050), which may lower its ranking among northern Hudson Valley communities (page G-19).
Response	Your comment discussing future population growth has been reviewed. The section of the Tier 1 FEIS you noted in your comment has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to this section of the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-12	On page G-24, under "Poughkeepsie," please note that the Walkway Over the Hudson elevator at Upper Landing Park will be completed in spring 2014. Also, the number of visitors to the Walkway, which opened in fall 2009, ranges from 500,000-700,000 annually, making the referenced "750,000 since inception" seem low.
Response	The correction you noted in your comment for the Tier 1 FEIS has been reviewed, and the appropriate revisions have been made to the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-13	On page G-37 (second paragraph), please note that Staatsburg is a hamlet located in the Town of Hyde Park.
Response	The correction you noted in your comment for the Tier 1 FEIS has been reviewed and the appropriate revisions have been made to the document.
Commenter	Debald, Mark, Transportation Program Administrator, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Comment R-1-14	Under Appendix I (Agency Correspondence), the incorporated Village of Tivoli should be included on the list communities for Dutchess County (page I-437), even though it is not a city or town. In general, all affected villages in the State should be included in Appendix I.

Response	Appendix I contains a record of agency correspondence, and the list of communities was appended to the agency correspondence. Since this list is part of the actual correspondence record, it is not appropriate to change this list. Exhibit G-26, Counties, Cities/Towns, and Villages within the APEs, in Appendix G shows the Village of Tivoli in Dutchess County.
Commenter	Eaby, P.G., Todd D., Manager, Project Review, Susquehanna River Basin Commission
Comment R-2-1	We have reviewed the following projects in question [High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Pennsylvania Station, New York City to Niagara Falls Station, Niagara Falls, NY] and have no comments.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and your statement advising that the commission has no comments on the document.
Commenter	Sutter, Jr., Charles J., Planner, Westchester County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Comment R-3-1	The primary beneficiary of this HSR program is intercity passenger rail service within the State of New York. This is an objective which Westchester County supports. At the same time, Metro-North Railroad's Hudson Line is an important travel conduit for a significant number of Westchester County residents who commute daily to Mid-town and Lower Manhattan. In 2012, the last year for which figures are available, the Hudson Line provided 15.9 million one way trips. To support this level of ridership, the freight operations of CSX Transportation and Canadian Pacific Railway are restricted on the Hudson Line to evening and nighttime operations. The remainder of the time the Hudson Line is restricted to commuter passenger train operations and 13 Amtrak limited stop intercity trains. Projections through 2035 indicate that freight traffic will continue to increase and forecasts for the Metro-North's Hudson Line through 2020 indicate projected increases of 28 percent. Certain capital improvements are proposed that are of interest to Westchester County. They include: Adding a second track between MP 9 and MP 13 (including the Spuyten Duyvil Movable Bridge), Adding a new Tarrytown pocket track to support Metro-North turn backs without delaying Empire Corridor Service, Add a new signal system between Croton-Harmon and the Poughkeepsie stations-MP 32.8 to MP 75.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Improving passenger rail service and maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor is the goal for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The projects referenced in your comment to improve operations of both Amtrak and Metro-North Railroad passenger trains between New York City and Albany or Poughkeepsie in the Hudson Valley have been included in the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, (and are part of Alternative 90A, a component of all of the Build Alternatives). The Preferred Alternative includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding a second track between MP 9 and MP 13 (including the Spuyten Duyvil Movable Bridge) • Adding an additional "overtake" track between CP53 and New Hamburg in the Hudson Highlands • Adding a new Tarrytown pocket track to support Metro-North turn backs without delaying Empire Corridor Service, • Add a new signal system between Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie stations-MP 32.8 to MP 75. • Upgrading of Track 3 in between CP72 and CP75 in the Poughkeepsie area with

improvements to the Metro North Railroad yard facilities.

Commenter **Sutter, Jr., Charles J., Planner, Westchester County Department of Public Works and Transportation**

Comment R-3-2 Westchester County generally supports increased intercity traffic as long as no detrimental impact, including financial, results on the predominant commuter rail service.

Response The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service, and passenger amenities. The program will improve passenger operations for both intercity and commuter rail service and will not have any detrimental impacts on existing or future commuter service.

Commenter **Branton, Donn E., Chair, Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board**

Comment R-4-1 Although the Board is supportive of improving the rail infrastructure in New York State, it cannot support the construction of a new rail corridor as proposed by Alternative 125. The impact on farmers and farmland, as well as the rural communities along this new corridor would not be justified by the estimated cost and proposed increased level of service of this new alignment. It is the opinion of the Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board that the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration should concentrate its efforts on improving the level of service within the existing corridor as is proposed by the other alternatives in the DEIS. Any such improvements, however, should take into consideration the needs of farmers that work the lands near the corridor. For example, the decision to eliminate or improve at-grade crossings should be done in consultation with County and local highway superintendents and the farming community.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your comments regarding potential impacts to farmlands and elimination of at-grade crossings in part pertain to Alternative 125, which has been dismissed from further consideration. Alternative 90B along the existing corridor has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. NYSDOT and the FRA will address treatment at specific at-grade crossings during final design.

Commenter **Morse, Hal, Executive Director, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council**

Comment R-5-1 I am Hal Morse, Executive Director of Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Buffalo-Niagara Region.

The twenty-year plan for this initiative would suggest we need to fully consider where we want our state to be in and how this service can help create that future in incremental steps together. There may be series of financial challenges during the phase as well as technology changes involving the shifts, putting corporations robust phase projects and response to the vision would help us to achieve our long-term objectives.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor program. The selection of the Preferred Alternative considered options for a future vision for New York State with respect to the future Empire Corridor passenger rail service. Incremental improvements will occur during the course of constructing the different components of the Preferred Alternative. In the construction of the supporting segments for Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, these individual projects could begin conferring travel benefits upon completion of each segment. Full program benefits would be achieved with the completion of all of the segments along the route. The program and implementation will be a collaborative effort and evaluate new technology and a focus on many supporting industries in New York State.
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Commenter	Morse, Hal, Executive Director, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council
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Comment R-5-2	<p>I also participate in the Federal Highway Administrative Mega regions initiative. The high speed rail service could possibly consider not so much as New York City and Niagara Falls but rather connecting two huge mega regions and also productivity within each of the two so to provide New York and Ontario crossing efficiency and improve rail services are noted and by national transportation strategy commissioned by the government in the last decade.</p> <p>Some basic services exist in New York City to Toronto, commuter rail service has seen some extensions to Niagara Falls, Ontario. Some service alternatives to Toronto were analyzed by amateur act, and the study they performed for the last decade also. Productivity within and between mega regions is a critical component of their ability to perform in a global level. This is well summarized by the high speed rail coalition documents in 2009.</p>
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Response	Thank you for your comment on the opportunities along the Empire Corridor for connections from Buffalo to Toronto. Currently the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Suggestions and recommendations by the public for improvements to the service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan and selection of the Preferred Alternative.
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Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-1	Also, while the study is for the Empire Corridor and the Empire Corridor technically terminates at Niagara Falls, the reality is the Maple Leaf is co-terminus with the Empire Corridor for all but the last 82 miles terminating at Union Station in Toronto, Canada. The benefit to the Empire Corridor for this short, but important, connection is missing from this TIER 1 analysis. At a minimum, a reference should be added.
Response	The scope of the Tier 1 EIS as approved by the FRA focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York. The ridership forecasts do not account for trips into Canada and therefore are conservative. The scope of the program improvements does not extend beyond New York State, but improvements to Empire Corridor service would also benefit trips into Canada and the Maple Leaf service.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-2	Likewise, there was no mention of a potential Buffalo Niagara Falls Express/Commuter Service. This limited service route was identified in the 2009 State Rail Plan. Again, a reference for this proposal should have been given.
Response	The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, as approved by the FRA, is focused on improving rail service along the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. Given the conceptual nature of the Tier 1 evaluation, the Tier 1 EIS does not reference all other commuter rail initiatives underway, but Tier 2 studies may address in more detail coordination with other commuter rail studies, as appropriate.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-3	The City of Niagara Falls strongly supports the purpose and intent of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program without reservation. The City of Niagara Falls is already a committed partner in developing the HSR system in New York, investing over \$5 million over the last decade to enhance the Empire Corridor's anchor station and re-invigorate the international gateway linking the largest Metro area in Canada with the largest Metro area in the USA. Bringing high-speed rail to New York State is or should be one of the State's most important long-range transportation priorities. At a minimum, the final recommendations of this Program must aim to: achieve higher passenger train speeds across the Empire Corridor; improve reliability, travel times, service frequency, and passenger amenities, and significantly increasing ridership, or risk failure.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the program of improvements identified (Alternative 90B) as the Preferred Alternative. In your comments, you identify many of the objectives outlined in the Tier 1 FEIS to improve intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-4	Therefore, the City of Niagara Falls supports the highest speed option that is deliverable within the shortest time and that will support the largest increase in service frequency (and ridership) across the State—but especially west of Albany.
Response	The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program recognizes the importance of trip times, and the FRA and NYSDOT have considered improvements to passenger rail service and their implementation times in identifying the Preferred Alternative. The Service Development

Plan for the Preferred Alternative describes the general implementation sequence of the many projects that make up the Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-5	Currently, cities west of Albany have low boardings due to limited frequency, slow travel time, and poor reliability. System Ridership will increase the most if implementing a 125MPH option. Unfortunately, the cost and time required for implementation leave it less than the optimal choice at this time for New York State. The optimal choice would seem to be establishing 110 MPH as the new base as soon as possible. In addition to the clear costs/benefit analysis supporting the 110MPH Alternative, there is also the projections for economic development in cities with stations. Economic growth in New York is linked to greater mobility and better land use.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the importance on the length of time necessary to achieve travel benefits, which would be the longest for Alternative 125 among the Build Alternatives considered. Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration. Although you indicate a preference for Alternative 110, Alternatives 90B and 110 have similar performance characteristics. Alternative 90B has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, as it balances performance characteristics with costs and impacts.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-6	Alternative 125MPH, an electrified, two-track, grade-separated 283-mile high-speed rail corridor between Albany/Rensselaer and a yet undetermined HSR Buffalo station should be the clear expectation and promise beyond the planning horizon of this study but is not an optimal starting point.
Response	Your comments regarding Alternative 125 have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative, as addressed above.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-7	'Program's' projected schedule for implementation. It is too long and too slow to show any noticeable benefit. Who wants to wait for 25 years to get a somewhat faster train to Albany? This is simply an untenable opening proposal. It must change.
Response	Individual project improvements will become available during the course of constructing the different components of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will begin conferring travel benefits within 2-5 years of the start of construction. Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration, and a major drawback was that it would not confer benefits until completion of the first major segment, around 15 years after the start of construction or later. The completion of the different program components and implementation of service initiatives were a focus in the development of the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	DeSantis, Thomas, Senior Planner, City of Niagara Falls
Comment L-1-8	Instead of four 5-year construction intervals, begin at both ends of the Corridor simultaneously and double the amount of construction in the first two 5-year construction intervals. The proposed program scheduling, used in the TIER 1, makes only marginal improvements in service in four 5-year steps, and will take 20-25 years to complete (~\$1.75B each four 5-yr intervals). The schedule as proposed cannot become the recommended schedule. Better to make most of the improvements and deliver most of the results in two 5-year cycles of construction, then complete the remaining work over the next

five years and complete the entire program in 15 years—not twenty or more (~\$2.65B each two 5-yr interval, plus \$1.75 per one 5-yr interval).

Response The program schedule and implementation were a consideration in identifying the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B). Since 90B requires less right-of-way acquisition than Alternatives 110 and 125, it can be implemented more quickly and at less expense. Program phasing and service initiatives are a focus of the Service Development Plan.

Commenter **Moore, Charles E., Director, City of Rensselaer Planning and Development Agency**

Comment L-2-1 For nearly a half a century a cantilevered walkway on the south side of the Livingston Avenue Bridge made it possible for pedestrians and bicyclists to easily and safely cross the Hudson River between Rensselaer and Albany. New York State's High Speed Rail investment, and replacement of this historic crossing, will provide an opportunity to replace the walkway in a cost-effective and timely manner. Replacement of the Walkway should be identified in each and every alternative scenario outlined by the Empire Corridor Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Response The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. The FRA and NYSDOT are currently engaged in this work including preliminary engineering and environmental analysis. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website:
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge>.

Commenter **Moore, Charles E., Director, City of Rensselaer Planning and Development Agency**

Comment L-2-2 Located in the heart of the region a walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge is critical for economic development and quality of life investments needed to sustain a 21st century workforce. Toward that end, the City of Rensselaer has made significant efforts to develop its waterfront to attract tourists, residents, and commercial enterprise. We are working to build a waterfront trail and boardwalk supported with NYS Department of State funds and are actively applying for grants to complete the trail north of the Livingston Bridge. Numerous studies have planned a trail following the river north of the City of Troy. The City of Rensselaer's Common Council passed a resolution in support of restored Bicycle and Pedestrian accommodations on a rebuilt Livingston Avenue Bridge in February of 2012. The not for profit Parks and Trails New York has a good summary of many studies funded with local government, state and federal dollars, that have included recommendations of a rehabilitated walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. Please ensure that the Empire Corridor Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement fully acknowledge the decade of planning and development of trails on the Rensselaer side of the River and the critical role the Walkway plays in quality of life and livability for the capital region.

Response The Tier 1 FEIS for the Empire Corridor Program will note the numerous comments received regarding the Livingston Avenue Bridge and the detailed analysis this project will undergo to select the best alternative for this project. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project, please visit the LAB project website:
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/projects/livingstonavebridge>.

Commenter **Phillips, Jr., Howard T., Supervisor, Town of Haverstraw**

Comment My only comment is that there continues to be a need for high speed rail and improvements

L-3-1	to our transportation infrastructure. In that light, I firmly support the proposed system improvement alternatives to intercity passenger rail services along the 463-mile Empire Corridor. Such improvements will translate into more people utilizing the rail system, more destination alternatives and support of greater economic development.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which were considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting a program of improvements (the Preferred Alternative) to advance into Tier 2.
Commenter	McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division
Comment L-4-1	The environmental review should include a transportation analysis of new auto, taxi, and pedestrians trips generated by each build alternative and for each build year, so that the potential traffic and other impacts to the streets and sidewalks surrounding Penn Station and the Bronx Station can be evaluated. For the build years 2018 and 2035 and for each alternative, the environmental review should include a breakdown of projected ridership by weekday, peak hour, off-peak hour, weekend, and season. the travel demand assumptions should include: projected vehicle and pedestrian trip generation - trip origin and destination; geographical distribution of where riders are originating; modal split; temporal distribution; vehicle occupancy; the station's access points (entrances and exits) to be affected by the increase in ridership; affected sidewalks, crosswalks, and corners; Levels-of-Service projection for each pedestrian element; and pedestrian/rider flow diagrams.
Response	Detailed traffic modeling would be performed as part of Tier 2 environmental analysis required for the Preferred Alternative, as appropriate.
Commenter	McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division
Comment L-4-2	the environmental review should address the following specific impacts: 1. Safety Impacts. The environmental review should include a safety assessment of the impacts to Penn Station and Bronx Station of increased ridership. 2. Cumulative Development Impacts. The environmental review should assess the effects of surrounding development at Penn Station, including 15 Penn Plaza (the Pennsylvania Hotel site), the relocation of Madison Square Garden, and the East Midtown Rezoning. 3. Cumulative Transportation Impacts. The environmental review should assess the effects of future transportation improvements in and around Penn Station, including the Hudson Yards/#7 Subway Extension, the Western Rail Yards, Moynihan Station, the Metro-North Penn Station Access Project, the Gateway Project, and the potential Northeast Corridor improvements.
Response	The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Section 4.24 and Appendix G.21 address indirect and cumulative impacts. Because this is a Tier 1 assessment, the Tier 1 FEIS does not evaluate the site-specific needs at each of the corridor stations, such as Penn Station. These may be addressed, as appropriate, in either the Tier 2 studies or as part of the individual station projects.
Commenter	McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division
Comment	The DEIS includes as a component of all build alternatives the installation of approximately

L-4-3 four miles of second track near and across the Spuyten Duyvil Bridge. This installation would occur adjacent to New York City Department of Parks and Recreation ("Parks Department") property--specifically, Inwood Hill Park, Riverdale Park, and potentially portions of Fort Washington Park. A brief description of the Spuyten Duyvil improvement is contained in a Capital Improvement Project Fact Sheet in the 2005 Plan, but is not included in the DEIS.

The potential impacts on adjacent park property must be evaluated in the environmental review. In particular, the following impacts must be addressed:

1. Pedestrian Bridge/Greenway Impacts. The environmental review should indicate whether the installation of additional track in this section or any proposed changes in service would require replacement or modification of any existing pedestrian bridges. If extensive reconstruction is involved, the Spuyten Duyvil Bridge work should be considered as a potential opportunity for accommodating multiple transportation modes (e.g., a bike path) and expanding the greenway network.

2. Rock or Tree Removal Impacts. The environmental review should identify whether the installation of additional track or the modification of the Spuyten Duyvil Bridge would require rock outcrop removal in the sections near Inwood Hill Park and/or Fort Washington Park.

3. Construction Impacts. The environmental review should identify the type, intensity, and duration of construction activities necessary to install this segment of track, to evaluate construction impacts on adjacent park property.

Response The pre-construction analysis for improvements to the Empire Corridor at Spuyten Duyvil would be conducted as part of Tier 2, and will take into consideration impacts on adjacent parks, before proceeding with any improvements to the tracks and infrastructure along the Amtrak Empire Connection. It is anticipated that any improvements would be strictly limited to within the existing railroad right-of-way, and would include reinstallation of tracks.

Commenter **McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division**

Comment **L-4-4** The Catskill and Delaware Aqueducts are essential components of the drinking water supply system for the City and numerous upstate communities. Construction of a third track from New Hamburg to Cold Spring, as proposed in all build alternatives, could result in impacts to the Hudson River Pumping Station ("HRPS") intake; the Delaware Aqueduct Shaft 6 dewatering conduit; the Catskill Aqueduct Hudson River Pressure Tunnel ("HRPT"); and the Hudson River Drainage Chamber ("HRDC"). Potential impacts which must be addressed include:

1. Construction Impacts. Construction work for the third track, including potential blasting of the Breakneck Ridge to widen the existing Breakneck Tunnel, may have damaging impacts to the HRPT and HRDC. These facilities' buildings and some of their equipment are nearly 100 years old. Moreover, construction activities may require relocation or disturbance of the exterior facility appurtenances which are necessary to the HRDC's function.

2. Ingress and Egress Impacts. Construction of the third track will impede access across the tracks to the HRDC and the Shaft 6 outfall for maintenance and normal operations.

3. Land Use Impacts. The construction of the third track will include an increase in the width of the railbed. This will likely extend outside of the existing right-of-way and encroach on City lands. The lands in and around the HRDC and the HRPS are limited in size for their

current operational and maintenance requirements. Any impairment or loss of City lands in and around these and other City assets in the watershed would likely impact operations, and may have a severe impact on the City water supply.

Response Impacts would be evaluated in the pre-construction phase, however, the Breakneck Mountain Tunnel consists of twin bores that can accommodate four tracks, and it should not be necessary to incur any significant disturbance of the mountain or surrounding area. Any additional tracks would be contained within the existing right-of-way, which once supported a four track right-of-way between Garrison and Barrytown a distance of 46 miles.

Commenter **McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division**

Comment L-4-5 Accurate Freight Volumes for Impact Analysis. Section ES-2.1 states that "Empire Corridor South has . . . limited freight operations of approximately four trains a day." Section 2.5, Freight Operations, states that "freight service on the Hudson Line consists of through freight limited to a nighttime window and several locals (four) per day." However, freight rail activity into and through New York City is increasing. Therefore, the environmental review should clarify that the freight traffic volumes assigned to the Empire Corridor South throughout the DEIS reflect current, 2014 volumes, and that these estimates incorporate increases in volume (for example, increases associated with the SWMP) that are anticipated in the near future.

Response The Tier 1 FEIS includes operation simulations and supporting modeling that accounted for future growth of freight traffic.

Commenter **McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division**

Comment L-4-6 Incorporating Infrastructure Upgrades into the Analysis. The Bronx's Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market ("HPTPM") currently receives over 2,000 loaded, time sensitive produce cars annually via the Hudson Line. Intermodal service is currently prohibited on the Hudson Line due to conflicts with the third rail and the air draft restrictions of many bridges along the line. However, long-term redevelopment plans for HPTPM include major improvements to its rail facilities, including additional sidings, cross-docking platforms, and the capacity to accept unit trains. Please ensure that all freight projections include capacity for increased freight movements to HPTPM via the Hudson Line, including the possibility of handling unit trains bound for HPTPM on the Hudson Line. When considering specific infrastructure upgrades, the environmental review should account for improvements to facilitate freight mobility of industry-standard, double-stack container railcars, including where appropriate: 1) increasing the height of bridges to 22 feet, thereby eliminating existing air draft restrictions, and 2) adjusting the horizontal clearances to accommodate national-standard intermodal well cars.

Response Thank you for your comments on the importance of preserving freight rail traffic capabilities to New York City and the Hunt's Point Terminal Produce Market. The High Speed Rail Program focused both on improving passenger train operations and minimizing the impact of the supporting projects on freight train operations. Several of the projects that are part of improving rail operations on the Hudson Line focus on reducing conflicts between passenger trains and freight movements. As the supporting projects are moved forward, preserving and improving existing overhead and horizontal clearances will be part of the design criteria. It will be a critical part of all new projects to examine potential opportunities to improve the horizontal and vertical clearances for freight on the Hudson Line. Adding greater clearances on the route may be challenged by earlier station construction projects on the Metro-North Railroad area of the route, where high-level platforms in stations or the electric traction third rail system may prevent the movement of freight cars that exceed the current clearance limitations on the route. Most of the new

overhead bridges and pedestrian walkways on the route have been built to the 22-foot clearance as you note in your comment.

Commenter **McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division**

Comment L-4-7 Rescheduling Effort from the 2005 Plan. The 2005 Plan identified as part of its preferred scenario a "'clean slate' rescheduling effort" for the Hudson corridor, See 2005 Plan, Sections 2.3.2--2.3.3. The DEIS incorporates a suite of capital improvements from the 2005 Plan into its build alternatives, but does not appear to reference the rescheduling. This should be clarified through the environmental review.

Response The scheduling of supporting projects will be further refined as the FRA and NYSDOT advance the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, as part of future Tier 2 studies.

Commenter **McCamphill, Amy, NYC Law Department, Environmental Law Division**

Comment L-4-8 Alternatives Analysis. Given the higher capital cost of Alternative 110 compared to Alternative 90B (\$6.25 billion compared to \$5.58 billion, see DEIS Exhibit 6-9), along with the higher operating cost (\$173 million annual compared to \$171 annual, see id.), and the small, arguably negligible differences in operational performance between these two alternatives, the environmental review should more clearly explain the revenue and cost-benefit analyses supporting its conclusion that Alternative 110 is the most cost-effective alternative. DEIS 6-14.

Response The reason Alternative 110 is deemed "most cost-effective" is because it would have the lowest operation subsidy per rider, approximately \$9 per rider vs. approx. \$12 per rider for the next lowest alternative, Alternative 90B. Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative, due to its lower cost, similar operational characteristics, and lower impacts compared to Alternative 110.

Commenter **Colacino, Dick, Supervisor, Town of Arcadia**

Comment L-5-1 My intention is to receive your input and support for the goal of finally bringing passenger rail service to Wayne County. Studies have already been completed which clearly show that adding a station here would generate enough ridership to meet the criteria set forth by both Amtrak and the N.Y. State DOT. The study, completed in 2006 was done specifically for Lyons, N.Y., which is only six miles away from Newark, N.Y., which is located in the Town of Arcadia. While I have supported the initiative in Lyons, the proposal has been delayed for over twenty three years for a multitude of reasons or excuses. Quite frankly, twenty three years is way too long to wait for such a valuable asset for our citizens and visitors to the Finger Lakes Region. In fact, since the 2006 study, various factors have changed which would logically add considerably to the earlier ridership projections. One major factor is our economy and the price of gasoline which has skyrocketed since that time. Our area has also become a vibrant tourist destination with the increasing popularity of the Finger Lakes Wine Trail as well as water sports and relaxing on our beautiful and pristine lakes. Skiing, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, shopping and dining are also very popular in the region along with the Erie Canal and other historic sites. I am prepared to propose an initiative to simply move the stop a short distance to Newark, which would likely have the same ridership or even more than in Lyons due to our central location and proximity to lodging and services. Please keep in mind that the area between Rochester and Syracuse is the longest stretch on the system from New York City to Niagara Falls without a stop.

Response The Tier 1 EIS for the Empire Corridor evaluated a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system

wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 FEIS considers using the existing stations in each of the alternatives at this time; the inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.

Commenter **Colacino, Dick, Supervisor, Town of Arcadia**

Comment
L-5-2 Would like a passenger station in Newark, Wayne County. This is an area of NY State with the longest distance between two stations – Rochester and Syracuse – a ridership study a few years ago in Wayne County supports the stop, even if it would stop twice per day in both directions.

Response Currently, the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS describe the stations that will be served in each option. Additional stations along the route could be considered in the future. The addition of stations to the intercity rail service route would require additional criteria to be met including design, operations, ridership and revenue criteria. Comments from agencies and the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting a program of improvements to advance into Tier 2.

Commenter **Colacino, Dick, Supervisor, Town of Arcadia**

Comment
L-5-3 Wayne County has been looking for a train station for twenty-four years and I would like to see a train station built in Wayne County from the Town of Arcadia to the Village of Newark. It is the population hub of Wayne County. I'd like to say that the longest distance between two stations is Rochester and Syracuse. That's one reason why I would like to see it built there. We have land along the current railroad tracks. I'm not sure if it would be the same routes that they would be using for the new passenger rail, but hopefully it will be.

I'd like to say that it would bring hundreds or thousands of people to the Finger Lakes area. Right now, as you know, we have over two hundred wineries.

Response Comments from local officials have been considered as part of the Tier 1 DEIS review process. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program evaluated a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system-wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 FEIS considers using the existing stations for each of the alternatives. Your comment on inclusion of an additional station at Newark is noted. Adding new stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of studies for expanding service in the future.

Commenter **Colacino, Dick, Supervisor, Town of Arcadia**

Comment
L-5-4 I would like to also make a comment that I don't think that 105-mile-an-hour speed is High Speed Rail.

Response The operating speeds discussed in the Tier 1 EIS are consistent with the speed thresholds and requirements for different classes of track for high speed rail operations outlined by the Federal Rail Administration (FRA). The FRA characterizes high-speed rail with speeds in the range of 90 to 125 mph as "Regional High-Speed Rail" with the objective to serve mid-sized urban areas on dedicated or shared track.

Commenter **Cunningham, Donald, Town Board Supervisor, Town of Bergen**

Comment
L-6-1 Town of Bergen submits this letter objecting to the proposed project based on the following;

1. The Town of Bergen is directly impacted by the proposed routes for this system with one of the routes completely destroying a linear park with access to a nature center and negatively impacting a National Natural Landmark known as the Bergen Swamp. The other alternative route, along existing rail, cuts directly through our Village increasing safety concerns for motorists and community members.

Response The Tier 1 EIS documents in several sections that the conceptual alignment of Alternative 125 would cross through the Bergen Swamp (e.g. pages 4-93 and 4-132). Although Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration, the alignment used for the Tier 1 EIS analysis is conceptual in nature and only one of several possible alignments that could have been used if NYSDOT and FRA had selected Alternative 125 as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would follow along the existing railroad alignment, which is situated at least two miles south of the Bergen Swamp National Natural Landmark and would not impinge on the swamp itself.

Commenter **Cunningham, Donald, Town Board Supervisor, Town of Bergen**

Comment L-6-2 2. With consideration to the financial investment this program will require the Town of Bergen finds it more prudent to direct funds towards repairs and improvements of existing roads and bridges which have been neglected and underfunded.

3. The Bergen Town Board believes that if a High Speed Rail system was to be successful and prosperous it would be considered, facilitated, and constructed by the private sector. Unfortunately passenger rail has notoriously been unprofitable and a project of this nature would be a waste of valuable taxpayer dollars that could be better utilized improving the existing transportation infrastructure.

Response Comments from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of a program of improvements to be carried into Tier 2. The Preferred Alternative was chosen to balance various considerations of concern to the public, such as performance characteristics, costs, and impacts.

Commenter **Hotaling, James A., Town Supervisor, Town of Brutus**

Comment L-7-1 The Brutus Town Board would like to express their interest in establishing a station or hub for the potential high speed rail in our community. Recently, The Town of Brutus and Village of Weedsport approved a Comprehensive Plan that encompasses both communities and one of the objectives is to study the feasibility of developing a commuter rail between Rochester and Syracuse that would pass through the Town of Brutus/Village of Weedsport. Our communities are situated in the center of Cayuga County and are easily accessible from the north/south by using State Route 34 and east/west using State Route 34. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss a potential station/hub in our area.

Response Comments from local officials have been considered in the Tier 1 DEIS review process. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program evaluated a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 EIS considers using the existing stations for each of the alternatives. Your comment on the inclusion of an additional station at Weedsport is noted. Adding new stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of studies for expanding service in the future.

Commenter **Mahan, Paula A., Town Supervisor, Town of Colonie**

Comment We all concur that we have fundamental concerns about the safety of the three grade level

L-8-1	<p>rail crossings in Town in the event of high-speed rail traffic. We do not believe the crossings as currently configured would provide the necessary degree of safety for drivers or pedestrians.</p> <p>Several years ago there were discussions about building bridges to carry traffic above the tracks, especially at the heavily trafficked Lincoln Avenue crossing. Perhaps this is an option that can be considered going forward.</p>
Response	<p>As part of the Base Alternative, improvements to grade level rail crossing gates that prevent motor vehicle drivers from attempting to drive around the gates and other warning device systems were to be used in the project limits of the Albany – Schenectady Double Track project between MP 143.2 to MP 160.3, which extends through the Town of Colonie. between approximately MP 151 and MP 154. The Tier 1 EIS anticipates that grade crossing improvements will be necessary for each of the Build Alternatives. The details of these improvements would be developed in Tier 2 for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B). Comments from the public and community officials, relating to the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right-of-way, were an important consideration for FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the program of improvements (Preferred Alternative).</p>
Commenter	Mahan, Paula A., Town Supervisor, Town of Colonie
Comment L-8-2	<p>Furthermore, if high speed passenger trains are to travel through the corridor, we feel additional studies need to be done regarding noise, sight, or fuel pollution relative to the propulsion system to be utilized.</p>
Response	<p>NYSDOT and the FRA examined the potential for noise, visual, and air quality impacts for the program as documented in the Tier 1 EIS. The Tier 1 EIS evaluated potential noise impacts of the proposed program improvements and concluded that the program would not increase noise levels over the Base Alternative in the corridor between New York City and Schenectady.</p> <p>In the Town of Colonie, the program will occur within an existing railroad corridor and will have no significant visual changes to the character of the rail line.</p> <p>The air quality analysis done for this program shows that no significant adverse air quality impacts are projected. Alternative 90B (the Preferred Alternative) would result in a reduction of approximately 33,000 metric tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions. Although the changes are small in the regional context, the net result is a reduction in all pollutants other than NO_x. The projected increase in NO_x emissions and decrease in VOC emissions represent less than 0.3 percent of emissions in each area (varies by region). The Preferred Alternative will result in a net reduction of 61 tons per year of CO in the New York-New Jersey-Long Island non-attainment area (for 8-hour ozone), with smaller reductions on VOCs (between 1.8 to 4 tons in the five cities analyzed).</p>
Commenter	Mahan, Paula A., Town Supervisor, Town of Colonie
Comment L-8-3	<p>But regardless of the merits of the proposed rail enhancements, the safety of Colonie residents must remain my primary concern.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding public safety. For NYSDOT and the FRA, public safety is one of the highest priorities. In advancing the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) in Tier 2, the program will be designed and constructed to the appropriate safety standards. Section 2.6 and Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS address safety considerations and state that further evaluation of grade crossings will be conducted in Tier 2, when a Preferred Alternative is advanced. These evaluations and further design studies to enhance or</p>

eliminate grade crossings will be performed in Tier 2 and final design.

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Commenter	Shavitz, Ian A., Oneida Indian Nation
Comment T-1-1	The [Oneida] Nation has significant concerns about the impacts that the Project could have on historic properties; resources of religious and cultural significance to the Nation; Nation lands; Nation economic enterprises; and the physical environment of the Nation's Reservation.
Response	The concerns of the Oneida Nation are noted and were considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative by NYSDOT and FRA.
Commenter	Shavitz, Ian A., Oneida Indian Nation
Comment T-1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * FRA's federal trust obligation mandates the protection of Nation resources and lands. * NYSDOT/FRA must protect Nation cultural resources. * NYSDOT/FRA must consider impacts to Nation Lands when planning the Project and selecting an alternative.
Response	If tribal interests may be potentially affected by the program, FRA and NYSDOT will continue to consult with the Oneida Nation, as appropriate, during the process of identifying significant cultural resources in the APE's and identifying measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any potential for adverse effects pursuant to Section 106 of NHPA, NEPA, and other applicable legislation.
Commenter	Shavitz, Ian A., Oneida Indian Nation
Comment T-1-3	NYSDOT/FRA must protect Atunyote Golf Course.
Response	The FRA and NYSDOT would like to thank the Oneida Indian Nation for their interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. We are aware of the importance of the Atunyote Golf Course to the Oneida Indian Nation. The Preferred Alternative for the program will follow the existing Empire Corridor rail alignment and will have no impact of the golf course or any lands of Oneida Indian Nation.
Commenter	Shavitz, Ian A., Oneida Indian Nation
Comment T-1-4	When considering performance objectives and environmental impacts, it becomes clear that NYSDOT/FRA should select Alternative 110.
Response	Comments of the Oneida Nation, regarding Alternative 110, were considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, similar to Alternative 110, will follow the existing rail corridor. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Shavitz, Ian A., Oneida Indian Nation

Comment T-1-5	<p>Alternative 125 is the only alternative that requires a new alignment, on a new right of way in the majority of the Empire Corridor West. This will result in a significant adverse effects and ramifications for the Oneida Nation, and therefore the Oneida Nation does not support NYSDOT/FRA selecting Alternative 125 for Tier 2 study.</p> <p>Alternative 125:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Has the greatest potential to destroy Nation cultural resources and historic properties. * Greatest impact on Nation Lands. * Maximum impact on the environment * Greatest Cost Implications <p>It is questionable whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can properly issue a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit for Alternative 125. Given the impacts on Oneida Nation Lands and resources, if NYSDOT/FRA selects the Alternative 125, the representative alignment should not be carried forward.</p> <p>Selecting Alternative 125:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Will have significant impacts on Oneida Nation cultural resources, trust land and economic enterprises. * Would require extensive archaeological surveys * Will cross soon to-be acquired Oneida Nation Trust Lands
Response	<p>The comments from the Oneida Nation were considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As documented in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 125 was dismissed in large part based on generally greater potential for impact than the other alternatives. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has provided FRA and NYSDOT with comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, if tribal interests may be potentially affected by the program, FRA and NYSDOT would continue consultation with the Oneida Indian Nation during Tier 2 level analyses.</p>
Commenter	Toth, MA, MS, Jay, Archeologist, Seneca Nation Tribe
Comment T-2-1	<p>Could you clarify for me how many new bridges and stations are planned for the Niagara Falls-Buffalo-Genesee section?</p> <p>We have worked with NYDOT on incorporating Seneca designs in to bridges and local waysides with Seneca cultural theme.</p> <p>We would be interested in seeing this done on this rail project for the bridges and stations. This concept would add to the tourism interests and reflect positively the history of the area.</p>
Response	<p>There are approximately 41 bridges on the Niagara Branch and three stations from Niagara Falls to Buffalo: Niagara Falls Station, Buffalo-Depew Station, and Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, which have all been reconstructed or modified since the publication of the Tier 1 DEIS. The Seneca Nation's desire to incorporate Seneca motifs into bridge and local wayside designs is noted. If tribal interests may be potentially affected by the program, FRA and NYSDOT would continue consultation with the Seneca Nation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the program progresses.</p>
Commenter	Hartley, Bonney, Assistant, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Comment T-3-1	<p>We are interested in staying a Section 106 consulting party specifically for the portions of the project from New York City to Schenectady, as this portion of the project is within our Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican area of interest.</p>
Response	<p>As program planning and environmental analyses progress at the Tier 2 level, if tribal interests may be potentially affected by the program, FRA and NYSDOT look forward to continuing consultation with the Stockbridge-Munsee to identify properties of significance to the Nation that may be affected by the program and to identify measures to avoid,</p>

minimize, or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

Commenter **Hartley, Bonney, Assistant, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribal Historic Preservation Office**

Comment
T-3-2 In reviewing the maps of the known sites where Native American cultural materials have been found in the APE, we have identified 11 that are of particular concern to us. However, the DEIS does not provide us with specific enough information on the project construction plans to determine the extent to which these sites risk being adversely effected by constructing in new soils, or if all the construction is occurring on already disturbed areas on the existing railway. As the project alternative is finalized and these detailed construction plans are better known, we will review and provide our determination.

Response The comments from the Oneida Nation were considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As documented in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 125 was dismissed in large part based on generally greater potential for impact than the other alternatives. As program planning and environmental analyses progress at the Tier 2 level, if tribal interests may be potentially affected by the program, FRA and NYSDOT will continue consultation with the Stockbridge-Munsee to identify properties of significance to the Nation that may be affected by the program and to identify measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

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Commenter	Goss, Raymond A., President, Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad, Inc.
Comment RR-1-1	The Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad wishes to express its support for the "Base Alternative" that has been presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in regards to the proposed development of a high-speed rail corridor across New York State. Of the options presented, this alternative would enable improvements to Amtrak's Empire Corridor without adversely impacting freight rail operations along the route. We therefore respectfully request your support of the "Base Alternative"
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered as part of the Tier 1 EIS review process. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will improve passenger rail service while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor. Alternative 90B would result in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Edwards, Gerard F., Area Representative Real Estate, Canadian Pacific / Delaware & Hudson
Comment RR-2-1	It is obvious from the report the 110 Alternative has the best benefit to cost ratio and should be the alternative pursued.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Compared to Alternative 110, Alternative 90B will involve lesser costs and impacts, with fewer property displacements, while also achieving the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035. As shown in Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would also result in the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains.
Commenter	Edwards, Gerard F., Area Representative Real Estate, Canadian Pacific / Delaware & Hudson
Comment RR-2-2	The study should include an evaluation of options for using the West Shore bypass around Rochester, between CP 359 and CP 382.
Response	Your comments suggesting the evaluation of the use of the West Shore Bypass around Rochester, provides some valuable input. The alternative route you suggest may provide some relief for freight train operations on the main route through Rochester. Your comments have been considered in the review process and the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will add additional trackage (third and fourth tracks) in this general area, but within the Empire Corridor, and the proposed designs will be further refined in the Tier 2 assessment.
Commenter	Edwards, Gerard F., Area Representative Real Estate, Canadian Pacific / Delaware & Hudson
Comment RR-2-3	The study should include an evaluation of the Lake Shore Route West of Buffalo, at least to Cleveland, Ohio, and possibly beyond.
Response	We appreciate your interest in reviewing the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and the idea of extending the study to continue west on the Lake Shore Route west of Buffalo. Currently, the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the alternatives along Empire Corridor that were outlined in the document.

Commenter	Edwards, Gerard F., Area Representative Real Estate, Canadian Pacific / Delaware & Hudson
Comment RR-2-4	Finally- on Page 2-7, the second sentence in the 5th paragraph does not accurately represent field conditions.
Response	Thank you for reviewing the accuracy of the description of trackage in the Tier 1 EIS document. The text in the final sentence was revised and expanded in the Tier 1 FEIS as follows; "West of Rochester at MP 372.2, the Rochester Subdivision continues west with a straight alignment and fairly level topography, which permits 79 mph for passenger trains operating from MP 372.2 to MP 435.4 (within the Buffalo Terminal Subdivision). The eastern limits of Frontier Yard are accessed at CP 434, which also permits movement to the Belt Subdivision, the primary freight train by-pass around the City of Buffalo and the route to the International Railroad Bridge connecting to Ontario, Canada. Passenger train operating speeds, west of MP 435.4 on the Buffalo Terminal Subdivision, are limited to a speed of 60 mph near Frontier Yard and then to 30 mph at MP 436.8. At CP 437, approaching the Niagara Subdivision, the passenger trains increase their maximum operating speed to 60 mph, once they clear the interlocking at CP 437, and then follow the governing speed restrictions for this subdivision."
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-1	<p>On May 28, 2010, CSXT and the State of New York entered into a Framework Agreement "concerning any implementation of high speed intercity passenger rail service in New York." Framework Agreement ¶ 2. The Agreement expressly acknowledged that CSXT, and CSXT alone, has "sole discretion" to determine the "use of its property." Id., ¶ 5. Among other things, New York agreed that CSXT, as the owner of the right-of-way, has total and complete authority to determine what constitutes safe rail operations on its own property. The Agreement specifically recognized CSXT's safety guidelines for passenger trains operating on its property, and stated that "in all circumstances CSXT shall have the right to make the final determination as to safe uses of its property." Id.</p> <p>The Agreement provided that "[i]n all cases, and notwithstanding any other provision of this Framework Agreement, CSXT will abide by legal standards and maintain sole discretion with respect to the safety and use of its property." Id.</p> <p>The Agreement also recognized that CSXT, and CSXT alone, has the right—and the fiduciary responsibility to its shareholders—to determine whether a proposed passenger rail line would jeopardize its business. To that end, the Agreement provided that "CSXT and New York acknowledge that CSXT, as a wholly-owned subsidiary of a public corporation, has the responsibility to solely determine the freight capacity that CSXT must retain to accommodate future operations." Id., ¶ 6.</p> <p>With regard to potential liability arising from passenger operations on its property, the Agreement provided that "New York acknowledges that if the [Empire Corridor] Projects are implemented, CSXT will require adequate protections from potential liability arising from the operation of passenger rail service, consistent with law and precedent." Id., ¶ 7. Finally, the Agreement expressly recognized that New York must bear the massive cost of land acquisition, as well as the cost of any diminishment in value of CSXT's property rights. The Agreement stated: "New York acknowledges that it has a legal and constitutional obligation to justly compensate CSXT for any of its property rights acquired or used by New York, as well as for any diminishment in value of those rights to the extent permitted by law." Id., ¶ 8. The Agreement further recognized the considerable value of the property—and of CSXT's operations on the property. It provided: "New York acknowledges that the CSXT corridor that is the subject of this Framework Agreement is today the single busiest on the CSXT network and has tremendous opportunity for additional freight demand, including from the expansion of the Panama Canal. Accordingly, the property that would be</p>

impacted by the [Empire Corridor] Projects is among the most valuable freight corridors in the United States.” Id

Response New York State recognizes CSX Transportation’s role in supporting and participating in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and their rights for determining the use of their property as outlined in the “Framework Agreement.” CSX Transportation is considered a leading partner in creating a vision for improved freight and passenger service in New York State. In moving the program forward New York State recognizes the valuable contribution that CSX Transportation offers both to the state and the nation’s freight railroad network. New York State shares with CSX Transportation the important goals of promoting economic revitalization along the Empire Corridor, and minimizing any impact to freight train operations from increased passenger train operations. Compared to Alternatives 110 and 125, Alternative 90B will involve lesser costs and impacts, with fewer property displacements, while also achieving the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains. In 2035, Alternative 90B would also result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT chose a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. The Framework Agreement is discussed in the Executive Summary (Section ES-1) in Volume 1 of the FEIS. The agreement between New York State and CSX Transportation is also discussed in Chapter 1 – Section 1.1.3 and Appendix J.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-2 As currently presented, the 90 and 110 alternatives do not satisfy CSXT’s safety standards and are not safe uses of its property.

Response As noted in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, each of the Build Alternatives analyzed would be designed in compliance with design criteria found in American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) as well as Amtrak and CSXT design standards. In addition, implementation of safety measures such as Positive Train Control (PTC) will be included in the design and construction of each of the alternatives. It is also anticipated that crash energy management measurements will be included in the design criteria for each concept alignment.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-3 Alternative 90A is not acceptable from a safety perspective because it would increase the co-mingling of passenger and freight traffic on a busy shared track. The greater the amount of passenger and freight co-mingling on a shared track, the greater the risk of an accident.

Response Passenger and freight trains are currently comingled on CSXT’s right-of-way. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide additional trackage to better segregate passenger rail and freight rail, thereby improving safety of rail transportation on the Empire Corridor. Approximately 370 miles of new track will include about 300 miles of third track in the Mohawk Valley, where CSXT freight operates west of Albany. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, includes all of the improvements included in Alternative 90A. NYSDOT maintains that Alternative 90A would not increase the risk of an accident due to the twenty separate capital improvement projects. The improvements proposed as part of Alternative 90A (and Alternative 90B) include improvements to the signaling system and Positive Train Control system, which would increase safety over existing conditions. As discussed in Section 3.3.2 of the Tier 1 FEIS, this alternative would increase the number of daily round trips between Albany and Buffalo by four trains from four to eight. Between New York City and Albany, a route with only four freight trains per day, Alternative 90A would add three daily round trips above the 16 existing trips.

Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-4	The scheme of crossovers, interlockings and grade crossings proposed in the DEIS will heighten the risk of an accident and will jeopardize the safety of passengers, train crews and the public. The DEIS offers no assurance that all of this can be accomplished safely.
Response	<p>NYSDOT remains committed to the safety of the travelling public and all users along the corridor. One of the Empire Corridor Program's objectives is to "minimize interference with freight rail operations."</p> <p>To achieve this, each of the Build Alternatives includes rail improvements projects currently planned and funded; these improvements would improve the service levels and operations as well as safety (see Tier 1 FEIS Section 3.3).</p> <p>Eight improvement projects would be included in all Build Alternatives with additional signal system improvements and grade separated flyovers included in certain Alternatives to eliminate potential conflicts with freight train movements. New interlockings, added crossovers, reconfigured signals, pocket tracks and new additional separate and elevated trackage in some Build Alternatives would further increase safety along the corridor. The Rail Network Operations Simulation study conducted as part of the Tier 1 DEIS (see Appendix D) concluded that there would be improvements to operating speeds and times for freight operations. It is further noted that the Tier 1 EIS concept alignments in all of the alternatives would be designed to comply with design criteria found in AREMA as well as Amtrak and CSXT design standards in Chapter 3, under the discussion of the Preferred Alternative (under "Safety").</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-5	<p>With regard to Alternative 110, it is not clear whether the DEIS contemplates that the passenger trains will be operating in excess of 90 m.p.h. in locations where there is less than 30 feet of separation between the freight tracks and the passenger tracks. Compare DEIS at ES12-13 (stating that such tracks will have a speed limit of 90 m.p.h.) with DEIS App. A Drawing Nos. 110-7 through -10, -12, -14, -15 (depicting stretches of a second passenger track spaced 15 feet from the freight tracks and with the same speed limit of 91-110 m.p.h. as the first passenger track). If the DEIS does contemplate passenger trains exceeding 90 m.p.h. in these locations, that would present an unacceptable safety risk. There would not be adequate separation to protect against potential encroachment by maintenance crews, or the wind forces generated by passing high-speed trains. Moreover, in the event of a derailment, there would be a high risk of the derailed train obstructing an adjacent track. See Chen-Yu Lin & Mohd Rapik Saat, "Semi-Quantitative Risk Assessment of Adjacent Track Accidents on Shared-Use Rail Corridors" 4 & tbl. 2, 2014 Proceedings of the Joint Rail Conference (finding a higher likelihood of derailment obstructing the adjacent track at spacing of 15 to 30 feet than when tracks are 30 to 55 feet apart). The likelihood of an intrusion increases with train speed, given the amount of energy that must dissipate before a train stops. Id. at 6 & tbl. 7. And the denser the traffic on the corridor, the more likely that such an intrusion causes an accident. Id. at 7.</p>
Response	<p>It is not planned for trains in the 110 Alternative to operate in excess of 90 mph where the requirements, as outlined in the "Framework Agreement," require the 30-foot separation. In Section ES-3.2.4 under the heading Alternative 110, the following is stated: "Due to existing physical conditions that would make it impractical to achieve the 30-foot separation, there would be sections of third main track located 15 feet from the existing track. In these instances, the Maximum Authorized Speed would be reduced to 90 mph." Appendix A drawings are consistent with this statement.</p> <p>In accordance with FRA requirements, the tracks for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) must be maintained to meet Class 5 FRA Track Classifications (90 mph maximum speed limits for passenger tracks inclusive of civil curve restrictions). In order to reduce the risk of derailments and increase safety, countermeasures could be included that meet a</p>

higher standard for the FRA Class 6 track classification (up to 110 mph operation) to allow for an extra degree of protection. These countermeasures that could be undertaken to avoid or minimize derailments include increased weekly track, switch, and signal inspection frequencies concurrent with semi-annual ultrasonic rail testing of open track, turnouts, and crossovers, even on those rails within the transit track with track/traffic densities of less than 30 million gross tons annually.

These additional (Class 6) countermeasures could include annual automated track inspections, using the latest technology and best practices. Similarly, the adjacent CSXT tracks could be subject to the same type of condition assessment. Any exceedances above registered benchmarks would be recorded on the passenger track and also on the next adjoining CSXT track.

In addition, conditions assessments (typically required for Class 6) could be also be performed by scheduling bi-annual joint CSXT/Amtrak management level track and signal inspections. If conditions show degradation, the joint inspection with management and track inspectors can verify in the field degradation and slow order penalties can be assessed for exceedances of registered benchmarks to mandate corrective actions and needed repairs and enforce compliance status.

Another preventative measure for reducing the chance of derailments is rolling stock maintenance. Assessments of vehicle components, such as wheels, brakes, etc. will be an integral part of the maintenance program.

These countermeasures could be the subject of discussion among NYSDOT and CSXT during advanced design of the Preferred Alternative and incorporated into the MOU.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-6 On the other hand, if the DEIS does not contemplate passenger trains operating in excess of 90 m.p.h. in locations where there is less than 30 feet of separation, then its travel-time projections may not be accurate and may require adjustment. Because the DEIS does not clearly identify the parameters used in the operations simulation and the study itself is ambiguous, it is unclear how New York and the FRA have addressed this crucial issue.

Response The rail network operations simulation (Appendix D of the Tier 1 FEIS) conducted for Build Year 2035 accurately reflects the conceptual design and the terminus-to-terminus travel times account for areas of decreased maximum operating speeds due to limitations imposed by track geometry or civil constraints. The parameters used in the rail simulation are described in Section 2, Methodology in Appendix D, "Rail Network Operations Simulation." In developing the simulation model for the 110 Alternative, maximum authorized speeds (MAS) used were consistent with "Framework Agreement" (Appendix J). However, the Preferred Alternative is 90B, which has an MAS of 90 mph.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-7 Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110 are unacceptable for another reason: they will deny CSXT the capacity it needs to handle current and future traffic on the line, causing significant economic harm to upstate New York. In this context, capacity means the ability of CSXT to make full use of its own property in order to meet its common-carrier obligations now and in the future.

Capacity is a valuable and limited resource. Operating a passenger rail service on or next to CSXT's mainline would limit the number of train slots available for freight traffic. It would also prevent CSXT from using additional land within its right-of-way to accommodate increased volume in future years. This would be a particularly troubling development in light of the widespread recognition that demand for freight traffic is increasing and capacity will need to expand to meet this heightened demand. The U.S. Department of Transportation projects a 46 percent increase in rail freight between 2011 and 2040. See Freight Facts and Figures 2012 tbl. 2-1, <http://1.usa.gov/Qpp8js>; see also Ass'n of Am. Railroads, National Rail Freight Infrastructure Capacity and Investment Study (2007). CSXT

anticipates using additional land within its right-of-way to expand capacity and handle the increased traffic.

Response Development of the supporting Rail Network Simulations were a collaborative process with team members from NYSDOT, CSXT, LTK (who led this task); supported by Willard Keeney and HNTB. The CSXT staff from their offices in Jacksonville, Florida were participants in these simulation exercises and expressed no objection to the parameters employed in assigning track and slot capacity. Building the network simulation followed a joint effort that began in 2012 and continued through 2013, with the results of the simulations included in Appendix D of Volume 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

The network simulation identified sufficient capacity to operate both the future forecasted passenger and freight demand with the improvements proposed under each Build Alternative. CSXT provided a forecast for freight traffic and modeled CSXT dispatching practices in the deployment of freight and passenger trains to produce the travel time forecasts for Alternatives 90A, 90B (the Preferred Alternative) and 110 as discussed in the Tier 1 FEIS.

In 2011, the Baseline Simulation Report was advanced following receipt of review comments received from CSXT to reflect changes in train volumes and routing. The Amtrak Baseline Simulation OTP was recomputed based on CSXT model changes, giving Amtrak higher dispatching priority. Amtrak On-Time Performance was returned to CSXT for review. CSXT provided e-mail approval of the revised Baseline Simulation Model. This coordination with CSXT and their inputs is documented in Appendix D, "Rail Network Operations Simulation," Section 2.1.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-8 Of the many types of freight that move over the line today, intermodal traffic is the most service-sensitive. Approximately 20 intermodal trains use the line today, connecting the western and midwestern United States with New York City, New England, and the East Coast. Intermodal traffic will grow dramatically in the years ahead. To serve this increased demand, CSXT is developing a major new intermodal terminal near Montreal that will connect the Canadian markets with New York and other

Response The planning and design for all alternatives were coordinated with freight rail considerations. Baseline operations simulation as well as increases to service were obtained from CSXT. Facilitation of freight movement was identified as an element of purpose and need. Increases in freight traffic was included in the baseline modeling efforts. Localized controlled sidings, passenger bypasses, and dedicated freight/passenger track segments have been proposed to minimize congestion and minimize reduced speeds resulting from operations of freight and passenger trains on each alternative. Careful operations and dispatching will be required to minimize interferences accruing from increased demand from intermodal and passenger traffic. Intermodal freight would potentially benefit from the proposed addition of dedicated passenger and freight tracks. Intermodal traffic can be prioritized to minimize interference with time-sensitive movements. Other alternatives could be explored by developing a series of joint improvements both for station access and layouts and track/signal systems and alignment. In addition, operations and dispatching through off-peak use of the railway for freight traffic could be considered during later stages of the program.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-9 There are no comparable planning studies devoted to promoting economic growth through expanded passenger rail service.

Response	The economic benefits associated with expanded passenger rail service have been included in various studies, as discussed in DEIS Pages 1-12, 2-10, and 2-11.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-10	<p>Hundreds of New York businesses depend on access to the Empire Corridor and, through it, the national rail network. Examples of New York-based businesses that depend on CSXT include Eastman Kodak, Sunoco, ADM Milling, Bestway Distribution Services, Trigen Syracuse Energy Corporation, LiDestri Foods, Anheuser-Busch, and Gas Supply Resources Holdings.</p> <p>The CSXT network also connects to seven short-line railroad partners on the Empire Corridor: Depew, Lancaster & Western Railroad (interchanging at Batavia); Rochester & Southern Railroad (Rochester); Livonia, Avon & Lakeville Railroad (Genesee Junction); Ontario Midland Railroad (Newark); New York Susquehanna & Western Railway (Syracuse, Utica); Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern Railroad (Utica); and Finger Lakes Railway (Solvay). In 2012 alone, more than 30,000 shipments were moved to or from these partners. Because the CSXT network is a critical feeder—in some cases, the only feeder—to each of these railroads, any degradation in service on the CSXT mainline would not only threaten the many New York-based businesses that these short-lines serve, but also the competitiveness and viability of the short-lines themselves.</p>
Response	<p>The planning and design for all alternatives were coordinated with freight rail considerations. Base line operations simulation as well as increases to service were obtained from CSXT. Facilitation of freight movement was identified as an element of the program's purpose and need. Increases in freight traffic was included in the baseline modeling efforts.</p> <p>Localized controlled sidings, passenger bypasses and dedicated freight/passenger track segments have been proposed to minimize congestion and minimize reduced speeds resulting from operations of freight and passenger trains on each alternative. Careful operations and dispatching will be required to minimize interferences accruing from increased demand from intermodal and passenger traffic. Local, short-line freight would potentially benefit from the proposed addition of dedicated passenger and freight tracks and added crossovers, which would provide additional flexibility. Short-line freight traffic can be prioritized to minimize interference with time-sensitive movements. Other alternatives could be explored by developing a series of joint improvements both for station access and layouts and track/signal systems and alignment. In addition, operations and dispatching through off-peak use of the railway for freight traffic could be considered during later stages of the program.</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-11	<p>Alternative 90A contemplates doubling the number of passenger trains on CSX's existing freight line. Because passenger trains are given dispatching priority over freight trains, the result would be delayed shipments and greater uncertainty for customers as to when a shipment will be picked up and when it will be delivered.</p> <p>Alternatives 90B and 110 would also have a severe and harmful impact on freight traffic. As explained in detail in the attached Declaration of Cressie Brown, "CSXT freight service cannot function at acceptable levels of reliability under Alternatives 90B and 110. . . . The core of the operational problem is that both alternatives propose numerous at-grade crossings to allow access to the many customers, switching facilities, branch lines, and short-line railroads that would be separated from the mainline freight tracks by the proposed passenger tracks. Dozens of times every day, freight traffic would have to wait unpredictable amounts of time for clearance from the passenger dispatcher to serve customers and reach yards. With narrow time windows for crossings, the inherent variability in freight service schedules, and a high volume of operations, freight service on the Empire Corridor would become gridlocked." Brown Decl. ¶¶ 8-10.</p>

Response	Alternative 90A includes many upgrades to the existing track structure and right-of-way to increase capacity and facilitate the movement of additional mixed freight and passenger traffic to meet the projected additional passenger and freight demand. Projections for freight trains under each of the Build Alternatives were conducted in cooperation with CSXT with data provided by CSXT. In Appendix D of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Rail Network Operations Simulation model identified sufficient capacity to operate both the future forecasted passenger and freight traffic provided the improvements outlined for each alternative are built. Similar to the simulation results for Alternative 90A, the simulation results for Alternatives 90B (the Preferred Alternative) and 110 used a CSXT-provided forecast for freight traffic and modeled CSXT dispatching practices in the deployment of freight and passenger trains to produce the travel time forecasts reported in the Tier I FEIS. As noted throughout Section 3.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, final design will include a detailed evaluation of the need to construct additional crossovers, flyovers, and interlockings to allow freight trains running on the south side to crossover the new passenger mains to reach freight facilities on the north side.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-12	In the locations where they contemplate building a new, passenger-only track on CSXT's right-of-way, Alternatives 90B and 110 would create a physical barrier between CSXT and its customers on the north side of the track—a wall depriving well over 120 New York businesses of vital access to the national rail network. Maps and lists of those customers are attached to this Comment. The barrier would restrict future business growth in upstate New York by hampering companies interested in shipping their goods by rail. The expensive and complex process of building fly-overs—overpasses for passenger trains—is not a realistic alternative for a prospective new business, and would not even be physically possible in many locations.
Response	The new mainline tracks in Alternatives 90B (the Preferred Alternative) and 110 would be at-grade and include turnouts for freight trains to continue to access existing customers; this represents no change in access from the present day. Rather, the proposed additional turnouts and crossovers would provide greater operational flexibility that the simulation results in the Tier I FEIS demonstrates (see Appendix D). This will allow the corridor to handle the projected increases in both freight and passenger train volumes through 2035, while minimizing conflicts and reducing delays for both services. Localized controlled sidings, passenger bypasses, and dedicated freight/passenger track segments can be used to minimize congestion and reduced speeds resulting from operations of freight and passenger trains on each alternative. The proposed flyovers are a capital intensive, but effective infrastructure improvement that could be designed to reduce passenger/freight interference. The concepts for the three flyovers presented in this Tier 1 FEIS would be developed further in Tier 2 design. Other alternatives could be explored by developing a series of joint improvements both for station access and layouts and track/signal systems and alignment.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-13	New York explained in a recent filing with the Surface Transportation Board that the “success of NYSDOT’s policies and initiatives to reverse past disinvestment in rail infrastructure and build a thriving rail transportation system for New York, is dependent upon preserving and developing new rail sidings, rail-truck transfer facilities, yards and ‘lastmile’ connections serving terminals and shippers.”
Response	The Tier 1 FEIS is a part of NYSDOT’s efforts to reverse past divestment in rail infrastructure. Localized projects within the Tier 1 FEIS (Tier 2), including the implementation of localized controlled sidings, passenger bypasses, and dedicated

freight/passenger track segments, are proposed to minimize congestion and minimize reduced speeds resulting from operations of freight and passenger trains on each alternative.

This program will benefit both passenger and freight rail and represents a major capital investment in the rail infrastructure in the region.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-14 ¹The barrier [new passenger tracks on CSXT right-of-way under Alternatives 90B and 110] would also prevent maintenance crews from entering the right-of-way in their usual fashion—driving standard vehicles into the right-of-way from a crossing—and instead require them to use specially-equipped vehicles that can ride on the rails, further disrupting traffic because on many occasions, this special vehicle (a “hi-rail truck”) would have to stay on the rails, thereby rendering that track unusable for any trains during the entire duration of the maintenance event.

Response Nearly all modern railways use hi-rail vehicles to access and maintain track and facilities along the right-of-way. Similar to other rail lines, maintenance work would need to be scheduled off-peak/weekend so as not to interfere with passenger/freight traffic. The additional dedicated passenger track will not eliminate existing grade crossings, however, access and maintenance will need to proceed in a safe manner, consistent with similar railways.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-15 A state may not circumvent NEPA by following a tiered approach and deferring the necessary analysis to Tier 2 on the theory that it cannot determine environmental impacts at the Tier 1 stage.

Response FRA and NYSDOT have not circumvented the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The agencies have followed NEPA and all appropriate regulations and procedures in preparing the Tier 1 EIS (including necessary analysis) for the Empire Corridor. Tiered environmental review is a well-established practice. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations encourage agencies to “tier their environmental impact statements to eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review.” 40 CFR 1502.20; see also 1508.28. Section 8.g. of DOT Order 5610.1C further encourages tiered environmental documents for “complex transportation proposals.” The program area encompasses 464 miles of trackage along Empire Corridor and the Niagara Branch, spanning three different railroads (Metro-North Hudson Line, CSXT Empire Corridor West, and the Niagara Branch), connecting the largest metropolitan areas in the state (including New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse). The Tier 1 evaluation focused on concepts to be examined in more detail in Tier 2, ranging from minimal improvements (Base and Alternative 90A) to an exclusive sealed high-speed rail corridor (Alternative 125). Alternative 125 would involve construction of a total of 236 miles of double track on new corridor alignment along three different segments: Rensselaer to Syracuse, Syracuse to Rochester, and Rochester to Buffalo. Tier 2 would focus on the Preferred Alternative developed through Tier 1 EIS evaluations, which included an extensive agency consultation and public participation process

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-16 An Environmental Impact Statement issued by an agency of New York State must also satisfy SEQRA.

Response NYSDOT has determined that the Tier 1 EIS prepared for the Empire Corridor meets New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements, as discussed on page 4-1 of the Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences of the Tier 1 Final EIS: “The Tier 1 EIS has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

(NEPA) and its implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508); FRA's NEPA procedures (64 Federal Register [FR] 28545 and 78 FR Part 2713); and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). NYSDOT, as the SEQR lead agency, has determined that the variance procedures under SEQR (17 NYCRR Part 15) apply."

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-17 If a passenger rail system is constructed on CSXT's right-of-way, there will be very harmful environmental consequences, as freight traffic shifts from the rails to the highways. The result will be more congestion on the roads, increased emissions of greenhouse gases by the armies of trucks necessary to carry the displaced freight, and less opportunity for environmentally- sensitive freight rail to grow in the years ahead. CSXT also has a strong interest in avoiding the increased environmental harms to its property—including noise, vibration and pollution—that would be caused by the additional passenger traffic.

Response The analysis in the Tier 1 FEIS shows that the program alternatives are neutral towards, or enhance freight operations, which includes CSXT-provided projections of future growth in freight traffic by 2035. Section 1.5 of the Tier 1 FEIS establishes six measurable performance objectives based on the program purpose and need. All alternatives were measured against these performance objectives, including the objective to minimize interference with freight rail operations and avoid degradation of freight service. Section 6.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS describes how the program alternatives affect freight train operations including delay, average speed, trip time and trip time variability. The Tier 1 FEIS determined that none of the Build Alternatives would negatively affect freight train travel times, and therefore no substantial shift of freight traffic from rails to highways would be expected to occur in the future with this program. The Tier 1 FEIS documents the effects of the program alternatives on noise and vibration (Section 4.21), greenhouse gas emissions (Section 4.20), and air quality (Section 4.19). Further studies of the noise, vibration and air quality will be conducted as part of the Tier 2 NEPA process. The net annual operational benefits (greenhouse gas emissions) for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year. Due to the existing frequent service of both CSXT freight rail traffic and Metro-North commuter rail, the Preferred Alternative would not result in substantial (or even perceptible) increases in noise from train operations.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-18 The DEIS artificially constrains the range of build alternatives by limiting them to four variants of a passenger rail system constructed on or adjacent to CSXT's right-of-way.

Response The Tier 1 DEIS considers in detail a Base (No Action) Alternative and four Build Alternatives (90A, 90B, 110 and 125). As described in Section 3.2 and Appendix C of the Tier1 EIS, the screening of alternatives began with 10 preliminary alternatives. Using a consistent set of performance measures based on the purpose and need, FRA and NYSDOT considered and dismissed 5 preliminary alternatives. The lower speed alternatives (Alternative 79A, 79B, and 79C) are not appreciably different than Alternatives 90A and 90B in operations, costs, and environmental impacts. As a result, FRA and NYSDOT did not advance these alternatives for additional analysis. Very high speed alternatives (Alternatives 160 and 220) were dismissed due to high cost and environmental impacts. Alternatives 125, 160, and 220 would be located outside of the existing alignment. Very high speed alternatives (Alternatives 160 and 220) were dismissed due to high cost and environmental impacts. The very high-speed alternatives (160 and 220) require infrastructure for stations. New alignment on sealed corridor would require electrification of new track and would require a new Positive Train Control signal system. Moreover, high-speed rail on a new corridor would not improve freight capacity for CSXT operations,

when compared to the Base Alternative, since regional Empire Service would continue to operate on the existing Empire Corridor with the same service frequency to provide service to all existing stations. This was one of the performance measures used to evaluate prospective alternatives.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-19 The DEIS's examination of this artificially limited set of options rests on an arbitrary, inconsistent and incomplete methodology that fails to give decision makers an objective basis for fairly evaluating the various alternatives.

Response As described in Section 3.2 and Appendix C of the Tier 1 EIS, the screening of alternatives used a consistent set of performance measures based on the purpose and need. The lower speed alternatives (Alternative 79A, 79B, and 79C) are not appreciably different than the 90 Alternatives in operations, costs, and environmental impacts. As a result, FRA and NYSDOT did not advance these alternatives for additional analysis. Very high speed alternatives (Alternatives 160 and 220) were dismissed due to high cost and environmental impacts.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-20 Most notably, the DEIS fails to consider other options for transporting people across the region. The DEIS does not examine improved air or bus service as reasonable alternatives to high-speed passenger rail. Both of these modes of transportation are cost-effective ways of moving people around the region.

Response As stated in Section 1.3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the program purpose is to improve passenger rail service by increasing speeds, improving reliability, reducing travel times, increasing service frequency, and improving passenger amenities. Projects to improve bus or air travel do not improve rail service and therefore do not meet the Tier I EIS purpose and need. All reasonable alternatives that did meet the purpose have been considered. Bus and air markets were recognized in the travel demand forecasting and are documented in Appendix B and Appendix E of the Tier 1 FEIS.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-21 The DEIS improperly narrows the range of alternatives by artificially narrowing the project's Purpose and Need. Instead of defining the project need as, say, improving transportation options for New Yorkers along the Empire Corridor, the DEIS defines the project need as making passenger rail more desirable. See ES-5. By defining the project's purpose in this narrow and artificial way, the DEIS forecloses consideration of reasonable (and much more sensible) alternatives, such as improving air or bus transportation. Likewise, although New York has publicly stated that the DEIS "will position the state to get future high-speed rail funding from the federal government," qualifying for federal grant money is not a legitimate purpose and need.

Response As discussed in Sections 1.3 and 1.4 of the Tier 1 FEIS, and after a statewide scoping process for this Tier 1 EIS, the purpose of the High Speed Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and improve reliability, travel times, service frequency, and passenger amenities to improve intercity passenger rail travel. Projects to improve intercity bus or air travel do not meet the purpose and need. As presented in Chapters 1 and 2, the need for the program stems from historic growth (over the past 20 years) not only in Empire Service passenger rail traffic, but also freight movements and Metro-North commuter rail. Ridership on the Empire Service increased by more than 50 percent over a period of less than 20 years prior to 2019, and Metro-North commuter rail ridership increased by 45 percent over the previous 25 years. Both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Association of American Railroads had forecast freight rail growth of at least 50 percent by 2035. Potentially qualifying for federal grant money is not stated in the Tier 1 EIS as a purpose and need for the program.

Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-22	Even accounting for the time required to travel to and from the airport and clear security, the 90-minute flying time from JFK to Buffalo makes the total trip duration less than half the roughly seven hours under Alternative 110. For the traveler putting time at a premium, the average one-way airfare of \$100, DEIS B-48, compares favorably with the \$58 one-way fare for existing Amtrak service, and even more favorably with the presumably higher fare for faster rail service. The DEIS does not explain why air transport alternatives were eliminated from consideration.
Response	As stated in Section 1.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the program purpose is to improve passenger rail service by increasing speeds, improving reliability, reducing travel times, increasing service frequency and improving passenger amenities. Air or bus improvement alternatives do not improve rail service and therefore do not meet the Tier I FEIS purpose and need. All reasonable alternatives that did meet the purpose have been considered. Bus and air markets were recognized in the travel demand forecasting and are documented in Section 2.5.4 and Appendices B and E of the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-23	Likewise, bus service is widely regarded as a growing, environmentally-friendly, and cost-effective means of passenger transportation for trips of several hundred miles, with particular appeal to the most cost-sensitive passengers.
Response	As stated in Section 1.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the program purpose is to improve passenger rail service by increasing speeds, improving reliability, reducing travel times, increasing service frequency and improving passenger amenities. Air or bus improvement alternatives do not improve rail service and therefore do not meet the Tier I FEIS purpose and need. All reasonable alternatives that met the purpose have been considered. Bus and air markets were recognized in the travel demand forecasting and are documented in Section 2.5.4 and Appendices B and E of the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-24	The DEIS does not explain why, if travelers prefer flying or driving because it is faster than the train, they would choose a “high-speed” rail alternative that is still slower than flying or driving. If there are reasonable alternative ways of transporting passengers along the Empire Corridor—as the DEIS concedes there are (see ES-5)—the government is required to consider those alternatives, or explain why they were eliminated from consideration.
Response	As stated in Section 1.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the program purpose is to improve passenger rail service by increasing speeds, improving reliability, reducing travel times, increasing service frequency and improving passenger amenities. Alternatives focused on automobile, air, or bus transport do not improve rail service and therefore do not meet the Tier 1 FEIS purpose and need. All reasonable alternatives that met the purpose have been considered. Bus and air markets were recognized in the travel demand forecasting and are documented in Section 2.5.4 and Appendices B and E of the Tier 1 FEIS. In addition, the ridership forecasts done for the Tier 1 FEIS demonstrate that people will ride the train even with the availability of other modes, such as auto, bus, and air. In part this is because train travel often brings a passenger closer to their final destination, often within walking distance, and avoids logistical issues such as parking constraints.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-25	Even if it were permissible under NEPA—and it is not—for the government to restrict the menu of alternatives to several high-speed passenger rail proposals, the DEIS should have analyzed other modes of transportation as part of the “No Build” alternative.
Response	Under NEPA and CEQ regulations (Section 1502.14), only reasonable alternatives need to be rigorously explored and evaluated. FRA/NYS DOT is not required to include alternatives that do not meet the program’s purpose and need. The ridership forecast for these other modes are included in the Tier 1 FEIS and can be viewed in Appendix B. As presented in Chapters 1 and 2, the need for the program stems from historic growth (over the past 20 years) not only in Empire Service passenger rail traffic, but also freight movements and Metro-North commuter rail. Ridership on the Empire Service increased by more than 50 percent over a period of less than 20 years prior to 2019, and Metro-North commuter rail ridership increased by 50 percent over the previous 25 years. Both the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Association of American Railroads had forecast freight rail growth of at least 50 percent by 2035.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-26	The formulation of alternatives was arbitrary in another respect: the Empire Corridor South and the Empire Corridor West should have been considered as separate alternatives. By treating the Empire Corridor Program as a single indivisible project, the DEIS masks the weakness of the western portion (Buffalo to Albany) by relying on the relative strength of the southern portion (Albany to New York City).
Response	The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements and goals for the entire corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. In Chapter 3. - Alternatives, the Base and 4 Build Alternatives outline trip times and ridership for the entire corridor. The program references the two segments of Empire Corridor South and Empire Corridor West for the identification purposes for supporting projects and frequency of service. The organization of the program with the two segments, also allows for the focusing of improvements by the different host railroads along the route. Specific projects with independent utility will undergo the appropriate Tier 2 environmental review.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-27	There is no rational reason why (1) the proposal to create a high-speed passenger railroad on the Western Corridor and (2) the proposal to implement a slate of agreed- upon improvements on the Southern Corridor should be jammed together in a single Environmental Impact Statement. The nature of these proposals is very different and the two corridors themselves are very different—as New York has repeatedly recognized. The Western Corridor project and the Southern Corridor project should have been presented as separate alternatives. This would have given decision makers the option of endorsing the slate of improvements to the Southern Corridor (many of which make sense and are agreed upon by all stakeholders), while electing the “no build” alternative on the Western Corridor—an outcome that plainly constitutes a “reasonable alternative” under NEPA. The decision to lump both corridors together—using the public benefits of the Southern Corridor to justify investments in the Western Corridor—is arbitrary and limits the options of decision makers for no good reason.
Response	The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements and goals for the entire corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. The program’s purpose and needs pertain to the entire corridor with limits from New York City to Niagara Falls. As discussed in Sections 1.3 and 1.4, the purpose of the High Speed Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and improve reliability, travel times, service frequency, and passenger amenities. The program is being undertaken to meet the following needs: reduce infrastructure constraints and accommodate existing

and projected demand. Specific projects with independent utility will undergo the appropriate Tier 2 environmental review.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-28 First, the DEIS improperly postpones many critical assessments to the Tier 2 stage. An agency may not circumvent NEPA in this way. Courts have held that a tiered approach is permissible only where the government “performs the necessary depth of analysis” at the Tier 1 stage. *United States v. 162.20 Acres of Land*, 733 F.2d 377, 380- 81 (5th Cir. 1984). Because critical decisions that bind the government will be made at the Tier 1 stage, including the choice of a Preferred Alternative, the DEIS must fully address all issues that bear on those decisions and may not defer them to Tier 2. Here, there is no mystery surrounding the location and impacts of the 90 and 110 alternatives; they all require the use of CSXT’s existing right-of-way, where all aspects of the railroad and the adjacent environment are well known. There is no reason why the DEIS cannot address these issues in order to ensure an informed selection of a Preferred Alternative at the Tier 1 stage.

Response The alternatives considered include those that are both on and off of the existing CSXT right-of-way, and the level of information used for this comparison is the same for each alternative. This format is fully compliant with regulations and guidance concerning the use of Tier 1 NEPA documentation for major high-speed rail projects. The Tier 1 DEIS compares each of the program alternatives and their benefits, costs, and potential for environmental impact at a level of detail sufficient to permit reviewers to understand the choices and the scale of impacts likely for each. FRA and NYSDOT used this information, along with public input, to select a preferred alternative in the Tier 1 Final EIS, Alternative 90B. Section 1.1.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS addresses use, and compensation for use, of CSXT right-of-way: “The position taken by CSXT and agreed to by NYSDOT in the Agreements must be considered in the implementation of the Preferred Alternative chosen by NYSDOT and FRA on property owned by CSXT. One principle set forth in the Agreements is that CSXT is entitled to compensation for the use, acquisition, or diminishment in value of its property resulting from any project advanced as a result of the Tier 1 EIS. While the development of the cost of alternatives must and will include the recognition of this principle, the negotiation of the actual value of any compensation to CSXT is not part of this Tier 1 EIS, and will be developed if and when necessary as part of Tier 2 program advancement.” The Tier 1 DEIS did not artificially constrain the range of Build Alternatives. Alternative 125, which would not follow the CSXT right-of-way, was dismissed due to high cost and environmental impacts. Moreover, high-speed rail on a new corridor would not improve freight capacity for CSXT operations, when compared to the Base Alternative, since regional Empire Service would continue to operate on the existing Empire Corridor with the same service frequency to provide service to all existing stations. This was one of the performance measures used to evaluate prospective alternatives. Chapter 4 of the Tier 1 Final EIS and Appendix G presents the environmental analysis that supported selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 DEIS and Tier 1 Final EIS considered the range of impacts in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected based on lesser costs and impacts than both Alternative 110 and 125, while also meeting the performance metrics used to screen the alternatives (including improving freight travel times and passenger rail ridership and OTP). Due to the scale and scope of the program, Tier 1 examined the 464-mile long existing Empire Corridor/Niagara Branch Study Area for the 90 mph/110 mph alternatives at a conceptual level, identifying potential impacts to screen to a Preferred Alternative. It also evaluated the 450-mile long 125 mph Study Area. Although the conceptual environmental study identified “buffers” that could potentially be impacted at Tier 1, it would not be possible to examine in detail impacts of the entire range of alternatives evaluated in the Tier 1 program. More advanced design and environmental analysis would be required (appropriate for Tier 2) to fully characterize the extent, nature, and duration of impacts for this program, which spans the entire state. The concepts examined in the Tier 1 FEIS were

appropriate for this level of analysis, but Tier 2 analysis is necessary to fully comprehend the impacts of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-29 Second, the analysis of environmental impacts consists of generalized descriptive summaries instead of quantitative assessments. This is unhelpful to the decision maker because it does not allow apples-to-apples comparisons of the alternatives using a common metric. The DEIS also asserts that certain alternatives “support” or “strongly support” various performance objectives. See Chapter 6. But the DEIS does not disclose how it makes these gradations—that is, the point at which an alternative crosses the line from “support” to “strongly support.” Likewise, the DEIS compares alternatives with regard to whether they will have low, moderate or high adverse impacts in particular areas. See Exhibit 6-10. But the DEIS does not explain the thresholds for these determinations—and in some cases, more than one alternative is deemed to have the “highest” impact. Like much in the DEIS, these rankings appear to be arbitrary and subjective.

Response The Tier 1 FEIS clarified how environmental rankings were determined, the qualitative discussion in Section 6.4 provides the basis and substantiation for the rankings of environmental impacts presented in this chapter. The Tier 1 document quantified the potential impacts to resources to the appropriate level for this program assessment, as documented in Chapter 4 of the Tier 1 FEIS. This discussion included, as appropriate, quantitative comparisons on which to compare alternatives (e.g., number of waterway crossings for each alternative), but did not subjective numeric rankings. For instance, the acres within the study area for land uses, wetlands, floodplains, and farmlands are presented for each alternative. This is the appropriate level of assessment at Tier 1, until the proposed action is selected and the design concept fully developed. The relative rankings of low, medium, and high for environmental impact were based on these potential impacts as presented in Chapter 4, in each respective section. In general, alternatives that involved minimal right-of-way takings were deemed to involve low impact and those requiring entirely new right-of-way or additional right-of-way takings were deemed to involve medium to high impacts (depending on the relative extent of takings required). Similarly, the performance objectives present both quantitative and qualitative measures (e.g., OTP, travel time, frequency of service, ridership, etc.). The use of four gradations of ratings, from 'contrary to program goals,' to 'strongly supports program goals,' is intended to summarize the effectiveness of program alternatives in meeting the program performance objectives which are numeric values. In all cases where the 'strongly supports' gradation is used versus the 'supports' designation is used, the accompanying numeric values are clearly of a different magnitude. Exhibit 6-10 is a summary rating of the more-detailed environmental impacts information.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-30 Nor does the DEIS apply performance objectives consistently. For example, the DEIS identifies “minimize interference with freight rail operations” as a performance objective. See Appendix C. But the DEIS then rejects the 79 miles-per-hour alternatives because “their principal attribute . . . Is to provide greater reliability and fewer conflicts with existing and future CSXT freight movements along the Empire Corridor West.” See DEIS 3-8. That fact should have cut in favor of these alternatives, not against them.

Response As stated in Section 3.2.1 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Alternatives 79A, 79B, and 79C were dismissed because they would be similar and slightly inferior to the Alternatives 90A and 90B. These alternatives were not advanced because, “None of the 79 mph alternatives provides a significant operational or cost advantage over the 90 mph alternatives. Because there was no substantive and positive differentiator of the 79 mph alternatives, they were not advanced for further consideration. In each case, the comparable 90 mph alternative

showed slightly superior trip time and ridership, resulting in it being retained over its slightly inferior 79 mph counterpart.”

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-31 Third, the DEIS compares alternatives by comparing cost estimates that the DEIS recognizes are not actually comparable. The DEIS recognizes that as the owner of the Western Corridor right-of-way, CSXT “is entitled to compensation for the use, acquisition, or diminishment in value of its property resulting from any project advanced as a result of the EIS.” DEIS 5-3 through 5-4. But the DEIS refuses to estimate that cost, which would indisputably increase the current “estimates” for Alternatives 90A, 90B, and 110 by billions of dollars given the value of the land and the enterprise value of CSXT’s current and future operations on that land. Omitting these costs makes it impossible to reasonably compare those options with Alternative 125, for which the DEIS does include land acquisition costs. The DEIS explains that the “development of the cost of alternatives must and will include the recognition of [the] principle” of compensation owed to CSXT. Id. At 5-4. But it attempts to mask the true costs of Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110 until Tier 2—after a Preferred Alternative has been chosen. In fact, the DEIS repeatedly presents the costs as if they are complete. See, e.g., id. At 3-42 Exhibit 3-17; 5-28 Exhibit 5-12. Worse, it repeatedly shows the costs side-by-side, without so much as a footnote alerting the public that the estimates are far from equivalent. See id. At ES-15 Exhibit ES-4; 5-15 Exhibit 5-1; 5-16 Exhibit 5-2; 5-22 Exhibit 5-7; 5-29 Exhibit 5-13.

Response NYSDOT has not obfuscated comparative costs. But, as noted in Section 5.2.1 in the “Property Acquisition” subsection, the Tier 1 FEIS recognizes the principle that while “CSXT is entitled to compensation for the use, acquisition, or diminishment in value of its property... the negotiation of the actual value of any compensation to CSXT is not part of this Tier 1 EIS.” That notwithstanding, the capital costs of the Tier 1 EIS are consistent throughout the alternatives including where property off of the existing right-of-way is required for construction, the costs were included in the capital costs. Similarly, the operations and maintenance costs, where an agreement with the host railroad would typically be captured, are consistent with the appropriate Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) guidelines.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-32 Fourth, the operations modeling is flawed and undermines the DEIS’s rating system. As explained in detail in the attached Declaration of Mark A. Dingler: “By departing from standard practices for the integrity of simulations, by using inputs and parameters known to be inaccurate, and by failing to account for the real-world conditions under which a railroad operates, the document’s conclusions about both passenger and freight service are unreliable. Moreover, because of the lack of adequate documentation, it is impossible to know precisely what assumptions were and were not made.” Dingler Decl. ¶ 39. A scheme that makes sense on paper can fail spectacularly in the real world. In a plan with virtually no margin for error, a single small delay will cause a severe domino effect of delays and misplaced infrastructure and equipment across the entire system. This is particularly the case when the passenger tracks are laid out with the assumption that trains travelling in opposite directions utilize carefully-placed stretches of additional track. That technique of “flying meets” falls apart if either train is delayed. See D-54, D-58. And because the DEIS contemplates the freight and passenger lines crossing one another, any delay will affect both services.

Response The rail network simulations are discussed with supporting results in Appendix D (Volume 3) of the Tier 1 FEIS. Current and future movements of CSXT freight trains were included. Section 2 of the simulation modeling discusses the methodology for operating simulations. The results of the different scenarios are reported in Section 3 of the simulation modeling study. As shown in Exhibit 6-8, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would result in

the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains. The simulation modeling study is appropriate for a Tier I FEIS. In the development of the models of the Empire Corridor, FRA and NYSDOT provided CSX Transportation the opportunity to participate (as noted in Section 2.1 of Appendix D to the Tier 1 FEIS), CSXT provided comments on features and additional trackage that should be included in the model.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-33 Appendix A to this Comment examines ten other environmental impact statements prepared for similar high-speed passenger rail projects and demonstrates that the Empire Corridor DEIS is an outlier. In virtually every respect, the Empire Corridor DEIS is the only environmental impact statement in the group to provide such a superficial analysis of key issues. (FROM APPENDIX A)

1. Southeast High Speed Rail Tier 1 Final EIS, July 2002
2. Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Tier 1 Final EIS, August 2012
3. Florida High Speed Rail: Tampa to Orlando Final EIS, May 2005
4. DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Final EIS, March 2011
5. California High-Speed Train System Final Program Environmental ImpactReport/EIS, August 2005
6. Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Program Tier 1 Final EIS, October 2012
7. Chicago to Council Bluffs-Omaha Regional Passenger Rail System Planning Study Tier 1 Final EIS, May 2013
8. Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program Draft Final Alternatives Selection Report, October 2011
9. California High Speed Train Project Revised DEIR/Supplemental DEIS Fresno to Bakersfield, 2012 California High Speed Rail Train System Final Program EIR/EIS Merced to Fresno Section

Response In preparing this Tier 1 EIS, the referenced Tier 1 documents contained in the comment were reviewed. The Empire Corridor Tier EIS uses methods that are similar, if not identical, to many of the EIS documents referenced by the commenter. For example, the methods of screening alternatives, and establishing performance measures that address the program purpose and need, setting environmental buffers, and conducting environmental analyses in the Empire Corridor document closely matches other Tier 1 EIS's, such as the Chicago to Council Bluffs-Omaha Tier 1 FEIS and the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Tier 1 FEIS. The Empire Corridor team engaged an Empire Project Advisory Committee (EPAC), similar to the Richmond/Hampton Road Tier 1 EIS technical working group, to vet alternatives, benefits, costs, and potential impacts. CSXT was an active participant on the Advisory Committee by formal invitation, and its concerns were considered in framing analysis methodologies, system simulation, and means of evaluating competing alternatives. CSXT was involved in the rail simulations, as documented in Appendix D. The Tier 1 Final EIS has incorporated additional discussion of the findings of the rail simulations in Chapter 3, "Alternatives."

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-34 Slowing and displacing freight traffic leads to increasingly congested highways and more pollution. That is because increased delays and uncertainty will cause businesses to ship their goods by truck rather than by rail.

Response The additional capacity of increased mainline track in Alternatives 90B and 110 along with professional dispatching will result in positive benefits to freight traffic by decreasing delays and uncertainty. Service is demonstrated to improve for both passenger and freight train operations as passenger interference is minimized. Chapter 3.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS documents the rail simulation results for each alternative in the "Freight Operations" discussions. Appendix D of the Tier 1 Final EIS presents additional details of the rail simulations.

Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-35	For these reasons, the Empire Corridor project will harm the environment by slowing freight rail operations and putting more trucks on the nation's highways. HDR Engineering, Inc. analyzed the public cost of CSXT freight traffic that would be displaced to highways if proposed high-speed intercity passenger rail were implemented on the CSXT mainline between Buffalo and Albany. That analysis, attached as Appendix E, concludes that the project would impose \$9.8 billion in public costs (using a 3 percent discount rate). These costs would include increased costs to shippers to purchase equivalent truck transportation instead of rail transportation. They would also include increased pavement maintenance costs, increased highway congestion costs, increased air emissions costs, and increased accident costs—all due to the diversion of freight from rail to truck.
Response	<p>The simulation of rail operations and the analysis of the potential impact of the program on freight operations demonstrate that the Preferred Alternative will have a positive effect on freight movements (see Exhibit 6-8). Therefore, the analysis completed for the Tier 1 FEIS shows that it is incorrect to state that the program will "...harm the environment by slowing freight rail operations and putting more trucks on the nation's highways." The Rail Network Operations Simulation (Appendix D) used information provided by CSXT for both current and future train movements. The Tier 1 FEIS used a freight traffic growth rate through 2035 provided by CSXT. Because the Preferred Alternative is forecasted to reduce both freight travel and decrease freight travel times, freight diversions (from train to truck) are not anticipated.</p> <p>In 2011, the Baseline Simulation Report was advanced following receipt of review comments received from CSXT to reflect changes in train volumes and routing. The Amtrak Baseline Simulation OTP was recomputed based on CSXT model changes, giving Amtrak higher dispatching priority. Amtrak On-Time Performance was returned to CSXT for review. CSXT provided e-mail approval of the revised Baseline Simulation Model. This coordination with CSXT and their inputs is documented in Appendix D, "Rail Network Operations Simulation," Section 2.1.</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-36	The DEIS contains none of this analysis. See DEIS App. D. Its treatment of the harmful impact on freight traffic—and the resulting damage to the environment—falls far short of what NEPA requires. The possibility of freight traffic being diverted to the highways is "reasonably foreseeable," and would plainly have a significant impact on road conditions, energy use and air quality. Thus, NEPA requires that it be discussed in the DEIS.
Response	The Tier 1 EIS documents impacts to freight traffic, and the Preferred Alternative will not cause degradation of rail service even with the CSXT-provided growth in freight traffic through 2035, but will reduce freight delays and travel times, as documented in Section 6.3.2 and Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 Final EIS and Appendix D. Therefore, it is reasonably anticipated that the program will not cause diversion of freight from rail to trucks. Consequently, adverse effects on air quality, energy usage, road traffic conditions, etc. due to freight diversion from train to truck are not expected.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-37	The DEIS's analysis of the impact on freight is far less detailed than the analysis conducted for other passenger-rail projects.
Response	The Tier 1 EIS documents the impacts to freight traffic from the Build Alternatives, and does not cause any degradation of freight rail service. Each passenger-rail program is unique, and the level of detail provided is sufficient for a Tier 1 EIS. The Preferred Alternative will provide the greatest reduction in freight delays of all of the Build Alternatives considered

and will also reduce freight travel times. With Alternative 90B, freight train delay-minutes would decrease the most among all alternatives, improving 10 percent over the Base Alternative and 6 percent over Alternative 110, the second best Build Alternative.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment
RR-3-38 The DEIS makes no attempt to model the enormous impact of twenty years of intensive construction on the freight corridor that would be necessary to implement the 90 or 110 alternatives. The effects of such a massive construction project are simply ignored—even though such an analysis is required by the FRA’s NEPA regulations. See 64 Fed. Reg. 28550. Large-scale construction on passenger tracks and associated infrastructure like signals would occur just a few feet away from the existing freight lines, requiring trains to slow as they pass through work zones. See generally 49 C.F.R. pt. 214. In fact, for Alternatives 90B and 110, the DEIS proposes shifting existing freight tracks, necessitating that traffic stops completely. See DEIS 3-39, 3-47 (discussing “large[] track shifts”). Yet it does not even acknowledge that disruption.

Response Section 4.25 of the Tier 1 EIS discusses construction means and methods and potential impacts and mitigation measures that would be employed under each of the alternatives. More design and construction details will be known as the program progresses and will be analyzed in the Tier 2 analysis.
The commenter inaccurately implies that page 3-39 and page 3-47 discuss the shifting of tracks during construction. Permanent, post construction track shifts would be constructed in segments to allow for the increase in operating speeds. Pages 3-39 and 3-47 of the Tier 1 DEIS discuss Alternative 90B and Alternative 110 alignments where several areas between Schenectady and Syracuse would require larger track shifts to obtain an increase in operating speeds due to the existing geometry of the track.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment
RR-3-39 With regard to Alternative 90A, which would run more passenger service on the existing freight lines, the DEIS fails to account for the fact that federal law would require almost all the tracks on the Western Corridor to be upgraded to support the proposed speed. As the DEIS correctly notes, most of the existing mainline track is currently maintained to FRA Class 4 standards, which limits freight traffic to 60 m.p.h. and passenger traffic to 80 m.p.h. See 2-20, -21; 49 C.F.R. § 213.9(a). Yet Alternative 90A contemplates service going as fast as 90 m.p.h. The DEIS does not acknowledge the disruption involved in upgrading the entire line to Class 5, much less the high cost of doing so. Nor does it address the direct cost of maintaining the track to that higher standard, which has significantly lower tolerances for deviations in track geometry, or the impact on operations on a congested corridor to accommodate that work. See generally American Railway Engineering and Maintenance Of Way Association, Practical Guide to Railway Engineering 3-47 through 3-54 (2003).

Response The Tier 1 EIS discussion of Alternative 90A recognizes the need to upgrade the existing tracks from Class 4 Standards to Class 5 Standards; Tier 1 FEIS Section 5.5 presents the understanding that improvements to existing infrastructure as part of Alternative 90A will be required. Section 5.5.1 acknowledges the potential adverse impacts to existing operations of constructing Alternatives 90A, 90B, and 110. Section 5.3.3 discusses CSXT involvement in the program development and also illustrates the FRA commitment to implementing the program so as to avoid adverse effects to CSXT freight operations. Specific and more detailed construction impacts and mitigation will be further defined in the Tier 2 analysis.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment
RR-3-40 The DEIS’s cost-benefit analysis is faulty; it substantially underestimates the project’s costs and substantially overestimates its benefits. HDR Engineering conducted a cost/benefit

analysis of the Empire Corridor project. That analysis is attached as Appendix D. HDR concluded that even under the “most favorable scenario,” the costs of the project exceed the benefits by approximately \$2.3 billion (using a 7 percent discount rate). The results for less favorable scenarios are worse.

Response The Cost-Benefit Analysis used for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor is discussed in Section 5.2 and Appendix F (Capital, Operating and Maintenance Cost Estimating Methodology), and it is consistent with Amtrak’s accounting for, and determination of the operating and maintenance cost. In the future, and as appropriate, the Cost-Benefit Analysis for each of the individual supporting projects as part of the Tier 2 process will be consistent with the Federal Railroad Administration’s guidelines for Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Rail Projects.

We have reviewed the HDR analysis, and these are our findings. Costs (capital and operating/maintenance) are presented in Exhibit 6-9 in the Tier 1 Final EIS, and means of funding the capital costs are addressed in Section 5.3. Subsidies noted are for operating cost vs. annual revenue as noted in the exhibit.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-41 First, in a section entitled “Market Qualities of Successful High-Speed Rail,” the DEIS identifies several factors necessary for a successful high-speed passenger rail system—but neglects to acknowledge that the Empire Corridor project fails to meet its own conditions for success. For example, the DEIS states that a “condition for successful [high-speed passenger rail service] is having the appropriate distance between stops,” and explains that “stops 250 miles apart” are ideal. DEIS B-7. But the DEIS then proposes a system in which the stations are only 31 miles apart on average, and only 35 miles apart on the Western Corridor portion. Likewise, the DEIS states that it is a “condition for successful” service that the cities served by a high-speed rail line have “existing transit systems,” and deems it “critical” that there be population density around a station. DEIS B-8, B-9, B-27. But the DEIS then concedes that the “populations that make up each major market on the [Western] corridor” are “heavily dispersed.” Id. At B-97. Even using the DEIS’s own density benchmark of 4,000 people per square mile, only Rochester and Buffalo have the requisite density to support high-speed passenger rail.

The DEIS repeatedly acknowledges that almost all of the proposed station stops on the Western Corridor lack the requisite population density, the requisite transit connections, or both

Response The Empire Corridor across New York State is one of the oldest continually operated passenger trains routes in the United States. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to reduce trip times and increase the service. The Tier 1 EIS in describing the conditions for successful high speed rail service, builds from the concepts of offering services at different levels to support the communities along the route. Stations along the Empire Corridor are part of the historical development of passenger service. On the route, there are already significant distances between stations with a span of 61 miles between Buffalo-Depew and Rochester and 80 miles between Syracuse and Rochester, these distances are consistent with some of the stations along the Northeast Corridor, which also features high-speed train service. It also needs to be recognized that along the Empire Corridor that the stations are regional resources, with many of the passengers driving to these stations to use the intercity rail service. Station spacing along the Empire Corridor are consistent with the availability for passengers to other modes of transportation.

Ridership and Revenue projections and estimates are discussed in both Volume 1 and Appendix B, and include the criteria that will help the different alternatives achieve the program goals. There are several criteria that would make a high speed corridor program viable including serving cities with existing transit systems. The Empire Corridor program

serves the most populous and densely populated cities in the state including New York, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo.

Both the FRA and NYSDOT believe that there are no discrepancies in the methodology and findings of the ridership and revenue forecasting that is used in Volume 1 and Appendix B. All of the cities along the Empire Corridor are served by transit systems, and many include feeder route that extend beyond the city to their suburban communities.

Exhibit 3-1 presents the FRA levels of high-speed rail service, and the Emerging category (speeds up to 90 mph) has routes between 100 to 500 miles while the next level up, Regional (90 mph-125 mph), has routes up to 500 miles apart. The 250-mile separation would be more appropriate for very high-speed rail in a less densely populated area. The existing Empire Corridor service has existing station stops that serve the largest cities in the states along the route, and the service to these cities would contribute to the ridership potential for the service, making the service more viable. The remainder of this section in Appendix B cites conditions for successful high-speed rail service: (1) locating service in metropolitan areas with transit systems and (2) locating service in metropolitan areas with strong Gross Domestic Product. The existing Empire Service servicing city centers in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Utica, Syracuse meets these conditions for successful high-speed rail service, but this requires station stops less than 250 miles apart. The Northeast Corridor (current Acela schedules) make stops more frequently than 250 miles and Acela is considered a successful high-speed service. Population centers in the northeast are routinely much closer than 250 miles with service to reflect the population centers.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-42 The DEIS recognizes that high-speed passenger rail works best in “regions with high congestion levels,” such as in the Northeast Corridor where I-95 is often backed up, making travel by automobile or bus difficult and unpredictable. But the DEIS then concedes that the Western Corridor is not plagued by congestion, acknowledging that the “presence of an uncongested Thruway . . . provides quick auto trips between [cities] on this sub-corridor and quickly connects auto users from the origin to their destination.” B-97

Response As discussed in ES-2.2 and Chapter 1 of the Tier 1 EIS, the purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, service frequency and passenger amenities. Relieving congestion levels in the corridor would be a benefit of the program but is not the purpose or identified as one of the needs for the program. The Empire Corridor program would provide benefits throughout the corridor including providing better reliability, travel times, service frequency and passenger amenities. The corridor has been identified in three segments because each have of the unique operating characteristics of each. However, the program is anticipated to provide benefits for travelers between on the entire corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-43 The DEIS also fails to acknowledge that regional planning studies do not endorse the idea of high-speed rail along the Empire Corridor. While there are many community planning studies addressing how to restore and grow the region’s economy, none identifies high-speed passenger rail as the solution. To the contrary, these studies conclude that tax dollars should be spent on attracting businesses, renovating declining neighborhoods and investing in schools (to name just a few examples). No planning study recommends prioritizing high-speed passenger rail above these and many other compelling public needs. In fact, although the DEIS notes that there have been many federal, state and local planning groups that have studied the feasibility of high-speed passenger rail—and how it might fit into overall regional planning efforts—the DEIS does not integrate or even meaningfully engage these studies and their conclusions.

Response	<p>Section 4.2 and Appendix G, Section 1 of the Tier 1 FEIS cites more than 20 state, regional, and local plans, many of which indicate support for improved access to rail service including improvements to the rail corridor, strengthened alternative modes of transportation, improved on-time performance, introduction of high- and higher-speed rail, and revitalization of station areas. The plans cited for program consistency include: New York State Rail Plan, NYSDOT Multimodal Transportation Program submission: 2009-2014 (March 20) as well as 26 county and municipal plans. The program is also consistent with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, as addressed in Section 4.2 and Appendix G.1. The U.S. Conference of Mayor's report addressed the substantial economic benefits that would accrue with implementation of high-speed rail service to the Albany region. This report projects that incremental speed improvements (79 to 90 mph) and more frequent service (32 roundtrips from NYC to Albany) could result in an addition of approximately 3,184 jobs in 2035 in the Capital District/Albany region alone. This report also forecasts increases in 2035 of sales output in the Capital District alone of \$357.9 million per year and increases in 2035 wages of \$158.7 million per year.</p> <p>The Build Alternatives advanced for analysis in the Tier 1 DEIS meet the program's primary needs: to reduce infrastructure constraints and accommodate existing and projected (ridership) demand.</p> <p>Contributing to "economic revitalization by accommodating forecasted growth in population and employment and corridor rail freight operations" is one of the program's transportation-related goals and supports the program's purpose and need of accommodating existing and future demand. Growing the region's economy in general and in a non-transportation manner is not a program objective and is beyond the scope of this program and review.</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-44	Nor does the DEIS acknowledge that the 90 Alternatives do not even qualify as "high speed" rail as Congress defines it.
Response	The Federal Railroad Administration's High Speed Intercity Passenger (HSIPR) Program outlines a 3-Tiered Strategy for Passenger Rail, that would include the 4 Build Alternatives (90A, 90B, 110 and 125). https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0134
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-45	Another disturbing omission is the DEIS's failure to reconcile its ridership projections with the dramatically different projections in the 2006 study by the state Senate Task Force. The Senate study projected that traffic between the New York City area and points on the Western Corridor would constitute only 5 percent of all new ridership for a high-speed passenger rail line similar to Alternative 110. The DEIS, however, concludes that traffic between the New York City area and points on the Western Corridor will constitute 65 percent of the new ridership for Alternative 110. See DEIS App. B. The DEIS offers no explanation for this disparity. At a minimum, New York must explain why it chose to ignore the Senate Report and why it reached such a dramatically different conclusion.
Response	<p>The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program actually projects lower ridership for the three of the four Build Alternatives, representing a more conservative estimate. The projected ridership in 2035 is: 2.3 million for Alternative 90A, 2.6 million for the Alternative 90B; 2.8 million for the 110 Alternative; and 4.3 million riders for Alternative 125.</p> <p>Section 3 of The New York State Senate High Speed Rail Task Force Report (2006), discuss ridership growth with the various alternatives with projected ridership growth to 2025, it is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.1.6 (page 3-9) of that document with a possible ridership of 3,946,000 in 2025 for Alternative E.</p> <p>Since 2001, ridership on the Buffalo to Albany-Rensselaer portion of Empire Corridor has more than doubled. Although comprising a substantially smaller proportion of overall</p>

ridership on Empire Corridor, Empire Corridor West has the highest growth rate (as a percentage) on the corridor. It experienced a proportionally larger growth rate than the New York City to Albany segment. The New York State Senate Task Force Report echoes this conclusion with ridership increases projected along Empire Corridor West. The report states: “The most dramatic ridership increases in percentage terms occur in the west corridor, where current ridership today is low relative to the south corridor.” The report states that Empire Corridor West was found to represent 16 percent of the total ridership and 56 percent of the total projected growth (for Case D-New Operations Plan), with an increase of ridership growth along Empire Corridor West of 316%. Appendix B of the Tier 1 EIS states: “Long Trips on the Empire Corridor – or trips that connect pairs such as NYC to Buffalo, NYC to Rochester, and NYC to Syracuse – account for about 60 percent of all growth forecast in all of the build alternative speeds studied.” This is roughly consistent with the 56 percent growth projected for Case D of the NYS Senate HSR Task Force report.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-46 Second, the DEIS overestimates benefits by basing projected ridership numbers on an inflated estimate of the region’s population in the years ahead. Although the DEIS states that a goal of the project is to “[c]ontribute to economic revitalization by accommodating forecasted growth in population,” ES-6, the DEIS acknowledges that its own estimates show “a slight population decrease in many of the counties” on the Western Corridor by 2035. See DEIS 2-10, 2-11 (emphasis added).

Response The projected population and employment for the Empire Corridor’s nine MPO regions are based upon the U.S. Census 2010 data. The Ridership and Revenue Forecasting Study indicates that an improved rail service, in terms of improved travel time, frequency of service, and reliability, will offer more travel choices (a program goal) with a target to attract passengers from their automobile, contributing to improved air quality and other environmental benefits. Appendix B of the Tier 1 FEIS explains that most of the new ridership along the Empire Corridor will be based on traveling to New York City, due in part to the ease of train travel to NYC vs. other modes. Train travel often brings a passenger closer to their final destination, often within walking distance, and avoids logistical issues such as parking constraints, which are particularly challenging in NYC. It is also anticipated that improved service on the western portion of the Empire Corridor will create new travel opportunities, supporting a program goal to increase travel choices.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-47 Moreover, the DEIS’s population estimates are unreliable. They are overoptimistic and deviate substantially from the population estimates prepared by the state-funded (and Census Bureau-affiliated) Cornell Program on Applied Demographics. For example, the Cornell Program estimates that by 2035 the Western Corridor will lose more than three times the population that the DEIS projects. Similarly, when the Western Corridor and Southern Corridors are taken together, the DEIS projects approximately six times the population growth that Cornell projects.

Response The reference cited by the commenter does not forecast population estimates; it uses only historic data and continues the rate of change in population for the future. Section 4.3 of the Tier 1 EIS discusses the methodology used to identify future population in the nine MPO areas, eight Metropolitan Statistical Areas and population statistics for 25 counties in the Empire Corridor obtained from the 2010 U.S. Census Decennial Census.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-48 The DEIS does not identify how much it will cost to purchase or lease the land, and does not explain how New York expects to pay for it, even though the Framework Agreement expressly recognized New York’s obligation to pay CSXT the cost of land acquisition or use. Third, the DEIS massively underestimates the project’s costs. Although the DEIS specifically

notes the immense cost of land acquisition for the 125 option, it largely sidesteps this issue with regard to the other build options (Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110). CSXT owns hundreds of miles of the right-of-way on which the proposed passenger service will operate. That property is a key segment of CSXT's line from Chicago to the New York-area ports, a right-of-way stretching across six states with a value in the billions.

Response The Tier 1 DEIS addresses broad corridor-level issues. Subsequent phases, or tiers, will analyze in greater detail site-specific proposals based on the decisions made in Tier 1. As stated on Pages 5-3 and 5-4, the Tier 1 DEIS recognizes the principle that "CSXT is entitled to compensation for the use, acquisition, or diminishment in value of its property..." The cost of compensation for use of CSXT right-of-way cannot be determined at this time and will be subject to future negotiations.

Program costs are presented in Chapters 3 and 6 for all of the Build Alternatives. The Tier 1 Final EIS cost estimates did not include the cost for compensating CSXT for the use of the right-of-way. However, the 90 and 110 Alternatives accounted for significant property acquisition within the cost estimates. In estimating the cost of land acquisition, five distinct categories of land acquisition types were developed – prime city, town, suburban, farmland, and marsh. Each land category was assigned a unique per acre dollar value. With regards to building acquisitions, three distinct categories were developed – business, residence, and outbuilding. The values were assigned using square foot (SF) of building size.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-49 "Presenting accurate market demand information [is] necessary to ensure a well informed and reasoned decision, both of which are procedural requirements under NEPA." By relying on population and employment numbers that are not accurate—and by neglecting to acknowledge that the Empire Corridor project does not meet its own requirements for a successful high-speed rail program—the DEIS's assessment of market demand is deficient.

Response The population and employment statistics presented in the Tier 1 EIS were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. According to the 2019 U.S. Census, New York's six largest metropolitan areas (New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, Syracuse, Albany) lie along this corridor. New York City is the nation's largest economic center, and is one of the three largest economic centers in the world, along with London and Tokyo.

Appendix B presents the results of the "Ridership and Revenue Forecasting," that formed the basis for estimating market demand for the Empire Corridor Program. Within this report, Appendix A presents a review of the modeling methodology. This effort included a comprehensive literature review, including review of other statewide transportation models, to devise an intercity multimodal travel demand forecasting model. Modeling also considered methods used for the California statewide High-Speed Rail forecasting, as well as that used for the Northeast Corridor Model.

The program's model included examining market pairs for cities, including nearby cities outside the state, such as Boston and Washington. The modeling effort included examination of other modes (highway, air travel, bus), in addition to intercity passenger rail. The forecasted populations and employment were the basis for the growth factored into forecasted travel demand. The model included an origin-destination analysis that also used a statewide average daily demand matrix and corridor annual vehicle traffic (based on toll data for the New York State Thruway). The Empire Corridor Intercity Travel Demand Model was successfully calibrated to match the observed travel data.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-50 The FRA has deemed the compensation question sufficiently critical that it will not provide federal funding for high-speed rail projects on a freight railroad's right-of-way until this question has been resolved.

Response	Applicable federal laws require that, as a condition of receiving a grant for projects that use a railroad owner's right of way, the grant recipient shall have in place an agreement addressing its shared use by the parties. As program elements of the Empire Corridor Program advances to the grant agreement stage, the Department will fully comply with this provision of the Federal Register/Vol. 74, No. 119 Appendix 3.4.3.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-51	A decisionmaker cannot compare the true costs of the build options absent an analysis of the cost of land acquisition or other compensation that must be paid to the property owner for the use of its land. The selection of a Preferred Alternative in the absence of such critical information would be arbitrary and capricious.
Response	Program costs are presented in Chapters 3 and 6 for all of the Build Alternatives. The Tier 1 Final EIS cost estimates did not include the cost for compensating CSXT for the use of the right-of-way. The cost of compensating use of CSXT right-of-way will need to account for factors that include current operations and OTP performance/operational delays. However, property acquisition costs have been accounted for in the cost estimates of the Build Alternatives. In estimating the cost of land acquisition, five distinct categories of land acquisition types were developed – prime city, town, suburban, farmland, and marsh. Each land category was assigned a unique per acre dollar value. With regards to building acquisitions, three distinct categories were developed – business, residence, and outbuilding. The values were assigned using square foot (SF) of building size.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-52	The DEIS ignores many other costs, including the cost of compensating the owners of industrial parcels on the far side of the passenger tracks, and on the northward- connecting branches and regional lines, for the diminishment in their property value caused by the loss of rail access. And for Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110, the DEIS fails to adequately account for operational costs, including the significant costs of upgrading the circuitry that controls warning systems at sidings and grade crossings.
Response	All customer access is maintained in the current conceptual track layouts, so no loss was estimated for diminishment of property value. The operational costs are included in the cost estimates. It is noted in Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 that a new signal system and grade crossing modifications are major elements in the additional infrastructure required for Alternatives 90B and 110, respectively. Costs for the signal system, warning systems, public and private grade crossings, and PTC upgrades are included.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-53	The DEIS fails to take a hard look at noise and vibration impacts. In fact, the DEIS fails to follow the steps set forth in the FRA's noise manual, despite claiming to follow that methodology. DEIS 4-238. Curiously, the DEIS relies on the 1998 version of the FRA's manual, see DEIS 4-238 n.170, even though the manual was updated in 2005 and again in 2012. The current version of the FRA noise manual states: "[I]n view of the sensitivity of the noise criteria to the existing noise exposure, careful characterization of the existing noise is important." FRA Manual for High-Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment 3-9 (2012). And when the project "is to be shared with an existing rail transit corridor . . . Noise measurements at representative locations along the corridor are essential to estimate existing noise accurately." Id. At 4-13 (emphasis added). The DEIS does not do any of this. It also omits any discussion of noise impact during construction, as required by federal regulations. See 64 Fed. Reg. 28556.
Response	Thank you for pointing out this apparent oversight. The reference to the 1998 version of FRA Manual is corrected to reflect the use of the 2012 version. The reference does not affect

the analysis or change the conclusions of the Tier 1 FEIS. For the General Noise Assessment used in the Tier 1 FEIS, noise measurements are not required to estimate existing levels. According to the FTA/FRA guidance, existing noise levels were estimated based on the noise exposure values in Table 5-7 of the FTA Manual. This method of assessment is appropriate for a 400-plus-mile corridor in a Tier 1 FEIS. As appropriate for this point in the program development, the Tier 1 FEIS states that there is the potential for severe noise impacts throughout the program area. NYSDOT will conduct a detailed noise analysis, including a comprehensive noise measurement program, for the Tier 2 analysis. This analysis would require further engineering and operational analysis along with site-specific land use data throughout the corridor. Similarly, without detailed engineering design to develop detailed construction phasing, staging and equipment usage by location, a construction noise impact analysis cannot be conducted at this time.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-54 The DEIS fails to tabulate impacted buildings, another required step. Part of the General Noise Assessment is a “Noise Impact Inventory,” which requires the assessor to “tabulate buildings and sites that lie within” previously mapped “impact contours,” and to “[p]repare summary tables showing the number of buildings and dwelling units within each impact zone for each alternative.” FRA Noise Manual at 4-17. The DEIS notes simply that “there were noise sensitive receptors within” the area that might be affected, providing no detail as to their location, type, or quantity. DEIS 4-240. It then states that “a detailed noise assessment is necessary to determine whether noise levels would exceed the applicable impact criteria.” Id. At 4-248. This approach contradicts the FRA and New York’s promise that the DEIS would “[a]ssess locations where the change in noise levels would result in severe, moderate, or no impact.” Tier 1 EIS Environmental Impact Assessment Methodologies 28 (2011).

Response Section 4.21 (Noise and Vibration) of the Tier 1 EIS correctly follows the steps described in FRA’s high-Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment and the program’s Environmental Impact Assessment Methodologies (2011). Chapter 4 of the FRA Manual contains procedures of an initial evaluation of potential noise impacts from a high-speed rail project. “The goals of an initial noise evaluation are to identify the potential for impacts and to determine their order of magnitude so that a more detailed analysis can be done in areas where significant impacts are found during later phases of the design process. [Emphasis added.] The Manual further states that a General Assessment be conducted in the early planning stage to help establish most promising corridor locations. Any estimate of the number of buildings impacted would require detailed information that is not available at this conceptual level of design. Tier 2 analyses would include a more detailed analysis including the number of receptors that would experience impacts from the Build Alternatives. Exhibit 4-32 of the Tier 1 FEIS summarizes the potential impacts to each of the ten segments of the Empire Corridor. As shown in Exhibit 4-32 and Section 4.21.4 of the Tier 1 FEIS, five segments of the corridor are anticipated to experience severe impacts and a sixth segment would experience moderate impacts. Four segments would experience reductions in noise levels.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-55 Nor does the DEIS include the required preliminary assessment of what noise mitigation would be effective. “The final step of the General Assessment is to estimate the noise mitigation measures required to minimize the number of impacts.” FRA Noise Manual at 4-18. The Manual provides procedures for making “order-of-magnitude” estimates of the height of barriers that would be sufficient to mitigate noise, and to estimate the cost involved. Id. At 4-19. The FRA and New York had previously said that they would “[e]xamine the feasibility of potential mitigation measures” during Tier 1. See Tier 1 EIS Environmental Impact Assessment Methodologies 28. However, the DEIS simply offers a

laundry list of possible mitigation approaches and then defers the feasibility analysis to Tier 2. DEIS 4-249.

Response Section 4.21.5 of the Tier 1 FEIS discusses three different types of mitigation options: noise source mitigation measures; path control mitigation measures; and receptor control measures. Several measures in each of the categories are also provided as potential measures that would be investigated in Tier 2 analysis, as needed and appropriate.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-56 There must be adequate separation—at least 30 feet, measured from track center to track center—between the track used for freight service and the track used for passenger service exceeding 90 m.p.h. This will account for the risk posed by the wind forces generated by passing high-speed trains, as well as by the dust, debris and ice that may be dislodged by a passing train. It also accounts for potential encroachment by maintenance crews. The FRA has emphasized the need for adequate separation, deeming it a “critical” issue requiring careful consideration. FRA, High-Speed Passenger Rail Safety Strategy 13 (2009). And a recent FRA Technical Report stated that “while having track centers less than 25 feet [apart] may have been acceptable for past transit lines” running at lower speeds on shared right-of-ways, “operating high-speed trains on adjacent tracks may be unacceptable” today. FRA, Investigating Technical Challenges and Research Needs Related to Shared Corridors for High-Speed Passenger and Railroad Freight Operations 13 (2013).

Response There is no industry standard or design criterion that declares 30 feet of separation between 110 mph passenger and lower-speed freight tracks as either adequate or inadequate. Moreover, passenger and freight trains traveling in opposite directions at speeds approaching 160 mph for passenger trains are comingled on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) with track centers nearing 15 feet in many locations. The FRA document acknowledges examples of existing light rail transit vehicles and freight trains comingled or at closer than 30 feet track centers without commenting on the 30’ separation as a requirement. Since a distance of 30 feet was recommended by CSXT for passenger trains traveling in speeds in excess of 90 mph, the conceptual alignment of Alternative 110 strives to meet this recommendation.

FRA, Vision for High-Speed Passenger Rail in America (2009), Page 8, states that “the advent of Positive Train Control (PTC), crash energy management, and other advances provides the United States with an opportunity to revise its safety approach in a manner that accelerates the development of high-speed rail...” There is no suggestion in the commenter’s cited reference that 25 or 30 feet is or is not acceptable; the reference only refers the matter for future study.

In addition, page 26 of the report, “Investigating Technical Challenges and Research Needs Related to Shared Corridors for High-Speed Passenger and Railroad Freight Operations (2013)” states that “CSX meanwhile has only agreed to 90 mph passenger trains on the Empire Corridor from New York to Buffalo,” with no track center mentioned.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-57 There must be adequate grade separation and warning mechanisms at all public and private grade crossings. There are almost 200 such crossings on the Western Corridor. See DEIS 2-346. The grade separation must satisfy the standards established by the FRA. See Office of Railroad Safety, Highway- Rail Grade Crossing Guidelines for High-Speed Rail (Nov. 2009). Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110 present complex technical challenges to ensure properly functioning warning systems. The DEIS does not discuss those challenges, or the legal issues surrounding private, at-grade crossings.

Response Section 3.4.4 of Appendix E of the Tier 1 FEIS discusses the both the public and private grade crossings in the different sections of the Empire Corridor and recognizes that that current private crossings are equipped with “passive warning systems.” The importance of

safe railroad operation is recognized and discussed in Section 2.6 of the Tier 1 FEIS. FRA/NYS DOT recognizes that more detailed study and design, as necessary, is required in the Tier 1 FEIS for each at-grade crossing that remains in each of the Build Alternatives. The analysis is anticipated to include whether these at-grade crossings would be either enhanced or eliminated, depending on the final design speed and be consistent with the FRA's regulations and guidance.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-58 Fences with detection circuits may need to be installed to provide early warnings of derailments. In addition, access control fencing must be installed in areas where there could be pedestrians or trespassers.

Response All feasible safety measure including those cited by the commenter will be considered, if appropriate as the design stages progress and will be analyzed in the Tier 2 analysis. The Tier 1 FEIS addresses fencing and other safety features for the Preferred Alternative in Section 3.3.3, under the "Safety" section. The Tier 1 FEIS accounts for several types of fencing and warning systems:

- 1) Perimeter fencing has been accounted for in the cost estimate on both sides of the ROW.
- 2) Private crossings will be protected by fence gates and signs, not active warning systems.
- 3) Existing grade crossing warning/protection will be upgraded as needed with crossing gates, signs, crossbucks, flashers, etc.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-59 Ensuring that customers have access to freight service must be accomplished in a way that does not require freight trains to operate on dedicated passenger tracks.

Response As stated in Sections ES-6, 1.5 and 1.6, one of the High Speed Empire Corridor Program's performance objectives is to "Minimize interference with freight rail operations" and one of its goals includes "Contribute to economic revitalization by accommodating forecasted growth in population and employment and corridor rail freight operations." NYSDOT is committed to reaching the objectives and goals including ensuring working with CSXT to develop a program that accommodates all users, including freight customers. Localized controlled sidings, passenger bypasses and dedicated freight/passenger track segments can be used to minimize congestion and reduced speeds resulting from operations of freight and passenger trains on each alternative. The proposed flyovers are a capital intensive, but effective infrastructure improvement that could be designed to reduce passenger/freight interference. The concepts for the three flyovers presented in this Tier 1 FEIS would be developed further in Tier 2 design. Other alternatives could be explored by developing a series of joint improvements both for station access and layouts and track/signal systems and alignment.

Commenter Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation

Comment RR-3-60 The DEIS fails to answer the question of who will own the proposed passenger railroad and its infrastructure, and who will operate and maintain the railroad. Consequently, it fails to consider whether that entity—or entities—will have the legal and financial capacity to undertake the mitigation and compensation measures the DEIS contemplates. As noted above, CSXT will not own, maintain, dispatch or operate on passenger-exclusive tracks. The DEIS must be revised to address this glaring omission. It must identify the entity, or at least the possible entities, that will own and that will operate the passenger rail service on the Empire Corridor. It must explain how these entities can be expected to pay the substantial expenses the DEIS relies upon. And it must confirm that they will have the legal capacity to carry out their responsibilities. An EIS that evaluates alternatives based on "unexplained assumptions" violates NEPA

Response	Section 2.1 reviews the ownership, operating and maintenance responsibilities for the Empire Corridor, and changes to the current situation have not been negotiated. At this stage of the program, ownership, operation and maintenance of the railroad has not been formally identified. NYSDOT will provide further information as the program progresses and further details are developed and will be discussed and provided in the Tier 2 analysis.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-61	An Environmental Impact Statement must discuss “whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.” 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27. Here, the DEIS fails to properly analyze the project’s negative impact on air quality, an issue at the heart of NEPA. As discussed above, the DEIS does not adequately examine the environmental impact of moving freight traffic off the rails and onto the highways, and the attendant obligations under the Clean Air Act.
Response	Section 4.19 of the Tier 1 EIS analyzes potential impacts to air quality and Section 4.20.4 includes an analysis and discussion of greenhouse gas emissions, which are both anticipated to result in net reductions of air pollutants. Further analyses will be conducted in Tier 2 analysis as the program progresses. The Tier 1 FEIS determined that the none of the Build Alternatives would negatively affect freight train travel times, and therefore no substantial shift of freight traffic from rails to highways would be expected to occur in the future with this program.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-62	The DEIS largely avoids questions of cumulative impact. Regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Transportation and the FRA all require evaluation of a project’s cumulative impact. The DEIS does not address the impact on upstate New York air service if those passengers do in fact divert to rail.
Response	Section 4.24 of the Tier 1 FEIS analyzes potential indirect and cumulative impacts under the Build Alternatives. As discussed in Appendix B, Ridership and Revenue Forecasting, it is projected that the mode share for air travel, which was 1.113% in 2012, will decrease to a range of 0.881% to 0.951% under the Build Alternatives in 2035. Impacts from ridership under each of the Build Alternatives, including passengers shifting from air travel and other modes to rail, have been incorporated into pertinent sections of Appendix E and Chapter 4 of the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-63	The DEIS lacks any analysis of high-speed passenger rail as a nascent technology that has yet to be implemented anywhere in the United States.
Response	Section 3.1 discusses the improvements to station stops, equipment and other physical improvements required under each of the Build Alternatives. Such improvements utilize established technologies for infrastructure and rolling stock such as employing existing rail coach and locomotive equipment and standard track geometries and signal systems. Even Alternative 125 will use currently available locomotive and coach configurations already standard on Amtrak's Acela express service.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-64	The DEIS does not adequately address the difficulties that will arise from building the project section-by-section. There is no analysis of how the work along the Empire Corridor will be staged, which segments will be constructed first, and how a segmented build process will impact operations. In light of the DEIS’s assumption that the entire project will take decades to complete, the failure to analyze this critical issue deprives decisionmakers of information they need to reach a reasoned judgment.

Response	<p>As the program progresses, the Tier 2 process will include more details on the means and methods of program construction and potential impacts in each segment. Section 3.3 describes construction staging for Alternatives 90B and 110: “For the 90 mph and 110 mph Alternatives, the new higher speed tracks for passenger trains would be installed on the north side of the existing railroad alignment. This would avoid conflicts with the existing train movements on the route while the new tracks for the higher speed were being installed and would minimize construction impacts on rail traffic.”</p> <p>To account for complex track construction phasing, additional costs were added in the program cost estimate for certain sections. Various areas along the corridor will require complex phasing plans to maintain existing freight and passenger service during construction of the proposed alternatives. A value ranging from 20% to 150% of the trackwork costs was assigned based on expected complexity.</p> <p>Staging and phasing will be coordinated so that new track and crossovers are installed off-peak and cutover prior to removals/realignment of existing track. Outages will be coordinated with CSXT to limit impact to daily operations. Preferences will be made to piggyback on adjacent outages required for annual maintenance/SOGR work.</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-65	The DEIS does not address the project’s impact on elderly and handicapped individuals.
Response	<p>As discussed in Section 4.3.4, each of the Build Alternatives are anticipated to provide positive benefits to the general traveling public including those at least 65 years of age and disabled individuals, primarily by improving mobility and travel choices within the corridor. The Environmental Justice and Title VI analysis has been modified to include persons at least 65 years of age and those with disabilities. In addition, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations have also been identified as part of this impact assessment. The results of this analysis are presented in Section 4.4 of the Tier 1 FEIS and in Appendix G.4.</p>
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-66	The DEIS fails to include any discussion of what steps will be taken to ensure that CSXT has sufficient protection from potential liability arising from passenger operations on its right-of-way.
Response	Freight and passenger operations are comingled on the right-of-way today. Any potential changes to current agreements addressing liability will be addressed in the future.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-67	I am writing on behalf of CSX Transportation (“CSXT”) to request a 30-day extension to the deadline for comments on the Tier One Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIS”) for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. We ask that the deadline be extended from March 24, 2014 to April 23, 2014.
Response	The Public Comment Period was extended to April 30, 2014.
Commenter	Renjel, Jr., Louis E., Vice President, CSX Transportation
Comment RR-3-68	Because the 125 alternative would create a largely separate passenger-rail corridor that would minimize interference with freight traffic, it is the most promising of the build alternatives.
Response	Because Alternative 125 would maintain regional service on the existing Empire Corridor, it would offer no benefits or improvements to existing freight service compared to the Base

Alternative. Therefore, it would not perform as well as Alternatives 90B or 110, which provide additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter **Smith, Michael V., President, Finger Lakes Railway Corp.**

Comment
RR-4-1 FGLK believes that the primary focus should be on the 90 mph option with emphasis on infrastructure improvements that will improve the speed, consistencies, and efficiencies of operations for both freight and passenger services.

Response Thank you for taking the time to review the alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your comment supporting the 90A and 90B Alternatives has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Smith, Michael V., President, Finger Lakes Railway Corp.**

Comment
RR-4-2 Since freight service is primary on the Empire Corridor, connecting and growing freight operations, such as FGLK's and the Susquehanna's at Solvay, NY (as two examples), should be unimpeded and physically enhanced as part of the improvement program(s).

Response Your participation and comments from New York State railroads comprise an important part of the Tier 1 EIS process. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic has been an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains (of all of the alternatives considered, as shown on Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 FEIS. The installation of additional third and fourth tracks under Alternative 90B would add capacity and provide the ability to route passenger trains around freight trains even while passenger trains operate at higher speeds. In 2035, Alternative 90B would also result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo.

Commenter **Mowery, Chad, Genesee & Wyoming, Inc.**

Comment
RR-5-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for reviewing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic has been an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to the detailed response to comment RR-4-2 summarizing Alternative 90B's favorable performance with respect to freight operations compared to the Base and most of the other alternatives.

Commenter **Mowery, Chad, Genesee & Wyoming, Inc.**

Comment
RR-5-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response We appreciate your review and comments discussing the alternatives for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the

selection of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As noted above, in 2035, Alternative 90B would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains (of all of the alternatives considered), and would result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo. As described in Chapter 6 of the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would improve freight operations compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter	Cheshier, Gregory A., Vice President of Operations, Genesee Valley Transportation Company, Inc.
Comment RR-6-1	Genesee Valley Transportation encourages the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90mph A, 90mph B, 110mph and 125mph alternatives, put forth in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), commingle freight and high speed passenger rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Participation by New York State railroads is a valued part of the process for the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to the detailed response to comment RR-4-2 summarizing Alternative 90B's favorable performance with respect to freight operations compared to the Base and most of the other alternatives.
Commenter	Blabey II, Eugene H., President/CEO, Avon & Lakeville Railroad Corporation, Livonia
Comment RR-7-1	I'm concerned that, if implemented, proposals for high speed passenger trains on the rail corridor linking Buffalo and Schenectady will negatively impact service from CSX at Genesee Junction (Henrietta, NY).
Response	Participation by New York State railroads is a valued part of the process for the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State was an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As indicated on Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered in 2035, and would result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo.
Commenter	Blabey II, Eugene H., President/CEO, Avon & Lakeville Railroad Corporation, Livonia
Comment RR-7-2	I urge NYSDOT to do everything it can to help the economy in upstate New York by protecting CSX freight service on the Empire Corridor. Please select the base alternative in the DEIS.
Response	Thank you for your review and comment on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State was an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative. The installation of approximately 370 miles of trackage under Alternative 90B would add capacity and would provide the ability to route passenger trains around freight trains even while passenger trains operate at higher speeds.

Commenter	Goss, Raymond A., President, Massena Terminal Railroad
Comment RR-8-1	The Massena Terminal Railroad wishes to express its support for the "Base Alternative"... We therefore respectfully request your support of the "Base Alternative"...
Response	Thank you for your review and comment on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. As noted above, the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will add approximately 370 miles of tracks, resulting in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Fogel, David, Deputy Director, Metro-North Railroad
Comment RR-9-1	Metro-North generally supports increased intercity traffic as long as no detrimental impact, including financial, results on the predominant commuter rail service. A corridor-wide operating and capital (normalized replacement) cost allocation cost sharing mechanism based on the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) Section 212 Northeast Corridor cost allocation formula would be an appropriate model for an Empire Corridor South shared use mechanism.
Response	Thank you for taking time to review the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and sharing your comments on use of a cost-allocation and cost-sharing mechanism based on Section 212 of PRIIA for commuter and intercity passenger rail. Chapter 5 of the Tier 1 FEIS indicates that future cost-sharing arrangements will be governed by Section 209 of PRIIA. The Service Development Plan cites PRIIA NEC requirements and indicates that, for the Empire Corridor, NYSDOT will share both the capital and operating and maintenance costs of the program according to formulas based on shared benefits and intensity of use of the infrastructure by the parties. Tier 2 assessments for the program, as the design is advanced, will include further evaluation and refinement of funding and cost-sharing and cost allocation mechanisms and models.
Commenter	Fogel, David, Deputy Director, Metro-North Railroad
Comment RR-9-2	Please note that Metro-North is planning a future phase of the Penn Station Access project that would add a new Manhattan West Side link via Amtrak's Empire Connection for Hudson Line trains to serve Penn Station with a potential for new intermediate stations in Manhattan.
Response	The future Penn Station Access for Metro North via the West Side Connection has been included in Exhibit G-43 in Appendix G.21, Indirect and Cumulative Impacts. The interrelationship with this project will be further considered when the design is advanced in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Fogel, David, Deputy Director, Metro-North Railroad
Comment RR-9-3	Please note that based on preliminary engineering, the Poughkeepsie Main Line Track and interlockings locations shown for the Build Alternative Engineered Track Schematics are subject to change.
Response	Thank you for sharing a reminder that the Poughkeepsie Main Line and interlockings locations for the Build Alternative Engineered Track Schematics may change. As the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail program progresses to the Tier 2 assessments, detailed evaluation of potential designs and further coordination with MetroNorth regarding Hudson Line improvements will be performed.

Commenter	Dingman, Robert, President, New York & Lake Erie Railroad
Comment RR-10-1	We are concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Participation by New York State railroads is a valued part of the process for the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As indicated on Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered in 2035, and would result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo.
Commenter	Dingman, Robert, President, New York & Lake Erie Railroad
Comment RR-10-2	I, Robert O. Dingman, Jr., President of the New York & Lake Erie Railroad, encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your review and comment on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State was an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative. The installation of approximately 370 miles of tracks under Alternative 90B would add capacity and provide the ability to route passenger trains around freight trains even while passenger trains operate at higher speeds.
Commenter	Fenno, Nathan R., President, The New York Susquehanna and Western Railway Corporation
Comment RR-11-1	we encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to continue to provide safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS comingle freight and high speed rail significantly constrain freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your review and comment on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. As noted above, the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will add approximately 370 additional miles of additional tracks, resulting in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Saracen, Sandra, Ontario Midland Railroad Corp.
Comment RR-12-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Participation by New York State railroads is a valued part of the process for the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to the detailed response to comment RR-4-2 summarizing Alternative 90B's favorable performance with respect to freight operations compared to the Base and most of the other

alternatives.

Commenter **Saracen, Sandra, Ontario Midland Railroad Corp.**

Comment
RR-12-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for reviewing the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. As noted above, the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will add trackage with approximately 370 additional miles, resulting in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative.

Commenter **Fink, David A., President, Pan Am Southern LLC**

Comment
RR-13-1 PAS is also concerned with the potential impact of the Project on the ability of PAS to efficiently interchange traffic with CSXT in New York and elsewhere.

Response Participation by New York State railroads is a valued part of the process for the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic was an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As indicated on Exhibit 6-8 of the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered in 2035, and would result in one of the lowest trip times for freight between Selkirk Yard, outside Albany, and Buffalo. Alternative 90B would result in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative. The installation of approximately 370 miles of additional tracks under Alternative 90B would add capacity and would provide the ability to route passenger trains around freight trains even while passenger trains operate at higher speeds.

Commenter **Fink, David A., President, Pan Am Southern LLC**

Comment
RR-13-2 Since alternatives 90A, 90B and 110 will each cause commingling of freight and passenger service, there is a real concern that these options will substantially limit the ability of railroads to grow to meet heightened customer demand. For that reason, PAS opposes these proposals.

Response Thank you for reviewing the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. As noted above, the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will add approximately 370 miles of tracks, resulting in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative.

Commenter **Goss, Raymond A., President, Rochester & Southern Railroad, Inc.**

Comment
RR-14-1 The Rochester & Southern Railroad wishes to express its support for the "Base Alternative" We therefore respectfully request your support of the "Base Alternative"...

Response Thank you for reviewing the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State was an important factor in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in better segregation of passenger trains from freight trains than the Base Alternative. The installation of approximately 370 miles of additional tracks under Alternative 90B would add capacity and would provide the ability to route passenger trains around freight trains even while passenger trains operate at higher speeds.

Commenter	Galloway, Drew, Chief of Planning, Amtrak
Comment RR-15-1	Chief of planning for Amtrak for the Northeast Corridor. What I am happy to endorse is the process. In that respect, I think the alternatives that have been discussed and evaluated are pragmatic, spanning in range in terms of investment potential and in ridership and in revenue, and from an Amtrak perspective, we are very pleased to support the process.
Response	Thank you for offering your comments on the process for the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

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O-108-1	Edic, Steven, Plant Manager, Scepter New York
O-108-2	Edic, Steven, Plant Manager, Scepter New York
O-109-1	Rhode, Steve, Vice President - Rail, Schneider National Carriers, Inc.
O-109-2	Rhode, Steve, Vice President - Rail, Schneider National Carriers, Inc.
O-110-1	Pagliuca, David, Schnitzer
O-110-2	Pagliuca, David, Schnitzer
O-111-1	Shea, Harry, Shea Lumber
O-111-2	Shea, Harry, Shea Lumber
O-112-1	Hodgkiss, Charles, Rail Transport Consultant, Shelly Materials
O-113-1	Grandstaff, Jeff, ShipCarsNow
O-113-2	Grandstaff, Jeff, ShipCarsNow
O-113-3	Dilling, Travis, ShipCarsNow
O-113-4	Dilling, Travis, ShipCarsNow
O-113-5	Hamilton, Christa, ShipCarsNow
O-113-6	Hamilton, Christa, ShipCarsNow
O-114-1	Barbari, Mark, Smart Warehousing
O-114-2	Barbari, Mark, Smart Warehousing
O-115-1	Manno, James, Sonwil Distribution Center
O-115-2	Manno, James, Sonwil Distribution Center
O-116-1	Shields, Jamison, SP Fiber Technologies
O-116-2	Shields, Jamison, SP Fiber Technologies
O-117-1	Berti, Joseph, Speed Global Services

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
O-117-2	Berti, Joseph, Speed Global Services
O-118-1	Byrd, Bruce, SSAB
O-118-2	Byrd, Bruce, SSAB
O-119-1	Cummins, John, Suburban Propane, LP
O-120-1	Baldock, Samantha, SUNY Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)
O-120-2	Baldock, Samantha, SUNY Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)
O-121-1	Sarin, Peter, Synagro
O-121-2	Sarin, Peter, Synagro
O-122-1	Bobitt, James, Tate & Lyle
O-122-2	Bobitt, James, Tate & Lyle
O-123-1	Tighe, John, Tighe Logistics Group
O-123-2	Tighe, John, Tighe Logistics Group
O-124-1	Bard, James, United States Steel Corporation
O-124-2	Bard, James, United States Steel Corporation
O-125-1	Seligman, Joel, President, University of Rochester
O-126-1	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
O-126-2	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
O-126-3	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
O-126-4	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
O-127-1	Applegate, Ken, Senior Vice-President/Transportation, Valero
O-127-2	Applegate, Ken, Senior Vice-President/Transportation, Valero
O-128-1	Cadieux, Shirley, Warehouse Mgr., Valleypac Industries, Inc.
O-129-1	Hammer, Virginia, President, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association
O-129-2	Hammer, Virginia, President, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association
O-130-1	Vaugh, Nick, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
O-130-2	Vaugh, Nick, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
O-131-1	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
O-131-2	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
O-131-3	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
O-131-4	Newman, William, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
O-132-1	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-2	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-3	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-4	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-5	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-6	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition
O-132-7	Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance
O-132-8	Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance
O-132-9	Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance
O-133-1	Parikh, Rohan, Albany Bicycle Coalition

Commenter	Blinkoff, Jason, Executive Vice President, A&R Bulk-Pak, Inc., A&R Bulk-Pak, Inc.
Comment O-1-1	<p>Our company, A&R Bulk-Pak, receives plastics and grains by railcar which are transloaded into containers for overseas export and domestic distribution. In 2013, we handled 935 freight railcars and based on 1st quarter results for 2014 to date, we expect a 20-25% increase in rail freight traffic for this year. In addition, we are in the midst of infrastructure development which will push our yearly rail volume higher while continuing to reduce inbound truck traffic in and around the busy Port of New York/New Jersey.</p> <p>I appreciate the state's continued focus on economic development and pro-business efforts, but I am concerned the proposed high speed rail corridor will negatively affect our business operations. Our company especially relies on the existing freight rail network for efficient, reliable, and economical transportation of goods. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail and will significantly constrain freight rail operations into our Elizabeth and Avenel facilities. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network will force my company to alter our business operations and shift our cargo receipt pattern from rail to truck thereby increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint, and increasing truck traffic on New Jersey and New York roadways as 50% of our inbound rail freight originates in Northwestern New York State.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a preferred Alternative.</p>
Commenter	Blinkoff, Jason, Executive Vice President, A&R Bulk-Pak, Inc., A&R Bulk-Pak, Inc.
Comment O-1-2	<p>I strongly urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.</p>
Commenter	Allen, Linda, Advocates for Rensselaer Trails (ART), Advocates for Rensselaer Trails (ART)
Comment O-2-1	<p>I strongly support improvements to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. I am supportive of alternatives 90B and 110.</p>
Response	<p>Your comment in support of the 90B and 110 Alternatives has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of</p>

safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter Allen, Linda, Advocates for Rensselaer Trails (ART), Advocates for Rensselaer Trails (ART)

Comment 0-2-2 I would like to express one concern with respect to the alternatives outlined in the draft EIS, and that is the lack of a pedestrian walkway on the replacement Livingston Avenue Bridge, which is part of all alternatives except the base alternative. I realize that the draft EIS is only a high level Tier 1 review and a more detailed review will be conducted in the future of the selected alternative, but I strongly encourage the NYS DOT to include a pedestrian walkway in the project at this early stage of development.

In particular, the walkway would:

- Increase the travel choices and improve air quality by providing additional commuting and travel options for residents and workers,

- Contribute to the economic revitalization by linking the planned riverfront developments in both Rensselaer and Albany,

- Improve environmental quality by reducing reliance on automobile travel.

The project has the potential to not only improve one mode of transportation but also enhance the intermodal opportunities more generally. Moreover, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways are supported and encouraged under major transportation legislation, including the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, so the NYS DOT clearly has a mandate to include a walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website <https://www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge>.

Commenter Allen, Linda

Comment 0-2-3 I support the improvements to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor, which provides an alternative mode of transportation for New Yorkers, as well as others who travel through the state.

Overall, I think the draft EIS provides a good assessment of alternatives for improving inner-city passenger rail service in the State, and personally I'm supportive of Alternatives 90B and 110. I think those two alternatives provide notable improvements in rail service at a reasonable cost.

Response Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that program, or group of projects including looking at options for pedestrian/bicycle accommodations. Comments from the public, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Allen, Linda
Comment O-2-4	<p>However, I would like to voice one concern with respect to the alternatives outlined in the draft EIS, and that is the lack of a pedestrian walkway on the replacement Livingston Avenue Bridge, which is part of all of the build alternatives.</p> <p>...but I strongly encourage the DOT to include a pedestrian walkway in the project in this early stage of development, given that it is included in all the build alternatives.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website https://www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Worden, Lorenz M., President, Albany Bicycle Coalition, Albany Bicycle Coalition
Comment O-3-1	<p>The planned rebuilding of Albany's Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge presents a one-time, unique opportunity to provide a pedestrian and bicycle link between both sides of the Hudson River.</p> <p>One can easily envision both recreational and commuter bicyclists using the link to decrease traffic congestion, promote tourism, reduce pollution, and increase health. The cost of this minor augmentation to the bridge will be minimal with the project's scope. By contrast, its impact on economic development, recreation, and environmental quality, will be great and lasting. Local governing bodies and planning commissions have fully endorsed this project, as has Senator Schumer.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website https://www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Worden, Lorenz M., President, Albany Bicycle Coalition, Albany Bicycle Coalition
Comment O-3-2	<p>We in the Albany Bicycle Coalition, on behalf of pedestrians and cyclists in the Capital Region, are asking your support for one small but key provision: restoration of a walkway/bikeway on the new bridge.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS document notes the support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.</p>
Commenter	Worden, Lorenz M., President, Albany Bicycle Coalition, Albany Bicycle Coalition
Comment O-3-3	<p>What rail travel needs in NYS is the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On time departure and on time arrival • No wrecks • Reasonable cost <p>After Amtrak has achieved the above real needs, then will be the time to concern yourselves with speed.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the needs for improving intercity rail passenger service on the Empire Corridor. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-</p>

level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds, which will meet the goals that outlined in your comment.

Commenter Healy, Edward B., Alliance Shippers, Inc., Alliance Shippers, Inc.

Comment O-4-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Healy, Edward B., Alliance Shippers, Inc., Alliance Shippers, Inc.

Comment O-4-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways. I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative. An optimized freight rail network will foster economic development, sustain jobs and help job growth as well as position existing and future New York businesses for success.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lefcourt, Ronald, Alliance Shippers, Inc., Alliance Shippers, Inc.

Comment O-4-3 Alliance Shippers Inc., a universal transportation company, has many services. In the year 2013 one major division of our company moved in excess of 50,000 trailer loads requiring temperature control throughout the United States of America. The majority of those truckload shipments are fresh produce from the states of Washington, Oregon, California and Arizona. We probably handle about 100 trailer loads of produce per week into the New York City area. We use CSX Transportation for the majority of those trailer loads. CSX receives our trailers at a Chicago Interchange point and then transports these trailer loads of fresh produce into their North Bergen NJ intermodal terminal. From there our delivery agents complete the process by delivering to customers in the Bronx Terminal Market, Queens and Brooklyn, NY.

Any slowdown in CSX service for fresh produce could change the customer's mode of transportation from railroad intermodal to highway trucks. The result of this would be emitting considerably more hydrocarbons into our atmosphere. Our company also ships thousands of loads of various commodities in and out of the New York Metropolitan area. The impact on this business could also be affected to some degree.

Response Thank you for your comment discussing the importance of shipping by rail, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is committed to improving rail service in New York State for both freight and passenger trains, and this will also benefit the many shippers and users of rail service along this important corridor.

Commenter Norton, Scott, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company

Comment O-5-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Norton, Scott, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company, AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company

Comment O-5-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network could force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Goldrick, Joseph, AMG Resources, AMG Resources

Comment O-6-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations at increase cost for the alternatives.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Goldrick, Joseph, AMG Resources, AMG Resources

Comment I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth.
O-6-2

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Fredericksen, Scott, President Transportation, Archer Daniels Midland, Archer Daniels Midland

Comment I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting a high speed passenger rail alternative.
O-7-1
In recent years we have shipped many thousands of railcars annually to the state. These shipments are accompanied by multi-million dollar freight bills each year. Fast, predictable and consistent transit times are critical to our business. If these criteria deteriorate our shipments to the state will decrease significantly. Our customers would find non-rail transportation solutions or even shift volume to alternative markets to meet their demand

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Fredericksen, Scott, President Transportation, Archer Daniels Midland, Archer Daniels Midland

Comment In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future. Advancing high speed passenger rail at the detriment of freight rail would limit opportunities for business and job growth and would be detrimental to the state economy.
O-7-2

Response Thank you for your comments discussing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-1	Further, ASLF would suggest that DOT further generate and support for this project.
Response	Thank you for your comment, and support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-2	The 110mph option stands out from the others as the most desirable due to its feasibility and environmental outcomes.
Response	Your comment in support of the 110 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration. Thank you for participating in the public review of the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.
Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-3	Passenger usage should be recalculated after considering connecting buses and potentially local train service to provide connecting trains at major station stops. California is doing this and coordinating other modes of travel with train service
Response	Thank you for your comments on improving connectivity between different modes of transportation with rail passenger service, which has been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will be advanced according to the Service Development Plan in Tier 2 environmental evaluations and design development. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity will be pursued with the local municipality and transit provider.
Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-4	Major increase in the timetable would result from eliminating the need for switching engines in Albany. The cost of this would be modest in relation to gain in time.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the timetable. The Tier 1 EIS and the Service Development Plan have considered the operations at the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station as part of the identification of the Preferred Alternative. More detailed evaluation of timetables and station operations would be performed as part of Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-5	Deficiencies in EIS: The analysis must be integrated with discussion options for new rolling stock. Higher performance rolling stock is needed. New Siemens 125mph locomotives modified for third rail pickup would be one alternative. Adopting them for third rail is not technologically difficult or too costly. Higher performance engines and cars will save money on fuel, maintenance, etc. Tilt body trains such as those tested in the late 80's on the Northeast corridor would allow increased travel speeds

Response	Thank you for your comments discussing different types of locomotives that could be utilized on the route. Identification and selection of the locomotives to be used on the route will be developed further as the FRA and NYSDOT refine the Preferred Alternative in Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Sage, Samuel H., President, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc., Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc.
Comment O-8-6	There is a need for better distribution and dissemination of the draft EIA. Paper copies should be put into more document depositories – our office library is one such that could be used. You should also supply copies on CD's for interested parties
Response	<p>Thank you for your suggestions on the distribution and availability of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program documents and materials. All the information for the public hearings was (is) available at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor</p> <p>The four volumes of the of the Tier 1 DEIS were and still are available online at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor/deis</p> <p>Copies of all the materials for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program were available by contacting the program staff for both printed or compact disc materials or directly from the program website. Moving forward with the program, the website and other supporting materials will be updated, as appropriate, and available to the public.</p>
Commenter	Price, George, Berg Steel Pipe, Berg Steel Pipe
Comment O-9-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.</p>
Commenter	Price, George, Berg Steel Pipe, Berg Steel Pipe
Comment O-9-2	<p>I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.</p> <p>I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative. An optimized freight rail network will foster economic development, sustain jobs and help job growth as well as position existing and future New York businesses for success.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight

	rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Price, George, Berg Steel Pipe, Berg Steel Pipe
Comment O-9-3	Comprised or limited service on the current freight network will have a negative effect on my business, increasing the cost of doing business in New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations along the Empire Corridor, which would benefit both freight shippers and passengers.
Commenter	Locke, Steve, BSPS Trustee President, Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, Bergen Swamp Preservation Society
Comment O-10-1	On behalf of the trustees of the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS) I am asking that the BSPS be included as a party of interest for the High Speed Rail Corridor Program. We ask that you forward all present and future notifications regarding this program. The BSPS is the first and oldest private ecological preservation land trust in the United States. We are chartered by the New York State Department of Education as a "Living Museum". We have a membership of 400 persons / corporations and we oversee five separate properties located throughout upstate New York, The Bergen Swamp was this nations first designated National Natural Landmark.
Response	Thank you for your comments and your interest in High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Bergen Swamp Preservation Society (BSPS) will be included as a party of interest for the New York State High Speed Rail program, and NYSDOT and the FRA recognize the importance of protecting the preserve as a National Natural Landmark.
Commenter	Locke, Steve, BSPS Trustee President, Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, Bergen Swamp Preservation Society
Comment O-10-2	Our Society and our membership strongly oppose any alternative plan that would deviate the rail lines from the present rail corridor through Genesee County. This corridor is owned by New York Central Lines LLC. We specifically ask that all rail lines stay within current New York Central Lines LLC properties identified by Town of Bergen SWIS code & Tax map parcel numbers 18268913.-1-53, 1826012.-1-42, 1826011.-1-59, 1826011.-1-56, 18268915.-1-26 and Town of Byron SWIS code & Tax map parcel numbers 18300010.-1-28 and 18300009.-1-59. Some of your proposals describe the construction of a new rail corridor that deviates several miles north of the present rail corridor. This new "northern" rail line would be constructed along Warboys Rd. through the Town of Bergen & Byron. This would be along our Bergen Swamp northern border. Any proposed new construction that would direct a high speed rail corridor along the borders of the Bergen Swamp, this nations first and most prestigious ecological sanctuary, is a train off the tracks.
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the proposed alignment of the 125 alternative, and the importance of protecting the Bergen Swamp Preserve is recognized by the FRA and NYSDOT. The 125 Alternative was the conceptual alignment for the purposes of the Tier 1 assessment, and this alternative has been dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Bhandari, Amit, BioUrja Trading, LLC, BioUrja Trading, LLC
Comment O-11-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Bhandari, Amit, BioUrja Trading, LLC, BioUrja Trading, LLC
Comment O-11-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thanks for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Batchelor, Gary, BlueLinx Corporation, BlueLinx Corporation
Comment O-12-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. BlueLinx Corporation, a leading distributor of building products, has many warehouses which will be negatively impacted by the high speed rail corridor. We rely on constant rail service everyday to meet customer commitments and remain cost competitive in this market. The lack of reliable rail freight service will result in increased costs, lost sales, negative growth opportunities. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Batchelor, Gary, BlueLinx Corporation, BlueLinx Corporation
Comment O-12-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter	Lund, Gregory W., Secretary/Treasurer Conrail/SAA/Alternate Legislative Representative, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, CSX North General Committee of Adjustment, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, CSX North General Committee of Adjustment
Comment O-13-1	I am a rep for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. I am currently a locomotive engineer in the Buffalo-Albany corridor, any plan such as 90A or 90B is really going to have to increase the overall capacity not only as far as the passenger side but also on the freight side. I say this because freight business within New York State and the lines that we travel over currently has probably increased in the last five years by 50 trains per week which would amount to seven trains per day and that does not leave you a lot of slots, a lot of slotting for passenger and/or freight. Freight is only going to increase as we go along. With that, separation is what we need because it does little good to a 90 or 110 mile an hour passenger train to get stuck behind a 50 or 60 mile an hour freight train.
Response	Thank you for your comments on of freight and passenger train operations on the Empire Corridor. Your assessment of the freight and passenger trains points to the need for improvements along the route. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. The FRA and NYSDOT are committed to improving both freight and passenger service, and the operation of passenger and freight trains along the Empire Corridor was a major factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Kearnsing, David, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
Comment O-13-2	My name is David Kearnsing. I am with the Brotherhood of Local Engineers and Trainmen. I work for CSX. I heard some concerns about oil trains, safety on the rails and everything else. In 2013, railroads across the United States have had their safest year ever in personal on the job, as well as crossings and incidents on the rails themselves. Regarding the oil trains, the number of carloads that we have, have increased to over 400,000 carloads over the past five years...
Response	Thank you for your comments on the operation of trains along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) identified by FRA and NYSDOT will improve safety by better segregating passenger and freight traffic and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Tier 1 EIS examined the operation of passenger and freight trains along the Empire Corridor, with critical focus on promoting both safe operations and allowing for expanded capacity to promote growth of rail traffic.
Commenter	Kearnsing, David, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
Comment O-13-3	High speed rail as we want it, the environmental impact would be tremendous. The visual would be ugly. It involves catenary lines that would interfere with the views of the rivers along the Mohawk, along the Hudson River. Higher speed rail and me running the trains, I propose and support the 110 or the 90B.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the different alternatives, which were considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	McDermott, Terrence, Bunge North America, Bunge North America
Comment O-14-1	Bunge North America urges the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.

Bunge North America ships grain products across the Empire Corridor rail line in New York from our processing and milling plants in the United States and Canada. This rail line provides the most cost-effective route over the long distances required to our customers in New York. It is critical for our businesses to maintain an efficient and consistent flow of our product and private rail cars to and from New York.

If service on the current freight network were compromised by the operation of high speed passenger rail, we could be forced to alter our business operations and possibly reduce shipping rail to customers in New York.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter McDermott, Terrence, Bunge North America, Bunge North America

Comment O-14-2 In selecting an option, we encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Klein, Mark, Cargill, Cargill

Comment O-15-1 We are writing to express our opposition to the mixing of passenger and freight traffic on the CSX line between Albany and Buffalo.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Klein, Mark, Cargill, Cargill

Comment O-15-2 Albany is an important destination for agricultural products to move from the interior of the United States to markets in the east and for export through the Port of Albany. Our experience elsewhere shows that when we have passenger trains running past our facilities, we have seen a reduction in service. The passenger trains take precedence and switching trains into our facilities is curtailed. If the Buffalo-Albany corridor was high speed, we think the challenges would be even greater than what we have seen elsewhere.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor

Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Drown, Matthew, Caterpillar, Caterpillar**

Comment O-16-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Drown, Matthew, Caterpillar, Caterpillar**

Comment O-16-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Warner, Deborah S., Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)**

Comment O-17-1 In reviewing the study of the five alternatives, we note that there are positive results from any increased investment. However, we also are keenly aware that significant federal

resources would be needed for any but the Base Alternative to move forward. This is the major hurdle in the short term. One can hope that future funding would become available to enable New York State to move ahead with incremental, prioritized improvements in keeping with the DEIS findings.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would involve substantially fewer right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125 and would also be substantially less costly. Thank you for your support for the program and comments on prioritizing the improvements.

Commenter **Warner, Deborah S., Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)**

Comment O-17-2 It would be logical to reject the Base (No Action) Alternative because it brings no improvements beyond what is already approved and funded by the FRA.

Response Thank you for your comments on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. Your comment on rejecting the Base Alternative is noted and has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter **Warner, Deborah S., Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)**

Comment O-17-3 Alternative 125 is less preferable due to its high cost at nearly \$15 billion to build which generates the highest per rider cost of any of the alternatives.

Response Thank you for your comments on the cost of Alternative 125. Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration in part based on its costs, it is the costliest alternative.

Commenter **Warner, Deborah S., Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)**

Comment O-17-4 Our interests are strongest for investments that improve the east-west corridor from Niagara Falls to Albany, as it has not benefitted as much from previous improvements as the Empire Corridor South between Albany and New York City. The Southern Corridor already runs a better schedule, more on time trips, having already been the beneficiary of more improvements than the Empire Corridor West. The current on time passenger train performance west of Albany of only 56 to 57 percent clearly must be addressed.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS comparing the Empire Corridor south and west of Albany. In the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, the number of trains serving the western portion of the Empire Corridor will increase, and there will be a reduction in trip time. In addition, the Preferred Alternative would have the best overall on-time performance of the alternatives considered. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations. Your comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Warner, Deborah S., Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)
Comment O-17-5	<p>It is clear from the DEIS that Alternative 110, costing \$6.25 billion and including new third and fourth main tracks, provides several distinct advantages. The one drawback of this alternative is that, while it would increase daily round trips, it would not offer express service.</p> <p>Improved rail infrastructure also increase the speed and capacity of our freight rail system, which benefits Upstate businesses and the entire northeast U.S. In the Buffalo-Niagara area alone, over 200 businesses depend heavily on rail for delivery and shipment of goods and products. These companies employ over 27,000 worker and have annual sales of over \$7.2 billion.</p> <p>The Impact Assessment states that around 3,500 worker are employed by 30 companies that manufacture railroad equipment in New York State. While these companies, with sales in excess of \$750 million, provide goods and services directly to the rail industry, an additional 11,000 Upstate workers are employed by businesses that produce and distribute goods to sectors that are heavily relied upon by the railroad rolling stock industry. New order of these businesses "represent a bright spot in the future of manufacturing and distribution in Upstate New York".</p> <p>The cities and regions along the Empire and Montreal Corridors each have world-class academic institutions, which would benefit from improvements, but could also provide invaluable assistance in the development and implementation of higher speed rail in New York State.</p> <p>With in just the 12-county Central Upstate region, 35 colleges and universities educate more than 130,000 students, the third highest concentration of college students in the entire country.</p> <p>New York's tourism economy will grow by fostering international trade and travel at border crossings with Canada, provide a reasonably priced, accessible and efficient alternative to air transportation, and speed up municipality-sponsored Amtrak station investments. Upstate New York's tourism industry, over \$12 billion of our economy, will be directly impacted by increased connectivity and ease of travel. All of Upstate's regions will be able to directly tap into the tourism markets of New York City, one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities.</p> <p>Section ES-2.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS addresses program goals and objectives: "Improvements in service include tangible and measurable gains in operational reliability and travel time reductions of scheduled train trips; an increase in the frequency of train trips; and support of economic development, mobility and environmental sustainability goals." The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected based on its ability to provide these transportation and economic benefits, and improved access to businesses and institutions and other destinations should support continued economic development and tourism for the region.</p> <p>Thank you for your comments on Alternative 110 and the benefits of "Express Service." However, the "Express Service" option may not provide equal benefits to all of the riders on the route, and may leave some stations with less attractive service. The transportation operations, costs, and environmental impacts were considered as part of the the criteria used by the FRA and NYSDOT to select the Preferred Alternative. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest</p>

improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

Commenter **Rodgers, Marilyn, Executive Director/CEO, Center for Restoration Arts & Sciences, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, Center for Restoration Arts & Sciences, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation**

Comment O-18-1 The Central Terminal Restoration Corp. (CTRC), as steward of the National Landmark known as the Buffalo Central Terminal wishes to acknowledge and endorse the Buffalo Common Council's adopted resolution on March 11, 2014 (attached for your review) regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project – Tier I EIS.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Rodgers, Marilyn, Executive Director/CEO, Center for Restoration Arts & Sciences, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, Center for Restoration Arts & Sciences, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation**

Comment O-18-2 The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

- The CTRC is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the Terminal which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

That the Common Council supports the amendment of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program to include the revitalization of the New York Central Terminal on Memorial Drive as an Intermodal Train Station in the City of Buffalo

Response Thank you for your additional comment on the Buffalo Central Terminal, and it has been included in the documentation of comments from the public on the program. A notation has been added to the Tier 1 FEIS, noting the public support for this historic structure.

Commenter **Maurer, Paul D., Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation**

Comment O-18-3 I am a volunteer board member of the Buffalo Central Terminal Restoration Corporation. Our historic and beautiful train station nears it's 85th birthday this June It lies along current live tracks in an area that would make a natural link to Downtown Buffalo. The resurgent area, now dubbed "Larkinville", is just a scant mile away from our soaring building. We would be a perfect location for a high speed rail station, with 500,000 square feet of space that would make for a breathtaking "front entrance" to Buffalo. Please consider this site as a viable replacement for the Amtrak Depew and Exchange stations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment O-18-1.

Commenter Cox, Tim, Certainteed Gypsum, Inc., Certainteed Gypsum, Inc.

Comment O-19-1 we are concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. Again, our ability to continue providing our customers with efficient, lower cost, reliable rail transportation is key to our success as well as the success of our customers. We urge you to consider the effects this will have on all rail shippers who greatly depend on rail service to meet demand in the NY and surrounding markets.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Cox, Tim, Certainteed Gypsum, Inc., Certainteed Gypsum, Inc.

Comment O-19-2 We encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. They also would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing upstate economy.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit
Comment O-20-1	Citizens for Regional Transit (CRT) strongly supports high-speed passenger rail in NYS
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit
Comment O-20-2	CRT urges that the alternatives should include significant improvements to the two Amtrak stations in Buffalo The current Depew Station does not adequately serve city residents and the current Exchange Street Station cannot handle westbound trains. A new train station within the city of Buffalo is needed. The future downtown Buffalo station serving HSR should offer seamless integration with local public transit, especially the light rail system. The Depew station is inadequate for current passenger access and for future HSR. A better location is the historic Central Terminal.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit
Comment O-20-3	Second, along with providing a reliable connection between Buffalo and Niagara Falls, high-speed rail should offer continuing service to Toronto.
Response	Thank you for your comment that points out the opportunities on the western end of the Empire Corridor with connections in Canada. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto.
Commenter	Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit
Comment O-20-4	My name is Doug Funke. I am the president of Citizens for Regional Transit. It looked like there wasn't a lot of resources being applied to a new train station for the options that were not the 125-mile an hour option, and we feel that the train stations here

in Buffalo are pretty dysfunctional and need some significant improvement. We need new stations no matter what option, so we would support that.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for a new station in Buffalo, New York. Recent station upgrades include state-of-good-repair and accessibility improvements at the Buffalo-Depew Station in 2013 and completion of a new Buffalo-Exchange Street Station in 2020.

Commenter **Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit**

Comment O-20-5 As far as which option, I would agree with Mayor Dyster that the 125 would be the best but we recognize that we have the same budget and schedule and we want to get something done. We want to see something get done as quickly as possible.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter **Funke, Douglas J., President, Citizens for Regional Transit, Citizens for Regional Transit**

Comment O-20-6 Finally, the most important point is whatever is developed in terms of high speed rail, it needs to get with local transportation, local transit, preferably with a light-rail system so a new station needs to be able to also integrate and accommodate our light-rail system preferably.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and your support. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities, along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Opportunities for connecting to other transit systems will need to be part of future efforts of the communities and stakeholders along the route.

Commenter **Wilson, Don, CMC Commercial Metals, CMC Commercial Metals**

Comment O-21-1 As a company in Columbia, SC that manufactures steel products and ships approximately 150 railcars annually into New York (primarily Brooklyn), we rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier

1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Wilson, Don, CMC Commercial Metals, CMC Commercial Metals

Comment O-21-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Piazza, David, Community Suffolk Inc., Community Suffolk Inc.

Comment O-22-1 Community-Suffolk, inc. is a family owned wholesale produce company that has been in business for three generations. Our business deals with perishable items that rely on freight rail to deliver products fresh to our customers. If this goes into affect the CSX freight rail network would be significantly delayed resulting in delinquent, compromised product to our facility. Fresh produce is prone to acteria and breakdown if not delivered in a timely fashion. This practice would cause an increase to our costs of having to find other ways of transport which would result in higher costs passed along to our customers. In today's economy, people just can not afford higher prices. Compromised service on the current freight network, resulting from the operation of high speed passenger rail, may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways. I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Piazza, David, Community Suffolk Inc., Community Suffolk Inc.

Comment O-22-2 In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Ali, Syd, Cornerstone Chemical Co., Cornerstone Chemical Co.
Comment O-23-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The long-term impact of the Preferred Alternative on energy and greenhouse gas emissions will be positive, by reducing automotive trips. .
Commenter	Ali, Syd, Cornerstone Chemical Co., Cornerstone Chemical Co.
Comment O-23-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Clay, Timothy, Cornerstone Systems, Cornerstone Systems
Comment O-24-1	I do have concerns that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. Cornerstone Systems, Inc. moves over 8,000 intermodal and boxcar shipments annually into the New York area. Our volumes are growing approximately six percent per year because of the consistent and reliable service provided by the railroads. The potential for slower service would negatively impact our business resulting in more trucks on the highway and more carbon in the environment.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative will provide additional trackage (approximately 370 miles) to improve freight and passenger railroad operations on the Empire Corridor, and your comment has been considered in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Clay, Timothy, Cornerstone Systems, Cornerstone Systems

Comment O-24-2	I support the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, which I believe would significantly constrain current freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Dorlon, Daniel, Covanta, Covanta
Comment O-25-1	As a company with significant Energy-from-Waste (EfW) operations in New York and a long-term contract with the City of New York to transport and dispose of residential waste generated in Manhattan and Queens, I appreciate the state's continued focus on economic development and pro-business efforts, but I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect our business operations and the City of New York's plan for reducing the impact of waste transportation on the communities that it's waste travels through by truck
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dorlon, Daniel, Covanta, Covanta
Comment O-25-2	I strongly encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Nixon, Robert F., President, Diversity Matters 2 US, Diversity Matters 2 US
Comment O-26-1	In order to maximize opportunities for small minority- and woman-owned disadvantaged businesses, separate DBE/MBE/WBE goals should be assigned to the construction of the track, stations, wayside equipment and railcars. Stakeholders in determining the number of "ready, willing and able" DBEs should include prime contractors, major system suppliers, and Bes/MBEs/WBEs.

Since minorities and women represent a majority of the ridership, they must represent a significant proportion of the supplier base.

Response Thank you for your comments on the program. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program has been meeting the goals, and is committed to the participation by Woman Business Enterprises (WBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), as required by New York State government. The program is compliant with New York State Department of Transportation goals for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.

Commenter Nixon, Robert F., President, Diversity Matters 2 US, Diversity Matters 2 US

Comment 0-26-2 I think if you want to sell this to the voters on the western corridor, it's 125 or bust, because I think the incentive really has to be High Speed Rail. Some of the other alternatives just increases the speed a little bit.

Response Thank you for your support of the 125 Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter Nixon, Robert F., President, Diversity Matters 2 US, Diversity Matters 2 US

Comment 0-26-3 After this first phase is approved -- and it will be approved in my opinion -- and the RFPs are developed, I hope we look at the opportunities for small women and minority owned businesses on the track work, train stations, the locomotives and the wayside equipment.

Response Your comment highlights an important part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program in creating economic opportunities as part of the process. The New York State Department of Transportation is committed to supporting the opportunities for "Disadvantaged Business Enterprises" and has a program that supports these goals. Further information is available at: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/main/business-center/civil-rights/dbe>

Commenter Gualtieri, Joseph, DSA, DSA

Comment 0-27-1 As a distribution company with significant rail customers shipping via rail thru NY, I appreciate the state's continued focus on economic development and pro-business efforts, but I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force our customers to alter their business distribution methods and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Gualtieri, Joseph, DSA, DSA

Comment O-27-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Gomez, Richard, East Coast Warehouse & Distribution Corporation, East Coast Warehouse & Distribution Corporation
Comment O-28-1	As a company that relies on Freight Rail service to my distribution center, I am concerned that there may be some changes that will affect the timely manner in which I receive my shipments from Canada. The commodity only has a short life and my customer believes in just in time product flows. Adding any time needed to ship to me will adversely affect our ability to turn the product as low cost as possible. any delays will mean lost sales. I am against any sharing of the freight system rail lines without adding additional safeguards to maintain or reduce lead times in the freight rail network.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-1	On behalf of the Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), I am submitting the following information in support of the 110MPH alternative ESPA is pleased to provide its unqualified support for the 110mph alternative. We believe that this option provides the best opportunity to significantly increase ridership and fundamentally shift travel patterns in the years to come.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting Alternative 110 and the benefits from high speed rail. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment O-29-2	When financing resources are being considered, we strongly encourage the investigation of innovative funding solutions, including public-private partnerships and station-area development interest participation.
Response	Suggestions from the public have been considered, and opportunities for innovative funding solutions could be explored in the future during Tier 2 assessments. .
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-3	I am the president of Empire State Passenger Association. After careful consideration of the presented information and options, ESPA is pleased to announce it's unqualified [sic] to work with the 110 mile per hour alternative. We believe that this option provides the best opportunities to significantly increase ridership and fundamentally shift travel time. A fully built 110 alternative will reduce travels time between Buffalo and Albany by an hour and provide for trips of just over six and a half hours from Buffalo to midtown Manhattan.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the 110 Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-4	It could be a substantial economic driver for the entire upstate region.
Response	We agree with your comment that the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program will be an important economic driver to the region. Key goals of the program are to improve service reliability, frequency of service, and train speeds.
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-5	It would be a catalyst for economic development near the stations. We are here in Buffalo have a particularly good position to take full advantage of such development with the new downtown station located in close proximity to the medical center, the harbor center, and our emerging walkway.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Buffalo-Exchange Station has recently been reconstructed and a new station building constructed, which should provide improved access and benefits economic development.
Commenter	Becker, Bruce, President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-6	While funding sources for this ambitious alternative have not yet been determined, it must be kept in mind that required projects would be completed in phases over multiple years. The alternative overall cost would be paid for in management projects. Financial resources are being considered to be strongly encourage the investigation of innovative funding solutions will be public/private partnerships and stationary developmental participation.

Response	Thank you for your comments on funding and program staging. Comments from the public on the financing and construction were considered in the development of the phased implementation presented in the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Cabal, Andrew, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-7	I am Andrew Cabal and I am a councilman of the National Association of Railroad Passengers out of Washington as well as the Empire State Passengers Association, which is New York's local rail advocacy group First of all, ESPA supports the DEIS 110 mile per hour alternative option because this option allows for future improvement projects across the Empire Corridor necessary to increase the maximum operating speed to 110 miles an hour in locations where such speeds are possible, cost effective and beneficial.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Cabal, Andrew, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-8	The hundred the -- high speed does not -- does not include either Utica or Schenectady or other stations such as Rome or Amsterdam. That should be understood because a lot of trips -- a lot of trips are made from Syracuse especially to Utica and to Schenectady.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Cabal, Andrew, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-9	And a little extemporaneous here, the high speed systems throughout the world, especially in France and in Germany and in Spain, they came about by incremental improvement, utilizing existing tracks in every locations, especially in the major cities, with high speed lines built in the interlands, if you will. It's the same way the thruway system was built in this country.
Response	Thank you for your comments on how to incrementally develop the high speed rail service on the Empire Corridor. The selection of the Preferred Alternative included consideration of constructability, and one of the advantages of Alternative 90B is that more of the additional trackage is constrained to the existing right-of-way (than Alternatives 110 or 125) and benefits can accrue within 2 to 5 years of the start of construction. The program schedule is outlined in the Service Development Plan, and building individual segments and supporting infrastructure, based on identification of funding and other factors, may follow an incremental approach to bringing the program into revenue service.
Commenter	Cabal, Andrew, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment 0-29-10	Just a couple of things that I think Upstate should know about their rail heritage: Between Syracuse and Utica, the running time -- up until the late 1960s, the running time was of the fastest of the top ten trains in the country, Syracuse to Utica. A little bit -- a little bit of trivia. And, also, during the administrations of Governor Malcolm Wilson, remember him, he came after Rockefeller, and Governor Hugh Carry -- Malcolm Wilson, by the way, did a lot of work for -- for passenger rail. He, through his administration, improved the trip times between New York City and Albany from what was almost three hours to today's times of about two hours and 10, 2 hours and 20 minutes. Now, back then, it was also promised in the Transportation Bond Act, I think of 1979, that they would have an hour and 55 minute times between Albany and Syracuse, an hour and 55 minutes times between Syracuse and Buffalo. That was in 1979 that was promised to the true Upstaters. And it's 2014 now and we are nowhere near those trip times. So, hopefully, with the hard work that you are doing, we'll be able to achieve those in hopefully my lifetime.
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the importance of Utica on the route and your support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve service to Utica and these other western cities.
Commenter	Godfrey, Ben, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-11	Hello, my name is Ben Godfrey and I'm with the Empire State Passenger Association. We're a state-wide advocacy group for improved rail passenger services in the state, and as a group, we vote for the 110 miles per hour. From an engineering standpoint, we think the HNTB, the DOT, and the FRA have done a great job doing this engineer study. Having said that, I support the 110 as the most feasible option for an engineering standpoint.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public participation in the program has been an important part of the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Godfrey, Ben, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-12	With regard to the study here, it seems to me that ridership estimates seem quite low.
Response	Thank you for your evaluation of the ridership levels in the Tier 1 DEIS. Estimates for the ridership in the Tier 1 EIS were forecast for primarily trips that began and ended along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Additional ridership may be present on the line for those riders on trains that serve areas outside the Empire Corridor that are not part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.
Commenter	Godfrey, Ben, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-13	I also think the study is not fully taking into account CSX's expanding operations out of there. I think CSX itself is going to need additional track capacity just to handle their freight business which is growing pretty dramatically at this point.
Response	Thank you for your comments on CSX operations on the Empire Corridor. In developing the operating plans and train performance simulations for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, CSX Transportation had the opportunity to provide input in formulating the

	criteria and rail operations forecasting. CSX Transportation provided information supporting the expansion of their operations in the future.
Commenter	Greenhagle, Karl, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-14	I represent the Empire State Passengers Association, Our committee has analyzed all the various plans proposed and our organization supports the 110-mile-per-hour plan. And that's the reason why, because we feel that was the most feasible at the least amount of cost and you get the greatest benefit.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Greenhagle, Karl, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-15	it should be a dedicated set of rails for passenger service
Response	Thank you for your comments on providing a dedicated tracks for passenger trains, which have been considered as part of the review of the Tier 1 DEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional tracks to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Greenhagle, Karl, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-16	our organization is really promoting the 110. But I must give you a footnote: Personally, I like the 120 (sic). And I think when you look at these type of long-range capital investments, you need to look further out. And I think we need to go for the higher technology.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the 125 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-17	I'm vice president of the Empire State Passenger's Association. We are a statewide organization looking at improving both rail and public transit throughout the State of New York and the major cities of New York State. I would like to give our organization endorsement of the 110 option

Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-18	One of the issues with the 90-A and 90-B options is they just do not have enough track capacity in order to have the service provided, especially when you figure it is one of the busiest freight lines, which is the freight line owned by CSX. Also, reducing the travel time from Albany to New York down to two hours we believe is very key
Response	Thank you for your comments on the 90A and 90B Alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS. Specific track diagrams and operating programs were developed for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. This information was then used to support the modeling and simulation of operation over the track layouts in each of the alternatives. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional tracks to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-19	One of the issues with the 125 mile-per-hour option is not only does it bypass several cities in upstate New York, but we believe taking existing land that is not part of our corridor right now for freight travel or passenger travel is just not a good option at the cost of 15 billion.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the 125 Alternative. This alternative has been dismissed from further consideration, and the factors outlined in your comment were among the reasons it was deemed inferior to the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B).
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-20	The better transit connections are also key, along with increased parking, cities such stations as Rhinecliff and Buffalo need additional parking.
Response	Thank you for your comments on improving the connections along the Empire Corridor. Improving the intermodal connections along the Empire Corridor is one of the focuses of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor and NYSDOT. Improvements, including parking, have been made at a number of new stations. These improvements include accessibility improvements at the Buffalo-Depew Station and new stations constructed at Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, Albany-Rensselaer, and Rochester. The needs can be reviewed for additional parking at stations, as station projects are studied and continue to advance, along the route.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-21	The Alternative 110 is clearly the best option, with significant improvements for passengers and limited environmental concerns.

Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative. Public participation in the program has been an important part of the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-22	I do question the travel time of several of the alternatives, especially the Alternative 110. The Alternative 110 should have a lower travel time New York City to Niagara Falls, as 7 hours 22 minutes would seem to include significant pad time. The goal of Alternative 110 should be 2 hours NYC to Albany, 4 hours Albany to Buffalo-Depew, and 45 minutes Buffalo-Depew to Niagara Falls. I think presenting the actual travel time without pad time of actual schedules would show the travel time in a clearer way.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the travel time estimates for the various alternatives considered in the Tier 1 DEIS. The travel times for the different segments of the route for each of the alternatives are discussed in Chapters 3 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS. These were developed by using simulations of the Empire Corridor under different scenarios and equipment assignments.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-23	The repeated assertion that Alternative 125 would be 100% on-time is not realistic.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding on time performance of the Alternative 125. Targets for the on time performance for each of the alternatives were determined utilizing simulations of the Empire Corridor with different operating factors and interfaces with other traffic on the routes. Details of the analysis can be found in Appendix D of the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-24	Specific service items should be included, as they are imperative to any improvement in the passenger rail in New York State and include the following passenger rail service items: train from Syracuse that arrives NYC before 11 am, train from Saratoga/Schenectady that arrives NYP before 10 am, train from NYC to Niagara Falls that departs NYC after 3 pm
Response	Thank you for your continued interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Suggestions and comments for improvements to the service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan for the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program. Operating timetables will be examined in detail in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-25	To improve service options for passengers, there needs to be an overnight train across New York State, which would also connect New York State with Toronto. A 10 pm train from NYC to Buffalo would be of great benefit and would provide a morning Toronto arrival from upstate New York.

Response	Thank you for your suggestion regarding overnight service from New York City to Toronto. The scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Suggestions and recommendations by the public for improvements to the service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan, and operating timetables can be further developed in Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-26	For the Hudson Valley, there is opportunity for speed improvements, including on the west side of Manhattan where speeds could be increased to 79mph for about half of the 11 miles, from the current 50-70mph. From Poughkeepsie to Albany, speeds should be 110mph on as much as is possible, within the limitation of curves, which would require bridges to be improved. Also, the 3rd station track through Poughkeepsie is often used for Amtrak trains, which limits Amtrak to about 15mph for a couple of miles. This is ridiculous and all 3 current tracks through the Poughkeepsie station should be regular track speed. In addition, a fourth track, closest to the station, should be re-activated and used by Metro-North for some trains starting and ending at Poughkeepsie, so that out of service Metro-North trains are not blocking two of the main tracks.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding improvements to operating speeds and station operations. Operating speeds and station operations for the routes and segments in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been studied in developing the Service Development Plan for the Preferred Alternative and the Tier 1 EIS. The proposed improvements/operations will need to meet both the engineering standards of the supporting railroads and Federal Railroad Administration regulations. The FRA and NYSDOT have considered operating speeds and trip times in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-27	The current, low speed 2.5 mile siding through Beacon should be extended further south by several miles and should be a 90mph track. In the EIS document, this existing siding is referred to as "south of Cold Spring" which is incorrect, as it is north of Cold Spring.
Response	Thank you for sharing the incorrect location for the siding at Beacon, New York. The Tier 1 FEIS document has been corrected with the correct location and limits.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-28	On page 2-32, it states that the top speed between Croton and Poughkeepsie is 79mph, which is not true.
Response	Thank you for pointing out the possible inaccuracy in the Tier 1 FEIS. Modifications have been made.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-29	Regarding the discussion of stations, two are in desperate need of parking expansion. The Rhinecliff station should have parking extended further north along the tracks and in fact, this would create a new exit to the north onto Slate Dock Road. Connecting bus service should connect this station with Red Hook, Bard College, and a parking lot at River Road and Route 199. The Buffalo-Depew station also needs more parking, which can be extended

to the east and possible other vacant land in the immediate area. The downtown Buffalo station needs to be rebuilt to serve the growing Buffalo waterfront developments.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. Station improvements included in each of the alternative are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. Station improvements as part of separate projects have been advancing independently, including the recent complete reconstruction of the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station and parking lot and accessibility improvements at the Buffalo-Depew Station. The FRA and NYSDOT will consider station locations and potential ridership and revenue opportunities in advancing the Preferred Alternative in Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment 0-29-30 Connecting bus service should be implemented where possible

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Once the FRA and NYSDOT complete the selection process for a Preferred Alternative under the Tier 1 program, individual projects or groups of projects will be advanced according to the Service Development Plan to Tier 2 environmental evaluations and design development. Suggestions and comments for improving connectivity between different modes of transportation with rail passenger service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity can be pursued with the local municipality and transit provider.

Commenter Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment 0-29-31 As far as additional track west of Schenectady, increased portions of a 3rd track are desperately needed through the Mohawk Valley, as much congestion occurs in this area due to slow moving freight trains

Response Thank you for your comments. Improvement of passenger rail service and maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor is the goal for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B would add dedicated third main track for approximately 273 miles between Schenectady (MP 159) and Buffalo-Depew (MP 432). The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment 0-29-32 about a mile east of the Buffalo-Depew station, a third track would allow for improved flow of freight trains in this area immediately east of major freight yard operations,

Response Thank you for your suggestion regarding track improvements in the Buffalo-Depew area. The Preferred Alternative would add a dedicated third main track extending east of Buffalo-Depew to Schenectady. The Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement discusses the operation of multiple tracks, and specific track diagrams were developed to support the modeling and simulation of operation using multiple tracks. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment O-29-33	From Buffalo to Niagara Falls, this area should be nearly all double tracked, at least 60mph (or 79mph) and the hand thrown switches near Niagara Falls need to be replaced. Also, 2 tracks, one of which could be a stub end or part of the branch line that proceeds north just before the new Niagara Falls station, are needed so that if the station track is taken by train which is being processed by customs, another train could start or terminate at Niagara Falls. It would not be beneficial if an eastbound train is at the station (from Toronto) and a train comes from NYC and it must wait for an hour 300 feet from the station,
Response	Thank you for your comments and suggestions. Improvements to tracks and stations for each alternative are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, includes doubletracking 11 miles along the Niagara Branch. The Niagara Falls International Railway Station and Transportation Center completed in 2016 relocated the station closer to the tourism destinations, 1 mile to the west. Crews still perform train cleaning and minor maintenance at the former station location, which includes layover yards, and trains are turned around in the yard tracks after stopping at the new station.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-34	With the continued congestion of Sunnyside Yard, NYS should at least look into options of separating the Empire Corridor from Sunnyside Yard,
Response	Thank you for your comments and suggestions. Currently, Amtrak Empire Corridor trains are stored and serviced, between runs, to and from Penn Station in Manhattan at the Amtrak facilities in Sunnyside Yard in Queens, New York. The Amtrak facilities provide servicing for the trains and the ability to turn the equipment for the proper direction of travel. Development of a separate facility in New York City, for the servicing of Empire Corridor trains, is not part of the Tier 1 EIS at this time.
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-35	There was very little discussed in the document about equipment, other than vague references to trainsets.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Equipment requirements provided for in each alternative are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. The Tier 1 EIS is focused corridor level improvements to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. Specific details on equipment needs will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best solution for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B).
Commenter	Prophet, Gary, Vice President, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-36	I did not see any mention of Dunkirk in the document. With the increased service outlined in the document, one additional train should be considered to operate west from Buffalo to serve Dunkirk, Erie, PA and end in either Cleveland or Toledo.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. Selection of the Preferred Alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT focused on the alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS. Extending service to destinations toward Pennsylvania could be part of future studies for expanding service beyond the current area outlined in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Rudman, Anthony, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association

Comment O-29-37	<p>I am Anthony Rudman, the Capital District Coordinator of the Empire State Passenger Association. The 1,400 members of our association have been working for over three decades to improve inter-city passenger rail opportunities for New York residents. We support the EIS Alternative 110 as the preferred alternative for the final study report. Because Federal guidelines for developing environmental impact statements are directive, we think that the ridership growth and revenue estimates presented are very conservative and Alternative 110 actually would have revenue and passenger ridership numbers higher than projected in the report. The cost of Alternative 110 is affordable, because it is spread over time and will be drawn from diverse sources.</p> <p>We urge New York State to give its residents the chance to experience a greater travel mobility and economic opportunities by selecting Alternative 110 as the EIS preferred Alternate recommendation.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments in support of the 110 Alternative, which has been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would also provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.</p>
Commenter	Gianotti, Gary, Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-38	<p>My name is Gary Gianotti and I am the Utica-area coordinator of the Empire State Passengers Association. ESPA and myself support the 110 mile per hour alternative.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Support and interest from the public, relating to Alternative 110, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.</p>
Commenter	Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment O-29-39	<p>‘Alternative 110’ seems to be the favored contender because it offers the biggest bang for the buck.</p> <p>The Empire State Passenger Association the rail advocacy organization I’m a member of supports ‘Alternative 110’ because it allows for the incremental upgrading of the existing rail infrastructure, with each new additional project leading to a gradual improvement in service until it reaches a level of speed, frequency, and reliability far superior to today’s service. It also serves all of the existing stations unlike ‘Alternative 125’ which bypasses Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, and Rome.</p> <p>Many people may be disappointed that “true HSR” is not being considered, but the reality is the Empire Corridor thru Upstate New York lacks the population to support “Very High-Speed Rail” (VHSR) with trains traveling up to 200-mph on newly high-speed railways, thus the focus on “Higher Speed Rail” (HrSR) instead.</p> <p>For a VHSR service like the French TGV to be economically viable the new rail lines must have annual ridership numbers of about 10-million, and an all-new-build super system like the Shinkansen or Maglev requires about 50-million passengers annually. In Spain where the national government fueled by EU subsidies plowed ahead with new dedicated high-speed lines regardless of geography, demographics, and economics; ridership has been</p>

disappointing with revenues reportedly even below the level needed to cover yearly operating expenses, let alone to recoup the initial construction costs.

This problem can also be seen in the projections for 'Alternative 125' which would entail the building of a new 125-mph railway from Albany to Buffalo at the cost of \$15 billion, for which annual ridership only would be 4.3 million despite the huge investment. The service would require an annual subsidy of \$59 million, compare to \$24 million in 'Alternative 110' which is roughly equal to what New York State is today now paying Amtrak to run the existing Empire Service.

Response Thank you for your interest in the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program. Support and interest from the public, relating to Alternative 110, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-40 Based on this in my opinion 'Alternative 110' is indeed the most logically choice, but it also in my opinion could be much improved by the inclusion of the following...
 Tilting Train-sets: Replacing the aging Amfleet coaches as called for in 'Alternative 110' with new tilt-body coaches could further reduce travel times by allowing faster speeds around the numerous curves south of Albany on the Hudson Line, in the Mohawk Valley, and between Syracuse and Rochester.
 By leaning into a curve by 2 to 8-degrees depending on the tilt system, a train can round a curve up to 40-percent faster while maintaining passenger comfort and safety. Tilting trains could boost average speeds into the 70-mph range. Tilting trains have spread from pioneering services like the X2000 to becoming a mainstay of modern passenger rail services.
 Tilting-trains do not necessarily require the locomotive to be tilting so this would not complicate the acquisition of new engines. And the costs of tilt operations could be minimized by using the new state-of-the-art air suspension tilt-systems developed by Japanese manufacturers Fuji, Kawasaki, and Nippon Sharyo, which enable tilt angles up to 3-degrees.

Response Thank you for your comments. Equipment requirements provided for in each alternative are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. The Tier 1 EIS is focused on corridor level improvements to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. Specific details on equipment needs will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best solution for the Preferred Alternative. Comments from the public, relating to the types of equipment to be operated as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-41 125-MPH Speeds: The DEIS rejected 125-mph speeds on the existing CSX right-of-way utilizing the planned infrastructure improvements of 'Alternative 110' because this would require extensive grade-separation due to Federal Railroad Administration standards that while not absolutely forbidding highway grade crossings at 125-mph, are so strict that they can't be technologically overcome.

However the 68-miles between Rensselaer and Poughkeepsie may be another matter since commercial speeds of 125-mph were studied and planned during the Pataki Era HSR program. None of the grade crossings are major roads, they are all low-speed access lanes to riverside farms, homes, and businesses and it's possible that rebuilding the crossings to the highest standards with warning lights, crash barrier-gates, and radar/laser presence detection systems could win a FRA waiver.

Amtrak's next generation of diesel locomotives and coaches will be designed to have top commercial speeds of 125-mph, so it would be a shame not to utilize this capability somewhere on the corridor. The combination of tilting train-sets and speeds up to 125-mph could cut the travel time New York-Albany to just a bit under 2-hrs with an average speed of 75-mph. The biggest benefit however could be in publicity since such service actually meets the international definition of "true HSR".

Response Thank you for your comment regarding safety improvements on the Empire Corridor. Improving safety of rail transportation on the Empire Corridor was considered a key goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program for both freight and passenger trains. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Tier 1 EIS address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Treatments for specific grade crossings would be considered during the development of individual projects designed to implement the Preferred Alternative. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that project, or group of projects.

Comments from the public, discussing the safety and the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment **0-29-42** JFK Connection: Around the world many international airports have direct intercity rail links allowing passengers to change modes as easy as they change airlines or planes. Frankfurt International is the hub of the 'AIRail Service' where airline passengers from Lufthansa, American Airlines, and Emirates can thanks to a code-share agreement make direct thru-ticketing transfers to the national railway Deutsche Bahn's ICE trains to Stuttgart, Bonn, and Cologne.

Such a rail-air connection could be created for the Empire Service if the present service was extended down the mainline of the Long Island Railroad to Jamaica Station where via the airport's AirTrain people mover a direct connection can be made to all 9 terminals of JFK International.

Just west of Jamaica is Belmont Park, which has a large but mostly unused 4-platform 8-track LIRR station. Intercity trains could be serviced here and thanks to a triangle wye junction with the mainline be turned so they can return back to Albany, locomotive first. Belmont Park is of course a famous thoroughbred race track, the site of a possible casino, and would make an excellent "park n' ride" station for suburban Long Island residents.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The goals and objectives of the program are the improvement of intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. Projects to further develop connectivity could be part of other projects or studies in the future.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment **0-29-43** Albany-Colonie Station: With increasing ridership a new station in the Capital District will be required given that Schenectady has limited parking and Albany-Rensselaer is constrained by two-lane streets and is on the far less populated side of the Hudson River. Parking is important because the car is the primary form of transport in the Capital District.

An excellent site is actually now available, a 9-acre parcel of industrial land on Railroad Ave next to the Amtrak mainline and right off Fuller Road between SUNY Albany and Wolf Road that is on the market for \$2.25-million. No need for lengthy eminent domain proceedings, immediate purchase of this property would secure an excellent central location for a regional 'park-and-ride' station adjacent to the interchange of the I-90 and I-87. The station could also be tied into the UAlbany Bus and CDTA BusPlus services.

The NYS Senate HSR Task Force in its 2006 report recommended a new station in the "vicinity of the State Campus on the west side of Albany" to be built "in parallel" with the new Albany-Schenectady second track.

Response Thank you for your comment on a new Albany Station location. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program evaluated a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 EIS considers using the existing stations in each of the alternatives; the inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor would be part of future studies for expanding service.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-44 Extended Service: With the proposal to increase Albany-New York frequencies from today's 13-round trips to 17, some of these trains should be extended to Schenectady and Saratoga Springs to provide early morning departures and late evening arrivals. In the 1980s Schenectady had such service because the old Turboliners trains were double-ended with streamline cabs, allowing for bi-directional travel to and from Schenectady. However another option today is to run a late evening train to Saratoga Springs where it could be turned for a return trip by using a wye just south of the station. The Saratoga Springs Rail Station also has two storage tracks where a train can be kept overnight; there should be little interference with the tourist train operations of the Saratoga & North Creek Railway or the freight operations of CP Rail. After an overnight layover the train would be ready for an early morning departure to New York City, stopping also at Schenectady and my proposed Albany-Colonie station. Also even without push-pull bidirectional train-sets the use of cab-cars at the end of future train-sets might be useful to ease the necessary turning of train-sets at wyes at Niagara Falls, Saratoga Springs, Rutland, Rensselaer, and Belmont Park.

Response Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor between New York City and Albany and Albany to Niagara Falls. Suggestions and comments, for improvements to the service outside of these limits, including service extending to Saratoga Springs, have been considered in the Service Development Plan for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-45 Overnight Service: The 7½ hour travel time New York City-Niagara Falls in 'Alternative 110' is too long for a practical day-trip, however it is ideal for an overnight sleeper train service like that offered by German's 'City Night Line' which despite low budget airlines and high-speed rail has been reinvested in by Deutsche Bahn. The attraction of such services is that they combine air travel and hotel stays into one vehicle, the train being essentially a moving hotel. No need for a red-eye flight or the hassle of travel to and from the airport. You check-in late in the evening in one city and wakeup in another city well rested. Such a service with a 9-hour schedule travel time between New York City and Buffalo-Niagara might prove popular to both business and leisure travelers including foreign

tourists. New York-Montreal is another potential route for such an overnight “hotel-train” service.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The purpose of the program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. Comments from the public, supporting the program, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Further improvements or enhancements to the service can be studied in the future, and operating timetables can be further developed as part of Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-46 However I’m not in favor of building a new station [Buffalo-Exchange Street Station] because there really is no longer a viable alternative site for a downtown station that would also be close to the Metro Rail. I believe that instead the existing station could actually be greatly improved. The existing red brick station was built in the 1950s by the New York Central and architecturally is not bad, but does need to be greatly improved and expanded. It seems to me that on the east side an entirely new waiting room/rest room annex could be built with little trouble, perhaps tripling the size of the existing station. It should have a high floor-to-ceiling height and large windows that flood the waiting room with natural light. It should also have its own entrances to the front taxiway and rear platform. The existing low-level platform should be replaced in part with a high-level platform immediately to the east of the current station building. Given that the line was once double track there is space to lay a 2nd track that could reroute freights around the platform track. The new platform should be covered by a canopy and be heated in the winter time. The station’s pedestrian connections to Main Street and the NFTA Metro Rail should be enhanced thru proper street signage. A pedestrian railroad crossing and sidewalk up to Washington Street could be built just west of the station that would allow passengers to more directly connect with new waterfront development and the Metro Rail. The sidewalk should be heated and covered. Finally purchasing an existing surface parking lot just east to the station could greatly expand parking for use by Amtrak passengers, providing perhaps by about 200 hundred spaces. The parking lot should be secured by being fenced in and under video surveillance. Parking at Buffalo-Depew should also be greatly expanded into the empty land to the east, parallel to the existing platform.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the improvements needed to the existing stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to

the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-47 In summary 'Alternative 110' provides the best blue print for accelerated intercity passenger service appropriate to the size of our Upstate population and economy and at a financial cost which is within the capability of New York State.

Response Thank you for your comment and support of 110 Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would also provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. The existing station stops on the route would remain in service and the frequency of trains would increase for the western portion of the Empire Corridor from 4 roundtrips west of Albany to 8 roundtrips. Support and interest from the public, relating to Alternative 110, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-48 "On the Right Lines? The Limits of Technological Innovation"
On page 191 he writes that "once traffic-generating potential drops below ten million passengers per annum, the new-build option becomes very hard to substantiate." On page 188 he writes that "it seems unlikely that a major new ground transport system such as MAGLEV will really be viable unless it can attract passenger flows of the order of fifty million per annum".
I don't support Alternative 125 because one it skips Schenectady, Utica, and Rome; but primarily because it seems to me that Upstate NY doesn't have the population or economy to support such a construction project, which even after it is completed, Rochester and Buffalo would seem to still be beyond the 3 to 4 hour travel time where HSR can successfully capture a large market-share of combined air-rail intercity travel.

Response Thank you for your comments. Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration in part based on its costs, it is the costliest alternative.

Commenter **Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association**

Comment 0-29-49 Alt 110 is in terms of costs and benefits is the most logical choice, the biggest bang for the buck. I think speeds up to 125-mph could be feasible south of Rensselaer to Poughkeepsie with grade crossing upgrades and a FRA waiver, and perhaps on portions of new dedicated 110-mph track should grade separation of significant lengths of the line be accomplished at some future date. But overall a new dedicated third track along the existing is the way to go Albany to Buffalo be it at 90, 110, or 125-mph.

Response Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional tracks to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter	Turon, Benjamin J., Empire State Passenger Association, Empire State Passenger Association
Comment 0-29-50	I support the Alternative 110, with one caveat. My caveat is that the State should consider the use of tilting train sets for the new train sets to replace the Am Fleets. I believe the use of tilting trains could significantly cut the travel time by maybe, you know, five, ten minutes between city pairs by going faster around the curves.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Consideration of the types of locomotives and rolling stock will be part of the second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that project, or group of projects, that will meet the goals of the program. Use of tilt trains on the route may require further study. The clearances for the tilt train wheel and axle assemblies may not meet the recommended allowances to operate on lines equipped with third rail that the Empire Corridor trains must use on both Metro North Railroad and in Pennsylvania Station, New York.
Commenter	Wierowski, David C., Empire State Passenger Association, NARP, Empire State Passenger Association, NARP
Comment 0-29-51	1. Secure funding to install additional RR bridge over Park Street (west of station) move existing switch west end approach to platform, to west of Park Street. Install high speed switch. Add additional switch to station track to allow 2nd track to be installed on south side of existing raised platform (it is almost ready to go) Extend that track to connect to north platform station track to the east of existing platform. Extend high level platforms, both east and west. This added bridge over Park Street would be asset to both Amtrak and CSX, should CSX decide to reconstruct existing 2 track bridge over park street, they would have a detour if construction occurs.
Response	Thank you for your suggestions and recommendations. Operations in the Syracuse area of the Empire Corridor are being addressed in a separate project by NYSDOT, the Syracuse Congestion Relief Project, that will focus on improving the operation of both freight and passenger trains in the area between Syracuse Station and East Syracuse.
Commenter	Wierowski, David C., Empire State Passenger Association, NARP, Empire State Passenger Association, NARP
Comment 0-29-52	2. For higher speed a third track to be installed at critical locations to allow for faster speeds for Amtrak, and in certain areas where needed, third track installation with super elevation (banked curves) to allow for faster speeds on tight curves thruout system (NYS) improved grade crossing warning with double locked gates, like in England and Europe. Grade crossing elimination where possible.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding the need for additional tracks on the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, the majority of which consists of dedicated third track, as outlined in Volume 2 of the Tier 1 EIS. Track and infrastructure design will need to conform to Federal Railroad Administration requirements and regulations. Provisions will need to be included in the design to support the safe operation of all trains on the route.
Commenter	Wierowski, David C., Empire State Passenger Association, NARP, Empire State Passenger Association, NARP

Comment
O-29-53 We also, last year, toured England and Europe, and observing some of the characteristics that they have in their rail networks, one of the things that, in comparison and as far as the safety aspect the gentleman that was just behind me spoke about, grade crossings, a lot of grade crossings in England use a method of locking down the approach to the -- to the grade crossing, and there are certain areas in this country that are experimenting with that system of double gates on both sides of the highway that cross the grade crossing at level grade crossings for safety reasons. And this is a big thing. I'm sure you folks have been working on that with CSX because they're the primary corridor owners here, but this would be a great improvement to help out with the -- the warning system on approaching trains. I notice that, in Ohio and Indiana, Norfolk Southern has put in amazing grade crossings with overhead lighting even on the smallest of highways, like, it was unbelievable. So whether or not CSX is going to get together with Amtrak or whatever, the DOT, to do those improvements, that would -- that would help immensely in speed.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives, and proposed safety and design measures will be further developed in the Tier 2 assessments. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Wierowski, David C., Empire State Passenger Association, NARP, Empire State Passenger Association, NARP**

Comment
O-29-54 Of course, the high speed -- high speed, I would love to see this at 110 miles an hour in my lifetime

Response Thank you for your interest and support of Alternative 110. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would also provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Wierowski, David C., Empire State Passenger Association, NARP, Empire State Passenger Association, NARP**

Comment
O-29-55 It's -- it's one of those things that our in infrastructure here, dealing with a freight railroad, you almost have to start separating, and I really would love to see the top speed here, the 110, to get -- get away in certain corridors, certain areas, get away from the freight road bed because, like he says, the -- the one and a half mile long freight trains that CSX runs around back and forth throughout this country, CSX and Norfolk Southern, BNSF, Union Pacific, the big four, they've put a lot of pressure on that roadbed.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program reviews the operation of multiple tracks along the Empire Corridor, including developing specific track diagrams and modeling/simulation of rail operations, to identify the necessary infrastructure projects that will improve travel times and the reliability of service. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.

Commenter **Olson, Milo, Energy Solutions, Energy Solutions**

Comment O-30-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force my company to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specifically in the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program, with Section 4.3 Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discussing how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.

Commenter Olson, Milo, Energy Solutions, Energy Solutions

Comment O-30-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Ardito, David, Environmental Rail Solutions, Inc., Environmental Rail Solutions, Inc.

Comment O-31-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Environmental Rail Solutions, Inc., the company I represent, relies heavily on the very busy corridor in New York. 85% of our freight business will be greatly impacted and will cause serious delays, delays we cannot afford. We rely 100% on the railroad for our freight business. We are generating over \$15,000,000.00 in freight and the cost would double if we would have to increase the number of rail cars to move our freight to offset the increase in delays

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As discussed above, this alternative would better segregate passenger and freight rail operations and would reduce travel delays for both types of rail. Improvement of passenger rail service, while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor, is one of the goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of a preferred alternative.

Commenter Ardito, David, Environmental Rail Solutions, Inc., Environmental Rail Solutions, Inc.

Comment O-31-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Elhakim, Diane, Evonik Corporation, Evonik Corporation
Comment O-32-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods. As a shipper of bulk chemicals, many hazardous in nature, Evonik tries to ship as much as we can on the railroads, as rail has proven to be the safest method of transportation for such shipments. To ship more by truck would mean dangerous chemicals moving on our highways, through our cities, past our schools. The danger of an accident increases with every truck shipment. In addition, for the safety of our plant personnel and customer recipients, there is one loading and unloading for each railcar as opposed to four or possibly five for the same amount of product shipped by truck. Less handling means less risk of spillage and potential injury.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would better segregate passenger and freight rail operations and would reduce travel delays for both types of rail. .
Commenter	Elhakim, Diane, Evonik Corporation, Evonik Corporation
Comment O-32-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. They also would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing upstate economy.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Elhakim, Diane, Evonik Corporation, Evonik Corporation
Comment O-32-3	I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and the preference for an alternative that will allow for growth of the freight. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Kuhr, Jim, Director of Brewery Operations & Brewmaster, The Matt Brewing Company Inc., The Matt Brewing Company Inc.
Comment O-33-1	<p>We urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative for the High Speed Rail project.</p> <p>Our company is a brewery in Utica, New York. Our sales are about \$50,000,000 and we employ 125-130 people. Our business is growing and we expect to do a capacity expansion in the next year or two. A key ingredient for our brewery is malt. We use approximately 21,000,000 pounds of grains per year and we receive most of this by rail, accounting for over 70 cars a years. Rail is the most efficient way to transport this quantity of malt and thus it is a key input to our business.</p> <p>If rail delivery of grains were to become more difficult, expensive or unreliable, we would be forced to receive more grains by truck which would increase costs and cause a cascading effect of increasing our environment footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.</p> <p>Advancing high speed passenger rail at the detriment of freight rail would limit opportunities for business and job growth and would be detrimental to the state economy.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would better segregate passenger and freight rail operations and would reduce travel delays for both types of rail.
Commenter	Hiser, Lynn, VP of Logistics, Fairmount Minerals, Fairmount Minerals
Comment O-34-1	<p>As VP of Logistics for Fairmount Minerals, I am very concerned about the proposed high speed rail corridor that could negatively affect business operations. Fairmount Minerals is a major shipper of bulk commodities and we rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of our product.</p> <p>Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force Fairmount Minerals to alter our business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways. Or worse, force us to do less business in New York thus impacting jobs & tax revenues.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Hiser, Lynn, VP of Logistics, Fairmount Minerals, Fairmount Minerals
Comment O-34-2	I strongly encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain shippers ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Canine, Rick, President, Federal Maglev, Inc., Federal Maglev, Inc.
Comment O-35-1	<p>On March 30, 2001, the Federal Railroad Administration released their Record of Decision for their Maglev Deployment Program. The Final Programmatic environmental Impact Statement compared these three rail alternatives to automobiles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Accelerail: steel-on-steel, shared freight right-of-way, diesel or electric powered, top speeds 90 to 110 mph. · Bullet Train: steel-on-steel, exclusive right-of-way, electric propulsion, speeds up to 200 mph. · Maglev: no-contact, exclusive guideway, electric propulsion, speeds of 300 mph or more. <p>The FRA determined that Maglev “is not only the preferred alternative from an overall standpoint, but also the preferred alternative from an environmental standpoint.” To reiterate, we were disappointed that this environmentally preferred, advanced ground transportation system was not included in your DEIS. If you are truly interested in protecting the environment in the state of New York, we ask that Maglev be added to the DEIS. We would be willing to provide information about Maglev to the DEIS authors.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the application of Maglev technology on the Empire Corridor. In developing the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, very high speed (VHS) alternatives were considered, but were not selected in part because they were considered to be cost-prohibitive. In addition, they would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West. Moreover, as noted in the Tier 1 FEIS on page 3-8 “alignments beyond the existing railroad corridor would be expected to have greater impacts to the natural and human environment than alternatives that follow the existing railroad corridor.” The Tier 1 EIS builds on using existing railroad infrastructure and would provide interconnectivity with other passenger rail networks in New York State and the Northeast Region.
Commenter	Canine, Rick, President, Federal Maglev, Inc., Federal Maglev, Inc.
Comment O-35-2	<p>I was disappointed though that magnetic levitation (maglev) was not included in the study. There are three unique versions of maglev, all of which use linear electric motors. Our company is a promoter of one version, which uses permanent magnets and goes 300+ mph. We are currently working on a 400+ mile project here in the U.S. similar to yours, so in comparison, your 438 mile project would cost about \$9.6 billion and take 3 years to construct. We are always asked, “How can you do that?”</p> <p>First, our Maglev is always elevated about 20 feet high. When we go 300+ mph, we cannot safely allow anything to get in our way. And we save money by doing this.</p> <p>Second, we do not purchase right-of-way and do not excavate a roadbed. We allow auto traffic to go under the Maglev, we do not divide neighborhoods, communities, or farms, and we mitigate damage to wildlife habitat and ecosystems.</p> <p>Third, our Maglev is electrically powered without overhead wires. It is quiet with no engine or wheel noise, no train horns at crossings, and no vibration of the surrounding landscape.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS on using Maglev for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The five alternatives considered in the Tier 1 EIS build on existing railroad technology and can be supported with existing railroad infrastructure, and, therefore, could provide interconnectivity with other passenger rail networks in New York State and the Northeast Region.
Commenter	Canine, Rick, President, Federal Maglev, Inc., Federal Maglev, Inc.

Comment O-35-3 Your project of 4.3 million passengers annually could be financially feasible without considerable subsidy. Although it was stated in the DEIS numbers, we are appalled that the text of the DEIS did not specifically point that out.

Response Thank you for your analysis of ridership and revenue for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The levels of financial support and investment for each of the alternatives are discussed in Chapter 6 of Volume 1 of the Tier 1 EIS. Exhibit 6-9 – Comparative Analysis of Alternatives notes that Alternative 125's subsidy per rider would be \$14, which is three dollars lower than if the Base Alternative were selected.

Commenter Barcelona, Dean, Ferraro Foods, Ferraro Foods

Comment O-36-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Barcelona, Dean, Ferraro Foods, Ferraro Foods

Comment O-36-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Polbos, Andy, Freight, Freight

Comment O-37-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Polbos, Andy, Freight, Freight

Comment O-37-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Saunders, Anita, Freight, Freight
Comment O-38-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Saunders, Anita, Freight, Freight
Comment O-38-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Cook, Austin, Freight, Freight
Comment O-39-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Cook, Austin, Freight, Freight
Comment O-39-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles

of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Grimmel, Betty, Freight, Freight

Comment O-40-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Grimmel, Betty, Freight, Freight

Comment O-40-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. They also would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing upstate economy.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Grimmel, Betty, Freight, Freight

Comment O-40-3 I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Hersh, Bob, Freight, Freight

Comment O-41-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for

business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Hersh, Bob, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-41-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Gooden, Clarence, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-42-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Gooden, Clarence, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-42-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Murray, Dan, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-43-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter	Murray, Dan, Freight, Freight
Comment O-43-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, which I believe will significantly constrain effective and timely freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Kennedy, David, Freight, Freight
Comment O-44-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Kennedy, David, Freight, Freight
Comment O-44-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Fortin, Eric, Freight, Freight
Comment O-45-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Fortin, Eric, Freight, Freight

Comment O-45-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Maheras, Greg, Freight, Freight
Comment O-46-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Maheras, Greg, Freight, Freight
Comment O-46-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Cutler, Harris, Freight, Freight
Comment O-47-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Cutler, Harris, Freight, Freight
Comment O-47-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A,

90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Gagarin, Jerry, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-48-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Gagarin, Jerry, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-48-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **McCreavy, John, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-49-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **McCreavy, John, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-49-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative

90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Basile, Joseph, Freight, Freight

Comment O-50-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Basile, Joseph, Freight, Freight

Comment O-50-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter Muldrow, Louis, Freight, Freight

Comment O-51-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Muldrow, Louis, Freight, Freight

Comment O-51-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of

	additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Popowycz, Michael, Freight, Freight
Comment O-52-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Popowycz, Michael, Freight, Freight
Comment O-52-2	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Strange, Nick, Freight, Freight
Comment O-53-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Strange, Nick, Freight, Freight
Comment O-53-2	I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Stack, Richard, Freight, Freight
Comment O-54-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Stack, Richard, Freight, Freight
Comment O-54-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Giovinazzi, Thomas, Freight, Freight
Comment O-55-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Giovinazzi, Thomas, Freight, Freight
Comment O-55-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Waldeck, Tracey, Freight, Freight
Comment O-56-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire

Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Waldeck, Tracey, Freight, Freight**

Comment O-56-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Martin, DelRay, Franklin Storage, Franklin Storage**

Comment O-57-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Martin, DelRay, Franklin Storage, Franklin Storage**

Comment O-57-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Longtin, Lisa, Grain Processing Corporation, Grain Processing Corporation**

Comment O-58-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles

	of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Longtin, Lisa, Grain Processing Corporation, Grain Processing Corporation
Comment O-58-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Bleyl, Steve, Green Plains Renewable Energy, Green Plains Renewable Energy
Comment O-59-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Bleyl, Steve, Green Plains Renewable Energy, Green Plains Renewable Energy
Comment O-59-2	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Testa, Louis, Hamburg Sud Liner Services, Hamburg Sud Liner Services
Comment O-60-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Testa, Louis, Hamburg Sud Liner Services, Hamburg Sud Liner Services

Comment O-60-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Barattini, Thomas, Hapag-Lloyd, Hapag-Lloyd
Comment O-61-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Barattini, Thomas, Hapag-Lloyd, Hapag-Lloyd
Comment O-61-2	I highly encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Riccio, Jr., Anthony M., Harlem River Transportation and Distribution Center, Harlem River Transportation and Distribution Center
Comment O-62-1	For the future, rail rights of ways have to be widened to accommodate both freight and passenger service. Having worked in transportation for Municipal Government and the private sector for the past 40 years, I have seen the rail freight industry deteriorate. The notion of having high speed rail and freight service co exist is just plain fantasy. Let's work together to develop a true rail freight plan for the NYS Business community. Politics has no role in this planning. I therefore support the base alternative with the proviso that affirmative action is taken to address the problems discussed above.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the

	least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Reinhard, George, Managing Partner, HGMG Transload, LLC, HGMG Transload, LLC
Comment O-63-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Reinhard, George, Managing Partner, HGMG Transload, LLC, HGMG Transload, LLC
Comment O-63-2	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Douglas, Kirk, Hyundai Intermodal, Hyundai Intermodal
Comment O-64-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Douglas, Kirk, Hyundai Intermodal, Hyundai Intermodal
Comment O-64-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will

	involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility
Comment O-65-1	IRUM fully supports public investment in incremental passenger and freight rail improvements in the NY-Buffalo Empire Corridor.
Response	Thank you for your support and endorsement of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility
Comment O-65-2	The DEIS provides an important beginning point in identifying the impacts of alternative passenger rail investment strategies, particularly for the Schenectady-Buffalo portion of the corridor. However, the DEIS does not fully address the range of alternatives and impacts that should be considered. Advancing a program of capital investments and service enhancements for both freight and passenger systems could produce significant gains to the upstate economy, which lags far behind the growth enjoyed by the NYC metropolitan area.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and on how the program will offer significant economic gains to the region. The Tier 1 EIS – Chapter 3 “Alternatives” presents a full range of the alternatives that were reviewed in Section 3.1 “Alternative Development and Screening” and Exhibit 3-3 “General Elements of the Alternatives.” In developing the alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS, a wide range of options were considered from some that used existing technologies with no gains in maximum operating speeds to others that required dedicated right-of-way’s and electrified operations. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility
Comment O-65-3	It is important to note that a 110 mph maximum speed is already a starting point for all the alternatives considered in the DEIS. Much of the Schenectady-Poughkeepsie segment of the Empire Corridor currently has this top speed. Extending this speed to additional track segments west toward Niagara Falls could be considered as part of a series of incremental upgrades.
Response	Your comment in support of the 110 alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility

Comment O-65-4	the DEIS should balance this with other public benefits that would occur if somewhat more frequent and higher performing passenger service were operated.
Response	Thank you for your comments on comparing benefits from the different alternatives with other public benefits. The selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT considered service strategies that are discussed in the Tier 1 EIS for each of the alternatives. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility
Comment O-65-5	Instead of expanding track capacity on the existing corridor, some freight trains could be operated on the Southern Tier, using existing freight lines.
Response	Thank you for your comments on expanding the analysis of freight operations to the Southern Tier. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current Empire Corridor alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. Selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Haikalis, George, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility
Comment O-65-6	The DEIS should be expanded in an effort to take a make more comprehensive examination of these issues.
Response	Your comments on expanding the Tier 1 EIS to include a more comprehensive review of the issues may be a project beyond the scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluated a range of alternatives and focused on the alternatives considered in the Tier 1 DEIS. The Tier 1 FEIS and Service Development Plan focused on Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, while the Tier 1 DEIS discussed and reviewed the five alternatives that were considered in the documents.
Commenter	Oberting, Gregory, Interstate Commodities, Interstate Commodities
Comment O-66-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles

	of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Oberting, Gregory, Interstate Commodities, Interstate Commodities
Comment O-66-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Margiotta, James, J. Margiotta Company, J. Margiotta Company
Comment O-67-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Margiotta, James, J. Margiotta Company, J. Margiotta Company
Comment O-67-2	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Ashcraft, Jeff, J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc., J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.
Comment O-68-1	In 2013, we originated and terminated almost 70,000 loads via New York intermodal facilities, with almost half of those loads moving on CSX tracks in the Empire Corridor. And an even larger number of loads passed through New York on their way to and from other points in the Northeast. With such large volume on the rails, we are concerned about the potential commingling of freight and passenger rail services such as being proposed by the State of New York and the FRA.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for

business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor. This alternative will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Ashcraft, Jeff, J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc., J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.

Comment O-68-2 We urge the State to consider strongly the impact on freight rail operations when selecting one of the five alternatives being proposed. Since greater preference should be given to alternatives with the least impact on freight, the “base” alternative appears to be the best option, at this time.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Wynne, Daniel, Judge Organization, Judge Organization

Comment O-69-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Wynne, Daniel, Judge Organization, Judge Organization

Comment O-69-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Painting, Joe, Lansing Trade Group, Lansing Trade Group

Comment O-70-1 The proposed commingling of freight traffic and high speed passenger traffic and the required concessions is a tactical error with a far reaching and profoundly negative impact. This would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing economy in upstate NY and most of New England for the sake of convenience for what will amount to a small handful of travelers.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote

	economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Painting, Joe, Lansing Trade Group, Lansing Trade Group
Comment O-70-2	I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-1	The Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition and the undersigned organizations represent thousands of New Yorkers committed to seeing the Bike and Pedestrian Walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge restored when this bridge is rebuilt or replaced as part of the Empire Corridor project. Although site-specific impacts of the selected program will be determined in Tier 2 evaluations, it is important to set the stage for the future of this critical bicycle and pedestrian connection...
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-2	...the report should acknowledge the significant local and regional support for the Livingston Avenue Bridge Walkway.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS (Section 7.7) notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge in the comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-3	The DEIS should contain general and relevant specific review of all transportation projects in the corridor, as well as a consideration of all activities reasonably foreseeable in each of the geographic areas of the program. The DEIS document should incorporate information based on the planning documents of other federal agencies, and state and local governments, including the studies highlighted below
Response	Thank you for your comments on including a review of all projects in the corridor. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focused on improving passenger rail service between New York City and Niagara Falls. The Tier 1 FEIS considers how it will

relate to other transportation projects in New York State and their environmental impact, including discussion of other related station improvements (Section 2.5.5), cumulative impacts (Section 4.24 and Appendix G.21), and other HSR projects (Appendix E.3.1). Appendix G.1 (Exhibits G-2 and G-3) addresses consistency with state, regional, and local plans. Additional information on NYSDOT High Speed Rail Projects along the Empire Corridor can be found at:

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor>

Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-4	DEIS should take into consideration that the Livingston Avenue Bridge was added to the Capital District Transportation Committee's Transportation Improvement Program in 2009 in anticipation of ARRA funding contingent on restoring pedestrian and bicycle accommodations across the bridge.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-5	page 3-24 of the DIES identifies the specific goals of the "Livingston Avenue Bridge Replacement Project" to "improve safety / reliability, travel time, remove speed / weight restrictions, increase capacity," but does not highlight the additional transportation goal of restoring safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access across the bridge as identified in several local and regional transportation studies
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. The Tier 1 FEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program addresses comments received indicating support for providing pedestrian/bicycle access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge.
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-6	we request inclusion of the following in the Tier 1 EIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Acknowledge material from transportation and land-use studies and plans relating to the Livingston Avenue Bridge and Walkway · Acknowledge community and municipal support for the Livingston Avenue Walkway · Conduct a Title VI and Environmental Justice Analysis of the scenarios, specifically identifying potential mitigation measures for Environmental Justice Areas surrounding the Livingston Avenue Bridge · Recognize the 2002 Federal Rail Administration report on Rails with Trails and the report's guidance on potential development of Rail-with-Trail facilities along the Empire Corridor
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the importance of a bike and walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.
Commenter	Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition
Comment O-71-7	I represent a group of organizations called Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition. We are a coalition. We are a number of different advocacy organizations and groups, like Restore Our Waterfront... We have several studies dating back well over a decade, planning studies done on both sides of the river, including the Albany Comprehensive Plan, the Tech Valley Trails Plan,

which prepared by our regional MPO. The City and County of Rensselaer, City and County of Albany have all invested significant public dollars in preparing planning documents that identify the benefits of the walkway. So that information is out there for the taking and I hope that it's included.

That being said, there were resolutions of support for reestablishing the walkway passed in the City of Albany, Albany County, the City of Rensselaer, Rensselaer County and the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Greenway Conservancy.

Response Thank you for your comments on the importance of the bike and walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (in Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that project, or group of projects. The Livingston Avenue Bridge (LAB) is currently undergoing a separate and independent evaluation in an Environmental Assessment (EA). NYSDOT seeks public input on the LAB improvements and offers a number of avenues for public input. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Environmental Assessment is examining alternatives, including options with pedestrian/bicycle accommodations

Commenter Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition

Comment 0-71-8 Secondly, I think this is a significant environmental justice issue. And while we have these trains going through the communities, I don't think it's too much to ask that there be a benefit provided to the people that are going to be most affected by these trains going through.

Response Thank you for your comment on the Livingston Avenue Bridge Project. We recognize its importance to the neighborhoods at both ends of the bridge in Albany and Rensselaer.

Commenter Daley, Martin, Founder, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition

Comment 0-71-9 The last issue in relation to safety and security. Actually, the Federal Rail Administration literally wrote the book on the safety of these facilities and Best Management Practices back in 2002 with a report called "Lessons Learned."
...making sure that the environmental justice issue, the planning issue, the public support and the safety issues are documented in the DEIS as we move forward. We are also looking forward to this bridge. It's a significant bottleneck for the corridor and we are hoping that this can be kind of fast-tracked in that process, given a high priority for replacement.

Response Thank you for your comments on the importance of the Livingston Avenue Bridge to the communities near the bridge, and the support for inclusion of a bike and walkway on the bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS (Section 7.7) notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge in the comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS.

Commenter La Rue, Greg, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, Louis Dreyfus Commodities

Comment 0-72-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increase the attractiveness of the region for business.

The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter La Rue, Greg, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, Louis Dreyfus Commodities

Comment O-72-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Perry, Kevin, Lowes, Lowes

Comment O-73-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Perry, Kevin, Lowes, Lowes

Comment O-73-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter Jordan, James, Magnetic Glide, Magnetic Glide

Comment O-74-1 This comment is provided to make the citizens and leadership of New York aware of a better alternative for high speed guided surface transport, called Maglev 2000, which is the 2nd generation superconducting Maglev transport system

Response Thank you for your comments on the application of Maglev technology to the improvement of intercity rail service on the Empire Corridor. In developing the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, very high speed (VHS) alternatives were considered, but were not selected in part because they were considered to be cost-prohibitive and would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West. Moreover, as noted in the Tier 1 FEIS on Page 3-9 “alignments beyond the existing

corridor would be expected to have greater impacts to the natural and human environment than alternatives that follow the existing railroad corridor.” The Tier 1 EIS builds on using existing railroad infrastructure and would provide interconnectivity with other passenger rail networks in New York State and the Northeast Region.

Commenter **Jordan, James, Magnetic Glide, Magnetic Glide**

Comment O-74-2 It would be a serious public policy error to ignore the Maglev alternative as the DEIS is considered by the citizens of New York.

Response Thank you for your comments on the program. As noted above, very high speed alternatives were considered, but were deemed both cost-prohibitive and would involve far greater right-of-way and environmental impacts than the Preferred Alternative 90B. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program outlines five alternatives that utilize existing railroad technology. This would continue to allow trains from the Empire Corridor to utilize the tracks of Metro North Railroad and Amtrak to reach Penn Station in New York City. Continued operation of passenger trains to Penn Station in New York City allows the Empire Corridor to be part of a larger network of passenger trains in the Northeast United States.

Commenter **Jordan, James, Magnetic Glide, Magnetic Glide**

Comment O-74-3 We observed that the DEIS did not mention the 2nd generation Maglev. Not considering Maglev is a serious policy error.

Response Thank you for your comments on the benefits of Maglev technology. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program discussed the use of railroad locomotives and passenger equipment that can be operated on the existing rail network in New York State and provide connections to the nationwide Amtrak network.

Commenter **Robledo, Joseph, VP Intermodal, Matson Logistics, Matson Logistics**

Comment O-75-1 As a company with significant operations in New York, Matson Logistics appreciates the state’s continued focus on economic development and pro-business efforts, but we are concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. In an average month, Matson Logistics ships over 500 containers to/from ports and production and distribution points via the Empire Corridor. We, and many thousands of citizens, rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Robledo, Joseph, VP Intermodal, Matson Logistics, Matson Logistics**

Comment O-75-2 We encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. We consider selection of the base alternative to be consistent with Governor Cuomo's nationally advertised business-friendly supporting new and expanded manufacturing.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Robledo, Joseph, VP Intermodal, Matson Logistics, Matson Logistics
Comment O-75-3	Conversely, the proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS alternatives. Alternatives 90A, 90B and 110 alternatives will add trackage to the Empire Corridor that will improve the operation of both freight and passenger trains. Alternative 90A would not provide the same level of transportation benefits as it would not add the same capacity as Alternatives 90B and 110 (which each provide more than 300 miles of additional trackage). Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Damman, James, President, Mode Transportation LLC, Mode Transportation LLC
Comment O-76-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Damman, James, President, Mode Transportation LLC, Mode Transportation LLC
Comment O-76-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments of the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	King, Mark, Executive Director, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
Comment O-77-1	Reconnecting the City of Albany and the City of Rensselaer via the Livingston Avenue Bridge offers the potential for a significant economic and transportation enhancement for the Capital Region. Ideally, this would be part of a region wide system of bike and walking trails, something that is desperately needed in the Capital District.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The

Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter	DiMeo, Steven J., President, Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation), Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation)
Comment O-78-1	With the recent proposal of installing high speed rail, Mohawk Valley EDGE is calling on the State to make the right decision, and once again include Utica as an integral part of that plan.
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125, a high-speed railroad on a new alignment, was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles. One of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	DiMeo, Steven J., President, Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation), Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises Corporation)
Comment O-78-2	Mohawk Valley EDGE respectfully submits its full support of the construction of high speed rail in New York State. EDGE also feels that any option that does not include Utica as a hub and stop along that proposed line is indefensible from both an economic and transportation planning perspective. Therefore, it is our opinion that any plans to construct high speed rail in New York State must include Utica as a hub and stop.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the importance of Utica on the route. Your comment has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons outlined above.
Commenter	Galioto, Frank, Murex, Murex
Comment O-79-1	...we are concerned that any changes to the rail corridor would negatively impact our logistics and our customers logistics.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Galioto, Frank, Murex, Murex
Comment O-79-2	We urge the state to maintain current freight corridor structure by selecting the base alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative

	90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Szaloky, Joseph, Murphy-Brown LLC, Murphy-Brown LLC
Comment O-80-1	I'd like to urge you to consider our needs before compromising those qualities with the proposal to share lines between passenger and freight rail carriers.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Szaloky, Joseph, Murphy-Brown LLC, Murphy-Brown LLC
Comment O-80-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Wells, James, National Lime & Stone Company, National Lime & Stone Company
Comment O-81-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Wells, James, National Lime & Stone Company, National Lime & Stone Company
Comment O-81-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter	Weber, John V., Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-1	<p>...I'm in favor of pursuing Alternative 110 for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternatives 90A & 90B support only a small maximum speed improvement over current 79 mph operation, and would not alleviate to a great degree interference with freight operations. - Alternative 125 cuts out Central New York, specifically Utica and Rome, from high speed service at a time when they are poised to become greater centers for new technology (nanotechnology, drone testing, functions at Griffiss Business & Technology Park).
Response	Your comment in support of the 110 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Weber, John V., Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-2	what I would like to see is the addition of dedicated passenger track as in Alternative 110 with schedules and platform configurations at Rochester, Syracuse, Albany and Schenectady allowing easy and timely passenger transfer between high speed trains and lower-average-speed trains that would serve Utica, Rome and any other Central New York communities
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and on the scheduling of the future train service. The 90B and 110 Alternatives include the installation of additional main tracks to support passenger train operations on the Empire Corridor, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. The Service Development Plan component of the Tier 1 FEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program addresses scheduling, service patterns, and opportunities for connections at stations along the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Lens, Harry, Vice President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-3	<p>My name is Harry Lens and I'm the Vice President of the Utica Mohawk Valley Chapter of The National Railway Historical Society.</p> <p>The Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is a non-profit historical society. It is committed to the preservation of railroad history and promotion of railroad transportation. The chapter endorses the DEIS 110 miles per hour alternative option. This option provides for increased and improved service for all corridor stations. Utica and the Mohawk Valley must be an integral part of the New York State railroad transportation plan. We do not approve options that bypass Utica in the Mohawk Valley. Our society is based in Utica.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the 110 Alternative. Your comments on preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125, a high-speed railroad on a new alignment, was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles. One of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany and would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its

	performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Lens, Harry, Vice President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-4	We do have some concerns of the area surrounding Utica Station. As you know, Bagg's Square is a historic district. Many of these buildings are register eligible including The New York Central Tower 30 at the eastside of the platforms. This tower is very significant as there are very few still surviving in New York State. I believe the count is three, and that is one of the three survivors. There are many buildings in this area that are on the register including this station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the importance of preserving historical sites along the Empire Corridor. In selecting routes and defining projects for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT have recognized the importance of preserving and supporting historical structures and facilities along the Empire Corridor. Section 4.15 of the Tier 1 FEIS addresses the potential for impacts on historic resources.
Commenter	Lens, Harry, Vice President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-5	Also, it appears that the Adirondack Scenic Railway will be impacted by the construction of the station platforms. Although the Adirondack Scenic Railway is a separate non-profit society, we support their goals. Please minimize this disruption due to the operations of the new construction of the platforms.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the need to consider impacts to the Adirondack Scenic Railway at Utica. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations. Improvements in the Utica area considered accommodating continued service for the Adirondack Scenic Railway.
Commenter	Preston, Doug, President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-6	I'm VERY DISAPPOINTED not to see an easel board concerning Utica!!! I heard an explanation, but I'm still disappointed.
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, it would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.

Commenter	Preston, Doug, President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-7	Some of the Alternatives tout raising the average speed from NY City to Niagara Falls to 63 mph. Impressive until one considers that about 60 years ago the New York Central ran the all-pullman “20th Century Limited” between New York (Grand Central Terminal) and Chicago (LaSalle Street Station – 960 miles, average speed 60 mph) in 15½ hours, pulled by first-generation diesels and, until 1953, sometimes by steam locomotives. I do acknowledge that the NYC was a 4-track railroad back then, with 2 dedicated passenger tracks (all on jointed rail BTW). Plus automatic train stop, which was later removed.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS, which were considered as part of the public review process. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Preston, Doug, President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-8	Concerning the reconfiguration of the Utica station in the Alternative 90B/110 schematics, I trust the powers-that-be would replace the Adirondack Scenic RR tracks displaced by the new Amtrak tracks. And since the “new” passenger platforms are to be isolated from freights on Tracks 2 & 1, it would seem possible to build new umbrella sheds on the passenger platforms: for passenger comfort and safety in inclement weather, and as a partial restoration of the historic facilities that once existed (six island platforms, each with toaches on both sides)
Response	Thank you for your comment discussing the configuration of tracks at Utica. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (called Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that project, or group of projects. Further evaluation of the facilities and track arrangements at Utica, would be part of the Tier 2 review for the improvement of the track arrangement at Utica.
Commenter	Preston, Doug, President, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-9	My comment just has to do with descriptions of the different communities, different stations along the way like volume one that were talked about Albany and Syracuse, and Syracuse, the big paragraph talked about it being the commercial and cultural hub of Central New York and the center of education, and I don't specifically remember if it was mentioned, Syracuse University, my alma mater as I say, but here in Utica where I live and I worked in this station in different ways, we see students go through here from to Utica College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Herkimer County Community College, State University College Utica/Rome, Hamilton College out in Clinton and even Colgate University

down in Hamilton, New York and the documentation is that you take shuttles, the shuttle vans from Colgate and Hamilton and, of course, obviously, the kids wear backpacks and jackets and all that. This station, the busiest travel day is the day before Thanksgiving or right around Thanksgiving and it's like students all here so we don't have Syracuse University, but when you start putting these other institutions together, student travel is a big part.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and on the importance of Utica on the route. Your comment have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in their selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.

Commenter **Preston/Lens, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society**

Comment 0-82-10 The Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is a non-profit, educational/historical society. It is committed to the preservation of railroad history and the promotion of railroad transportation. The Chapter endorses the DEIS 110 miles per hour Alternative Option. This option provides for increased and improved service for all corridor stations. Utica and the Mohawk valley must be an integral part of the New York State's Rail Transportation Plan.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the 110 Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Moreover, Alternative 90B would have fewer environmental impacts than Alternative 110. Alternative 90B would have land use impacts in nine areas in six counties, compared to 53 areas in eight counties with Alternative 110.

Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which were considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide improvements in service to currently served cities, such as Utica. One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.

Commenter **Preston/Lens, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society**

Comment 0-82-11 Our society is based in Utica and has some concerns in the area immediately surrounding Utica Union Station. As you know, Bagg's Square area is a historical district. Many buildings are register eligible including the New York Central Railroad Tower 30 at the east side of the station platforms. This tower is historically significant because there are few remaining in New York State. Please try to keep Tower 30 intact with the future construction.

Response Thank you for your comments on the importance of preserving historical sites along the Empire Corridor. In selecting the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT considered the importance of preserving and supporting historical structures and facilities along the Empire Corridor. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125, as described above. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative

	110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Preston/Lens, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
Comment O-82-12	Also it appears the Adirondack Scenic Railroad will be impacted by the construction of new station platforms. Although the Adirondack Scenic Railroad is a separate non-profit society, we support their goals. Please minimize the disruption to their operations at Utica.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the need to consider impacts to the Adirondack Scenic Railway at Utica. The program of improvements under the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) will be further developed in Tier 2. Improvements in the Utica area considered accommodating continued service for the Adirondack Scenic Railway. The Service Development Plan addresses maintaining and improving intermodal connection between intercity passenger trains on the Empire Corridor with other railroads including the Adirondack Scenic Railway.
Commenter	Hague, P.E., John Maxfield, New York Central System Historical Society, Inc. 4072, New York Central System Historical Society, Inc. 4072
Comment O-83-1	The 20CL compared not too unfavorably to your Alternatives 90A, 908 and 110. Its history of great performance over many decades, including links to the west coast, should be included as a model for the future in the final EIS.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	Hague, P.E., John Maxfield, New York Central System Historical Society, Inc. 4072, New York Central System Historical Society, Inc. 4072
Comment O-83-2	Buffalo Central Terminal (opened 1929), located at the junction of the main line and the NY Central Belt Line, about halfway between the Depew and Exchange Street stations, should be considered for re-use as the Buffalo station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily acceptable for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter	Martin, Richard J., Associate Executive Director, New York State Bar Association, New York State Bar Association
Comment O-84-1	I am writing in support of the so-called modified high speed rail proposal that is capable of speeds of 110 miles per hour.
Response	Your comment in support of the 110 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Schiffer, William, Newhaven Distribution Services, Newhaven Distribution Services
Comment O-85-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Schiffer, William, Newhaven Distribution Services, Newhaven Distribution Services
Comment O-85-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Brown, Ike, President, NFI Intermodal, NFI Intermodal
Comment O-86-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce

travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Brown, Ike, President, NFI Intermodal, NFI Intermodal**

Comment O-86-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Jones, Michael, North Dakota Mill & Elevator Association, North Dakota Mill & Elevator Association**

Comment O-87-1 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Butts, Joe, NOVA Chemicals, NOVA Chemicals**

Comment O-88-1 We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods and encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Long, Raymond, NRG Energy, NRG Energy**

Comment O-89-1 I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Long, Raymond, NRG Energy, NRG Energy
Comment O-89-2	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Roberson, Rob, Corporate Logistics Manager, Nucor Corporation, Nucor Corporation
Comment O-90-1	I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative, not only with respect to how such a decision may directly affect freight rail operations but also the indirect affect such a decision may have on the safety of the state's rail system and roadways.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Roberson, Rob, Corporate Logistics Manager, Nucor Corporation, Nucor Corporation
Comment O-90-2	The state should maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Hatfield, Jane, Owensboro Riverport, Owensboro Riverport
Comment O-91-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote

economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Hatfield, Jane, Owensboro Riverport, Owensboro Riverport**

Comment 0-91-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-1 Performance objectives must be expanded to ensure full consideration of all types of multi-modal connections, including bicycling and walking
A new objective should be added: "Foster multi-modal travel connections, including bicycling and walking."

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. Transportation-related goals include: "increase travel choices by providing additional commuting and travel options for residents and workers." Although multi-modal connections and pedestrian access are considerations in station design, the broader focus for the program centers on intercity passenger rail service. The purpose of the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to improve intercity passenger service in New York State through infrastructure investments and operational improvements, which will enhance the attractiveness of the service to existing and potential riders. Improvements in service include tangible and measurable gains in operational reliability and travel time reductions. The Tier 1 EIS focuses on selecting a Preferred Alternative for improving passenger rail service on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-2 the Tier 1 EIS must include a specific discussion of the following:

- Facilities for cyclists (bike racks, lockers, even showers) at stations
- Integration of station design with the surrounding street network to allow for safe access to the station by pedestrians and cyclists
- Accommodation of walking and bicycling at locations where the chosen alternative requires that bridges or other infrastructure be modified or replaced

Response Thank you for your comments on the issues to be addressed in the Tier 1 EIS. The tiered EIS process for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is a two-tier process, and currently Tier 1 selects a Preferred Alternative. Stations and supporting facilities can be either advanced as independent, separate projects (as many of the stations along the route have been recently upgraded or reconstructed) or can be addressed later in Tier 2, as individual projects are identified and reviewed. In the second stage of the process, the opportunities for integrating the needs accommodating bicycles and cyclists can be included in station projects.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-3	We specifically request that a bicycle and pedestrian walkway be restored in conjunction with the Livingston Avenue Bridge replacement.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)
Comment 0-92-4	Transportation-related goals should recognize the importance of high speed rail to supporting tourism in New York State
Response	Thank you for your comments on the importance of rail in promoting tourism in New York State. The transportation-related goals of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, as outlined in Chapter 1, include “contribute to economic revitalization by accommodating forecasted growth in population and employment and corridor rail freight operations and by accommodating and attracting additional tourists.”
Commenter	Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)
Comment 0-92-5	The NYSDOT transportation-related program goals mentioned on page 1-12 and 6-1 should be revised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase travel choices and improve quality of life by providing additional commuting and travel options for residents, workers, AND TOURISTS • Contribute to economic revitalization by accommodating forecasted growth in population and employment and corridor rail freight operations and by ATTRACTING ADDITIONAL TOURISTS.
Response	Thank you for your comments on revising the document. As described above, the Tier 1 EIS has been revised to include the goal of accommodating tourists and tourism.
Commenter	Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)
Comment 0-92-6	Investment in new rolling stock must include cars to accommodate bicycles. Any rolling stock purchased to serve the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program must include passenger cars designed with racks to accommodate bicycles (the option we prefer) and/or baggage cars fitted with bicycle racks.
Response	Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing. It is anticipated that equipment requirements would continue to incorporate bicycle access.
Commenter	Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)
Comment 0-92-7	Built Alternative Reviews must include impacts to the state's trail systems in addition to national, state, county, and municipal parks and recreation areas and federally and state-designated heritage and historic sites The text of Existing Conditions: Parks and Recreational Areas, page 4-262, does not include mention of any of the trail systems within the Empire Corridor with the exception of the

Erie Canalway Trail. While the document notes the Glenville Bike Trail (page 4-277), this is actually a section of the Erie Canal way Trail.

On page 4-261, the DEIS states that "Publicly owned recreation areas were defined to include publicly owned golf courses (but not "public" golf courses that are open to the public, but privately owned). There is no mention of publicly-owned trail systems.

We recommend consultation with the MPOs and NYSDOT bicycle and pedestrian coordinators to ensure that, if applicable, New York's trails are recognized as recreational resources that should be included in any evaluation of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program impacts.

Response The Tier 1 analysis of conceptual corridors identified potential impacts and focused on GIS-mapped parks and recreation areas. Due to the size and scale of the trails and bikeways, the detailed analysis of impacts to these recreational corridors would be evaluated as part of the Tier 2 analysis, when more detailed designs on component projects are advanced and developed.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-8 Built Alternative Reviews must include impacts to historic as well as present Erie Canal alignments and planned as well as existing trail routes
In addressing potential impacts within the Area of Potential Effect for the five alternatives, consideration must be given to the broad corridor-level issue of impacts to planned as well as existing trail networks and to the historic as well as the present Erie Canal alignments. In evaluating alternative and potential effects, care must be taken to specifically ask local and state officials about planned or proposed trail projects before deciding there is no impact.

Response Thank you for your comments on the need for Built Alternative reviews in the future. The State Historic Preservation Office has been included in the Tier 1 reviews and will be consulted, as appropriate, in Tier 2 as part of constructability reviews for supporting projects. Tier 2 reviews will need to consider potential for impacts on recreational trails and projects.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-9 Use of former track bed should be preserved for potential Erie Canalway Trail and other trail network development
In those locations where former track bed is not utilized, we request that it not be lost to non-transportation purposes but instead be preserved as future rail, trail, or rail with trail projects.

Response Thank you for comment on the possible future preservation of the right of way for rail trail or trail use. Currently, it is not anticipated that the existing right of way used by CSX Transportation for their freight train operations will be retired and available for other uses.

Commenter **Dropkin, Robin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)**

Comment 0-92-10 Characterization of the New York State Canalway Trail System should be revised to reflect the Canalway Trail System's full extent
The paragraph should be revised to read as follows: "The 524- mile New York State Canalway Trail System is comprised of a network of four major recreational trails across upstate New York: the Erie Canalway Trail, Champlain Canalway Trail, Cayuga Seneca Canalway Trail, and Oswego Canalway Trail. Much of the trail system is located adjacent to the waterways of the New York State Canal System or follow remnants of the historic

original canals of the early 1800s that preceded today's working Canal System. Presently, more than 300 miles of the Canalway Trail System are open to the public: 277 miles of the Erie Canalway Trail, including the 36-mile Old Erie Canal State Park Trail in Central New York; six miles of the Cayuga-Seneca Canalway Trail; 17 miles of the Champlain Canalway Trail; and two miles of the Oswego Canalway Trail. Portions of this canal system are nationally or state-designated heritage areas, parks, and trails."

Response Thank you for your comments and suggestions to revise the Tier 1 EIS's characterization of the trail system, and the document's description of the New York State Canalway Trail System has been revised.

Commenter **Rinaldi, Philip L., Chief Executive Officer, Philadelphia Energy Solutions, Philadelphia Energy Solutions**

Comment I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods.

O-93-1

I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. They also would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing upstate economy. I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative. An optimized freight rail network will foster economic development, sustain jobs and help job growth as well as position existing and future New York businesses for success.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Steubing, Sandy, Spokesperson, People of Albany United for Safe Energy, People of Albany United for Safe Energy**

Comment I'm concerned that high speed passenger rail will be stalled due to the take over of oil by rail. I've also spoken to a few regular rail travelers who are shying away from taking the trains today b/c they don't wish to be near the oil trains.

O-94-1

The solution would be a massive switch to renewable sources of energy.

Response Thank you for your comments on operation of the high speed rail passenger trains and other train operating along the Empire Corridor. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, which should provide better separation of cargo trains from passenger rail. Equipment needs (including rolling stock) will be further addressed in advancing the Preferred Alternative in the Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter **Steubing, Sandy, Spokesperson, People of Albany United for Safe Energy, People of Albany United for Safe Energy**

Comment O-94-2 I'm a spokesperson for PAUSE, People of Albany United for Safe Energy. I'd like to double down on what Mr. Calsolaro and Mr. Daily and others have said about the Livingston Street Bridge, which I would love to be able to walk over in my lifetime.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Clark, Sharon, Perdue AgriBusiness, Perdue AgriBusiness

Comment O-95-1 I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Clark, Sharon, Perdue AgriBusiness, Perdue AgriBusiness

Comment O-95-2 In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter Spieckermann, Phil, POET Ethanol Products, POET Ethanol Products

Comment O-96-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Spieckermann, Phil, POET Ethanol Products, POET Ethanol Products

Comment O-96-2 I urge the state to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.

Response	Thanks you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Spieckermann, Phil, POET Ethanol Products, POET Ethanol Products
Comment O-96-3	In selecting an option, I encourage the state to maintain freight connectivity and the capacity to expand such service in the future by not commingling freight and high speed rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor and will improve the operation of both freight and passenger trains.
Commenter	Von Dohlen, Gerard, Port Newark Refrigerated Warehouse, Port Newark Refrigerated Warehouse
Comment O-97-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. As outlined above, the additional trackage provided by the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Von Dohlen, Gerard, Port Newark Refrigerated Warehouse, Port Newark Refrigerated Warehouse
Comment O-97-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Hayes, Ken, PSL North America, PSL North America
Comment O-98-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles

	of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Hayes, Ken, PSL North America, PSL North America
Comment O-98-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, the additional trackage provided by this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Jordan, Jacob, Executive Director, Queen City Rail Trails, Queen City Rail Trails
Comment O-99-1	Is it possible, while building the 90A/B and 110 improvements, to lay the literal foundation for 125 along the existing corridor?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the possible future ability to build the 125 Alternative from the infrastructure for 90B or 110 Alternatives. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125, as described above.
Commenter	Jordan, Jacob, Executive Director, Queen City Rail Trails, Queen City Rail Trails
Comment O-99-2	I am Jacob Jordan, Executive Director of Queen City Rail Trails. I mean I definitely think that whatever investment happens for dedicated separate right of ways must be considered on their ability to be expanded upon for true European/Japanese type high speed monorail. It doesn't have to be the same but, you know, if we're already running the overhead lines and make these trains go 125 miles an hour you should be able to expand that in the future.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the possibility of using technology that requires a dedicated right or way. Early in the alternatives identification process, higher speed (very high speed) options were reviewed, but were not selected as they would have a greater impact on the environment and would require substantially greater financial resources. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on railroad technology discussed in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Jordan, Jacob, Executive Director, Queen City Rail Trails, Queen City Rail Trails
Comment O-99-3	The existing plan that we talked about talks about expanding the Buffalo-Depew station which has -- those of you around here know is a brick shack out in the suburbs. I mean there is nothing wrong with that, but it definitely could be an investment that we're seeing in the City of Buffalo and Western New York and especially in downtown, medical campus,

Main Street, and waterfront corridor that an expansion to main Street to be a larger capacity station or an all together new downtown station in the City of Buffalo is of importance to any project in the Western New York area.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improvements to station(s) in Buffalo. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Esposito, Paul, Railex, Railex**

Comment O-100-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comment on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Esposito, Paul, Railex, Railex**

Comment O-100-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter **Fesen, Michael, President, Railroads of New York (RONY), Railroads of New York (RONY)**

Comment O-101-1 I wish to express our support for the base alternative

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to

	better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-1	Reconnect Rochester strongly supports the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Project design presented in the DEIS, in particular “Alternative 110.”
Response	Your comment in support of the 110 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-2	We ask for the following changes and clarifications: -Retain Central Avenue in the design of the Rochester Intermodal Transportation Center’s Phase II.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the Rochester Station Project. The rail station at Rochester has been replaced by a new intermodal passenger station, information on the public outreach for this project can be found at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/rochesterintermodalcenter/outreach
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-3	We ask for the following changes and clarifications: -Improve transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Rochester Intermodal Transportation Center.
Response	The improvements for the Empire Corridor have been designed to facilitate passenger connections with stations along the route, including the Rochester Station. The intermodal Rochester Station will promote economic development by connecting people to the downtown Rochester and destinations along the Empire Corridor. The station reconstruction project replaced the existing station with a fully ADA compliant Intermodal Transportation Center that meets the needs of the traveling public entering and exiting the Empire Corridor at Rochester.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-4	We ask for the following changes and clarifications: -Re-acquire the former Mainline ROW through Fairport to accommodate the addition of a dedicated passenger track.
Response	Thank you for your analysis of the track arrangements in the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor program. . The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. This additional trackage includes additional third track to be installed between Schenectady and Buffalo-Depew, including through Fairport. The arrangements of tracks at Fairport were altered several years ago to support the elimination of a grade crossing on State Highway 250 (Main Street) in the community. As

	projects are considered in the Tier 2 assessments for the program, the impact of railroad operations on grade crossing can be reviewed with a focus on promoting safety.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-5	We ask for the following changes and clarifications: -Accommodate new stations in Lyons (or Newark) and Batavia.
Response	Thank you for your comments on adding more stations to the Empire Corridor routes as part of the public review of the Tier 1 DEIS. The Tier 1 EIS outlines the improvements needed at existing stations for each of the alternatives; the inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor would have to be part of future studies for expanding service.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-6	We ask for the following changes and clarifications: -Accommodate the introduction of regional service along the Niagara Falls to Albany corridor.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS and the suggestion for the introduction of regional type service along the Empire Corridor. In the Preferred Alternative, regional trains will continue to operate and service all stations between Albany and Buffalo/Niagara Falls, but at a greater frequency (doubling the service currently provided). Suggestions and comments for improvements to the service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan component of the Tier 1 FEIS.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-7	I'm from Reconnect Rochester, which is a local organization that supports and approves transportation, including transit. And we do very strongly support improvement to the Empire Corridor, as well as the new Rochester Intermodal Station. However, personally, as an individual I'd like to say: In an ideal world, I would like to see the 125 Option. So I would hate to see that we insist upon a 125-mile-an-hour Option and wind up really getting more decades of nothing significant happening in the corridor.
Response	Your comment in support of the 125 Alternative has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative.
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester
Comment O-102-8	...we very strongly support the efforts for a new Amtrak and Trailway/Greyhound station here in Rochester. It would be a vast improvement for all passengers.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Rochester Station project. The rail station at Rochester has been replaced by a new intermodal passenger station. Further information on the new Intermodal Station at Rochester can be found at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/rochesterintermodalcenter
Commenter	Feller, DeWain, Vice President, Reconnect Rochester, Reconnect Rochester

Comment O-102-9 We do have major concerns about the current concept of the second phase which would sever Central Avenue between Clinton and Joseph. And that would create a huge barrier, a superblock to the 1960s and '70s terminology, between Cumberland and Ward Street where you have no option for getting between the two streets, between Clinton and Joseph. I think we could very easily modify that phase to keep Central Avenue in place.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the Rochester Station project. The rail station at Rochester has been replaced by a new intermodal passenger station. The new station maintains access and continuity along Central Avenue.
Further information on the new Intermodal Station at Rochester can be found at:
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/rochesterintermodalcenter>

Commenter Pearson, Ben, Republic Services, Republic Services

Comment O-103-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.

Commenter Pearson, Ben, Republic Services, Republic Services

Comment O-103-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Johnson, Kenneth, Republic Steel, Republic Steel

Comment O-104-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter Johnson, Kenneth, Republic Steel, Republic Steel

Comment O-104-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Rotondo, Rob, Rotondo Warehouse, Rotondo Warehouse
Comment O-105-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Dietz, Steven, RPMG, RPMG
Comment O-106-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Dietz, Steven, RPMG, RPMG
Comment O-106-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Anzevino, Jeffrey, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson, Inc., Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Comment O-107-1	we are primarily concerned that the implementation of an improved high speed rail program between New York and Albany does not further limit the public's access to the river

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The improvements proposed are largely restricted to the railroad right-of-way and should not impede public access to the river beyond what currently exists. Reviews of public access in the Hudson Valley can be evaluated, as appropriate, in the Tier 2 assessments for individual projects that are part of the program.
Commenter	Anzevino, Jeffrey, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson, Inc., Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Comment O-107-2	The "Purpose and Need" section of the DEIS should be amended to include a statement that affirms that public access to the Hudson River's shore will not be diminished, and where possible, the project will seek out new opportunities and partnerships to provide additional access.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, service frequencies, and passenger amenities. Access to the Hudson River for recreation could be part of the analysis in Tier 2, as appropriate, for individual projects in this segment of the route.
Commenter	Anzevino, Jeffrey, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson, Inc., Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Comment O-107-3	Since the High Speed Rail program will require federal and state permits and use federal funding, a consistency determination must be made with respect to New York State's Coastal Management Plan.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Acquisition of federal and state permits and approvals would be performed as part of the Tier 2 assessments for individual projects that are part of the program.
Commenter	Anzevino, Jeffrey, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson, Inc., Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Comment O-107-4	We urge the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to include in the program financial and planning incentives to support municipal efforts to plan for and implement Transit-oriented development (TOD) in areas around existing or future train stations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on improving transit oriented development, and the opportunities for Transit Oriented Development could be part of future station projects along the Empire Corridor. The improvements at new or existing stations constructed by NYSDOT in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany were implemented as separate projects, with the goal of complementing the neighborhood and fostering adjacent development.
Commenter	Anzevino, Jeffrey, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson, Inc., Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Comment O-107-5	We urge DOT to plan for future sea level rise and flooding patterns and to use the planning for the High Speed Rail Project as an opportunity to make the entire corridor more resilient so that public investment in this infrastructure is protected over the long run.
Response	Thank you for your comments on flooding and resiliency of the system as part of the public review. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, the railroads along the Empire Corridor; Metro North Railroad, Amtrak, and CSX Transportation have all taken proactive measures to protect their operations along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and continue to

	make improvements to protect trackage and signal systems from high water and flooding. In the Tier 2 process, potential mitigation strategies and future analysis that could be performed is discussed in Chapter 4 – Sections 4.20.5 and 4.11.6.
Commenter	Edic, Steven, Plant Manager, Scepter New York, Scepter New York
Comment O-108-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Edic, Steven, Plant Manager, Scepter New York, Scepter New York
Comment O-108-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Rhode, Steve, Vice President - Rail, Schneider National Carriers, Inc., Schneider National Carriers, Inc.
Comment O-109-1	We urge that the Department of Transportation give considerable weight to the effect that the various passenger rail options under review may have on freight movement.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Rhode, Steve, Vice President - Rail, Schneider National Carriers, Inc., Schneider National Carriers, Inc.
Comment O-109-2	We therefore urge that the Department of Transportation to reject any passenger rail service proposal which does not adequately protect existing freight rail service.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.

Commenter	Pagliuca, David, Schnitzer, Schnitzer
Comment O-110-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Pagliuca, David, Schnitzer, Schnitzer
Comment O-110-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Shea, Harry, Shea Lumber, Shea Lumber
Comment O-111-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Shea, Harry, Shea Lumber, Shea Lumber
Comment O-111-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Hodgkiss, Charles, Rail Transport Consultant, Shelly Materials, Shelly Materials

Comment O-112-1	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, potentially constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Grandstaff, Jeff, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow
Comment O-113-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Grandstaff, Jeff, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow
Comment O-113-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Dilling, Travis, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow
Comment O-113-3	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Dilling, Travis, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow

Comment O-113-4	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Hamilton, Christa, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow
Comment O-113-5	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Hamilton, Christa, ShipCarsNow, ShipCarsNow
Comment O-113-6	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Barbari, Mark, Smart Warehousing, Smart Warehousing
Comment O-114-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Barbari, Mark, Smart Warehousing, Smart Warehousing
Comment O-114-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A,

90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Manno, James, Sonwil Distribution Center, Sonwil Distribution Center
Comment O-115-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Manno, James, Sonwil Distribution Center, Sonwil Distribution Center
Comment O-115-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Shields, Jamison, SP Fiber Technologies, SP Fiber Technologies
Comment O-116-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Shields, Jamison, SP Fiber Technologies, SP Fiber Technologies
Comment O-116-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Berti, Joseph, Speed Global Services, Speed Global Services
Comment O-117-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Berti, Joseph, Speed Global Services, Speed Global Services
Comment O-117-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Byrd, Bruce, SSAB, SSAB
Comment O-118-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Byrd, Bruce, SSAB, SSAB
Comment O-118-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, the additional trackage provided by this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Cummins, John, Suburban Propane, LP, Suburban Propane, LP

Comment O-119-1	We urge the state of New York to consider the impact on freight rail operations when selecting an alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Baldock, Samantha, SUNY Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)
Comment O-120-1	Each of the alternatives, under consideration, to increase train speed are accompanied by operating deficits and expensive price tags, yet they do project an increase in overall passengers. Thus, we must support an option that takes our system into the 21st century and beyond. Balancing the cost of increased speed with a reduction in travel time should be paramount in the decision making process.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS, and your support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. The subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Alternative 90B's costs would also be less than that for Alternative 110. Its capital cost would be \$720 million (or 12%) less than that for Alternative 110, and annual operating and maintenance costs would be \$2 million lower than for Alternative 110. A discussion of the comparison of the alternatives is discussed Chapter 6 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Baldock, Samantha, SUNY Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG), Center State Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEG)
Comment O-120-2	CEG supports the goal of the EIS to study and select a HSR service level that advances operations and infrastructure, so that train frequency and travel times improve.
Response	Thank you for your support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Because Alternative 90B is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits

within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter Sarin, Peter, Synagro, Synagro

Comment O-121-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect our cost of operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.

Commenter Sarin, Peter, Synagro, Synagro

Comment O-121-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Bobitt, James, Tate & Lyle, Tate & Lyle

Comment O-122-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Bobitt, James, Tate & Lyle, Tate & Lyle

Comment O-122-2 I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.

Commenter	Tighe, John, Tighe Logistics Group, Tighe Logistics Group
Comment O-123-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Tighe, John, Tighe Logistics Group, Tighe Logistics Group
Comment O-123-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined above, this alternative would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Bard, James, United States Steel Corporation, United States Steel Corporation
Comment O-124-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Bard, James, United States Steel Corporation, United States Steel Corporation
Comment O-124-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Seligman, Joel, President, University of Rochester, University of Rochester

Comment O-125-1	Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the University of Rochester in support of passenger rail improvements to New York's Empire Corridor. If New York wants a 21st century innovation-based economy, we need a 21st century transportation system to accommodate it and compete with the rest of the world. I strongly support the proposed alternatives that improvement in service will increase ridership and support and help accommodate increased demand associated with planned and future growth of the University.
Response	Thank you for your support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals of the project are to improve reliability, reduce trip times and increase the frequency of trains of the program. Your comment has been reviewed by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
Comment O-126-1	We see potential for High Speed Rail to move these time distances further upstate, drawing Albany within daily commuting distance (at 125 Miles per hour) and Utica within the "arts" zone.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS in support of the program. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
Comment O-126-2	We also believe that New York City would benefit from increased access to upstate residential, labor, and retail markets as the city has added nearly one million residents since 1990. In fact, such cities as Tokyo have turned to High Speed Rail as a mechanism for increasing the city's "local" market, and we believe that New York will need to do the same in order to remain competitive against other global cities.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the benefits that can be achieved by the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. An important goal of the program is to support economic growth along the Empire Corridor, as you discuss in your comment.
Commenter	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
Comment O-126-3	We would certainly be in favor of 110 miles per hour train, although we also believe that a connection of 125 miles per hour would maximize this potential in eastern New York State.
Response	Your comment discussing the 110 and 125 Alternatives have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the

alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Because Alternative 90B is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, the Preferred Alternative will maintain/increase service to all existing stations.

Commenter	Thomas, Ph.D., Alexander R., Director, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies, Utica College Center for Small City and Rural Studies
Comment O-126-4	Alternatively, a "hybrid" model of 125 mile-per-hour connection between New York and Utica and 110 mile-per-hour to the west would also be quite effective.
Response	Thank you for your comments on improving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125, a high-speed railroad on a new alignment, was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 milese. One of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, it would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 125 and 110, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative will increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Applegate, Ken, Senior Vice-President/Transportation, Valero, Valero
Comment O-127-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Applegate, Ken, Senior Vice-President/Transportation, Valero, Valero
Comment O-127-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, and we are concerned about the potential for significant negative impacts to freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of

	additional trackage that will expand capacity for both passenger and freight rail on the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Cadieux, Shirley, Warehouse Mgr., Valleypac Industries, Inc., Valleypac Industries, Inc.
Comment O-128-1	Valleypac was perturbed when we got the news that the Federal Railroad Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation were contemplating commingling Freight and Passenger traffic. Our wish list would be that CSXT continues to service us promptly, efficiently and safely as they have done for us for the past 30 years. We are truly concerned of how these changes could affect our future business.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Important goals for the program include improving travel times on the Empire Corridor, increasing the frequency of service and enhancing passenger amenities. Other goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increasing the attractiveness of the region for business. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Hammer, Virginia, President, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association
Comment O-129-1	The likely replacement of this bridge provides an opportunity to reestablish a bicycle and pedestrian connection that is both safe and cost effective.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Hammer, Virginia, President, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association
Comment O-129-2	The Empire Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement does not acknowledge the walkway, support for the facility, or Federal Rail's own report outlining best practices for developing rail with trail facilities.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS (Section 7.7) notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge in the comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Vaugh, Nick, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
Comment O-130-1	Good evening, everyone. I am Nick Vaugh with the Albany Colonie Regional Chamber. We represent over 2,200 members throughout the Capital Region that employ over 110,000 individuals. While we haven't taken an official position as far as the individual proposed plans, important points that we would like to have considered is first, no disruption to freight.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT and the FRA are committed to the improvement of passenger rail service and maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Vaugh, Nick, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
Comment O-130-2	The other is the affordability for passengers. The frequency is critical, especially when we head west, and the reliability, knowing the train will show up and knowing when and where, it's very critical.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West for the service leg that includes Utica and Rome. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered. Although Alternative 110 has the lowest subsidy, the subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Alternative 90B's costs would also be less than that for Alternative 110. Its capital cost would be 12% less than that for Alternative 110, and annual operating and maintenance costs would be \$2 million lower than for Alternative 110.
Commenter	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW), Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
Comment O-131-1	I'm here representing a group they call ROW, R-O-W, Reclaim Our Waterfront. We are a group of people, business owners, sports clubs, bicycling, running, paddling, walking and local elected officials. We agree that improvements for high speed rail in the Empire Corridor is a much needed necessity as we move deeper into the 21st Century. However, ROW has not yet taken a stand on which option to consider the best option for improving high speed rail service from New York City to Niagara Falls.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would increase ridership by 1 million over the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW), Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
Comment O-131-2	What we are taking a strong stand on, though, is the inclusion in whatever option is finally decided upon, that the reconstruction of the Livingston Avenue Bridge include a pedestrian and bike access way across the Hudson River. The Livingston Avenue Bridge was originally constructed with a walkway that made it possible for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross the Hudson River between Albany and Rensselaer. The walkway was open for decades, going back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, until it was closed about 20 or so years ago because of needed repairs. To include the walkway as part of the reconstruction of the Livingston Avenue Bridge is a very inexpensive item when looking at the projected cost of the numerous options for improving high speed rail in the Empire Corridor. The walkway is a necessity, not an amenity.

Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Calsolaro, Dominick, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW), Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
Comment O-131-3	Local governments on both sides of the Hudson have made better access to the river a priority. The City of Albany has not one, but two planning groups working on river access issues as a way to encourage economic development in these downtown neighborhoods. Rensselaer is in the process of extending their riverside pedestrian and bike trails north, bringing the trail closer to the Troy waterfront. The inclusion of a walkway connecting Albany and Rensselaer will go a long way to regionalizing economic development in the Capital Region. The walkway would connect the ever-increasing rail-trails on the Albany side of the Hudson, to the expanding trail on the Rensselaer/Troy side of the Hudson.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the inclusion of a walk and bikeway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Tier 1 FEIS (Section 7.7) notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge in the comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Newman, William, Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW), Reclaim Our Waterfront (ROW)
Comment O-131-4	I'd like to see a restoration of the pedestrian walkway on the rail crossing over the Hudson River at the Livingston Avenue railroad bridge. This crossing is very important for the economic revitalization that is going on both in the City of Albany and the City of Rensselaer. My group does not have a preference in terms of which alternative, it's more of a reestablishing that pedestrian connection with the replacement bridge that will be going forward.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of improving the Livingston Avenue Bridge, which is part of the program evaluated in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Tier 1 FEIS notes the public support for the pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on the bridge.
Commenter	Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition
Comment O-132-1	My name is Ivan Vamos AICP, retired Deputy Commissioner of NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), Vice-Chair of NY State's Trails Advisory Committee, member of CDTC (Capital Dist. MPO) Bicycling Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Board Member Emeritus NY State Bicycling Coalition. My involvement with the Empire State Corridor, freight lines along the same and parallel routes includes about 50 years of experience, occasionally necessitating negotiations with the railroads regarding bridges and other right-of-way issues and I continue to be interested as a regular train passenger. However there are issues that the DEIS fails to address, probably making the document deficient or incomplete. I will limit my comments to a few selected, very relevant bridge and access issues that are not addressed in the DEIS at all. NY State is much benefited by long and scenic rail lines, especially those located along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and Lake Champlain.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, relating to the accessibility of recreational areas along the Empire Corridor,

have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter **Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition**

Comment
O-132-2

A combination of aging bridges, both impromptu and signalized at grade crossings and guarded, closed access points (that do experience problems with trespass) at one time offered rail line crossings, frequently developed and managed by the railroad company owning the line. These rail line bridge crossings were not addressed through the years and are not mentioned in the DEIS. Elevated walkways crossing the lower Hudson route have long been closed, and offer third-world examples of this issue, with stairways left dangling in the air. What were at one time formerly managed crossings have been deemed “closed” because of safety concerns, while they remain very much in use with trespassers dumping trash, setting fires and causing other problems.

A very few selected “closed” bridges and crossings that were formerly a railroad responsibility have been reluctantly addressed by public and private entities that were stuck solving the safety issues involved to continue the use of their riverfront properties. Three examples along the tidal Hudson come to mind since these locations had to be solved by OPRHP, with some help from other agencies, and legislative initiative. The Parks agency replaced “closed”, the derelict bridge to Little Stony Point, the at grade crossing providing access to the 9 mile long Schodack-Castleton peninsula, and Stony Point Bridge, located in Putnam, Rensselaer / Columbia and Rockland Counties respectively. If these bridge issues had not been addressed, important state recourses would have been closed to the public, including parks, historic and marine sites, a museum, proposed natural beaches and great hiking, fishing and riding opportunities. Worse than the loss of closed facilities and parks, the public didn’t stop accessing these sites just because the railroad posted a “closed” sign on the crossing, so the closed crossing presented a policing and safety problem without any benefit. The railroad simply ignored their responsibilities and perhaps hoped someone else would offer a solution.

It is understood that this is a large, far scattered and complex problem requiring considerable work to identify what’s to be done, along the Empire Corridor. However at least the issue should have been conceptually and procedurally addressed in the DEIS. An approach to analyzing and solving these crossing problems, identifying where increased speeds and rail service improvements will exacerbate the safety issues, and perhaps proposing standards that are to be followed, should have been added to the DEIS.

Response

Thank you for expressing your comments and concerns. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Alternatives. Safety Considerations are discussed in Section 2.6 of the Tier 1 FEIS. Access across the rail right-of-way could be addressed in Tier 2 assessments for individual projects and any planning would need to consider existing access and easement agreements, with the railroad companies owning the right-of-way.

Commenter **Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition**

Comment
O-132-3

There are other bridges where a strategic crossing has been a part of the railroad bridge and the abandonment of walkway facilities by the rail owners was based on no other consideration than saving maintenance funds. The abandonment of immediate concern at this time is the pedestrian walkway along the 112 year old Livingston Ave Bridge (LAB) connecting the Cities of Albany and Rensselaer. This bridge must be rebuilt or rehabilitated very soon for the Empire State Corridor system to function. I was delighted to be included in a meeting with DOT, CDTC (the MPO), Modjeski and Masters (the bridge consultant hired by NYS DOT), Cities of Albany and Rensselaer and Albany County representatives on Sept. 30, 2010 to discuss the LAB. Regarding the walkway, we noted that there was never a formal “abandonment” such as a State or ICC proceeding (if required circa 1970), it was simply closed without notice! We discussed one inadequate option; the mile distant, and

sub-standard, out of ADA compliance, crossing along the Dunn Memorial Bridge, serving another community. Inconveniently high, the route is generally thought to be unattractive and even unsafe. Two or more viable, attractive pedestrian crossings served these Cities from the Civil War into the 1970s. It was clear that no other option existed than to rebuild or rehab the walkway on the LAB at that location.

We discussed if multi-purpose trails existed along active rail rights of way; I alerted the attendees at the 3/30/'10 meeting to several reports cataloging these activities and offering model solutions. I agreed to provide a report on the subject, and mailed a five page synopsis of my findings to all at the meeting on Oct. 25, 2010.

A few calls followed regarding details about access from existing trails on both shorelines up to the LAB (about 24'), but no response, decision, acknowledgement or project status report was received in three or more years.

The Cities, Counties, Federal and State legislators passed resolutions and took positions strongly supporting the reconstruction of the LAB.

If however the existing (but closed without review) walkway along the LAB is not evaluated as a viable option to be undertaken with the LAB, then I assume the DEIS, the project, and perhaps the entire Empire Corridor,

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter **Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition**

Comment O-132-4 I am adding a relatively simple request to to my testimony (perhaps already part of the project but not shown on the renderings); the new and renovated rail stations that are included in the Base Alternative, as well as some of the stations that were not included, should all have convenient bike racks, some perhaps under cover, installed as part of the project.

Response Thank you for your continued interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, relating to the accessibility for bicycles and pedestrians, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative. A number of station improvement projects have been completed as separate independent projects along the Empire Corridor, including reconstruction at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. The projects included in the Preferred Alternative will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2), and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations can be further evaluated at that time for any station projects included, as appropriate.

Commenter **Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition**

Comment O-132-5 I am from New York State Bicycle Coalition and I am also a member of several advisory groups, Trails, as well as CDTCs Bike Path Task Force. I'm pleased to hear that the EIS includes some at-grade crossing improvements, but more are needed.

It really should be considered, as part of an overall program, how to deal with the major sites that are cut off by the railroads, and that could be also along the freight lines elsewhere, where there are equal problems. That is a long-term program. I realize it can't be done at the same time as this EIS, but it's something that EIS should mention.

Response Thank you for your comments on the grade-crossings along the Empire Corridor. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including

service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Vamos, Ivan, New York Bicycling Coalition, New York Bicycling Coalition**

Comment
O-132-6 There were proposals to connect up to that site and the railroads chose on their own, without any proceedings, without any hearings, without any ICC approval, if that's needed, to abandon that trail as part of their bridge and part of their service, without any public participation whatsoever. Now, I realize this was many years ago, but it remains out there. It should be replaced as the bridge is being replaced So we hope for this to be processed soon so we can know whether there is a proposal in place that has that as an option that could be selected, rather than getting stuck with an emergency project that leaves out this critical element and perhaps opens up the project to challenge because it has been not dealt with.

Response Thank you for your comments concerning the consideration of bicycles and pedestrians in the High Speed Rail evaluation process. Comments from the public, relating to the accessibility for bicycles and pedestrians, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for a Preferred Alternative. Any projects resulting from the Preferred Alternative will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations can be further evaluated at that time, as appropriate.

Commenter **Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance**

Comment
O-132-7 I also am here representing the Rochester Cycling Alliance and the New York Bicycling Coalition, we all, those two organizations as well as myself. And I also belong to and I'm on the Board of Canal New York Business Alliance.
Let me first make a short comment that the Canal Corporation is encouraging transport of all commodities and rail cars by barges. The problem is, there aren't enough barges.

Response Thank you for your comments. Public comments, discussing passenger rail operations as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance**

Comment
O-132-8 But I'm here, basically, to support the 125-miles-per-hour trains. And one of the main reasons is the tourism potential of getting people from New York City to Upstate to Niagara Falls, as well as to the places in between: Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo.

Response Views and comments from the public relating to support of Alternative 125 have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to existing stations between Albany and Buffalo/Niagara Falls.

Commenter **Botzman, Harvey, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance, New York Bicycling Coalition/Rochester Cycling Alliance**

Comment O-132-9 And we must make sure that on each of the stations, and in fact this station, we have submitted comments as the Rochester Cycling Alliance and the New York Bicycling Coalition and myself, to make sure there are storage places and places which are secure for bicycles for people who want to get on a train and go down or go up, either way, and travel up by train.

Response Thank you for your continued interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to determine the best alternative for that project, or group of projects including looking at options for pedestrian/bicycle accommodations, as appropriate.

Commenter Parikh, Rohan, Albany Bicycle Coalition, Albany Bicycle Coalition

Comment O-133-1 My name Rohan Parikh. I am a resident of Red Hook, New York, in the Hudson Valley, as well as Albany, and I am involved with Albany Bicycle Coalition, a local group here, also the Livingston Avenue Bridge Coalition, What I will emphasize is that we are looking here at the EIS to mitigate environmental impacts, impacts on parks and recreation, facilities, impacts on historic resources. And one historic resource that spans New York State from Albany to Buffalo is the Erie Canalway Trail, and this trail follows very closely along with the rail corridor. And one opportunity to mitigate any environmental impact, would be to increase connectivity with this corridor, and that would be allowing bicycles on trains.

Response Thank you for your comments concerning the consideration of bicycles and pedestrians in the High Speed Rail evaluation process. Comments from the public, relating to the accessibility for bicycles and pedestrians have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Any projects resulting from the preferred alternative will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations can be further evaluated at that time, as appropriate.

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I-157-2	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
I-157-3	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
I-157-4	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
I-157-5	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
I-158-1	Donnelly, Steve
I-159-1	Dougherty, Catherine
I-159-2	Dougherty, Catherine
I-160-1	Drajem, Lynn
I-161-1	Drake, Paula
I-162-1	Du Bois, Patricia
I-163-1	Dudek, Jessica
I-164-1	Duszynski, Peter
I-164-2	Duszynski, Peter
I-165-1	Dworzanski, Ray
I-166-1	Dymond, Jayne
I-167-1	Eames, Frederick
I-168-1	Elton, Wallace
I-168-2	Elton, Wallace
I-168-3	Elton, Wallace
I-168-4	Elton, Wallace
I-169-1	Englert, Timothy
I-170-1	Erdmann, Tyler
I-171-1	Ericson, Del
I-172-1	Eson, Jud
I-173-1	Evans, J. Reid
I-174-1	Everett, Norma
I-175-1	Eyington, David
I-176-1	F., Audrey
I-177-1	Falbo, A.
I-178-1	Falbo, Antone
I-179-1	Fandl, Richard
I-180-1	(No Last Name), Fanying
I-181-1	Farina, Nicholas J.
I-182-1	Farrell, Shirley
I-182-2	Farrell, Shirley
I-182-3	Farrell, Shirley
I-183-1	Farrell, Don
I-184-1	Farrington, Alexandra
I-185-1	Fassler, Cary
I-186-1	Faulds, Colin and Fratesi, Victor
I-187-1	Faust, Catherine
I-188-1	Fava, Peter
I-188-2	Fava, Peter
I-188-3	Fava, Peter
I-189-1	Felder, Vincent R.
I-190-1	Felicetti, Tony
I-191-1	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates
I-191-2	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates
I-191-3	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates
I-191-4	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-191-5	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates
I-192-1	Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty
I-192-2	Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty
I-192-3	Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty
I-192-4	Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty
I-193-1	Field, Susan
I-194-1	Filler, Samuel
I-195-1	Fisher, Jean
I-196-1	Fishlock, Frances
I-197-1	Fiutak, Paul
I-197-2	Fiutak, Paul
I-198-1	Flynn, L.R.
I-199-1	Foley, John
I-200-1	Folts, James D.
I-200-2	Folts, James D.
I-201-1	Forbes, Melissa
I-201-2	Forbes, Melissa
I-202-1	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-2	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-3	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-4	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-5	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-6	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-7	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-8	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-9	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-10	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-11	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-12	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-13	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-14	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-15	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-16	Fordock, Arleen
I-202-17	Fordock, Arleen
I-203-1	Freed, Wayne
I-203-2	Freed, Wayne
I-204-1	Freeman, Jeanne A.
I-204-2	Freeman, Jeanne A.
I-205-1	French, Joanne
I-206-1	Friedman, Jay
I-207-1	Friedman, Mark
I-208-1	Fronckowiak, Paul
I-209-1	Fullem, Robert
I-210-1	Fusarelli, Anthony Loreto
I-211-1	Fusarelli, Renee L.
I-212-1	Gaber, Matthew
I-212-2	Gaber, Matthew
I-212-3	Gaber, Matthew
I-213-1	Gaffney, Dennis
I-214-1	Gale, Peter
I-215-1	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-2	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-3	Gallagher, Kevin

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I-215-4	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-5	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-6	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-7	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-8	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-9	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-10	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-11	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-12	Gallagher, Kevin
I-215-13	Gallagher, Kevin
I-216-1	Ganjian, Ahmad
I-217-1	Gardner, Diane
I-218-1	Gataletto, Donna
I-218-2	Gataletto, Donna
I-219-1	Geleta, Marion
I-220-1	Georgi, Ethan
I-221-1	Geraci, Christine M.
I-222-1	Getz, Orrin
I-223-1	Giannino, Luca, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-224-1	DiFiore, Joe
I-224-2	DiFiore, Joe
I-225-1	Gibbons, Maggie
I-226-1	Gifford, Gladys
I-227-1	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-2	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-3	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-4	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-5	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-6	Gilchrist, Tim
I-227-7	Gilchrist, Tim
I-228-1	Giles, William
I-228-2	Giles, William
I-229-1	Gilrein, John
I-230-1	Glende, Amy Marie
I-231-1	Glica, Shelley
I-232-1	Godlewski, PE, Stephan
I-233-1	Gollhardt, Andrea
I-234-1	Gomez, Larry
I-235-1	Goodwin, Catherine
I-236-1	Goodman, Ryan
I-237-1	Gordon, James
I-237-2	Gordon, James
I-237-3	Gordon, James
I-238-1	Gossett, Linda
I-239-1	Gough, Eliza J.
I-240-1	Granston, Kareem
I-241-1	Grauer, Jon
I-242-1	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
I-242-2	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
I-242-3	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
I-242-4	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
I-242-5	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
I-243-1	Greiner, Richard

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I-244-1	Grekulak, Stephen
I-245-1	Griehl, Mary
I-246-1	Guarnere, Joanne
I-247-1	Gubbins, Barbara
I-248-1	Guguentz, Cindy
I-249-1	Guilmette, Lou
I-250-1	Gyurik, Gloria
I-251-1	Hacker, Abby
I-252-1	Hackett, Alice
I-253-1	Hall, Addie
I-253-2	Hall, Addie
I-254-1	Hall, Jane
I-255-1	Hall, Peter
I-256-1	Hanavan, Ian
I-257-1	Hanks, Kelsey
I-258-1	Hanna, Christopher
I-259-1	Hannon, Don, Hannon Transportation Consulting
I-260-1	Hardy, Joseph
I-261-1	Harf, Mark
I-262-1	Harner, Janet
I-262-2	Harner, Janet
I-263-1	Harnischfeger, Mark and Monica
I-264-1	Harrington, Bill
I-264-2	Harrington, Bill
I-264-3	Harrington, Bill
I-264-4	Harrington, Bill
I-264-5	Harrington, Bill
I-264-6	Harrington, Bill
I-265-1	Harris, Jason
I-266-1	Harris, Louise
I-267-1	Haun, Mark
I-268-1	Haynes, Jimmy
I-269-1	Healy, Edward J.
I-270-1	Hebert, Austin, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-271-1	Heint, Lucretia W.
I-272-1	Heintzman, Michael
I-273-1	Herrling, Daniel S.
I-273-2	Herrling, Daniel S.
I-274-1	Hill, Lauren
I-275-1	Hillengas, Paul
I-276-1	Hmiel, Abraham
I-277-1	Hooven, James
I-278-1	Hotra, Michael
I-279-1	Howard, Patricia G.
I-280-1	Huang, Jackie
I-281-1	Huber, Roger
I-281-2	Huber, Roger
I-282-1	Hufnagel, Glenn
I-283-1	Hunter, Suzanne
I-284-1	Hunters, CS
I-285-1	Hycner, Jim
I-286-1	Ilic, Mila
I-287-1	Inglis, Andrew A.

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-288-1	Iocco, Joe
I-289-1	Isserlis, Alan
I-290-1	Jackson, Lynne
I-291-1	(No Last Name), Jacob
I-292-1	Jacobs, Joshua
I-293-1	Jacobs, Shari
I-294-1	James, Anthony
I-295-1	Jamieson, Richard A.
I-296-1	Jamison, Ann
I-296-2	Jamison, Ann
I-297-1	Jaroszewski, Tracy
I-298-1	Jenkins, Edward
I-298-2	Jenkins, Edward
I-298-3	Jenkins, Edward
I-299-1	Jennings, Susan Sturman, General Counsel and Senior Vice President, Conifer Realty, LLC
I-300-1	Jesaitis, Amy
I-301-1	(No Last Name), Johnny
I-302-1	Johns, Christopher
I-303-1	Johnson, Jeffrey
I-304-1	Johnson, Kristen
I-305-1	Johnson, William
I-305-2	Johnson, William
I-306-1	Johnston, Deanna
I-307-1	Jouret-Epstein, Ellen
I-308-1	Judd, Mark S.
I-308-2	Judd, Mark S.
I-308-3	Judd, Mark S.
I-309-1	Kaczynski, Jeremy M.
I-310-1	Kahkejian, Deborah
I-311-1	Kahn, Joanne, 21st Century Park on the Outer Harbor Inc.
I-312-1	Kaplowe, Stephen
I-313-1	Karas, Alex
I-314-1	Kawa, Michelle
I-315-1	Keady, Kathleen A., Office Manager, Gardner Plus Architects, PLLC
I-316-1	Kerrigan, Scott
I-317-1	Ketola, George
I-318-1	Kimball, Hubert D.
I-319-1	Kinder, Drew
I-320-1	King, Derek
I-321-1	King, Jessica
I-322-1	Kirkendall, Scott
I-323-1	Klatt, Bonnie
I-324-1	Klepfer, Marcia
I-325-1	Klion, Bruce
I-326-1	Klug, Judith
I-327-1	Koch, Frances
I-328-1	Kompinski, CS
I-328-2	Kompinski, CS
I-329-1	Konder, George C.
I-329-2	Konder, George C.
I-330-1	Kontrabecki, James
I-331-1	Koplik, Mark

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-332-1	Kostran, Jan
I-333-1	Kozaczka, Stanley J.
I-333-2	Kozaczka, Stanley J.
I-334-1	Kraska, Robert
I-335-1	Kratz, Josh
I-336-1	Krekeler, Paul
I-337-1	Kruzynski, Mari-Beth
I-338-1	Kurtik, Edward
I-339-1	Kurtik, Elizabeth
I-339-2	Kurtik, Elizabeth
I-340-1	Kurya, Jamie
I-341-1	Kustyn, David M.
I-342-1	Lacari, Mark
I-342-2	Lacari, Mark
I-342-3	Lacari, Mark
I-343-1	Lancellotti, Frank
I-344-1	Langner, Guenther
I-344-2	Langner, Guenther
I-344-3	Langner, Guenther
I-344-4	Langner, Guenther
I-345-1	Langone, Louis C.
I-345-2	Langone, Louis C.
I-346-1	Lankenau, Susan
I-346-2	Lankenau, Susan
I-347-1	Lannier, Monica, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-348-1	Lasher, Ed
I-349-1	Lashgar, Shaghafegh, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-350-1	Lautz, Ellen
I-351-1	Leone, Corey
I-352-1	Leppere, Barney
I-353-1	Levy, Josette
I-354-1	Lewandowski, Karen
I-355-1	Lewandowski, Nancy J.
I-356-1	Lezynski, Scott
I-357-1	Lindblad, K.A.
I-358-1	Loeser, Sara
I-359-1	Lofaro, Cynthia
I-360-1	LoFaso, Fred
I-361-1	Lofft, Patrick M.
I-362-1	Lombardo, Rosemary
I-363-1	Long, Joseph & Susan
I-364-1	Lotto, Peter
I-365-1	Loughlin Jr., Tom
I-365-2	Loughlin Jr., Tom
I-366-1	Lum, David
I-367-1	Lundgren, Faith, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-368-1	Lupia, Charles
I-369-1	Macdonald, Roderick
I-370-1	Mackiewicz, Cheryl A.
I-370-2	Mackiewicz, Cheryl A.
I-371-1	Macri, David
I-372-1	Ziehm, Linda
I-373-1	Maderi, Denny

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-374-1	Madison, Dale
I-374-2	Madison, Dale
I-374-3	Madison, Dale
I-374-4	Madison, Dale
I-375-1	Malecki, Joanne
I-376-1	Malone, Evelyn
I-377-1	Mandanas, Linda
I-378-1	Mantell, Amy
I-379-1	Marcus, Aaron
I-379-2	Marcus, Aaron
I-380-1	Markiewicz, Jacob
I-381-1	Martin, April
I-382-1	Martin, Ben, Communication Manager , CURE International
I-383-1	Martin, Sharon
I-384-1	Mathieu, Richard
I-385-1	Mathner, Susan
I-386-1	Maurer, Maggie
I-386-2	Maurer, Maggie
I-387-1	McFarland, Jay
I-388-1	Maziarczyk, Michael
I-389-1	Mazura, Christopher
I-390-1	McColl, William
I-390-2	McColl, William
I-390-3	McColl, William
I-391-1	McElduff, Kelsey
I-391-2	McElduff, Kelsey
I-391-3	McElduff, Kelsey
I-392-1	McLaughlin, David
I-393-1	McLeod, Caitlin
I-394-1	McMahon, Thomas J.
I-395-1	McNally, Megan
I-396-1	Mead, Jeffrey
I-397-1	Meara, Thomas
I-398-1	Merriman, Leigh
I-399-1	Merzbach, Ralph K., Attorney, Merzbach Law Office, P.C.
I-400-1	Messere, Fritz
I-400-2	Messere, Fritz
I-400-3	Messere, Fritz
I-401-1	Mietlicki, James F.
I-401-2	Mietlicki, James F.
I-401-3	Mietlicki, James F.
I-401-4	Mietlicki, James F.
I-402-1	Mignogna, James E.
I-403-1	Miller, Chey
I-403-2	Miller, Chey
I-403-3	Miller, Chey
I-403-4	Miller, Chey
I-403-5	Miller, Chey
I-403-6	Miller, Chey
I-403-7	Miller, Chey
I-403-8	Miller, Chey
I-404-1	Miller, Douglas
I-405-1	Miller, Henry T.

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-406-1	Miller, Michael J.
I-407-1	Miller, Phillip
I-408-1	Miller, Ted
I-408-2	Miller, Ted
I-408-3	Miller, Ted
I-409-1	Moden, Karen
I-410-1	Moll, William
I-410-2	Moll, William
I-410-3	Moll, William
I-410-4	Moll, William
I-410-5	Moll, William
I-410-6	Moll, William
I-410-7	Moll, William
I-411-1	Mooney, Mike
I-412-1	Moore, Greg D., CEO, QuiCR
I-412-2	Moore, Greg D., CEO, QuiCR
I-413-1	Moore, Richard
I-414-1	Moore, Scott
I-415-1	Moretta, Justin
I-416-1	Morgan, Richard
I-417-1	Morris, Andy
I-418-1	Morris, Fallon, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-419-1	Mortensen, Annette
I-420-1	Mount, Lee and Elaine
I-421-1	Mount, Timothy
I-422-1	Murphy, Daniel
I-423-1	Murphy, John J.
I-424-1	Namynanik, Mike
I-425-1	Nardone, Candice
I-426-1	Nassimos, Joe
I-427-1	Nedwick, Darlene
I-428-1	Neffke, Ronald E.
I-429-1	Neish, Devon, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-430-1	Nerode, Nathaneal
I-430-2	Nerode, Nathaneal
I-430-3	Nerode, Nathaneal
I-430-4	Nerode, Nathaneal
I-430-5	Nerode, Nathaneal
I-431-1	Newton, Theresa
I-432-1	(No Last Name), Nico
I-433-1	Nicolaysen, Bryan
I-433-2	Nicolaysen, Bryan
I-434-1	Nielson, Eric
I-435-1	Nimphius, Donald J.
I-435-2	Nimphius, Donald J.
I-436-1	Nithikasem, Surasit
I-436-2	Nithikasem, Surasit
I-437-1	Noblin-Jackson, Lisa A.
I-438-1	Nolan, CPA, Rita M.
I-439-1	Nordheim, Shirley
I-440-1	Nowak, Elizabeth L.
I-441-1	Nuzback, Michael
I-442-1	Olds Sr., Dennis F.

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I-442-2	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
I-442-3	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
I-442-4	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
I-443-1	Olexenko, Peter
I-444-1	Zweig, Brian
I-445-1	Oswald, Sean
I-446-1	P., Ajay
I-447-1	Paarlberg, John
I-448-1	Paladino, Scotty
I-448-2	Paladino, Scotty
I-449-1	Palmer, Ada
I-449-2	Palmer, Ada
I-450-1	Palmer, Eugene
I-451-1	Palmer, Richard
I-452-1	Palvino, Jack
I-453-1	Paolini, Edward
I-454-1	Paolini, Margaret A.
I-455-1	Paradowski, Mark
I-456-1	Parke, Richard
I-457-1	Parker, Christine
I-458-1	Parrotte, Jeffrey M.
I-459-1	Parsons, W.T.
I-460-1	Patalita, John
I-461-1	Patierno, Michael
I-462-1	(No Last Name), Patricia
I-463-1	Pawenski, Chris
I-463-2	Pawenski, Chris
I-464-1	Pawensla, Chris
I-465-1	Pawlowski, Lenore
I-466-1	Pellingra, Justin
I-467-1	Pellman, John
I-467-2	Pellman, John
I-467-3	Pellman, John
I-468-1	Pena, Oscar
I-469-1	Pescrillo, Jordan
I-470-1	Peters, Ariel
I-471-1	Peterson, Lorna
I-471-2	Peterson, Lorna
I-472-1	Petko, Stephen
I-473-1	Phillips, Scott
I-474-1	Piecuch, Sarah
I-474-2	Piecuch, Sarah
I-475-1	Pieniazek, Nicholas
I-476-1	Plaat, Daniel
I-476-2	Plaat, Daniel
I-476-3	Plaat, Daniel
I-477-1	Plante, Gerald
I-478-1	Prenty, Noreen
I-479-1	Preske, Carl
I-479-2	Preske, Carl
I-480-1	Price, Joshua, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-481-1	Priestley, Robert
I-481-2	Priestley, Robert

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-483-1	Provino, Paul
I-484-1	Pucalski, Christopher
I-485-1	Puckett, Michael
I-486-1	Punturiero, Brian
I-487-1	Puritz, Becky
I-488-1	Pusateri, Robert G.
I-489-1	Putnam, Randal
I-490-1	R., Steve
I-491-1	Rain, Dan
I-492-1	Randazzo, Robert
I-493-1	Rathbun, Susan
I-494-1	Rawls, Brittany
I-495-1	Reamer, Stephen D.
I-495-2	Reamer, Stephen D.
I-496-1	Rebbeor, James
I-497-1	Rebmann, Michael
I-497-2	Rebmann, Michael
I-498-1	Reeher, John
I-498-2	Reeher, John
I-499-1	Reichmuth, Elaine
I-500-1	Render, Dave
I-501-1	Rezak, David
I-502-1	Rezak, Linda
I-503-1	Richards, Charles
I-504-1	Richardson, David
I-504-2	Richardson, David
I-505-1	Riley, Jibreel
I-505-2	Riley, Jibreel
I-506-1	Rittenhouse, Maryanne
I-507-1	Robe, Susan
I-508-1	Roberts, Carol
I-509-1	Rodriguez, Eva
I-510-1	Roertgen, Brandon
I-511-1	Rogers, Amanda
I-512-1	Rogers, Andy
I-513-1	Rogers, Cheryll
I-514-1	Rogers, John
I-515-1	Rogge, David
I-516-1	Rohman, Henry Lee
I-516-2	Rohman, Henry Lee
I-517-1	Romanowski, Margaret
I-518-1	(No Last Name), Ronnie
I-519-1	Root, Chris
I-519-2	Root, Chris
I-519-3	Root, Chris
I-520-1	Rose, David
I-521-1	Rose, Joel S.
I-522-1	Rosenberg, Marc
I-523-1	Rosenberg, Nancy
I-523-2	Rosenberg, Nancy
I-524-1	Rotolo, Tom and Barbara
I-525-1	Roy, Eileen
I-526-1	Rumril, Peter

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I-526-2	Rumril, Peter
I-526-3	Rumril, Peter
I-527-1	(No Last Name), Russ
I-528-1	Russell, CPA, Robert
I-529-1	Sackett, John L.
I-529-2	Sackett, John L.
I-530-1	Sadowski, Emily
I-531-1	Salsburg, Fred
I-531-2	Salsburg, Fred
I-531-3	Salsburg, Fred
I-532-1	Salzyn, John
I-533-1	Samson, Joseph
I-534-1	Sandberg, Glenn
I-535-1	Santiago, Jennifer
I-536-1	Santos, Rob
I-537-1	Savage, Anne
I-538-1	Scammell, G.
I-539-1	Scavo, Dominick
I-540-1	Schanne, Joseph
I-541-1	Scheyer, Lawrence W., Attorney at Law
I-541-2	Scheyer, Lawrence W., Attorney at Law
I-542-1	Schmidt, Dawn
I-543-1	Schou, Bertil
I-544-1	Schroeder, Tim
I-544-2	Schroeder, Tim
I-545-1	Schultz, F. Justin
I-546-1	Seefeldt, Joanne
I-547-1	Seiders, Daniel
I-548-1	Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-548-2	Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-548-3	Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-549-1	Semler, Dylan
I-549-2	Semler, Dylan
I-549-3	Semler, Dylan
I-549-4	Semler, Dylan
I-550-1	Sennett, John
I-551-1	Sexton, Laura
I-552-1	Sexton, Luke
I-552-2	Sexton, Luke
I-553-1	Shanebrook, Robert
I-554-1	Shants, Terry
I-555-1	Shapp, Mark
I-555-2	Shapp, Mark
I-555-3	Shapp, Mark
I-555-4	Shapp, Mark
I-555-5	Shapp, Mark
I-556-1	Shearer, Adam
I-557-1	Sheldon, Jerry
I-558-1	Sheridan, Jim
I-559-1	Shipherd, Sam
I-559-2	Shipherd, Sam
I-560-1	Shusler, Irene
I-561-1	Sillars, Rodger James

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-562-1	Skill, Lisa
I-563-1	Skompinski, Carl B.
I-563-2	Skompinski, Carl B.
I-563-3	Skompinski, Carl B.
I-564-1	Skowron, Frank
I-565-1	Smcarelli, (No First Name)
I-566-1	Smietana, Sophie
I-567-1	Smigelski, Casey
I-568-1	Smith, David C.
I-568-2	Smith, David C.
I-568-3	Smith, David C.
I-569-1	Smith, Max
I-569-2	Smith, Max
I-569-3	Smith, Max
I-569-4	Smith, Max
I-570-1	Tanti, Carol
I-571-1	Smith, Robert
I-571-2	Smith, Robert
I-572-1	Smith, Stephen
I-573-1	Smithling, Cody
I-573-2	Smithling, Cody
I-574-1	Smith, Wayne
I-575-1	Snodgrass, Randall
I-576-1	Soman, Sheldon
I-576-2	Soman, Sheldon
I-577-1	Sopchak, Carl
I-577-2	Sopchak, Carl
I-578-1	Spadafore, Mark
I-579-1	Spula, Jack Bradigan
I-580-1	Stadler, Rebecca
I-581-1	Staley, Bian
I-582-1	Stamm, Corina
I-583-1	Stanlis, Ingrid
I-584-1	Stark, Barry E.
I-585-1	Stevens, Marty
I-586-1	Stewart, Jr., Robert J.
I-587-1	Stieger, Matt
I-588-1	Stimmer, Jonathan
I-588-2	Stimmer, Jonathan
I-588-3	Stimmer, Jonathan
I-588-4	Stimmer, Jonathan
I-588-5	Stimmer, Jonathan
I-589-1	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
I-589-2	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
I-589-3	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
I-589-4	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
I-589-5	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
I-589-6	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau,

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I-589-7	NYS Department of Transportation Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau,
I-589-8	NYS Department of Transportation Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau,
I-590-1	NYS Department of Transportation Stokes, Belle Louise
I-591-1	Stowe, Richard
I-591-2	Stowe, Richard
I-591-3	Stowe, Richard
I-592-1	Stuczynski, Ken JP
I-593-1	Sullivan, E.B.
I-594-1	Sullivan, Susan
I-595-1	Sunser, Penny
I-596-1	Sweat, Laura
I-597-1	Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-597-2	Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-597-3	Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-598-1	Swift, Adam
I-599-1	Szczupak, Anne
I-600-1	Taibi, John
I-600-2	Taibi, John
I-600-3	Taibi, John
I-600-4	Taibi, John
I-600-5	Taibi, John
I-600-6	Taibi, John
I-600-7	Taibi, John
I-601-1	Tanck, Carol
I-602-1	Tanck, Ron
I-603-1	Taylor, Charles
I-604-1	Taylor, Elizabeth
I-604-2	Taylor, Elizabeth
I-605-1	Tedesco, Greg
I-606-1	Terenzetti, Terry
I-607-1	Terrana, Tammy L.
I-608-1	Terry, Carol
I-609-1	Teter, Edward and Barbara
I-610-1	Thomas, Erin
I-611-1	Thompson, Ted
I-611-2	Thompson, Ted
I-611-3	Thompson, Ted
I-611-4	Thompson, Ted
I-612-1	Thurges, J.
I-613-1	Tobin, Dave
I-614-1	Tonning, Nils A.
I-615-1	Torcello, Frank
I-616-1	Trinder, Stephen
I-617-1	True-Frost, Cora
I-618-1	Trufelman, Lloyd
I-619-1	Tulloch, Timothy
I-619-2	Tulloch, Timothy
I-619-3	Tulloch, Timothy
I-620-1	Michaelson, Kirsten
I-620-2	Michaelson, Kirsten

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-620-3	Michaelson, Kirsten
I-621-1	Tylicke, Scott
I-622-1	Umhauer, Kitty
I-623-1	Valerio, John
I-624-1	Vallalonga, Damian
I-625-1	Mink, Dan
I-626-1	Van Ness, Cynthia
I-627-1	Van Patten, Chris
I-627-2	Van Patten, Chris
I-628-1	Van Riper, Daniel W.
I-629-1	Van Valin, Robert
I-630-1	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
I-630-2	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
I-630-3	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
I-630-4	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
I-631-1	Venturi, Jim
I-631-2	Venturi, Jim
I-631-3	Venturi, Jim
I-631-4	Venturi, Jim
I-632-1	Verburg, Tom
I-633-1	Vester, Nathan
I-634-1	Vincent, Jim
I-635-1	Vitale, Joe
I-636-1	Volcko, Meghan, D.S. Ray Middle School
I-637-1	Waack, Peter
I-638-1	Walsh, Charles
I-639-1	Walter, Christine
I-640-1	Walter, Robert C.
I-640-2	Walter, Robert C.
I-641-1	Walters, John
I-641-2	Walters, John
I-641-3	Walters, John
I-642-1	Walton, Richard
I-642-2	Walton, Richard
I-643-1	Wang, Jason
I-643-2	Wang, Jason
I-644-1	Warner, Tom
I-645-1	Washer, Steve
I-646-1	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-2	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-3	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-4	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-5	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-6	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-7	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-8	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-9	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-10	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-11	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-12	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-13	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-14	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-15	Wasiutynski, Christopher

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I-646-16	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-17	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-18	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-646-19	Wasiutynski, Christopher
I-647-1	Waszkiewicz, Ed (Butch)
I-648-1	Weekes, Michael
I-648-2	Weekes, Michael
I-648-3	Weekes, Michael
I-649-1	Welch, Alan
I-649-2	Welch, Alan
I-650-1	Welker, Richard
I-651-1	Wells, Maurice
I-652-1	Westcott, Lynn
I-653-1	Westermann, Kevin
I-654-1	Whipple, John
I-654-2	Whipple, John
I-655-1	White, Toney
I-656-1	Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)
I-656-2	Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)
I-656-3	Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)
I-657-1	Wiesner, Devin
I-658-1	Williams, Collin
I-659-1	Williams, Maureen R.
I-660-1	Wilson, Bonnie
I-660-2	Wilson, Bonnie
I-661-1	Winship, Micah
I-662-1	Wisinski, Patrick J.
I-663-1	Wnorowski, Mark
I-663-2	Wnorowski, Mark
I-663-3	Wnorowski, Mark
I-663-4	Wnorowski, Mark
I-664-1	Wokan, Sara
I-665-1	Wolf, Phillips
I-666-1	Wolfe, Greg
I-667-1	Wolfe, Wm. F.
I-667-2	Wolfe, Wm. F.
I-667-3	Wolfe, Wm. F.
I-668-1	Wolff, Adam
I-669-1	Woolley, Jonathan
I-669-2	Woolley, Jonathan
I-669-3	Woolley, Jonathan
I-669-4	Woolley, Jonathan
I-669-5	Woolley, Jonathan
I-669-6	Woolley, Jonathan
I-670-1	Wozniak, Mark
I-671-1	Wright, Nancy
I-672-1	Yanik, John S.
I-673-1	Young, Dennis
I-673-2	Young, Dennis
I-674-1	Young, Jennifer
I-675-1	Young, Michael
I-676-1	Zaffuts, Michael
I-677-1	Zalucki, Richard

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-678-1	Zamow, Allie
I-679-1	Zarabozo, Peter
I-680-1	Roate, Connell
I-681-1	Robinson, Martin
I-682-1	Switzer, James
I-682-2	Switzer, James
I-683-1	Tucker, Donald
I-683-2	Tucker, Donald
I-684-1	Wieczorek, Rich
I-684-2	Wieczorek, Rich
I-685-1	Alberin, Ken
I-686-1	Russell, Gary
I-686-2	Russell, Gary
I-687-1	Barren, Dan
I-687-2	Barren, Dan
I-687-3	Barren, Dan
I-688-1	Behr, Michael
I-688-2	Behr, Michael
I-688-3	Behr, Michael
I-688-4	Behr, Michael
I-689-1	Berger, Richard G.
I-689-2	Berger, Richard G.
I-689-3	Berger, Richard G.
I-690-1	Myers, Tom
I-690-2	Myers, Tom
I-691-1	Catalli, Joseph
I-692-1	Cates, David
I-692-2	Cates, David
I-692-3	Cates, David
I-692-4	Cates, David
I-693-1	Chelbach, Sue
I-694-1	Tsotsky, Richard
I-694-2	Tsotsky, Richard
I-694-3	Tsotsky, Richard
I-694-4	Tsotsky, Richard
I-695-1	Cupoli, Edward
I-696-1	Stone, Jeff
I-696-2	Stone, Jeff
I-696-3	Stone, Jeff
I-696-4	Stone, Jeff
I-697-1	Doff, Frank C.
I-698-1	Ebina, Alexander
I-698-2	Ebina, Alexander
I-698-3	Ebina, Alexander
I-699-1	Elias, Byron
I-700-1	Ellis, Tom
I-700-2	Ellis, Tom
I-700-3	Ellis, Tom
I-700-4	Ellis, Tom
I-701-1	Olejniczak, Hank
I-701-2	Olejniczak, Hank
I-701-3	Olejniczak, Hank
I-701-4	Olejniczak, Hank

COMMENT #	COMMENTER
I-702-1	Giles, Elizabeth
I-702-2	Giles, Elizabeth
I-702-3	Giles, Elizabeth
I-703-1	Glass, Bradley
I-704-1	Greenburg, Richard
I-704-2	Greenburg, Richard
I-705-1	Haremza, Jason
I-705-2	Haremza, Jason
I-705-3	Haremza, Jason
I-705-4	Haremza, Jason
I-706-1	Hellwitz, Bob
I-707-1	Hubiak, Joe
I-708-1	Thomas, Colin Fox
I-708-2	Thomas, Colin Fox
I-708-3	Thomas, Colin Fox
I-709-1	Lepine, Maurice
I-709-2	Lepine, Maurice
I-710-1	Love, John C.
I-710-2	Love, John C.
I-710-3	Love, John C.
I-711-1	Maray, Carl, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks
I-711-2	Maray, Carl, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks
I-712-1	Pyke, Gayle

Commenter	Ackerman, Lauren
Comment I-1-1	I'm all for faster train service upstate, but why is there never a move to reintroduce rail service from NYC, through PA and up to Binghamton where you have a major university and then moving on to Niagara etc.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor. The route mentioned (Pocono Corridor) is approximately 80 miles south of the Empire Corridor and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Acquisto, Michelle
Comment I-2-1	If there was a way to protect homes, the environment and historical land and sites, I am in favor of Alternative Plan 125.
Response	NYSDOT's goal is to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to the greatest extent possible. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. This detailed analysis, as outlined in the Tier 1 FEIS, examined the best method for avoiding and minimizing impact to features like homes, the environment and historical land sites.
Commenter	Acton, Brion
Comment I-3-1	I do not support any of the proposed options for one reason, our current road and bridge infrastructure need repair/improvement far more than the addition of a high speed rail line.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Adams, Rev. Bud
Comment I-4-1	I wholeheartedly support the implementation of safe high-speed rail service across New York State. The benefits are many: jobs for construction and for long-term maintenance, local economics near train stations, substantially reduced travel times, and fewer cars on the thruway resulting in a reduction in emissions are but a few.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would substantially reduce highway emissions over the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Zizzi, Annamarie
Comment I-5-1	We have been waiting for high speed rail for years when it was promised. I have stopped taking the train because its so slow and so have others. We would love to take the train again on high speed rail.
Response	Your view and comments have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from

	New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035.
Commenter	Akkoul, Sharon
Comment I-6-1	I am very much in favor of a high-speed rail option between the 2 cities. The current rail options are not truly an alternative to flying. Often, I drive to Albany in order to be able to take the train to NYC. Reducing the total travel time to 3 or 4 hours between the 2 cities will make it easier for business and leisure travelers, and aid in improving the upstate economy.
Response	Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would also double the frequency of service to destinations along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Aldridge, Zachary Steiner
Comment I-7-1	the prospect of a high speed railway linking the state is a definitive "yes." Environmental concerns are minimal (especially considering the reduced emissions from a populace taking trains instead of driving cars), economic opportunities are inevitable and the image it would provide of our state would be exemplary. All of Europe is connected by rails, why can't we be?
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.
Commenter	Alfes, Keith
Comment I-8-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee,

tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Alfes, Kim

Comment I-9-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Allentoff, Norman

Comment I-10-1 With the shrinking resources available in Upstate NY, I believe that pie-in-the-sky proposals such as high speed light rail hoped for by our esteemed Louise Slaughter should be abandoned for the time being.

What Upstate needs is upgrading of the CSX tracks and the small additions to them needed to eliminate the passenger delays now required for the first priority passage of the CSX freights, resulting in elimination of the frequent delays in passenger schedules which now preclude reliable, on time service.

Response Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Allin, Christopher

Comment I-11-1 An improved rail network including upgrades and high speed trains and service, creating an efficient network connecting downstate to upstate and then to Western New York.

Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Empire Corridor Program have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would also double the frequency of service to destinations along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Almer, Carl
Comment I-12-1	I just wish to express my strong support for a high-speed component to the Empire Corridor. High-Speed passenger rail, especially with a dedicated line, would have a great impact on western New York (not to mention the Hudson Valley). It would provide connections between the three large cities in the area, creating the synergy between them that is often talked about but actually rarely seen.
Response	Comments from the public have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and would also double the frequency of service to destinations along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Ambrosino, Arthur Michael, Great Sacandaga Lake Deepening Project, Great Sacandaga Lake Deepening Project
Comment I-13-1	This project is long overdue, I commend you for moving it forward. I am the president of the Great Sacandaga Lake Deepening Project. This freshwater Impoundment project will be paid for by the mineral wealth of the GSL. The GSL will contain between 200 and 600 Billion EXTRA gallons of freshwater that can be used for downstate, in an emergency, depending on how deep we deepen the lake. It would be exceedingly smart to bury the piping infrastructure underneath the railroad right-of-way....
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting for the High Speed Rail (HSR) Empire Corridor Program. Our program is focused on improving intercity rail passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls. Your proposal to share the right of way for multiple purposes would require further study, since the railroad companies own the property.
Commenter	Amicucci, Barbara
Comment I-14-1	Alternative 90B is my first choice, with Alternative 110 as my second. I really want Utica to remain a stop either way.
Response	Your comments supporting Alternatives 90B/110 and preserving intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90B will provide improvements in service to currently served cities, such as Utica. One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.
Commenter	Andrle, Christopher
Comment I-15-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Anonymous

Comment I-16-1 The 125 option will not benefit the trains to Toronto and Chicago; the 90B and 110 options will, as an added effect, benefit these trains.

Response You are correct in recognizing that the equipment in the 125 Alternative may not be compatible with trains currently operated to Toronto and Chicago. It is an accurate assumption that these trains could benefit from operating on the 90B and 110 Alternatives. Your comment has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT.

Commenter Anonymous, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-17-1 No, I wouldn't support this idea of High Speed Rail because why waste money on this and not donate this money to cancer research.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the review of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Anonymous, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-17-2 Even though it would be great to get to places faster, this is also polluting the air.

Response Comments from the public are an important part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Section 4.19 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the air quality analysis performed, which indicates that no significant adverse air quality impacts are expected. Moreover, with the diversion of travelers to rail, the net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to

	eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-18-1	support any enhancements to the Empire Corridor - have Them be incremental – don't do a project and say "now we're done"
Response	Incremental improvements will occur during the course of constructing the different components of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would begin conferring travel benefits within 2-5 years of the start of construction. The implementation of service initiatives and completion of the different project components are outlined in the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-18-2	Do promotions!! I am 58 years old and am awe That many of my friends have never ridden a train.
Response	Thank you for comments on public outreach and education. Your support has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-18-3	Please, please focus on being on time. Also, frequency of trains is important for flexibility in travel plans. MPH is an easy reference for comparisons, by frequency & punctuality will lead To a more sustainable level of ridership.
Response	Key goals of the New York State High Speed Rail program will be to improve reliability, on-time performance, and provide additional trains to the communities along the Empire Corridor in western New York, which will address the concerns you outlined in your comment. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would also double the frequency of service to destinations along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-19-1	Bring is on! But without the government!
Response	Your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program has been considered in the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Your suggestion is acknowledged relating to support of the project from the public sector.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-20-1	We need a statewide intercity travel ridership survey. Without this, ridership for high speed options is underestimated, due to omitting people who drive from (e.g.) Watertown to catch trains at Syracuse.
Response	Thank you for your comment, on the need to accurately forecast the demand for ridership for intercity rail service along the Empire Corridor. A detailed ridership analysis was conducted for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Analyzing the demand for ridership has been an important consideration in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Anonymous

Comment I-21-1	I support High Speed Rail 100%! Let's get this country up to speed w/ Europe. The sooner the better!
Response	Thank you for comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, your support has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-22-1	At the present time I think the funds you are planning to use on a high speed railroad could be put to better use. Those funds should be used to repair roads and bridges that the average NY State resident has to use daily to go to work or other daily living needs. When these thing are improved then think about the high speed rail systems.The average person in NY will never use the high speed rail system but they do use the roads and bridges each day.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-23-1	I-81 tear it down and leave it down.
Response	Thank you for your comment on I-81, but it is outside the scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. You can also visit the I-81 webpage on the NYSDOT website, and express your opinion.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-24-1	Exclusive passenger tracks are needed to avoid freight-induced delays.
Response	Your comment discussing the need for additional tracks along the Empire Corridor has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Anonymous
Comment I-25-1	At alternative 110 (or 125), it becomes faster and more reliable to drive from Ithaca to Syracuse and take the train from there to NYC than it is to take the direct bus from Ithaca to NYC.
Response	Thank you for your comment on how faster rail service in Alternatives 110 (or 125) will encourage ridership on the Empire Corridor. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125 and would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and would also double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo.
Commenter	Anonymous

Comment I-26-1	The trestle bridges over Howland Wildlife Refuge (if I remember correctly) are one of the slowest points on the route (10 miles per hour perhaps?). Any option needs to replace these “slow spots” with full-speed track. ASAP.
Response	Your comment points out the operating constraints the rail bridge over the Seneca River near the Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area(which includes Howland Island) places on train operations on the route. The speed restriction for this bridge is currently 40 mph. Under the Preferred Alternative, the speed restriction will be improved. Future operating speeds will be established during final design.
Commenter	Anthony, Sam, Erdman Anthony, Erdman Anthony
Comment I-27-1	Average 1 way flight = \$100 x 600 = \$60,000 On 1 Monday If price train at air rate and get to NYC in 2 hours, 1 way revenue = \$60,000, 2-way = \$120,000 Annual Rev = 120,000 * 50 weeks = \$6 million At the public info meeting the HNTB staff person told me my numbers were not real and that the Niagara to Albany run could not be justified
Response	Your comments on the revenue possibilities for rail service and competitiveness with air service have been considered by NYSDOT and the FRA in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. A detailed assessment of market demand and projected ridership was performed for each of the alternatives evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Ridership and revenue performance were important considerations in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Applebaum, Richard
Comment I-28-1	The rail system in Upstate NY is very much hampered by the 2 track system. In most cases, we can not rely on rail travel due to possible delays and missing connections. I see high speed rail as a solution to this problem. If high speed rail existed, it would be a wonderful alternative to flying and driving, which does not presently exist.
Response	Thank you for your comment discussing challenges in using the existing rail service, and the opportunities for success for this program. Your comment has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Appleton, Ted
Comment I-29-1	The plan to put high speed rail in New York has failure written all over it. The estimated cost of high speed rail along empire corridor as of now is upwards of \$14.7 billion. Even with inflated numbers of estimated ridership, New Yorkers are not going to be willing to give up their vehicles to get around cities like Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, and Albany, which lack the public transportation of NYC. There are nearly endless reasons that no plan for high speed rail has been put into action.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. The cost of Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, is substantially less (almost 1/3 less) than the most costly alternative (Alternative 125), which was a major consideration in

its selection. The subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider.

Commenter Aselin, Don

Comment I-30-1 Unless trains go 150 - 210 mph it may not be worth the investment ? Bullet train from London to Paris is a good example of the good fast train !

Response Thank you for your comment on the need for trains to operate at higher speeds than the different Build Alternatives evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered, but were not advanced, in part because they would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West. Moreover, it was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate than the Preferred Alternative. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Ashton, Timothy W.

Comment I-31-1 The connection to NYC is obviously important for Buffalo, but at the other end, the connection to Toronto is similarly significant and can be missed.

Response Thank you for your comment on opportunities on the western end of the Empire Corridor to connect Buffalo and Toronto. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Suggestions and recommendations by the public, for improvements to the service, have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. Further improvements or enhancements to the service can be studied in the future, and operating timetables can be further developed as part of Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Ashton, Timothy W.

Comment I-31-2 When there is good high speed service from Toronto to NYC, everyone will benefit and the value of the investment in New York State will be greatly increased.

Response Thank you for your comment on how everyone will benefit from improvements to the route, when trip times are improved between New York City and Toronto. In the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B), the train on the Empire Corridor to Toronto will be able to utilize the improved infrastructure and will have a reduction in trip times, which would achieve the goals you outline in your comment.

Commenter Askeland, Richard A.

Comment I-32-1 After attending the public hearing in Syracuse on 5 March 2014, feel that alternative 110 offers the best plan for improving the NY State rail passenger program. We need dedicated track for passenger service---and we don't want to short-change populations that live close to the Empire Corridor West, by eliminating stops.

Response Thank you for your comment in support of 110 Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and

	passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.
Commenter	Askeland, Richard A.
Comment I-32-2	<p>It must be improved. In light of climate change - we need to reduce our carbon imprint. We must promote train travel to reduce out imprint; offer alternatives to car and plane travel and stimulate our N.Y. State economy by providing economic linkages between communities.</p> <p>I think Alternative 110 offers a good start. It doesn't provide the kind of speed that Japan has attained with the "Bullet" train that I rode in the 1960's - but we can improve in increments.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comment discussing the need to use rail service to reduce our carbon footprint, along with improving the connectivity and economy of the communities along the Empire Corridor. Your comment has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B (over Alternative 110) as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined above.
Commenter	Askin, Tim
Comment I-33-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Backer, Kevin

Comment I-34-1 Please use the Central Terminal in Buffalo for the any and all upcoming rail projects in WNY. This should include the statewide highspeed train, metro rail expansion and any other project. Improvements to the Depew or Exchange street terminals arr foolish with the Central Terminal here in our market.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Baco, Meagan

Comment I-35-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Banks, Ariane

Comment The Buffalo Central Terminal would be a perfect stop for the high speed rail.

I-36-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Banning, Patricia

Comment I-37-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-35-1.

Commenter Barnaba, Alyssa, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-38-1 When high speed rail trains come to New York, I'm hoping they will be fast, reliable, efficient and environment safe. I'm really hope that the high speed rail trains will be fast, because I really think if it was fast, it could help people cut down on being late to places. It could help people how live in Baldwinsville get to Albany and back in one day rather than two. It could help people who live over an hour away from their work.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Comments from the public have been considered in the selection by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative, which will improve reliability, travel times, and frequency of train service.

Commenter Barrick, Joseph

Comment I-39-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-35-1.

Commenter Barringer, Brian

Comment I-40-1 I've been a close observer of high speed rail use in Europe and parts of Asia for some time. I see tremendous benefits for its implementation in NYS.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments have been considered in selection by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Barry, C.J.

Comment I-41-1 I vote for the 125 MPH option. \$14.71 billion is an investment in NY state. Rail travel is ecologically-friendly, safe, and progressive.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public participation in the program was considered in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter Barry, Cindy

Comment I-42-1 I welcome ANY improvement to the current rail system and schedule between Central NY and NYC. I don't even care what option you go with. Anything is better than what we have now.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Bartlett, Russ

Comment I-43-1 I am in favor of the 14.7 billion dollar option.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative. Public comment has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Moreover, Alternative 90B would have fewer environmental impacts than Alternative 125 and would also be less

costly. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts to 2,000 to 3,000 acres and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 125 would also take the longest time to incur travel benefits due to the time required to acquire and construct the right-of-way.

Commenter Bates, Ann

Comment I-44-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Bauch, Kevin James

Comment I-45-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Beal, Daniel

Comment I-46-1 I fully support the improvement of high speed rail in NYS and specifically I support the highest speed possible while still stopping at Utica. In the proposal 110 mph was the highest, but I would definitely support exploring a way to have even greater speeds while still stopping at Utica. Union station in Utica is also a station for the Adirondack Scenic Railroad.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, the 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.

Commenter Beal, Daniel

Comment I-46-2 Another missed opportunity could be in Buffalo. The Depew station parking lot is always overcrowded. A new station (replacing Exchange Street) should be added at Buffalo Central Terminal. What a great site to prepare for expansion, with its size and historical value. With Buffalo looking at growing its metro rail, a local line to downtown and the Airport could be run through Buffalo Central Terminal.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives at this time. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station over the Central Terminal location. Some of the primary reasons

for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Bellanti, Jason

Comment I-47-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Bennett, Shirley B.

Comment I-48-1 we need a train station in the Finger Lakes Region to support tourism and increase the number of visitors to our wine country.

Response Thank you for your suggestion for the adding of a station along the Empire Corridor north of the Finger Lakes area. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor. Trip time reductions for the Build Alternatives as discussed in the Tier 1 EIS were based on the trains operating non-stop between Syracuse and Rochester, without any intermediate stations in the Finger Lakes area. The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.

Commenter Benzing, James

Comment I-49-1 I strongly support any substantial upgrades to the corridor.

Response Thank you for uour comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments have been considered in the by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Bersohn, Daniel

Comment I-50-1 High speed rail between Hudson and NYC and Buffalo? Yes, please! Please do it with electric trains so we can reduce carbon as the grid gets less carbon intense.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. A primary goal for the program is to increase patronage of rail passenger service, by attracting passengers from other modes of transportation (short distance air travel and automobiles), that have carbon footprints greater than rail passenger service. Achieving a diversion to rail and increases in rail passenger usage will reduce the carbon footprint of the other forms of transportation.
Commenter	Bersohn, Daniel
Comment I-50-2	Tilting trains might improve speeds on existing track without significant modification to existing track.
Response	Consideration of the types of locomotives and rolling stock will be part of the second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the design for that project, or group of projects, that will meet the goals of the program. Use of tilt trains on the route may require further study. The clearances of the tilt train wheel and axle assemblies may not meet the recommended allowances to operate on lines equipped with third rail that the Empire Corridor trains must use on both Metro North Railroad and in Pennsylvania Station, New York.
Commenter	Bick, Henry J.
Comment I-51-1	I believe the state could truly benefit from these upgrades to our rail system.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Bick, Michelle
Comment I-52-1	We felt that the state, and certainly local economies could benefit from these projects as presented.
Response	Comments from the public supporting of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered in selecting the Preferred Alternative. Promoting economic vitality for the communities along the route is part of the purpose for the program, along with improving trip times, frequencies of service and passenger amenities.
Commenter	Birnbaum, Jesse
Comment I-53-1	I am strongly in favor of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Project.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments have been considered in the selection by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Bishop, Timothy
Comment I-54-1	A high speed passenger train from Buffalo to NYC is not needed, period.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Bissaillon, Gary
Comment I-55-1	I am very interested in the proposed high speed rail corridor from Buffalo to Albany and to NYC. I am an occasional Amtrak rider and would love to see great improvements made in the high speed line with dedicated track for passenger traffic. I know I would increase the frequency of my trips with improved speed and on-time trains. I am in favor of the 125 mph option.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Blarr, Patricia
Comment I-56-1	I fully support a high speed rail from NY City to Buffalo. A few years ago my family took Amtrak from Depew to NYC. Trip was very beautiful, comfortable and ease of travel with baggage/luggage 99% better than air travel. Negative part of trip- Extremely frustrated with length of time train on rails. Travel by Amtrak took 10 hrs vs car-5-6 hrs. High speed rail would create same benefits in 21st century that Erie Canal produced in 19th century. Not enough space to list the numerous benefits. In Europe passenger trains are priority. That would be advantageous to America, as well. Time for fed govt to concentrate on passenger trains rather than air transp. Compared to air transp, passenger trains much more environmentally friendly and uses less fossil fuel.
Response	Comments from the public supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered in selecting the Preferred Alternative. Major goals for the program include a reduction in trip times, along with improving the operating speeds of the passenger trains, frequencies of service, and passenger amenities.
Commenter	Blasdel, Serena
Comment I-57-1	I would love to see the central terminal in Buffalo as a stop for a high speed rail train.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Bleier, Kevin
Comment I-58-1	I am a proponent for the following options in order of preference: 90B Alt 11 (because it has lower on-time performance) 90A

Response	Thank you for your support of Alternative 90B and your analysis of the alternatives. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Boatwright, Stephon J.
Comment I-59-1	With all this said, after intensely reviewing the options, I am in strong favor of alternative 110, or, despite its hefty price tag, option 125. This type of project would greatly alter my decision making process while looking for employment; upstate NY would become significantly more appealing.
Response	Your support of the the 110 and 125 Alternatives has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Boatwright, Stephon J.
Comment I-59-2	Lastly, I would like to express my opposition to any project that does not add more trains from the Western Corridor to New York City;
Response	Your comment has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-1	High speed rail in New York should start with Alternative 125 as it offers the best solution to meeting the high speed rail performance objectives as listed in the your website (and brochure).
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-2	The only modification that I would make with Alternative 125 would be to add a station in the Utica area (south of Utica)
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley

	between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, the 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-3	Has NYSDOT explored using the Barge Canal right of way and /or the abandoned West Shore Railroad right of way as part of the right of way for Alternative 125?
Response	Your comment on the Tier 1 DEIS has been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B), which follows portions of the canal system. As discussed in the prior responses, Alternative 125 was dismissed from further consideration. The Erie Canal (Barge Canal) may not be suitable in many areas for supporting the addition of a high speed railroad as it passes through park areas at many of the locks and uses part of the Mohawk River and other waterways. The West Shore Railroad right of way, in many locations, has been redeveloped for other uses and is still utilized by CSXT in the Rochester area. It does not offer access to Albany-Rensselaer Station or a direct connection to Manhattan.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-4	Another option for the other alternatives would be electrifying the existing right of way.
Response	Thank you for suggestion for electrifying the trackage along the route. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Section 4.20. One of the alternatives dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 125, would provide for electric trains between Albany and Buffalo. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-5	I'm a consultant at United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems. I endorse alternative 125, with the caveat that there is a stop in the Utica area, New Hartford area. One or two or three or four trains can stop in this area, New Hartford, and Clinton. I don't think it would affect the schedule that much, perhaps all the stops in Utica or certain percentage, so an alternative 125 is really the start to High Speed Rail. It's got a dedicated Railway, it would eliminate a lot of confusion, perhaps with traffic on CSX, if there's a derailment on CSX which it is going to happen, it always does.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, the 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Bogdan, Daniel, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems, Consultant, United Consulting Network at High Speed Rail Systems
Comment I-60-6	I just have one more request that perhaps the comment period could be extended beyond the March 24th date. That would be, I think, greatly appreciated. I know it was out in

January, but now that you're having -- making these presentations, I think it's waking up a lot of people and they may want to make comments. I would suggest extending the deadlines for the written comments.

Response NYSDOT was able to extend the comment period, to April 30th, 2014, as other commenters shared your interest in lengthening the span of time to submit comments. Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter **Boland, Bernice**

Comment Please use the central terminal in Buffalo N. Y. It will be the perfect speed rail dectinarion.
I-61-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Boltz, Michael**

Comment This "high speed" rail is a terrible idea that nobody wants.
I-62-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter **Boomer-Jenks, Solon**

Comment I would like to voice my support in favor of bicycle and pedestrian access over the replacement for the Livingston Avenue railroad bridge. I believe having such access is important as there is currently only one other nonmotor vehicle river crossing within the City of Albany, with the nearest one outside the city several miles to the north. The only current crossing in Albany is inconvenient for pedestrians and bicycles as it requires climbing 60 feet and the path is quite narrow with bicyclists expected to walk their bikes the entire length.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter **Boulden, Kimberly A., Education and Employment Specialist, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Education and Employment Specialist, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo**

Comment I-64-1	With the expansion of the Buffalo Medical Campus and Cuomo's proposed "Buffalo Billion" coming to our city for job and urban development, it is crucial that our city be connected with other major centers. If we want to see Buffalo become a center for business, education, and growth, we need to improve the accessibility of our city.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need to improve intercity rail passenger service in Buffalo and Western New York. Key goals of the program are to improving the operating speeds of the passenger trains, frequencies of service, and passenger amenities, which will all help to better serve the City of Buffalo. Your comment has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, which would double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo.
Commenter	Boulden, Kimberly A., Education and Employment Specialist, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Education and Employment Specialist, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo
Comment I-64-2	A proposed high speed train that tops out at speeds of 125 mph is "planning for the past." Like many abandoned projects in Buffalo, 125 mph train would have been a fantastic asset to our city twenty years ago. In 2014, the plan is dated and does not seem to be effectively utilizing the world's advancing technology and the region's vast resources in an efficient manner. If the plan can not offer a less than 6 hour train ride to New York City, I am afraid we will commit ourselves to project that will be outdated before it's ever completed.
Response	Your comments on the Tier 1 EIS have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Several alternatives were reviewed that would have introduced higher speed trains than Alternative 125, but it was determined that these alternatives would have a greater impact on the environment and higher costs. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered, but were not advanced, in part because they would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Boyer, Greg
Comment I-65-1	I am strongly in favor of the 125 option.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Bradfuhrer, Edward
Comment I-66-1	A 6 hour train ride to from Buffalo to NYC would make people more likely to use the train over Airplanes since the time costs could be similar when parking, security and waiting on the tarmac are added into flying times. Any alternative with a ride of longer than approximately 6 hours would not have a similar effect. Once again, I support implementing Alternatives 110 or 125. I would prefer Alternative 125.
Response	Thank you for your support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and 110 and 125 alternatives. Your comments on the Tier 1 EIS have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. We recognize your suggestion for higher speed trains, and in the early stages of the process several alternatives were reviewed that would have introduced higher speed trains than Alternative 125, but it was determined that these alternatives would have a greater impact on the environment and higher costs. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and

its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Brady, Joseph

Comment I-67-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Braun, Patrick

Comment I-68-1 This opens an opportunity to establish right of ways for high speed connections, as well as renewable power generation and transmission. Electric based rail may appear to add cost to the infrastructure at first glance, but provides a sustainable and mutible alternative to diesel fuel.

Response Your comments on the use of electricity for train movements have been considered in the Tier 1 DEIS review process. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Section 4.20. One of the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 125, provides for electric trains between Albany and Buffalo. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. A primary goal for the program is to increase patronage of rail passenger service, by attracting passengers from other modes of transportation (short distance air travel and automobiles), that have carbon footprints greater than rail passenger service. Achieving a diversion to rail and increases in rail passenger usage will reduce the carbon footprint of the other forms of transportation.

Commenter	Braun, Patrick
Comment I-68-2	The Buffalo Central Terminal is not only centrally located to provide multimodal transportation, it can serve as a cornerstone for renewable energy production to serve the high speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-67-1.
Commenter	Breisch, Keith C.
Comment I-69-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-67-1.
Commenter	Brodnick, John
Comment I-70-1	Alternative 125 is the only proposed plan that meets the definition and service advantages of high speed rail. Alternative 125 is the only plan that will attract enough travelers to change driving habits and provide viability to the high speed rail system.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative.
Commenter	Brodnick, John

Comment I-70-2	Alternative 125 clearly meets all of the plan objectives, however the exhibit indicates that the regional portion of the plan does not provide service enhancements to several existing stations on the Empire Corridor including: Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, Rome, and Niagara Falls.
Response	Thank you for your analysis of the service levels and stations served for the Alternative 125. Alternative 125 was designed to reduce trip time between New York City and western New York, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Brodnick, John
Comment I-70-3	It must be noted, that the 95% on time performance for Alternatives 90B and Alternative 110 may be a bit optimistic considering projected freight train growth. The National Rail Plan states "Between 2010 and 2035, the transportation system will experience a 22 percent increase in the total amount of tonnage it moves. When looking forward to 2050, the increase is 35 percent" (United States, 2010). This report did not consider the boom in crude oil currently moving along CSX's Rail network.
Response	Thank you for your comment on on-time performance goals. The on-time performance values account for future growth in freight trains. Comments from the public, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred alternative.
Commenter	Brodnick, John
Comment I-70-4	Exhibit 6.8 (Impact on freight train operations) indicates how each alternative will impact freight train velocity. Alternative 110 received a "strongly supports program goals" with an average freight train speed of 30.8 mph Buffalo NY to Selkirk Yard. Alternative 125 makes the same trip with an average speed of 30.3 mph and the plan received a "supports program goals". It is questionable whether a 2% or 0.05 mph difference in a freight trains speed over a 300 mile run could be differentiated to a point of separating their qualitative ran kings. Considering all of the program goals listed in the draft EIS the only plan that meets all goals is Alternative 125
Response	Thank you for your comment. Exhibit 6.8 facilitates a comparison of several factors, in addition to average speed, of the freight performance and differences of the alternatives. Alternative 125 would create a new passenger train-only corridor between Albany and Buffalo and would not include any additional improvements to the existing rail corridor beyond what is proposed with the Base Alternative. Therefore, its rating regarding freight impact is the same as the Base Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Brodnick, John
Comment I-70-5	-Alternative 125 is the one and only high speed rail plan that meets all the goals of the Draft EIS. -Alternative 125 is the only plan the meets the New York State Senates High Speed Rail Task force goals for creating an adequate high speed network. -Alternative 125 is the only plan that modestly lives up to the international standard of high speed rail, and the only plan that has a chance of successfully attracting ridership.

-Alternative 125 is the only plan that has an advantage over driving, saving travelers over one hour on a trip from Buffalo to New York City

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comment has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 125 and would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 (since Alternative 125 would not improve regional service at stations bypassed) and would also double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction.

Commenter Broton, Shawn

Comment NO to high speed rail, we cannot afford it!
I-71-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Broton, Wendy

Comment I am against high speed rail because we cannot afford it.
I-72-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Bruce, Parker, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment If New York State were to install a high speed rail, it would be a beneficial economic achievement as a whole. Overall, if the state builds a high speed rail, it will positively affect my generation and other generations to come. As a bonus, it will bring a much need income to the state.
I-73-1

Response Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Buie, Caesar

Comment I would enjoy having the rail in-place.
I-74-1

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Burke, N

Comment I would like to express my support for 110 alternative for NY HS
I-75-1

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection

of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter **Burke, N**

Comment
I-75-2

Also, I hope that improvements to the stations will include better connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, to help make taking the train easy and accessible for everyone.

Please allow bicycles to be brought on the train as well. Bikes pair well with transit, and allow users to cover 'the last mile' between the train station and their final destination - no bike boxes or folding requirements, just a space for people to lock their bikes up on the train.

Response

Thank you for your comments concerning the consideration of bicycles and pedestrians and accessibility of bicycles on trains operated in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor evaluation process. Your comments have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. Stations for the Empire Corridor, in most cases, provide access to the public for public transit, automobiles, and pedestrians/cyclists. Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing.

Commenter **Burns, John**

Comment
I-76-1

I favor the Alternative 110 for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor.
My second choice would be Alternative 90B

Response

Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter **Burton, Steven**

Comment
I-77-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Bushey, Adam J.**

Comment I support spending the extra money and getting the faster trains that are consider as an option. Let's do it right the first time and spend the money.
I-78-1

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. All of the public's comment on the program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter **Bussanich, Marc**

Comment I would like to see train service from NYC to Niagara Falls running at 125 mph.
I-79-1

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter **Buterbaugh, Corinne, Buterbaugh Partners, Buterbaugh Partners**

Comment I strongly support the expansion of high-speed rail, especially in NY State, for the following reasons:
I-80-1

- National security – We rely too heavily on air travel for long distances. 9-11 demonstrated how vulnerable having only one long-distance travel option makes us.
- Train travel is safer than other forms of transportation.
- Train travel is less harmful to the environment than driving cars.
- Train travel is much more pleasant than air travel.
- Train travel is much more convenient than other forms of transportation, and you can work onboard.
- Train travel is less likely to be disrupted by bad weather than air or highway travel, which is especially important in central and western NY.

- The United States lags Europe, Japan, and other nations on new technologies in rail travel. This is harmful to our national security and our economy. It is also extremely embarrassing. Other countries are investing in infrastructure, and we continue to allow oil companies to dictate a transportation system that is outdated and inefficient.
- Critics say high-speed rail travel is prohibitively expensive; however, if you count the cost of highway construction and maintenance and subsidies to oil companies, travel by car costs much more than the 56 cents per mile the IRS allows. Most of the costs of car travel are hidden. Remember: Carbon emissions also cost, economically and in terms of quality of life!
- Young people prefer rail travel. They are rejecting car-centric suburbs for walkable neighborhood and cities that are connected by rail. This will lead to the further decline of Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse. Our dependence on cars is one of the factors driving young people away.
- Eventually, high-speed rail will become necessary (there is only so much air space, our population is growing, and people are more mobile). Why wait to start building high-speed rail until it is even more expensive?
- High-speed rail will mean more jobs and GROWTH for central and western NY.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the important place and role intercity rail passenger service has in our communities. Comments from the public have been considered in the selection by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative, which will improve reliability, travel times, and frequency of train service.

Commenter Buterbaugh, John

Comment I-81-1 I support the proposed high-speed rail project on the Empire Corridor. High-speed rail would not only create jobs in our state but it would also reduce our dependence on automobiles and enhance our technological standing worldwide.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Buttery, Lewis

Comment I-82-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-

Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Byrd, Jason

Comment I-83-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
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- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Byrne, Michael

Comment I-84-1 I support the concept of high speed rail service for New York State. It could have a very positive impact on the economy and quality of life in upstate New York.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter C., Alex

Comment I-85-1 My first concern has to do with the cost of this high speed rail.

Response Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter C., Alex

Comment I-85-2	A second concern of mine has to do with the time it will take to complete this project. Your website states it will take only 5 years to complete this project
Response	Schedules for construction and implementation of the different project components have not been determined at this time. The Service Development Plan provides scheduling of component projects, which will be further defined in Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	C., Alex
Comment I-85-3	My last concern has to do with profitability. By what year would you expect to see a profit for this expensive project?
Response	Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Cadran, David, Vermont Rail Action Network Volunteer, Vermont Rail Action Network Volunteer
Comment I-86-1	I am writing as an interested “third-party” for the upgrade of this line. As a Vermont resident that relies on passenger rail for trips to NY and to bring travelers to our state, improvement of the Empire Corridor is crucial.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the benefits from high speed rail. Public comment has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Cadran, David, Vermont Rail Action Network Volunteer, Vermont Rail Action Network Volunteer
Comment I-86-2	I am personally pushing for speeds of 110 mph which would help to create world class train service in the Empire Corridor to the benefit of all people in the region.
Response	Your comments supporting the 110 Alternative and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Calandra, Nicholas M.
Comment I-87-1	I think this is a great idea. I would utilize the rail Buffalo to New York at least once a month. The Buffalo to Rochester and Buffalo to Syracuse a few times as well.
Response	Your comments supporting rail travel and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Carey, Matthew
Comment I-88-1	I would implore you to please include bike and pedestrian accommodations on the Livingston Avenue bridge across the Hudson.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For

	more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Cargill, Todd
Comment I-89-1	I just recently became aware of the idea to use the old west shore railroad bed for this high speed rail project. As a resident of Swamp Road in the town of Bergen I am strongly opposed to this idea.
Response	Only Alternative 125 would use the former West Shore Railroad alignment in this area. The other alternatives, including Alternative 90B, would use the existing CSX right-of-way. Comments from the public, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Carni, Michael, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-90-1	I support the 110 alternative
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Carr, Deborah
Comment I-91-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown

site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Casasanta, James

Comment I-92-1 Personally, I am disheartened true high speed rail was not included in the potential options. By true high speed rail I mean maglev trains and bullet trains, not unlike those that are used in Europe and Asia that exceed 220 mph. This is the definition of true high speed rail.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection process for the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Casasanta, James

Comment I-92-2 Given the options at hand, the only two that make sense are the 110 mph option and the 125 mph option.
But preferable, the better option is the 125 mph option.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 and 110 Alternatives and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Casatelli, Jeanne

Comment I-93-1 Empire Corridor involving the section between the village of Castleton and Staats Island Road in Schodack.
I am following up to respectfully ask what is the status of at-grade crossings in this stretch which were supposed to be consolidated, closed and replaced with a bridge or underpass? I was told that a federal mandate in 1980 blocked new at-grade crossings from being created which has kept our family's land on Campbell Island without land access since 1979. I am more than willing to work with you to address the situation in this area to meet safety and access concerns for all involved.

Response Thank you for your inquiry as to the status of adding new grade crossings to this particular route in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your comment will be shared with Amtrak, the operator of the railroad and NYSDOT, as they will be able to better address your comment, as to safety requirements for constructing new grade crossings.

Commenter Catel, Alice

Comment I-94-1	I liked both 90B and 90A, but I think the impacts on historical and wetlands maybe too high in 90B – so my vote and support for 90A.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 90A Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. The supporting improvements for the 90B Alternative are primarily within the existing right of way, requiring little additional land and should have minimal impacts on historical sites or wetlands. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Catlin, Lindsay
Comment I-95-1	Rochester has become quite the music scene and would be a lot easier for others to get here if there was high speed rail.
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Cecconi, Nick
Comment I-96-1	I understand the importance of this Empire Corridor project and high speed rail; I do not understand how momentum for the Binghamton-NYC line dissipated after the initial feasibility study was concluded.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor. The route mentioned (Pocono Corridor) is approximately 80 miles south of the Empire Corridor and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Cecconi, Nick
Comment I-96-2	connecting to Syracuse with buses is not popular and would not maximize ridership, even if high speed rail is successfully brought to the corridor.
Response	Comments from the public have been considered as part of the Tier 1 EIS review process. The Service Development Plan focuses on revenue service for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and Tier 2 assessments can further consider transit connectivity at stations.
Commenter	Champion, David
Comment I-97-1	I think it's time that New York State takes the lead with this high speed rail project. To help offset the cost of the project and future maintenance expenses simply follow what other projects such as Arenas, theaters and even the TSA does at the airport and charge a small fee on every ticket. When it's paid off the fee can be used for upgrades and equipment maintenance of the line and stations. Let New York lead the way and not be a follower. I fully support this project and feel it's worth the expense.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Chelnov, Sandra
Comment I-98-1	I would highly recommend that ways be found to reduce the travel time between Buffalo and NYC be reduced to 4 hours.
Response	Your comments have been considered as part of the Tier 1 EIS review process. Several alternatives were reviewed that would have introduced higher speed trains than 125 mph,

	but it was determined that these alternatives would have a greater impact on the environment and higher costs.
Commenter	Chelnov, Sandra
Comment I-98-2	We are also concerned about climate change and the need to reduce green house gas emissions. While it is true that more construction requires more use of energy, the increased use of rail travel for both short and long distances and the decrease in car and air travel will play a significant role in reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions.
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. With the Preferred Alternative, improving rail service along the Empire Corridor will encourage the public to shift from using automobiles, thereby helping to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improving New York State's carbon footprint.
Commenter	Cherry, Elizabeth
Comment I-99-1	First I would like to say that the Empire Corridor is serving a wider population than you may realize. My fiancé and I travel by train whenever we travel. We live in Ithaca, so this requires a drive to Syracuse and the nearest train station.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. We agree with you about the importance of train travel regionally. Currently, the scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York and the cities along the route. The Tier 2 assessments could examine other opportunities for indirectly (through transit or other connections) or directly serving additional communities along the route.
Commenter	Cherry, Elizabeth
Comment I-99-2	I am strongly in favor of the 125 option.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public participation in the program is an important part of the selection process for the preferred alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT.
Commenter	Chiesi, Bill
Comment I-100-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Childs, Doreen
Comment I-101-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Cianchetti, John
Comment I-102-1	Niagara Falls needs help and this is it. Rail service can and will put the true JEWEL of New York and all of the East Coast on the map ! This is LONG overdue !
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Cipriani, Corindo
Comment I-103-1	High speed rail is a boondoggle, the cost exceeding enormously the benefits, now and in the very long run. Do NOT try to copy Europe, it's politically-correct, but this is a different land. AVOID spending on high speed rail ---- studies, commissions, etc.

Response	Comments from the public expressing their opinions of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Clark, James
Comment I-104-1	I am convinced that this high speed rail service would serve this state as a whole better than any other transportation project conceived.
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Clark, Kenneth
Comment I-105-1	Utica should be included in any development plans for high speed rail in Upstate NY. This area is in need of support to continue the efforts to provide jobs and attract new development (such as the NanoTech Center being worked on at SUNYIT). Bypassing the city would undermine ongoing efforts and would send a negative message to prospective developers.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Clute, Courtney, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-106-1	I highly disagree with the idea of the High Speed Rail. I think there are better things that we can spend money on. For Example, roads, and rail roads, and trains could use repairs. Bridges also need work done on them. They crack and become dangerous. Next, train tracks and trains; most train tracks today are in bad conditions.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Colangelo, Dominick
Comment I-107-1	NO HIGH SPEED RAIL SYSTEM
Response	Thank you for your opinion on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Coleman, Stephen F., Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Psychologist
Comment I-108-1	I would certainly support additional resources to upgrade passenger train transportation through Upstate New York, particularly high-speed passenger train systems.
Response	Your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Collins, John
Comment I-109-1	In the alternative information, I would like to see a break out of the Niagara Falls to Albany times

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Simulated travel times can be found in Appendix D, Rail Network Operations Simulation, of the Tier 1 EIS. Travel times simulated for 2035 between Niagara Falls and Albany range between 3:37 to 6:26 depending upon the alternative. In the Tier 2 assessments, additional information can be developed to show trip time between segments of the route in refining schedules.
Commenter	Collins, John
Comment I-109-2	It would also be beneficial to show in your brochures, information, and DEIS the "project cost per rider" (\$ per million projected riders) of each option.
Response	Thank you for your comment. The information on cost per rider is shown on Exhibit 6-9 of the Tier 1 FEIS, as annualized operations and maintenance cost and subsidy per rider.
Commenter	Collins, John
Comment I-109-3	Many photos of current improvement projects show the use of timber rail ties. Are more modern materials being considered in the project costs? More modern materials like concrete ties may provide a longer service life, and hence be a better investment. Thus, material options should be considered that may raise construction costs but provide a better, long term investment.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The photos used in the Tier 1 EIS are for illustrative purposes only. Construction materials used for any high speed rail improvement projects will be determined as the projects are developed and will be consistent with rail industry best practices and conform to Federal Railroad Administration regulations and requirements. In certain situations and environments, it should be recognized that wood crossties may be required to meet field conditions.
Commenter	Collins, Timothy
Comment I-110-1	What if this new rail system is a flop and trains go un-filled thus losing money or revenue to run as planned? Who will pick up that tab?
Response	Your comments concern ridership and revenue opportunities, which have been evaluated as part of the Tier 1 EIS analysis used by the FRA and NYSDOT to determine the Preferred Alternative. In addition, the Service Development Plan considers service strategies that promote increased ridership of intercity passenger trains along the Empire Corridor. Comments from the public, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Collins, Timothy
Comment I-110-2	What are the prices going to be? Is it going to be affordable or outrageously expensive? What about the safety of a train traveling more than 100 miles an hour through an automobile intersection? I'm not saying I wouldn't use it, I'm saying there will be millions of people that won't. Is/Would this project be financially secure enough to support itself if it doesn't receive the number of passengers it hopes for?
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way. Ridership and revenue opportunities have been addressed in the analysis used by the FRA and NYSDOT in determining the Preferred Alternative for the project, as described above. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Tier 1 EIS address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Collins, William L.

Comment I-111-1	I favor Alternative 125 for the Empire Corridor. We must plan for the future transportation needs of NYS, not for the least expensive option. We need a serious competitor to air travel inside NYS.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Cominsky, Sidney, Law Offices of Sidney O. Cominsky, LLC, Law Offices of Sidney O. Cominsky, LLC
Comment I-112-1	Constructing a high speed rail system might be the only way to revive upstate New York. Public monies should and must be used for this project
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo.
Commenter	Condo, Will
Comment I-113-1	My field is economic development, and upstate New York needs/requires efficient, reliable transportation options to regain economic growth. All options for “high” speed rail would be an improvement – if we were planning for the 19th or 20th century. Option 125 is by far the best option offered – but – 220-300 is what should be the goal.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments for on the need for trains to operate at higher speeds on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, relating to Alternative 125, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT, in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.</p> <p>During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered, but were not advanced, in part because they would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West. Moreover, it was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate than the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.</p>
Commenter	Conklin, Richard
Comment I-114-1	With a High - Speed Train/Transit System, I would not only be able to afford it because it would be much cheaper than flying, as it cost's 1/4 of that price, but with the Central Terminal in Buffalo, I would be able to make connections there to continue to visit relatives living on the East Coast in places like New York City, Delaware, Connecticut and do so all withing the same amount I would spend for one trip! It would cost 2-3 times the current amount of airline tickets to make a flight to the same destinations and yet the cost for train travel would allow me to make trips more often and to farther destinations and still save spending money for the city's I visit.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Conner, Robert
Comment I-115-1	Please build this! Please build this rail, quick travel between Buffalo and New York City is exactly what I need
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Cook, Joyce
Comment I-116-1	I like the 125mph proposal, and wish that one could happen. But if it can't, then at least upgrade some of the worst tracks so the trains can travel faster than those cars on the Thruway!
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.
Commenter	Cooley, Stacie
Comment I-117-1	would love to have high speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Public comments, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Kuersteiner, Donna and Cooper, John
Comment I-118-1	We were appalled to hear that a new highspeed might bypass Utica & Rome. Utica has fine refurbished station and it is well used. It seems wasteful to build a new rail line at huge

expense south of this area to gain a slight increase in speed (125 mph as opposed to 95 - 110 mph to go through Utica and Rome) , please continue the line through these two cities.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.

Commenter Cope, Robert D.

Comment I-119-1 I fully support the High Speed Rail initiative. This project can greatly cut into our dependence on fossil fuel and help the environment.

Response Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Cording, Carl

Comment I-120-1 This is a very important socioeconomic project—just what the Capital District needs!

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Cornwell, Kirk

Comment I-121-1 This is to make clear my unequivocal support for whatever is necessary to make the Albany-Rensselaer RR bridge usable for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Cox, Jane

Comment I-122-1 After attending the public hearing in Buffalo, I agree that a dedicated rail line for high speed trains is the answer. I prefer Alt #110, which would not require acquisition of separate corridor land.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.

Commenter Cox, Jane

Comment I-122-2 Please do not consider anything less than Alternative #110. Doing nothing should not be an option.

Response	Your comment in support of 110 Alternative has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. For these reasons and those outlined above, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Cox, Robert W.
Comment I-123-1	Alternative #110 is the minimum plan option, in my opinion.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of 110 Alternative. Public comments, relating to Alternative 110, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined above. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Craig, Susan A.
Comment I-124-1	I am a strong supporter of Alternative 12
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Public comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Craig, Susan A.
Comment I-124-2	I am a frequent, very frequent traveler up and down the Empire Corridor now. Five times out of six on my way home from Amsterdam to NYC the train is delayed by several hours.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Craine, Allison
Comment I-125-1	I think it would be a great idea.
Response	Your comments and support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Crandall, Brian
Comment I-126-1	While I certainly appreciate the infrastructure investment brought by this project and its various proposals, I have concerns regarding the impact on historic resources through land acquisition in the grander proposals; our historic resources are one of our greatest assets, and the detrimental impacts of transportation projects like the Thruway are still apparent in cities like Syracuse. I also have concerns with some of the socioeconomical impacts

described, because some things can be more “black-and-white” (population projections), while others are “grey,” such as people in the NYC metro moving further north up the Hudson Valley.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.

Commenter Crittenden, Gregory

Comment I-127-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal’s use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation’s Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Cruce, Joanne

Comment I-128-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal’s use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter **Crysler, Robert E.**

Comment I am in favor of the continued consideration of this infrastructure project however the emphasis should shift to Return On Investment (ROI) versus Cost. I would also see a Life Cycle Analysis as well as some historical ROI analysis on past infrastructure projects such as the Erie Canal, The Panama Canal, Rural Electrification and particularly other passenger rail projects.

Response Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 FEIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter **Crysler, Robert E.**

Comment I am strongly in favor of high speed rail through the Empire Corridor of New York State.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public, including support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Crysler, Robert E.**

Comment Personally, I would also like to see a consideration of short line in upstate New York in addition to high speed rail.

Response Thank you for your comments. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. In the future, consideration could be given to other supporting rail projects on the route between New York City and Niagara Falls.

Commenter **Curcio, Brad**

Comment As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Curtis, Robert**

Comment I-131-1 It is with excitement that I read of possible high speed rail for upstate NY. This may improve employment by making it more possible for people to travel more efficiently around the state.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West.

Commenter **Czuprynski, Larry**

Comment I-132-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-130-1.

Commenter Danieu, Eamon

Comment I-133-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
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 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-130-1.

Commenter D'Anthony, Dante

Comment I-134-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
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 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-130-1.
Commenter	Dasey, Theresa M.
Comment I-135-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-130-1.
Commenter	(No Last Name), David
Comment I-136-1	no to high speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Davis, Cindy
Comment I-137-1	Attached, you will find a letter sent by Marilyn Rodgers, Executive Director/CEO of the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, to the NYS DOT outlining our position, as well as highlighting a recent resolution adopted by the City of Buffalo Common Council regarding their position favoring the Central Terminal's reuse as part of this project. As always, thanks for supporting the Buffalo Central Terminal!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee,

tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Davis, Jim

Comment I-138-1 I sincerely believe that the economic benefits to this state will exceed anyones expectations. The potential for tourism in Upstate NY is largely an untapped resource.

Response Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West.

Commenter Davis, Jim

Comment I-138-2 Is the NY Thruway right-of-way off limits for any kind of rail service, including light rail?

Response Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Regarding your question on the potential use of the Thruway right-of-way, Alternative 125 follows the New York State Thruway between Albany and Schenectady. In other areas, the grades, curvature of the Thruway, and availability of additional property for the high speed rail right of way in some locations, did not support following the highway.

Commenter Davis, Jim

Comment I-138-3 All things being equal, the “125” alternative is “way too much too soon.” Alternatives 90A, 90B, and 110 are all reasonable and will produce multiple benefits.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor and was dismissed due to higher costs and impacts. Alternative 90A would not provide the same level of transportation benefits as it would not add the same capacity as Alternatives 90B and 110 (which each provide more than 300 miles of additional trackage). Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.

Commenter Davis, Jim

Comment I-138-4 The Empire Corridor plan is great. I wonder if the plan could be expanded sometime to include a) Albany to Montreal, and B) Albany to Boston?

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the goals and objectives of the program are the improvement of intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. Amtrak service to Boston is provided via the Lake Shore Limited Line. Service to Boston is currently provided by Amtrak over the CSXT's Boston Line and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Worcester Line. Improvements on this line could be considered in the future, but requires partnering with Commonwealth of Massachusetts and these host railroads. Amtrak service to Montreal is currently provided via the Adirondack Line. New York State has had a long partnership with Amtrak to provide service to Montreal dating back to 1974,

	and utilizes the tracks of the Canadian Pacific for this route. Over the years, New York State DOT has improved the tracks, including recently new double track in the area of Ballston Spa, to upgrade passenger trains operations on this route.
Commenter	Davis, Steve
Comment I-139-1	Having traveled Amtrak as recently as 4-26-14 my experiences would ten to favor more Amtrak dedicated rail would speed up service much more cheaply and cost effective.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the high speed rail program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Davis, Steve
Comment I-139-2	As I use the Utica station exclusively I would also not favor it being dropped from the schedule and having no stops between Schenectady and Syracuse which would mean the longest non-stop routing in the entire system. Alt 125.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Dearing, Andrew
Comment I-140-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee,

tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Decker, Leigh

Comment I-141-1 I believe New York should leave the idea of a "high speed rail system" alone.

Response Thank you for your comments. Comments from the public, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Decker, Leigh

Comment I-141-2 A lesson for New York is that high speed rail systems only work if there are ample transportation options at each destination. This requires European style metro systems and dense urban cores, neither of which is the majority of America's strong suit.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Individual projects or groups of projects for the Preferred Alternative will be advanced according to the Service Development Plan to Tier 2 environmental evaluations and design development. Suggestions and comments for improving connectivity between different modes of transportation with rail passenger service have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. The Empire Corridor connects the largest cities in the state, from New York City, Yonkers, to Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity can be pursued with the local municipality and transit provider.

Commenter Degenfelder, Ron

Comment I-142-1 If you are considering a location in Buffalo area for high speed rail/transportation, the Central Terminal has been waiting years for you.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-140-1.

Commenter Dekdebrun, Kylie

Comment I-143-1 It would be a wonderful opportunity to redevelop Buffalo's Central Terminal with a new era of train travel.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-140-1.

Commenter Delmonte, Andrew

Comment I-144-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-140-1.

Commenter DeLude, Danielle

Comment I-145-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

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-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-140-1.

Commenter Dembrosky, Stan

Comment I-146-1 I think someone should look at electrifying the New York to Buffalo line.

Response Thank you for your comment. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of power used in each of the alternatives considered. Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS, would have used electric power. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.

Commenter	De Muth, Roger
Comment I-147-1	Having a high speed rail line between upstate and NY city would stimulate the economy of upstate dramatically Yes I approve! Do it!
Response	Thank you for comments on the benefits of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	DeNora, Nick
Comment I-148-1	Buffalo needs all the help it can get. When Buffalo had trains just look at the Central Terminal it was a huge hub. Therefore bring the Trains back please
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-1	My favorite option is the 125mph option but without a new right of way and without electricity.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting Alternative 125, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 125 would create an exclusive new right-of-way, which would involve potential impacts on 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-2	Who made the decision to capitulate to CSX, the owner of the right way, and study only options outside of its right way for 125mph? Why wasn't a third track with the existing Empire corridor studied?
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning alternative alignments in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS discussed alternative selection and reviews for each of the alternatives considered. Portions of the existing corridor geometry can support 125 mph maximum authorized speed, however, just like the 110 and 90 mph Alternatives, there are portions of the corridor that could not be realigned to support 125 mph, so trains would have to slow down and speed up at each civil speed restriction. That is, the trip time (or average speed) for the new corridor 125 Alternative will be better than

	the trip time (or average speed) for an existing-corridor 125 Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide over 280 miles of third track, largely located within the existing railroad right-of-way.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-3	Why didn't the commission study an option for 125mph diesel trains instead of only 125mph electric trains?
Response	Thank you for your question. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Chapter 3 and Section 4.20. For Alternative 125, a dual mode diesel-electric locomotive was considered. Selection of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, by the FRA and NYSDOT, considered locomotive propulsion and the types of energy for train movements. Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed and evaluated as the program moves forward in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-4	why weren't tilting train options studied?
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, by the FRA and NYSDOT, considered railroad technology and systems as discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. Electrified dynamic tilt trains were evaluated in Chapter 3 as part of the 160 mph and 220 mph Very High Speed (VHS) alternatives, which were dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-5	I think NYS should put its money into building a 125mph diesel train system using as much of the existing infrastructure and right of way as possible.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the alternative selection for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Portions of the existing corridor geometry can support 125 mph maximum authorized speed, however, just like the 110 and 90 mph Alternatives, there are portions of the corridor that could not be realigned to support 125 mph, so trains would have to slow down and speed up at each civil speed restriction. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS discusses alternative selection and evaluations of the alternatives considered. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125. Selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, by the FRA and NYSDOT, considered locomotive propulsion and types of energy for train movements (see Section 4.20 of Tier 1 FEIS). Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed and evaluated as the program moves forward in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-6	Buy Super Voyager tilting trains or EMD F125 locomotives to allow for 125mph speeds
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the types of equipment to be operated as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed in Tier 2 assessments. Any rolling stock selected for operation will need to comply with Federal Railroad Administration

	regulations, and capable of mixing in operation with other trains and locomotives on the North American railroad network.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-7	Upgrade the Hudson Line between Albany-New York City for 125mph speeds in most sections
Response	Thank you for offering your support of the Alternative 125. The FRA and NYSDOT have considered operating speeds and trip times in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Operations on the Hudson Line are constrained by shared operation with Metro-North Hudson Line commuter rail trains, and Alternative 90A improvements (that are included in the Preferred Alternative) includes upgrades to the line to increase operating speeds.
Commenter	Desjardins, Zachary
Comment I-149-8	Upgrade the Empire Line between Schenectady and Depew for 125mph speeds in some straight sections and bottleneck sections such as Rochester to Depew or Syracuse to Utica
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 125 and would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 (since Alternative 125 would not improve regional service at stations bypassed) and would also double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	DeStefano, Linda A.
Comment I-150-1	What is missing is an evaluation of a new reality, namely, that there are now a large number of railroad tankers which carry crude oil from the Bakken Shale in N. Dakota through upstate New York. The crude is more volatile than other crude, and more than one explosion has already occurred. The worst was in July, 2013 in which much of a small village in Quebec was destroyed, and 47 people were killed. Sen. Charles Schumer has called these tankers "bomb trains". New standards for tankers would reduce the danger, but these tankers are not now being used. The trains go through downtown Syracuse. If there were an explosion, how could people be evacuated quickly? The trains also travel along Onondaga Lake. Much has been done to clean up the lake and to build amenities. The trains go right over a trail. An amphitheater is proposed for the lake shore. Even without an explosion, a spill could contaminate the lake and would make the amenities unusable until adequate cleanup was completed. Thus, I request that the EIS include an analysis of how high speed rail impacts safety, environmental and social aspects of these tankers.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations is one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. These improvements that will reduce congestion, delays and interference between passenger and freight trains will improve safety. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS address alternatives, and safety and environmental benefits and concerns.

Commenter	Dettman, Perry
Comment I-151-1	Any train has very limited use for the entire state, a lot of money spent for the few people who want to use it. It will be like Rochester's Fast Ferry, a lot of money spent with only a very small percentage of people in the area using it.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dettman, Perry
Comment I-151-2	A Fast Train could be a whole lot of law suits waiting to happen, as it races threw rail crossings, possibly crashing into motor vehicles in its path. As well as possible derailments, not a far fetched opinion,as I'm a retired trucker, I can predict this will happen.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Dewitt, John
Comment I-152-1	I support the Alternative 110 option.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Dillingham, Justin
Comment I-153-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not

included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Dobucki, Randy

Comment I-154-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-153-1.

Commenter Dolhy, Paul

Comment I-155-1 Explain to me how adding 1 track is going to work?

Response Thank you for your comment. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide over 280 miles of third track, largely located within the existing railroad right-of-way. The FRA and NYSDOT considered the operation of passenger and freight trains along the Empire Corridor in each of the alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Dolhy, Paul

Comment I-155-2 You need two tracks not one, two tracks for csx freight & two tracks for Amtrak pass.

Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. The Tier 1 EIS reviews the operation of multiple tracks along the Empire Corridor, including developing specific track diagrams and modeling/simulation of rail operations, to identify the necessary infrastructure projects that will improve travel times and the reliability of service. Alternative 90B would restore large sections of third and fourth track.
Commenter	Dominguez, Javier
Comment I-156-1	I would like to see NYSDOT reach out to college campuses and get more feedback from the college students.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Recognizing the importance of public awareness for the project, six public hearings were held across the state between March 4, 2014 and March 12, 2014 in Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Utica, and Poughkeepsie. The Albany public hearing was held at the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering. Three additional informational meetings were held including one at Niagara University. In addition the project has a website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor , that provides the option of downloading the Tier 1 DEIS and other supporting documents.
Commenter	Dominguez, Javier
Comment I-156-2	I feel that the student population would be in favor of the 125 plan.
Response	Thank you for your comment. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative.
Commenter	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
Comment I-157-1	90A seems the safest bet as it addresses the need for more East-West trains and improves infrastructure.
Response	Thank you for your comment, relating to Alternative 90A, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
Comment I-157-2	I do not feel that 125 justifies its costs.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.
Commenter	Donnelly, Jr., Peter

Comment I-157-3	If this plan were to be adopted, I would strongly recommend that there be an increase in local train travel between Syracuse and Albany
Response	Thank you for your comments on improvements to the service, which have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan and the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and would also double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo. Projected level of service and train travel times between Syracuse and Albany for each alternative can be found in Appendix D, Rail Network Operations Simulation.
Commenter	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
Comment I-157-4	I strongly support 90A because it fulfills the most basic needs (time efficiency and more options).
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting Alternative 90A, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Donnelly, Jr., Peter
Comment I-157-5	I feel that 110 is a better long term plan provided that the building needs of 90B are not urgent, and provided that there will not be major resistance of the building of new rails.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Donnelly, Steve
Comment I-158-1	Let's develop a multi-phase master plan consisting of: (1) Holding CSX accountable for poor dispatching and host railroad responsible delays (2) improve the border crossing process to/from Canada (3) implement incremental improvements of the rail system we currently have (4) higher speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan and Tier 1 FEIS. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours, which would also benefit Maple Leaf service continuing on into Canada. The focus for the program is on improvements along the Empire Corridor between Niagara Falls and New York City. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The SDP provides a schedule for phased implementation of the individual projects comprising the program.
Commenter	Dougherty, Catherine
Comment I-159-1	High speed rail should use existing tracks and stop in every city along the route including Utica/Rome.

Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative will double the frequency of service to Rome and Utica.
Commenter	Dougherty, Catherine
Comment I-159-2	The Utica/Rome corridor region has Nanotechnology and Drone manufacturing companies relocating to the region. The nearest proposed high speed rail stop is in Syracuse and that is unacceptable and too far to drive back to Utica. This project should be used to renovate existing tracks and routes.
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will double the frequency of service to Utica and the stations in the Mohawk Valley.
Commenter	Drajem, Lynn
Comment I-160-1	Yes please make the Central Terminal a stop on this project.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Drake, Paula
Comment I-161-1	Let's get going! This is a desperately needed services
Response	Thank you for your support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Du Bois, Patricia
Comment I-162-1	I find it appalling to see such HIGH SPEED trains screaming along PRIMITIVE ground rail systems Why aren't you constructing MONORAILS high above ground like 30 feet above ground so you can scream across at 2-300 mph from one city to the next. Why don't you take a look at Walt Disney World's monorail system, take a look at Regal Theatre's opening commercial that begins the show.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. Alternative 125 would involve construction of a viaduct on structure in places, but it would involve considerable costs and impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land). It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Dudek, Jessica

Comment I-163-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-160-1.

Commenter Duszynski, Peter

Comment I-164-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for reviewing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The goals of the program include using the improved intercity rail passenger service to promote economic activity along the route and increase the attractiveness of the region for business. In the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. More specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.

Commenter Duszynski, Peter

Comment
I-164-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. Compromised or limited service on the current freight network may force many companies to alter business operations and begin shipping more products by truck – increasing cost, increasing our environmental footprint and increasing traffic on New York roadways.

Response Thank you for your comments. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Dworzanski, Ray

Comment
I-165-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Dymond, Jayne

Comment
I-166-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Eames, Frederick

Comment I-167-1 As upgrading the Livingston Avenue bridge must be a part of this plan, PLEASE consider that a bicycle-pedestrian walkway on the bridge must be a part of this upgrade. It's quite obvious. It would provide a much safer and friendlier crossing than the current Dunn Memorial bridge, as described by Casey Seiler in the Times-Union on April 27. Aside from its practical value for pedestrian traffic, it can be an attraction in itself, because of its proximity to the Corning Preserve waterfront area (though not as spectacular as the Poughkeepsie Walkway, it can have a similar stimulating effect on local recreation.)

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Elton, Wallace

Comment I-168-1 I write to express my general support for the Empire Corridor Project to bring high-speed rail to the NYC-Albany-Buffalo corridor.

Response Thank you for your comment, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will double the frequency of service between Albany and Buffalo.

Commenter Elton, Wallace

Comment I-168-2 There is, however, another use of this (the Empire West portion) historic transportation corridor that the EIS should acknowledge and assess impacts on: the Erie Canal way Trail.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 EIS. Existing conditions related to the Erie Canalway Trail are presented in Appendix G, Environmental Inventory and Impact Assessment and Sections 4.6 (waterways), 4.8 (navigable waters), 4.15 (historic resources),

	and 4.16 (parklands/recreation areas). These sections of the Tier 1 FEIS address the potential impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the canals and canal trails.
Commenter	Elton, Wallace
Comment I-168-3	In the larger picture, the Empire Corridor Project should support and facilitate bicycle and pedestrian opportunities throughout its route by including linkages and facilities wherever feasible.
Response	Thank you for your continued interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. A number of station improvement projects have been completed as separate independent projects along the Empire Corridor, including reconstruction at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing. Comments from the public, relating to the accessibility of bicycles and pedestrians, have been considered in the design of station facilities and other facilities constructed as separate projects along the route and in the Tier 1 assessments for Empire Corridor. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance design for that project, or group of projects including looking at options for pedestrian/bicycle accommodations.
Commenter	Elton, Wallace
Comment I-168-4	In one specific example, the new or refurbished Livingston Avenue Bridge over the Hudson River in Albany must include provision for bicycles and pedestrians.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Englert, Timothy
Comment I-169-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at

the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Erdmann, Tyler

Comment Buffalo needs to be considered for the high speed rail line!
I-170-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Ericson, Del

Comment Fast train was favorite spot for suicides when we lived near the Boston to Washington, DC. Make sure to include safety fence at high risk areas in your cost estimates.
I-171-1

Response Thank you for your comments about safety on this high speed rail line. All feasible safety measure including those cited by the commenter will be considered, if appropriate, as the design stages progress and will be analyzed in the Tier 2 analysis. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. The Tier 1 FEIS accounts for several types of fencing and warning systems, including installation of perimeter fencing on both sides of the right-of-way on portions of the right-of-way to prevent trespassing. The Tier 1 FEIS addresses fencing and other safety features for the Preferred Alternative in Section 3.3.3, under the "Safety" section.

Commenter Eson, Jud

Comment The planned rebuilding of Albany's Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge presents a one-time, unique opportunity to create a pedestrian / bicycle walkway between both sides of the Hudson River.
I-172-1

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Evans, J. Reid

Comment I-173-1	I highly support the high speed rail project for the Empire Corridor
Response	Thank you for your comments expressing support for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Everett, Norma
Comment I-174-1	I feel that Buffalo Central Terminal reuse should be included in the proposed NYS high speed rail plans
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-169-1.
Commenter	Eyington, David
Comment I-175-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-169-1.
Commenter	F., Audrey
Comment I-176-1	I think that the establishment of the high speed rail between Albany and New York will help a lot of students
Response	Thank you for your support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Falbo, A.
Comment I-177-1	<p>Localized Buffalo rapid transit lines should be below ground in neighborhoods. This will protect the integrity of the neighborhoods and communities.</p> <p>Be smart - below ground in local Amherst areas.</p> <p>Above ground is great for state span distances Buf to Albany.</p> <p>SO UNDERGROUND TRANSIT LINE IN AMHERST!</p>

Response	Thank you for your comments. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improving intercity rail passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls. Improvements to the light rail or rapid transit system in the Buffalo area is not part of the scope of this program.
Commenter	Falbo, Antone
Comment I-178-1	We want underground local rapid transit lines in Amherst please.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improving intercity rail passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls. Improvements to the light rail or rapid transit system in the Buffalo area is not part of the scope of this program.
Commenter	Fandl, Richard
Comment I-179-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	(No Last Name), Fanying
Comment I-180-1	The most important aspects of travel is consistent on time performance (does not have to be the fastest) just consistent so I can properly budget my time effectively. High speed is nice but predictable travel time is most important,

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program regarding on time performance, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Farina, Nicholas J.
Comment I-181-1	I read a story in our local paper that the proposed high speed line if constructed at 125mph would bypass Utica. How idiotic an idea is that!
Response	Your comments about preserving intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125, a high-speed railroad on a new alignment, was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles. One of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Farrell, Shirley
Comment I-182-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for reviewing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. More specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.
Commenter	Farrell, Shirley
Comment I-182-2	I strongly encourage the state to include High Speed Passenger rail ONLY as it would run apart from the freight rail network.
Response	Thank you for your comment, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The importance of segregating passenger rail from freight and preserving and improving both passenger and freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important consideration. As outlined above, the additional trackage provided by the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations.
Commenter	Farrell, Shirley
Comment I-182-3	I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.
Response	Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Farrell, Don

Comment I-183-1	this is a huge waste of money like the bridge to NOWHERE. Amtrak is a waste too the money will be better spent on bridge repair/replacement !!
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Farrington, Alexandra
Comment I-184-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Fassler, Cary
Comment I-185-1	<p>My sister and her husband, both profs at Notre Dame would visit us more frequently in Oswego county if train service improved to Syracuse. My wife and I would go to NYC more frequently if train service was acceptable from Syracuse or Utica.</p> <p>The U.S. should not allow our infrastructure to blunder into third world status and allow the loud government haters to win this war.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments, supporting the program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would also double the frequency of service to destinations along Empire Corridor West, including Syracuse and Utica.

Commenter	Faulds, Colin and Fratesi, Victor
Comment I-186-1	We are very supportive of Alternative 110 for the Empire Corridor renovations and new construction.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Faust, Catherine
Comment I-187-1	Please include Buffalo's historic NY Central as an intermodal train station for the NYS High Speed Rail Empire Corridor.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Fava, Peter
Comment I-188-1	No poster of Utica when we inquired. We were told 'Utica already has a beautiful station'. This is true. Does that mean Utica will not receive any other upgrade?
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding the passenger station in Utica. As described in Section 3.3.3 of the Tier 1 FEIS, the Preferred Alternative, Alternatives 90B includes making operational and platform improvements to Utica Station. The specific details of these improvements would be determined in a project level evaluation conducted at a later date as part of the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Fava, Peter
Comment I-188-2	NY State does not have the wide open space of some other areas. Do we need to spend billions of dollars to go to 110 or 125 miles per hr? how often would the trains be able to sustain these speeds?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the costs of Alternative 110 and 125 for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Fava, Peter

Comment I-188-3	Any plan that takes Utica off the route or stops is out of the question. Having to get off a "High Speed" train and transfer to a "regional" train is a disservice. Where is the time saving and efficiency for our area residents?
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will double the frequency of service to Utica, unlike Alternative 125. Since Alternative 125 would bypass Utica, express service to this station would not be provided.
Commenter	Felder, Vincent R.
Comment I-189-1	I am in favor of Alternative 125.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Felicetti, Tony
Comment I-190-1	We need high-speed rail in upstate New York. It will be at economic boom to this area but the trains must run on time!
Response	Thank you for offering your support, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will double the frequency of service to Empire Corridor West and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035.
Commenter	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates, Bruce Fennie & Associates
Comment I-191-1	1. RE the Base Alternative of 1.6 million passengers, is that today or in 2035? 2. If 2035 what is the latest year you have that info on?
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The ridership estimate in the Tier 1 EIS is for future conditions in 2035, which would reflect the growth in the next 20 years. Base year (2009) ridership estimates are approximately 1.3 million and can be found in Chapter 2 and Appendix B.
Commenter	Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates, Bruce Fennie & Associates
Comment I-191-2	3. How does the 1.6 Million breakdown between: a) NYC-Albany? b) Albany -Buf c) Albany- ROC d) Albany- Syracuse e) NYC-Buf f) NYC-ROC g) NYC-Syracuse 4. If 1.6 million is the 2035 Number how does the latest year you have data for breakdown as described in a-g above?
Response	Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

For the service between these locations, the 1.6 million riders breaks down as follows; NYC-Albany (570,326), Albany-Buff (12,760), Albany-ROC (12,210), Albany-Syracuse (10,708), NYC-Buff (29,632), NYC-ROC (42,492), and NYC-Syracuse (55,214).

For the base year (2009) data, the 1.3 million riders breaks down as follows; NYC-Albany (542,702), Albany-Buff (10,146), Albany-ROC (10,386), Albany-Syracuse (8,822), NYC-Buff (68,182), NYC-ROC (72,596), NYC-Syracuse (60,734).

Detailed ridership and revenue data is maintained by NYSDOT and Amtrak for the service provided on the Empire Corridor. Current figures for these destinations can be obtained by contacting Amtrak.

Commenter Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates, Bruce Fennie & Associates

Comment I-191-3 5. Av price of tickets a-g in 2035 and latest year?

Response Thank you. Base year (2009) ticket prices range from \$18 between Utica and Syracuse to \$58 between NYC and Buffalo, as presented in Appendix B of the Tier 1 EIS. The current cost of fares on Amtrak can be found on their website (<http://www.amtrak.com/home>). Ticket prices for the year 2035 are not known at this time, and would be subject to operating costs and assistance from NYSDOT and the federal government at that time.

Commenter Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates, Bruce Fennie & Associates

Comment I-191-4 1. How much federal and State money has been spent on this project and over how many years?

Response Thank you for your continued interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In April of 2010, NYSDOT received a \$1 million grant from FRA to conduct analyses of potential Empire Corridor improvements, including preparation of a Service Development Plan, Tiered EIS, and other necessary studies. In addition, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) contributed \$1.8 million to the Tier 1 EIS preparation, and New York State provided matching funds in the amount of \$3.5 million (New York State rail funds).

Commenter Fennie, Bruce, Bruce Fennie & Associates, Bruce Fennie & Associates

Comment I-191-5 2. The subsidy per passenger (Exhibit ES-4) does not include any imputed interest for the Capital outlays although the taxpayers are paying interest of the Federal debt. Why has interest on the debt / Capital not been included in the Subsidy?

Response Thank you for your comments. There is no interest paid on direct federal capital grants for transportation projects. Moreover, the omission of this cost element, even if it were a true program cost, is consistent for all alternatives such that comparisons of economic performance across alternatives remain valid. Interest on the federal debt is not allocated across all federal grants but rather is a separate payment out of the treasury shown as a budget line item exclusive of federal programs funded with the remaining federal budget. It would therefore be inappropriate to make assumptions as to the appropriate index to assign to each capital dollar expended. For these reasons, the subsidy is calculated only on the gap between annual operating costs and ticket revenues collected by Amtrak.

Commenter Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty

Comment I-192-1 If we are to make a massive investment in a new transportation system, then the return should by rights be equally massive. Compared to the alternatives, it should ideally be:

- Safer
- Faster
- Lower cost

- More convenient
- Immune to weather
- Sustainably self-powering
- Resistant to Earthquakes
- Not disruptive to those along the route

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered. It would increase ridership by 1 million over the Base Alternative. The net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter **Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty**

Comment I-192-2 The Hyperloop (or something similar) is, in my opinion, the right solution for the specific case of high traffic city pairs that are less than about 1500 km or 900 miles apart. Around that inflection point, I suspect that supersonic air travel ends up being faster and cheaper. With a high enough altitude and the right geometry, the sonic boom noise on the ground would be no louder than current airliners, so that isn't a showstopper. Also, a quiet supersonic plane immediately solves every long distance city pair without the need for a vast new worldwide infrastructure.

Response Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In selecting the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on technology in the Tier 1 EIS that is compatible with, and will allow connections with, other parts of the national rail network.

Commenter **Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty**

Comment I-192-3 Short of figuring out real teleportation, which would of course be awesome (someone please do this), the only option for super fast travel is to build a tube over or under the ground that contains a special environment. This is where things get tricky.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. Alternative 125 would involve construction of a viaduct on structure in places, but it would involve considerable costs and impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land). It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Fernandez, Joseph, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty, Licensed Real Estate Broker, CJF Realty
Comment I-192-4	I believe that New York State should be the first state to consider other modes of transportation not just rail. One mode proposed is Evacuated Tube Transport Technologies (www.et3.com). Elon Musk of Tesla Motors, SpaceX, etc., has proposed a similar system called Hyperloop. Proponents of both systems are hoping to obtain enough signatures by July, 2014 in the State of California to persuade California's State Legislature to pass a bill allowing for these systems to be built in addition to rail.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As described in the prior responses, in selecting the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on technology in the Tier 1 EIS that is compatible with, and will allow connections with, other parts of the national rail network. Economic costs and benefits of each program alternative have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Field, Susan
Comment I-193-1	Much needed! Would bring some jobs too!
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Filler, Samuel
Comment I-194-1	Based on the current political climate and the state of the budget, I would suggest going after option 90B and pursuing the express track build out as another phase.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90B, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, and the Service Development Plan presents the phased implementation of individual projects. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Fisher, Jean
Comment I-195-1	Would love a high speed rail. Pick Alternative 90B
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, expressing support for Alternative 90B, which has been selected by FRA and NYSDOT as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fishlock, Frances
Comment I-196-1	I think we should go for the fastest train we can have in Central NY. If we do something less than the best, it will have to be upgraded at a much greater cost in the future.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will reduce travel times between New York City and

	Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Fiutak, Paul
Comment I-197-1	Syracuse's future as a continuing crossroads of transportation for the NE IS AT STAKE.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West that includes Syracuse.
Commenter	Fiutak, Paul
Comment I-197-2	Consider future benefits for the limited weather delays benefitting travelers
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Flynn, L.R.
Comment I-198-1	High speed rail is not a priority but repairing the State Highway system is.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities between New York City and Niagara Falls. Consideration of the needs for the interstate highway system was not included in the scope of the program. However, the proposed rail improvements are anticipated to result in a diversion of trips from the highway system, resulting in operational benefits. This annual net benefit (compared to the Base Alternative) would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.
Commenter	Foley, John
Comment I-199-1	I strongly support the inclusion of a bike /pedestrian path in any project to Improve the rail line at Livingston avenue.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Folts, James D.
Comment I-200-1	The draft EIS indicates that only the existing station stops between Albany and Niagara Falls would be served by higher-speed trains. I hope that a final plan will propose stations in places like Batavia and Newark.

Response	Thank you for your comments. The Tier 1 EIS is a corridor level evaluation that considers use of the existing stations only. Alignments and rights of way for each of the different alternatives do not include new stations. Additional stations could be addressed in future studies.
Commenter	Folts, James D.
Comment I-200-2	At the Albany public hearing some speakers advocated for a pedestrian walkway across the Livingston Avenue railroad bridge in Albany. I oppose it.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Forbes, Melissa
Comment I-201-1	I think High Speed Rail would be great for NY.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Forbes, Melissa
Comment I-201-2	Go for it all. We need to get our rail system back in this century enough of band aid fixes.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-1	I do not want high-speed train; want \$ to go for education of children in NY State.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-2	Ques: Will the 90 people --attending Wed meeting at DBT Stadium---verify that they or their employees DO currently travel via present train system to NY City? Will they say they avoid the current train at all costs, & travel by AIR instead?
Response	Thank you for your comment on ridership patterns on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. A detailed assessment of market demand and projected ridership was completed for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. Ridership and revenue performance were important considerations in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen

Comment I-202-3	What agency has done a headcount of travelers leaving Syr & unloading themselves at NY City? Will actual survey, via internet or a paper process, accomplish a proper headcount? OR will Gov Cuomo just do a "executive order" and spend the \$ as he/his office sees fit?
Response	Thank you for your questions regarding ridership patterns on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. Amtrak monitors the ridership on all trains along the Empire Corridor at each of the stations. Syracuse was the sixth busiest station on the route, behind Penn Station, Albany-Rensselaer, Hudson, Rhinecliff, and Rochester, with over 131,000 riders using the station during fiscal year 2019. Ridership and revenue performance were important considerations in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-4	what is cost per person IF 90 people per week DO ride the high-speed train AND return to Syr?
Response	Thank you for your question on the cost of ridership on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. The current cost of fares on Amtrak can be found on their website (http://www.amtrak.com/home). A detailed assessment of market demand and projected ridership was completed for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. The subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Ridership and revenue performance were important considerations in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-5	What "high-speed train "contract will be divulged TO the public, reflecting where the funds DO come from?
Response	Thank you for your question regarding the funding for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In April of 2010, NYSDOT received a \$1 million grant from FRA to conduct analyses of potential Empire Corridor improvements, including preparation of a Service Development Plan, Tiered EIS, and other necessary studies. In addition, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) contributed \$1.8 million to the Tier 1 EIS preparation, and New York State provided matching funds in the amount of \$3.5 million (New York State rail funds). Future funding for the program has not been determined at this time. The program costs, schedule, and implementation were considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative, and the implementation of service initiatives were investigated in the development of the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-6	Need a public referendum on this item? As per Charter of NY State? The general fund would or would not be providing \$ for the development of this train? What %? If yes, then it would detract from the education of the children in NY State; i.e., less would be funded for schools and universities(including lowering of funds for BOCES/for SUNY/for other educational items).
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. The program is supported by both the Federal Railroad Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation and would be subject to the funding requirements of both the federal and state governments.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-7	TO have a high-speed train that carries merchandise/tractor trailers/cattle/food/any merchandise as well as people, is or is not the purpose??

Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The purpose of program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. The service being considered is focused on trains that carry passengers and associated luggage. The alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS do not consider trains that mix freight and passengers on the same train. An evaluation of how each alternative impacts both freight and passenger rail operations has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-8	TEST runs, during beginning development, would number over 30 to ensure safety checks were documented? Engine fires possible? Batteries, lithium or other style? Backup personnel on train at all times for safety of passengers, from beginning to end? ALL rails weather-checked during periods of time, & "spot-checks" as required by some NYS "safety board"?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the importance of safety in the implementation of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As part of the implementation of any HSR project, a comprehensive safety program would be followed, along with the familiarization of staff and employees with the new features of the service.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-9	IS train wholly owned by investors, by corporation, by??
Response	Thank you for your question on ownership of passenger trains in New York State. Currently, the intercity passenger service along the Empire Corridor is a partnership between the New York State Department of Transportation and Amtrak, which operates the trains and owns many of the stations, tracks, and rolling stock. CSXT also owns a substantial length of the Empire Corridor tracks.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-10	EMPLOYEES of this NY State-authorized train would be hired under civil service laws of NYS??
Response	Thank you for your question regarding the employees operating the intercity passenger trains along the Empire Corridor. These employees are employed by Amtrak, a company owned by the federal government. The Amtrak employees and other railroads employees are subject to the Railway Labor Act and are considered employees of a private company.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-11	THIS railroad, statistics/income/outgo/accident reports etc., would be added to duties of State Comptroller?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Intercity passenger service along the Empire Corridor is a partnership between the New York State Department of Transportation and Amtrak, who operates the trains and owns many of the stations, tracks and rolling stock. CSX also owns a substantial length of the Empire Corridor tracks. The responsibility for safety and administration of the Empire Service operations would be with the owners and operators.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen

Comment I-202-12	Security along the route would be provided by NYS Troopers and Homeland Security & Border Patrol?
Response	Thank you for your question regarding security on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, safety and security of the right of way along the Empire Corridor is administered by the CSX Transportation Police Department, an accredited law enforcement agency, with the officers carrying the same legal powers as the New York State Police. In other areas, the right of way is protected by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Police, who provide protection on Metro North, and the Amtrak Police Department. These railroad police departments fully cooperate and team with the New York State Police, or other local law enforcement agencies, to investigate issues and incidents along the various railroad right of ways in New York State. In some cases, the Department of Homeland Security screens passengers boarding Amtrak trains, or partner with MTA Police or Amtrak police in monitoring train stations and terminals in New York City. The United States Border Patrol also regularly conducts reviews of passengers on trains along the Empire Corridor, based on the route's close proximity to the Canadian Border.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-13	IF carrying all sorts of categories, including military, then a fee per pound or tonnage or tanker fee would be assessed and earn money for NYS coffers?? AND would there be less items put onto AMTRAK and other railroad companies and then put them out of business?? Trucking companies would lose business? FedEx and UPS would lose business?
Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The purpose of program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. The service being considered is focused on trains that carry passengers and associated luggage. The alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS do not consider trains that mix freight and passengers on the same train. An evaluation of how each alternative impacts both freight and passenger operations has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-14	WHEN a hazardous chemical as well as people are ON the high-speed train cars or ramps, is 100% protection provided (extinguishers or foam automatic dispensers) AND are there firehouses every 30miles or less from the rail "stations" along the length of the route (to handle that hazard or any normal type of emergency)?? Would the "911" system be called for emergencies to people or any hazard or any accident where railroad cars "jump rails" etc.?
Response	Thank you for your comments about emergency services on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. Amtrak and CSX Transportation share in ownership and operations of trains on the Empire Corridor. They have a rigorous program for the safe transportation of different types of fuels and chemicals by rail. This program includes training and communication programs with local fire companies and first responders in the communities traversed by their trains. As the HSR program moves forward, safety and security will be part of the process that will culminate with a safety and security certification, before projects go into revenue service. Emergency coordination between the railroads and the local communities are handled by the railroad dispatcher offices for Amtrak, CSX Transportation and the other railroad companies that have frequent reviews of response protocols and communication links.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen

Comment I-202-15	Cell phones carried (provided by railroad company) used by all railroad employees on each schedule "run" of each high-speed train? What would be digital and/or wireless cost for passenger or employee use items?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Operating costs have been part of the analysis of the different alternatives by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-16	WHAT legal aspects of contract would protect NY State coffers, from being sued by the owners or operators or investors of this new incorporated entity??
Response	Thank you for your questions on liability and protection of the state. Currently, the program is supported by the NYSDOT and FRA and is subject to all of the rules and policies and protections of both the federal and state governments. As the program moves forward from the planning stage toward revenue operation, full operating plans will be developed.
Commenter	Fordock, Arleen
Comment I-202-17	WHAT official "authority" or "agency" of NY State &/or Federal Agcy would regulate 100% of railroad?
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the program is supported by the NYSDOT and FRA. As the program moves forward from the planning stages toward construction and revenue operation, full operating plans will be developed.
Commenter	Freed, Wayne
Comment I-203-1	I would like to support Alternative 125.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Freed, Wayne
Comment I-203-2	If this alternative is not possible, for any reason in the future, then I would want my second choice to be alternative 110.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Freeman, Jeanne A.

Comment I-204-1	I have wondered if they would ever consider putting the “High Speed Rail System” down the middle of the NYS Thruway.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In Alternative 125, the New York State Thruway was followed between Albany and Schenectady. In other areas, the grades, curvature of the Thruway, and availability of additional property for the high speed rail right of way in some locations, did not support following the highway. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 90B would largely follow the existing Empire Corridor and would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 125, and was also selected for the reasons described in the prior responses.
Commenter	Freeman, Jeanne A.
Comment I-204-2	If this project goes through many MANY ROADS will be closed. This affects our schools, the fire depts. and ambulance.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates corridor-level service improvements looking at issues including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds and identifies a Preferred Alternative. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance designs for the Preferred Alternative. Further evaluation of the specific related roadway closures and grade crossings will be evaluated in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	French, Joanne
Comment I-205-1	I would LOVE to see the Core Express option implemented.
Response	Thank you for your comments on rail options and support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Early in the alternatives identification process, higher speed (speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph) alternatives were considered, but were deemed both cost-prohibitive and would involve far greater right-of-way and environmental impacts than the Preferred Alternative 90B. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.
Commenter	Friedman, Jay
Comment I-206-1	The project team has put together an impressive presentation. Glad to attend.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Friedman, Mark
Comment I-207-1	Any opportunity to allow bicycles to travel more safely is extremely important to the citizens of the capital district.

Response	Thank you for your comments concerning the consideration of bicycles in the High Speed Rail evaluation process. Accessibility of bicycles has been considered in design of stations reconstructed or rehabilitated along the route and will continue to be a major consideration for future station planning. Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing.
Commenter	Fronckowiak, Paul
Comment I-208-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Fuller, Robert
Comment I-209-1	My comment is that walkers and cyclists should be able to safely use any replacement or restored railroad bridge over the Hudson in Albany.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Fusarelli, Anthony Loreto

Comment I-210-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-208-1.

Commenter Fusarelli, Renee L.

Comment I-211-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-208-1.

Commenter Gaber, Matthew

Comment I-212-1 I made some private and public comments regarding incorporating the Toronto Metropolitan Area into the economic impact analysis and if that could possibly bring some of those omitted very high speed options back onto the table.
P.S. The busiest border crossing in Northern US is via Buffalo/Niagara Falls @ 13 million individuals entering in 2012.

Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Passenger forecasts and analyses excluded trips that may have one trip end in Toronto.
Commenter	Gaber, Matthew
Comment I-212-2	I'm actually employed in the rail transit industry. the analysis that was done did not incorporate the Toronto metropolitan area. I just don't understand why that wasn't incorporated into the base analysis and if that would possibly change the -- sort of the options that were laid out and to possibly incorporate even higher speed options.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York and passenger forecasts conservatively exclude trips that may have one trip end in Toronto.
Commenter	Gaber, Matthew
Comment I-212-3	The company that I work for, actually, has a land-speed record to have, like, 357 on a test train, about 357 miles per hour. So I mean 125 is -- to me it seems a little bit slow.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the alternatives being evaluated in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gaffney, Dennis
Comment I-213-1	What a wonderful legacy it would be to have a bike path across that bridge, linking both sides of the river for cyclists and walkers.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Gale, Peter
Comment I-214-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Gallagher, Kevin**

Comment I am in support of the highest speed passenger rail system possible.
I-215-1

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. In selecting Alternative 90B, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Gallagher, Kevin**

Comment I believe connections between regions are extremely valuable to system success. In order to be complete, the New York State Plan must coordinate with these other organizations and include connections to Cleveland, Toronto, Montreal and Boston. That is, contingent connection routes to these other areas must be included within this plan for future implementation.
I-215-2

Response Thank you for your comment in pointing out the need to consider connections to areas outside of the Empire Corridor. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The Tier 1 EIS addresses Amtrak connections regionally to other destinations (including Boston, Toronto, and Montreal), and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on these regional

	lines. Comments from the public, for improvements to the service, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the development of the Service Development Plan and the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-3	Consider stations that balance serving a population center and maintaining system speed.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS is a corridor level evaluation that considers use of the existing stations only. One of the advantages of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, is that it maintains and improves service to existing stations (unlike Alternative 125, for which express service would bypass certain cities along Empire Corridor West). The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-4	The term "High Speed Rail" has not been legally defined and its use is misleading. In the 1903's there were trains in the US with peak speeds between 95 and 115 mph. It is my opinion that the term should not be used for anything under 105 MPH. To avoid misleading the public, I ask that a different term, such as medium or improved speed rail, be used from now on for the slower options.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-5	To the best of my knowledge, there are 4 rail routes (active and historic) between Albany and NYC but I see only one path considered for passenger service. Is there an overlooked alternative that would allow greater speeds in that section?
Response	Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The HSR Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. Additional alternatives that were considered and eliminated from further study can be found in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT, selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-6	How will the many at-grade crossings be modified or eliminated (~55 between Buffalo and Syracuse)?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade

	crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-7	During the building of the NYS Thruway there are associated stories of profiteering, related to acquiring right-of-ways. Will there be any protections made so that legitimate landowners are fairly compensated, the public is not cheated, and other criminal behavior is discouraged, and if necessary, severely prosecuted?
Response	Thank you for your comments about issues regarding the implementation of a high speed rail corridor in New York State. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and property impacts. During Tier 2 assessments, refinements in design will include efforts to avoid and minimize impacts on adjoining buildings and properties. As the program moves forward, the contracts and construction would be subject to the laws and regulations of the federal government and the State of New York.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-8	will passenger service adversely effect freight service, or reduce future freight capacity potential?
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-9	- Improve the planning process. The process needs empowered citizen representatives. When I say representatives, I don't mean politicians. I mean individual citizens including members of transportation groups. Furthermore this process requires wider inclusion of individuals and companies that have first-hand experience with planning, designing, building and operating true High Speed Rail systems, such as from Europe and Asia. Also, since the plan needs to include connections to other regions, representatives from those regions should be included. - Just as important, the decision process must include the same type of citizen representatives.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The program incorporated and actively sought out public involvement and participation in the process. The different avenues of public outreach can be found in Chapter 7 of the Tier 1 EIS and included, but were not limited to, media outreach, key milestone newsletters, program website, public scoping meetings, and public hearings.
Commenter	Gallagher, Kevin
Comment I-215-10	There seems to be external and internal limitations that have been placed on the scope of the projects. At the very least, the connections to Cleveland, Toronto, Montreal, and Boston need to be available for near future consideration.
Response	Thank you for your comment. The scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. Amtrak regional lines, such as the Maple Leaf, Lake Shore Limited, and Adirondack Lines provide access and

connections to the cities referenced in your comment. Improvements to Empire Corridor service will improve service on these regional lines. Comments from the public, for improvements to the service, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the development of the Service Development Plan and the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Gallagher, Kevin**

Comment I-215-11 Rail stations need not be in the city's center to serve regions. However, placing rail stations in the center of cities may interfere with service for the region.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding the location of stations on the Empire Corridor. The Tier 1 EIS is a corridor level evaluation that considers use of the existing stations. The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.

Commenter **Gallagher, Kevin**

Comment I-215-12 It is my opinion that the term High Speed Rail should not be used for anything under 105 miles per hour. To avoid misleading the public, I ask that a different term, such as medium or improved speed, be used for these lower speed options.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding the definition of high speed rail. Comments from the public, relating to cost of the different choices and required public investment, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As presented in the Tier 1 EIS and defined by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), "high speed rail corridors" are corridors where trains operating at speeds of 90 mph could be reasonably expected.

Commenter **Gallagher, Kevin**

Comment I-215-13 I have concerns about approximately fifty-five grade crossings between Buffalo and Syracuse, potential interactions between trains, cars, people, ATVs, snowmobiles, wild animals and the environment and the potential for profiteering related to right-of-ways. I'd also need to know that there is not going to be an adverse effect of passenger service on freight service.

Response Thank you for your comments about the grade-crossings along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives.

More detailed design will occur in Tier 2 assessments, and treatments for specific grade crossings could be considered during the development of individual projects designed to implement the Preferred Alternative. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Ganjian, Ahmad**

Comment I-216-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Gardner, Diane

Comment I am completely opposed to a new PUBLICLY funded high speed rail service. If there were enough demand for the rail service and it was profitable, the private sector would already be supplying this service.
 I-217-1

Response Comments from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Gataletto, Donna

Comment I am very concerned about the proposed high-speed passenger and freight rail system. The Environmental Impact Statement associated with each proposal does not acknowledge that some of the freight cars will be carrying volatile, crude oil from the Bakken Shale. Both the passenger trains and freight trains would increase speed under at least some of these proposals,
 I-218-1

Response Thank you for your comments about rail safety. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Amtrak and CSX Transportation share in ownership and operations of trains on the Empire Corridor. CSX Transportation has a vigorous program for the safe transportation of all different types of fuels and chemicals by rail. This program includes training and communication programs with local fire companies and first responses in the communities traversed by their trains. As the program moves forward, a comprehensive safety and security process will be part of the program that will culminate with a safety and security certification, before the program goes into revenue service.

Commenter Gataletto, Donna

Comment I believe the DOT should evaluate the danger of this kind of plan (given the deadly train explosion in Quebec and other recent derailments) and should upgrade the tankers before putting in this kind of crude substance.
 I-218-2

Response	Thank you for your comments. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Geleta, Marion
Comment I-219-1	The High Speed Rail, which would impact my area of residency. Morris Road is highly residential and is located in the Pinebush Preserve. We were looking at alternate route for the RR crossing to go through lands that were donated to the town of Colonie from LIA Auto, these lands would have little impact on the residential and wildlife preserve, I would like to see the plans proposed for the crossing and may I add my comments as to the 1994 committee I attended with DOT on a bus ride with them. Could you please look into what they proposed on the high rise bridge going over Morris Road near the Tire Warehouse and connecting to Central Ave, this was also done on Hamburg Street in Rotterdam to avoid residential concerns and no disruption to the wildlife.
Response	<p>Thank you for your questions about the alternative alignments in the Town of Colonie. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and environmental impacts.</p> <p>Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As projects are considered in the Tier 2 assessments for the program, the impact of railroad operations on grade crossings can be reviewed with a focus on promoting safety.</p>
Commenter	Georgi, Ethan
Comment I-220-1	Disappointed to learn that pedestrian and bicycle access to the Livingston Avenue Bridge has been omitted. Communities need this connection for walkable and livable cities. Last year the governments on both sides of the bridge heartily endorsed ped/bike access via the LAB. Now it's gone? We need this.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Geraci, Christine M.
Comment I-221-1	How would this project improve current travel times between Albany and New York City in order to make the train a viable commuter option for people who wish to take advantage of job opportunities in New York City but still live in the Capital Region?
Response	Thank you for your comment. Travel times between New York City and Albany were estimated to be approximately 2:10. The full listing of travel times can be found in Appendix D - Rail Network Operations Simulation, of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Getz, Orrin

Comment I-222-1	The 110 mph alternative should be selected as the final alternative for the Tier 1 DEIS. This alternative provides the most benefit for the proposed cost of \$6.25 billion. Also, the 110 mph alternative provides the most realistic plan for elements that can be built with a realistic amount of environmental impact.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of Alternative 110, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.
Commenter	Giannino, Luca, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-223-1	I think that we should have a High Speed Rail because it would be a fast, reliable, efficient, and comfortable for passengers. High Speed Rails would also improve our economic future and environmental future. In conclusion I think that we should have High Speed Rail in New York State.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	DiFiore, Joe
Comment I-224-1	it's a little bit scary some of the options that are listed on here that we're considering, that we're considering anything less than the 125 Option. if you're thinking about anything less than a 125 Option, please just see what else is out there and see that this is really the bare minimum of what we can do and what we really should be doing.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.
Commenter	DiFiore, Joe
Comment I-224-2	I run a small B & B here in Rochester. We get travelers from all over the world. I could tell you it's a little bit embarrassing. They use New York City as their major hub for coming in. And when I tell them: Hey, Amtrak is how you're going to get into Rochester. That's your best option. And they look up the time it's going to take them. They're a little -- it's a little -- there's a little disbelief there if they're coming from a country that has real, actual High Speed Rail, or even an efficient rail system.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.
Commenter	Gibbons, Maggie

Comment
I-225-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response

Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Gifford, Gladys

Comment
I-226-1

I am writing in support of the High Speed Rail project in the Empire Corridor. I have been able to view the particulars about the alternatives, and I support the 110 mph alternative. I am opposed to the construction of an alternative right-of-way for the 125 mph version because of its environmental impacts.

Response

Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter Gilchrist, Tim

Comment
I-227-1

It is not clear if it is improving rail for the sake of improving rail or to reduce travel times between city pairs, or to reduce emissions and save fuel.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. It is anticipated that the proposed improvements to the rail service along the Empire Corridor will reduce travel times and will encourage the public to shift from using automobiles. This, in turn, will reduce pollutant emissions and improve New York State's carbon footprint. The net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-2	The titles of the Alternatives are misleading. The use of maximum speed does not properly describe the actual speeds or travel times and in the future a better title such as average speed or travel time Albany to Buffalo should be used.
Response	Thank you for your comment. The titles for the alternatives were derived from the engineering standards that would be necessary to support train operations outlined in the particular alternative. Average speed or travel time would vary too greatly depending on the level of physical improvements made to properly represent the name of an alternative.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-3	With the common infrastructure improvements needed for any of of the 90 alternatives or the 110 alternative calls for the future work to be tiered in a manner which provides incremental benefits. The projects which produce the greatest time savings at the lowest cost should be prioritized and among those projects those that have the greatest chance of success with CSX should be done first.
Response	Thank you for your comments on project prioritization and planning needs. We agree with your assessment, and the phasing of the projects was considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Because Alternative 90B is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than the highest speed alternative (Alternative 125) and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-4	The 125 alternative should be dropped from any consideration.
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning the 125 Alternative, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative), in addition to the reasons outlined above.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-5	Exhibit ES-4 is very misleading, and shares a problem common throughout the DEIS, while the DEIS is focused on the Albany west corridor the statistics and benefits are displayed for the entire corridor.

Response	Thank you for your comment regarding the benefits of each alternative. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focused on providing improvements to passenger train service along the entire route from New York City to Albany and to Buffalo-Niagara Falls. The Tier 1 EIS studies alternatives that require improvements to both segments of the Empire Corridor, and trains to and from western New York will benefit from improvements to the route between Albany and New York City.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-6	The benefits such as increased travel time and cost should clearly line out the costs west of Albany.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative, giving consideration to reduced travel times for the portion of Empire Corridor west of Albany. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, largely situated along Empire Corridor West, to better segregate passenger and freight traffic. Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Gilchrist, Tim
Comment I-227-7	A true comparison of the benefits of each alternative, would be to calculate the 30 year time savings for passengers from Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse to Albany or NYC and compare the cost of capital and 30 years of operating expenses.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, including analysis of capital, operating, and maintenance costs, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Giles, William
Comment I-228-1	The higher the speed (and thus the shorter the journey) between Buffalo and New York City, the better. So I support Alternative 125.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125 for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Giles, William
Comment I-228-2	However, regardless of the option chosen, the most crucial element is to consolidate train stations in Western New York, closing Depew and Exchange Street stations in favor of Central Terminal. Central Terminal is a beloved landmark and its location ideal for train service to Chicago, etc.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-

Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Gilrein, John

Comment I support the fastest high speed rail option possible.
I-229-1

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Glende, Amy Marie

Comment As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
I-230-1

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-228-2.

Commenter Glica, Shelley

Comment
I-231-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
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- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response

Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-228-2.

Commenter Godlewski, PE, Stephan

Comment
I-232-1

I am writing to express my support for restoring pedestrian/bicycle access to the Livingston Avenue Bridge.

Response

Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Gollhardt, Andrea

Comment
I-233-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-228-2.
Commenter	Gomez, Larry
Comment I-234-1	I whole hardily support this very important initiative. I think it does not go far enough. We need a rail system that can let people work in NYC area and have people commute from Albany, Utica and Syracuse. There should be branch lines from Watertown, Binghamton etc.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will better serve travelers destined to and from Buffalo and other points along Empire Corridor West by providing more frequent and faster service. Alternative 90B would double the number of trips on Empire Corridor West. Unlike the Alternative 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	Goodwin, Catherine
Comment I-235-1	I am NOT in favor of this high speed rail because I think the New York State DOT needs to make infrastructure improvements its' TOP priority.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Goodman, Ryan
Comment I-236-1	Having the Buffalo Central Terminal as a part of this is a MUST!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-228-2.
Commenter	Gordon, James
Comment I-237-1	Of these two plans, the 110 plan appears to be the most cost effective. Unfortunately, both of these plans fall short.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of Alternative 110. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.
Commenter	Gordon, James
Comment I-237-2	I propose connecting these two mega-regions using a different corridor from the proposed Empire corridor. A much more direct route would be considerably shorter than the

proposed Empire corridor. I suggest using the old Delaware-Lackawanna route between New York City and Buffalo, NY, as shown in the map below (map source Wikipedia).

Response Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor which connects New York City to Albany through the Hudson Valley then west from Albany-Rensselaer to Niagara Falls, through Mohawk Valley, and across Central and Western regions of New York City. Use of the Erie and Lackawanna abandoned right of ways would not follow the areas outlined in the program and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor.

Commenter Gordon, James

Comment I-237-3 The Buffalo terminus would be at Buffalo's Central Terminal. This beautiful multi-modal terminal is undergoing renovation and will be ready to handle passengers very soon. It has parking for hundreds of cars. Amtrak's Maple Leaf and Lake Shore Limited lines already go through Central Terminal, although they don't stop there.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Gossett, Linda

Comment I-238-1 I would love to see the Central Terminal in use again for rapid rail transit.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Gough, Eliza J.

Comment I-239-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-237-3.

Commenter Granston, Kareem

Comment I-240-1 I support higher speed rail service along the Empire Corridor.

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Grauer, Jon

Comment I-241-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-237-3.

Commenter Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.

Comment I-242-1 My biggest concern that I have noted in oral presentation is that the High Speed Rail proposal NOT be considered independently of the 88\$ increase in freight traffic anticipated by 2035.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-

	minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
Comment I-242-2	This further supports having shared track capacity in that a third "shared Track" provides higher efficiencies in transporting not only passengers but also freight.
Response	Thank you for your comment. As outlined above, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide additional trackage and would improve both passenger and freight rail capacity and operations. The Tier 1 EIS reviews the operation of multiple tracks along the Empire Corridor, including developing specific track diagrams and modeling/simulation of rail operations, to identify the necessary infrastructure projects that will improve travel times and the reliability of service. The public's comments on the program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
Comment I-242-3	New York should develop a third track to increase freight service in conjunction with an increased flexibility for rail planner to allow for additional passenger trains.
Response	Thank you for your comment on freight service operations on the Empire Corridor, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide over 280 miles of third track, largely located within the existing railroad right-of-way to better segregate passenger and freight rail operations. Improvement of passenger rail service while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor is a major goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.
Commenter	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
Comment I-242-4	I want future investment in rail funding to be for enhancing Freight rather than passenger service. In addition, should a third rail be developed It should support a gross weight capacity of an estimated 325,000 pounds which I believe is the Industry Standard under adoption. A shared third rail would support an industry reported to employ 175,000 American and that delivers 70% of domestically produced automobiles and coal. Nearly 40% of all freight moves along the rail. The next biggest competitors are Truck and Pipeline. I strongly urge the committee considering this question to develop this corridor to its fullest capacity- but as a corridor for the movement of Freight rather than passengers.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As discussed in the prior responses, the Preferred Alternative would add approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, which would benefit freight operations. This new track, including third track, would be added primarily along Empire Corridor West, where freight operations are heaviest.
Commenter	Gregory, Jr., Thomas P.
Comment I-242-5	The two studies are High Speed Rail in America. It's a 2011 study sponsored by the Rockefeller Institute. And I looked at the other study. It was a National Rail Freight Infrastructure Capacity of Investment Study, which was put together by the Association of American Railroads. In 2035, the American Railway Association says that we will have utilized all of our surplus capacity for moving freight.

I don't support a dedicated rail. And the reason why is because our freight carriers are going to need that capacity.

The Rail Institute in looking at certain aspects they said: Look it, we can't look at trucks anymore because, guess what, that capacity, our road capacity, is almost used up right now. We can't look at airplanes anymore because, guess what, you can't safely increase the number of flights going from here to there. The only thing we have for us now, the only economy scale that we have now, is our rails. Share that rail with CSX. Keep our cost down.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Minimizing interference with freight rail operations was one of the six performance objectives of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter Greiner, Richard

Comment I-243-1 If the State has billions of extra dollars to fund a high speed rail why don't you cut taxes and make the state more business friendly and actually do something that's going to help this State.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 DEIS.

Commenter Grekulak, Stephen

Comment I-244-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including

Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Griehl, Mary

Comment
I-245-1 The train at 125 m is a game changer.
With a movie film industry coming to Dewit it could bring people to and from NYC in a day and back extremely important for that type of industry.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative, which have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Guarneri, Joanne

Comment
I-246-1 I am sending this as a recommendation that the Empire Corridor Project be developed as quickly as possible.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Gubbins, Barbara

Comment
I-247-1 A high speed train would be more convenient!!

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Guguentz, Cindy

Comment
I-248-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
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-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-244-1.
Commenter	Guilmette, Lou
Comment I-249-1	Railroad passenger service has been dead since the 1950's, let it rest in peace. The American citizen drives a car, and will continue to drive some sort of similar vehicle forever. We are too independent a society to go back to trains. Trains have a place in local commutes but long distance, not here, not in the US.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 DEIS.
Commenter	Gyurik, Gloria
Comment I-250-1	If the people of the Mohawk Valley will not have access to a CONVENIENT rail service, i.e. Amsterdam or Fonda station, I don't see the necessity for another boondoggle project.
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would double the frequency of service to Utica.
Commenter	Hacker, Abby
Comment I-251-1	please do not allow the sncf, the French railway, to build the new high speed rail for new York.
Response	Thank you for your interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the project is sponsored by NYSDOT and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and does not include any participation by railroads outside of the United States.
Commenter	Hackett, Alice
Comment I-252-1	I would like to voice my support for the high speed rail service between New York City and Upstate New York.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Hall, Addie
Comment I-253-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations. We rely on the existing freight rail network for the efficient, reliable and economical transportation of goods.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative,

Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor is one of the major goals for the HSR Empire Corridor Program.

Commenter Hall, Addie

Comment I-253-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As discussed in the prior response, the Preferred Alternative would provide additional sections of third and fourth track to better segregate passenger and freight rail operations. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Hall, Jane

Comment I-254-1 I am very much in favor of a dedicated high-speed rail system connecting major upstate cities such as Syracuse with New York City and Niagara Falls.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Hall, Peter

Comment I-255-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

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- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including

Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Hanavan, Ian

Comment I-256-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

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- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
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- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Hanks, Kelsey

Comment I-257-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-255-1.

Commenter	Hanna, Christopher
Comment I-258-1	I am writing in support of the proposed pedestrian bicycle route on the Livingston ave rail road bridge that is slated to be rebuilt.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Hannon, Don, Hannon Transportation Consulting, Hannon Transportation Consulting
Comment I-259-1	Having worked in NYSDOT for more than 25 years I am well aware of the importance of environmentally sound, economically-wise transportation infrastructure investments. After reviewing all the available information on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program I am in full support of Alternative 110 and commend the Department and all involved in producing such a high-quality, well researched analysis.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Hardy, Joseph
Comment I-260-1	I am writing you in support of the restoration of the pedestrian / bicycle walkway on the planned rebuilding of Albany's Livingston Avenue Railroad.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Harf, Mark
Comment I-261-1	Please do NOT bypass Utica as a stop in any of your high speed rail plans.
Response	Thank you for your comment, relating to preserving and providing train service for the City of Utica, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide improvements in service to currently served cities, such as Utica, and would double the frequency of service. One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that it would bypass cities such as Utica, so express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.
Commenter	Harner, Janet
Comment	We do not need a new terminal!

I-262-1

Response Thank you for your comment that a new terminal is not needed as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The program focuses on improvements for corridor-level service, and improvements to individual station sites (including at Rochester and Penn stations) have largely been performed as separate, independent projects.

Commenter Harner, Janet

Comment I don't care about the high speed option; just improve upon the existing service and then
I-262-2 explore other improvements as ridership increases.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Harnischfeger, Mark and Monica

Comment We should spend ZERO money on this project.
I-263-1

Response Thank you for your comment, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Harrington, Bill

Comment From a Buffalo perspective, train travel to Toronto is important (and presently infrequent
I-264-1 on both sides of the border). I see that the proposed scope of projects don't address that, but keep in mind that getting to Niagara Falls, NY at the point across the river from the Niagara Falls, Ontario station would be important to provide for easy train travel to Toronto. I understand that the Toronto commuter rail system, GO TRAIN, may in a few years, extend into the Niagara Region so easy travel may eventually be possible if the US connection is done correctly (currently, it does run on summer weekends, albeit not frequently with only a couple trips per day).

Response Thank you for your comments on the need for connections from Niagara Falls to Toronto, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. Further improvements or enhancements to the service can be studied in the future, and operating timetables can be further developed as part of Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Harrington, Bill

Comment Rochester and Buffalo as essentially one metro area (for professional sports in particular
I-264-2 plus more than a few daily commuters from one region into the other). Together, we comprise almost 2.5 Million people, essentially a major US metro area, not fully recognized by marketers and economists. Frequent train travel between the regions would benefit both

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will double the frequency of service along Empire Corridor West servicing the cities of Rochester and Buffalo. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Details on the levels of service that will be provided can be found in the Tier 1 EIS-Appendix D, Rail Network Operations Simulation.

Commenter	Harrington, Bill
Comment I-264-3	Eventually, besides the current proposed line running through Batavia, one should consider a second line extending east from Niagara Falls through Lockport and the other Erie Canal towns.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The current focus of this program is on improving intercity rail passenger service between New York City and Niagara Falls. Improving service to Lockport and the other Erie Canal town areas is not part of this program.
Commenter	Harrington, Bill
Comment I-264-4	Finally, frequent predictable service at 80mph would be good enough and preferred over true high speed rail if enough funds are available for only occasional high speed travel in the corridor.
Response	Thank you for your comment, which has been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Harrington, Bill
Comment I-264-5	I would like to add the idea that I think we should start thinking about Buffalo and Rochester as potentially being a single metropolitan area in many respects. We share so many attributes. Our distance seems great at times. There is a lot of space between the two cities, but we're certainly no wider the width of greater Los Angeles which certainly things of itself as a single metropolitan area. We have 2.5 million people roughly between the two regions, major metropolitan area in the United States, and certainly we think of ourselves as a significant metropolitan area for many aspects of our lives, professional sports being perhaps the most one dating, but there are more than a few people that commute between the two areas.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B will double the frequency of service along the portion of Empire Corridor servicing Buffalo and Rochester. Ridership and revenue opportunities were part of the considerations used by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative for the program. In addition, the Service Development Plan considers service strategies that promote increased ridership of intercity passenger trains along the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Harrington, Bill
Comment I-264-6	I also think you ought to think about the possibility of rail extending east from Niagara Falls through the canal center, Lockport, Medina, Albion, Spencerport, Brockport. Those towns have stagnated over many decades. Rail connections to Rochester and Buffalo and I think by the way that would include probably a connection from Lockport to Buffalo though I would hope that the local transit system in Buffalo would accommodate that.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. Selection of the Preferred Alternative, by the FRA and NYSDOT, focused on the alternatives servicing Empire Corridor, as outlined in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Harris, Jason

Comment
I-265-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response

Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Harris, Louise

Comment
I-266-1

As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
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- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response

Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with

	evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Haun, Mark
Comment I-267-1	Of course travelers would love to get to their destinations in less time. But I fail to understand what sense it makes to spend this amount of money when, except for New York City, there is no practical method of transportation available once the traveler reaches his destination.
Response	Thank you for your comments relating to the accessibility of local transit from the train stations for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Station locations identified in the Tier 1 EIS, in most cases, provide access to the public for both public transit and automobiles.
Commenter	Haynes, Jimmy
Comment I-268-1	Thanks for the improvements and upgrades to help move passengers, business, and commerce in this area.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Healy, Edward J.
Comment I-269-1	I am writing to urge New York State to consider the reuse of the Buffalo Central Terminal as a center for transportation
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Hebert, Austin, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-270-1	I would pick the Alternative 110, as it has the same features as the Base Alternative, 90A, and 90B with 25 miles of new track. The trains, stations, and tracks, all need to be updated. They are old and could cause accidents.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have

	significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Heint, Lucretia W.
Comment I-271-1	4 choices but 110 sounds but we need more service in Utica and Rome. Somehow we have been bypassed. Our station is unique. Don't have to build here. All of our 4 parts have more but I favor Alternative 110.
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As described in the prior response, Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would double the frequency of service to Utica.
Commenter	Heintzman, Michael
Comment I-272-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-269-1.
Commenter	Herrling, Daniel S.
Comment I-273-1	High Speed Rail, Great Idea...If It Was 1980 A high speed rail sounds great, but the reality is that high speed rail does not mean high speed travel. Most of the proposed options only have an average speed in the mid 50 mph range. None of the travel time from NYC to Niagara Falls is really that impressive, not to mention that most of them are based on express services.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 DEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would reduce travel times between New

York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West and would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Herrling, Daniel S.

Comment I-273-2 A high speed rail system in NY would still rely heavily on local mass transit options once a traveler gets to the local train station.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to the accessibility of local transit as part the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Station locations identified in the Tier 1 EIS, in most cases, provide access to the public for both public transit and automobiles.

Commenter Hill, Lauren

Comment I-274-1 The Buffalo Central Terminal is a perfect hub for the high speed rail.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-269-1.

Commenter Hillengas, Paul

Comment I-275-1 Please note my support for the proposed Livingston Ave bridge walkway to be included in plans to replace / update the current Livingston Ave railroad bridge.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Hmiel, Abraham

Comment I-276-1 My comment is twofold: I would like to advocate for the adoption of the maximum-speed and projected ridership plan that uses the existing CSX right-of-way, widening the tracks to as many as would be allowable. I feel that the environmental impact of the 125-plan is too great, while the increase in speed is not worth the effect on New York's ecosystems. Further, I would advocate for the plan that services the most urban areas in central New York. Therefore, I urge the NYSDOT to adopt the 110-plan. My second comment involves the Livingston Ave Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer. I want to urge the NYSDOT and the CSX Corporation to consider a pedestrian and bike path over the Hudson river. Such a right-of-way would improve commerce and mobility of car-free people living in the Albany area and would allow people to experience the natural beauty of the Hudson River.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a

modest improvement in overall performance. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York, please refer to the preceding response.

Commenter **Hooven, James**

Comment I-277-1 Alternative 90B with its addition of a third and fourth track and a 1:30 hour reduction in travel time from NYC to Niagara Falls seems to be the most beneficial to the citizens of New York and others who utilize the EC service. However if the \$5.58 billion dollar cost is prohibitive, then Alternative 90A is the next desirable option.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Hotra, Michael**

Comment I-278-1 I would urge you to consider carefully the impact of NY state's high speed rail proposals on existing freight rail service, which provides a much needed transportation link in upstate NY.

Response Thank you for your comments on the impacts of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program on freight rail service in New York State, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Howard, Patricia G.**

Comment I-279-1 I am in favor of the proposed high-speed rail in our area.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Huang, Jackie**

Comment I-280-1 But in order to reach the balance between costs and products, I am in favor of alternative 90B.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 90B Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Huber, Roger**

Comment I-281-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. In the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. More specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discusses how

	the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.
Commenter	Huber, Roger
Comment I-281-2	I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As described above, the Preferred Alternative would provide additional trackage, including large sections of dedicated third and fourth track, to better segregate passenger and freight operations. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Hufnagel, Glenn
Comment I-282-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Hunter, Suzanne
Comment I-283-1	I'm aware that a high speed rail system from Buffalo to NYC is estimated in the area of 16 billion dollars. Well, it would be worth it!

Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Hunters, CS
Comment I-284-1	I am disappointed to find that Buffalo's Central Terminal is not in the High Speed Rail Plan.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-282-1.
Commenter	Hycner, Jim
Comment I-285-1	I totally agree we need to bring hi-speed rail through Buffalo. But we need a stop at the BUFFALO CENTRAL TERMINAL.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-282-1.
Commenter	Ilic, Mila
Comment I-286-1	You need to revisit option 220!! That is the ONLY option that would make a real difference for NY state economy and would offset cost and envr impact by its advantage! Do not waste money and time w/any other options!!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Inglis, Andrew A.
Comment I-287-1	I would strongly support a passenger only high speed rail line from Saratoga County to NY. The terminus for the high speed line should be located in Saratoga County
Response	Currently, the Tier 1 EIS addresses improvements to the service to be operated as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focused between Niagara Falls and New York City. Suggestions and recommendations by the public, for improvements to the service outside of these limits, including service extending to Saratoga Springs, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Iocco, Joe

Comment I-288-1 The concept is great but the cost is not manageable. It would be best to have a dedicated line for only passenger trains.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. The subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter Isserlis, Alan

Comment I-289-1 I would love to go as fast as possible. With a greater travel connect downstate stronger economy will invigorate Upstates economy. The faster the train the greater it Impact.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.

Commenter Jackson, Lynne

Comment I-290-1 Having a pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on the Livingston Street Bridge would allow me to walk and bike to Rensselaer.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter (No Last Name), Jacob

Comment I-291-1 All NYS high speed rail projects should include the use of the Buffalo central terminal

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Jacobs, Joshua
Comment I-292-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Jacobs, Shari
Comment I-293-1	To restore Central Terminal and bring the rail back would be fantastic.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-291-1.
Commenter	James, Anthony
Comment I-294-1	I fully support moving the Amtrak high-speed rail station from Depew to the Central Terminal in Buffalo.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-291-1. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
Commenter	Jamieson, Richard A.
Comment I-295-1	Use surface tracks for freight and an elevate "High Speed" monorail or "hyperloop" for high speed travel.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. Alternative 125 would involve construction of a viaduct on structure in places, but it would involve considerable costs and impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land). It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Jamison, Ann
Comment I-296-1	Is there a plan to do a health impact statement/analysis with the Gt. Dept. Health Dr. Shah?
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments. The current regulatory review process for the program under NEPA (which also meets the requirements of New York State's SEQRA) involves preparation of a Tiered Environmental Impact Statement, and this Tier 1 EIS addresses corridor-level alternatives and identification of the Preferred Alternative for further definition and evaluation in a Tier 2 assessment.</p> <p>The environmental assessment of the impacts of the program on the passengers and residents along the Empire Corridor has included evaluation of noise and air quality as documented in the Tier 1 EIS. Section 4.19 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the air quality analysis performed, which indicates that no significant adverse air quality impacts are expected. Moreover, with the projected diversion of travelers to rail, the net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year. Although there are no plans to perform a Health Impact Assessment, it is anticipated that this would have a substantial beneficial effect on public health. Since Alternative 90B would involve adding tracks largely within the existing right-of-way, this would also minimize impacts to adjoining communities and neighborhoods. Individual projects, or groups of projects for the Preferred Alternative, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further define and evaluate the impacts of those projects.</p>
Commenter	Jamison, Ann
Comment I-296-2	Please work with Mass. To get high speed to continue on to Boston 9+ hrs. is way too long ever though train more comfortable than driving to Boston.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improvements between Niagara Falls and New York City. Amtrak service to Boston is provided via the Lake Shore Limited Line. Service to Boston is currently provided by Amtrak over the CSXT's Boston Line and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Worcester Line. Improvements on this line could be considered in the future, but requires partnering with Commonwealth of Massachusetts and these host railroads. However, the Tier 1 EIS addresses Amtrak connections regionally to other destinations (including Boston), and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on these regional lines. Comments from the public, for improvements to the service, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the development of the Service Development Plan.

Commenter Jaroszewski, Tracy

Comment I-297-1 This is a great project that could only open the doors to Buffalo even wider. Our Central Terminal is the perfect Hub.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Jenkins, Edward

Comment I-298-1 I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. In the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. More specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.

Commenter Jenkins, Edward

Comment I-298-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations. They also would impede the ability of the freight rail network to keep pace with and serve the needs of a growing upstate economy.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As described above, the Preferred Alternative would provide additional trackage, including large sections of dedicated third and fourth track, to better segregate passenger and freight operations. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Jenkins, Edward
Comment I-298-3	I urge the state to maintain current freight service and the capacity for growth by selecting the base alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on freight service operations on the Empire Corridor, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the prior responses, the addition of dedicated third and fourth tracks along Empire Corridor where freight operations are heaviest will represent an improvement in freight operations, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Jennings, Susan Sturman, General Counsel and Senior Vice President, Conifer Realty, LLC, General Counsel and Senior Vice President, Conifer Realty, LLC
Comment I-299-1	I whole-heartedly support this project
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Jesaitis, Amy
Comment I-300-1	I am writing to urge you to include a path on the Livingston Ave railroad bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	(No Last Name), Johnny
Comment I-301-1	It's the common sense to make central terminal the train stop because it's in the city parameter unlike depew.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-297-1.
Commenter	Johns, Christopher
Comment I-302-1	I'm in support for a high speed train from Albany to New York City.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Johnson, Jeffrey
Comment I-303-1	Why are we trying to spend money on something that's not broken.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Johnson, Kristen
Comment I-304-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Johnson, William
Comment I-305-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. In the

Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. More specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.

Commenter Johnson, William

Comment I-305-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As described above, the Preferred Alternative would provide additional trackage, including large sections of dedicated third and fourth track, to better segregate passenger and freight operations. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Johnston, Deanna

Comment I-306-1 ultra high speed rail is not as necessary as DEPENDABLE service.

Response Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and would double the frequency of service along Empire Corridor West.

Commenter Jouret-Epstein, Ellen

Comment I-307-1 So you would expect that I would be totally in support of high speed rail. I am, in theory, but I am also primarily concerned for the development and protection of our more immediate area. The best way to achieve economic development, and to preserve and promote our more rural way of life here in the Hudson Valley will be to build high speed rail, but not on the existing tracks. This should be incorporated into the Thruway system with all new infrastructure.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In developing the alignment of the different alternatives, consideration was given to those that would support the most favorable conditions for achieving the operating goals. In 125 Alternative, the New York State Thruway was followed between Albany and Schenectady. In other areas, the grades, curvature of the Thruway, and availability of additional property for the high speed rail right of way in some locations, did not support following the highway. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 90B would largely follow the existing Empire Corridor and would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 125, and was also selected for the reasons described in the prior responses.

Commenter Judd, Mark S.

Comment I-308-1 we need to go directly to 220MPH HSR,

Response Thank you for your comment on the need for trains to operate at higher speeds than being considered in the different alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced, in part because they would bypass all but four of the existing stations along Empire Corridor West. Moreover, it was determined that operating trains at these higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate than the Preferred Alternative. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Judd, Mark S.

Comment I-308-2 My company, Comfort Care, takes care of elderly people and they shouldn't be driving and I don't plan on driving when I'm eighty.
on an Amtrak you keep having to ask the conductor when you need to get off. And then he's got to point where the door is: It's three cars down that way and get up maybe in fifteen minutes unless we stop again on the track.
So on a German train, let's say you're scheduled to ride to Kaiserslautern at 10:07.
at 10:06 your iPhone goes off to alert you to the fact that you're arriving at the station and now you have sixty seconds to get up and grab your luggage off the overhead compartment and walk to the door. You walk to any door, any door near you -- they all open -- and then get off.
The large train stations, like Mannheim and Frankfurt and Kaiserslautern, the train stops for a hundred and sixty seconds. And in the smaller stations, like the sizes of Newark maybe and Geneva, they would stop for sixty seconds.
They're electric trains though.

Response Thank you for your comments on improvements to the service, which have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Operating schedules for service for the Preferred Alternative will be further refined in Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Judd, Mark S.

Comment I-308-3 I was going to be for the 125 miles per hour. Actually, thirty years ago when I went over there I joined GESPA and I wrote Louise Slaughter a whole bunch of letters about getting 125-miles-per-hour trains here. And now here we are thirty years later deciding to put in a 125-miles-an-hour train when it should be 220.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). Comments from the public relating to the different service alternatives have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Kaczynski, Jeremy M.

Comment I-309-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Kahkejian, Deborah

Comment I-310-1 I would like to see high speed rail so rail passengers can travel in a timely fashion.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West.

Commenter Kahn, Joanne, 21st Century Park on the Outer Harbor Inc., 21st Century Park on the Outer Harbor Inc.

Comment I-311-1 My vote is for the fastest connection possible between NYC and Buffalo.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In addition to improving the reliability and frequency of service, as noted in the previous response, Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.

Commenter Kaplowe, Stephen

Comment I-312-1	Please add my voice in support of pedestrian and bicycle access to and across the new bridge, when constructed. This would be a natural extension to the Mohawk-Hudson bike/Hike Trail already so popular. It would be a practical and progressive thing to do
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Karas, Alex
Comment I-313-1	I highly support the 125mph alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor and was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Kawa, Michelle
Comment I-314-1	It would be absolutely wonderful, community enhancing and a much deserved reward for the Central Terminal and all its restorations and hard work to be part of this rail project.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-309-1.
Commenter	Keady, Kathleen A., Office Manager, Gardner Plus Architects, PLLC, Office Manager, Gardner Plus Architects, PLLC
Comment I-315-1	I am in full support of this-faster trains.
Response	Thank you for comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In addition to improving the reliability and frequency of service, Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.
Commenter	Kerrigan, Scott
Comment I-316-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-309-1.

Commenter Ketola, George

Comment I-317-1 Do not build a train for which there can be no economic pay back. I do not think it can possibly be a good investment of the money proposed.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. A report prepared by the U.S. Conference of Mayors projects that incremental speed improvements (79 to 90 mph) and more frequent service (32 roundtrips from NYC to Albany) could result in an addition of approximately 3,184 jobs in 2035 in the Capital District/Albany region alone. This report also forecasts increases in 2035 of sales output in the Capital District alone of \$357.9 million per year and increases in 2035 wages of \$158.7 million per year. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter Kimball, Hubert D.

Comment I-318-1 In my opinion the only way NYS could have true and safe high speed rail is for the trains to have their own dedicated tracks not used by any other trains.
 My conclusion is that this idea will neither be safe nor economically feasible and that time and money should not be wasted on it.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, the majority of which consists of dedicated third track. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives, and Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter Kinder, Drew

Comment I-319-1 I wouldn't bother with anything other than the 125 alternative.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the Alternative 125, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter King, Derek

Comment I-320-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter King, Jessica

Comment I think this is a great idea!!
I-321-1

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Kirkendall, Scott

Comment consider the BUFFALO CENTRAL TERMINAL IN BUFFALO NY as one of the station stops.
I-322-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.

Commenter Klatt, Bonnie

Comment As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
I-323-1

-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.

-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.

Commenter Klepfer, Marcia

Comment I-324-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.

Commenter Klion, Bruce

Comment I-325-1 I just want to go on record as being a strong supporter of high speed passenger rail service for NY extending to Western New York.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Klug, Judith

Comment I-326-1 The Central Terminal in Buffalo is an important historical landmark which would benefit greatly if a High Speed Rail system were to be put in place along the New York rail corridor

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.
Commenter	Koch, Frances
Comment I-327-1	We really need this in Buffalo so we can make use of our beautiful Central Terminal that is in process of renovations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.
Commenter	Kompinski, CS
Comment I-328-1	If this is a 20 year project - 110 or 125MPH is 1990's technology. If we are going to invest in High Speed Rail - make it High Speed - 200+ MPH or what's the point?
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning train technologies considered in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Kompinski, CS
Comment I-328-2	Leverage the existing central terminal in Buffalo as a HS rail station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.
Commenter	Konder, George C.
Comment I-329-1	I am writing in strong support of the proposed high-speed rail system for the Empire Corridor from Albany to Niagara Falls, New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Konder, George C.
Comment I-329-2	While I would hope for the fastest speed possible, plan Alternative 125 (mph) at \$14.71 billion is also the costliest. The second fastest speed appears to be far less costly, Alternative Plan 110 (mph), at \$6.25 billion, and makes more sense financially in exchange for a reduction of only 15 mph in speed

Response	Thank you for your comments from the public, relating to either Alternative 125 or 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Kontrabecki, James
Comment I-330-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-320-1.
Commenter	Koplik, Mark
Comment I-331-1	I would like to express support for adding pedestrian and bicycle access to the Livingston Avenue Bridge Replacement Project.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website: www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Kostran, Jan
Comment I-332-1	With an affordable and viable option like high speed rail I have no doubt countless New Yorkers will take advantage of this opportunity especially if promoted wisely and aggressively. Count me among those who will.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Kozaczka, Stanley J.

Comment I-333-1	I am in favor of the 110 mph alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Kozaczka, Stanley J.
Comment I-333-2	new routes to serve the Southern Tier ought to be considered with trains eventually going from Syracuse to Binghamton and to Scranton and New York City.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor between New York City and Albany and Albany to Niagara Falls. Additional routes out of this corridor are not being considered at this time as part of the program.
Commenter	Kraska, Robert
Comment I-334-1	I believe the central terminal, located in buffalo New York should definitely be in all future plans for high speed rail projects.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Kratz, Josh
Comment I-335-1	I highly advise going with the full 125mph high speed rail option.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Krekeler, Paul
Comment I-336-1	I encourage the NYSDOT to include bike/ped access on the Livingston Ave bridge. Doing so will make crossing the Hudson River more accessible and multimodal.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website: www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Kruzynski, Mari-Beth

Comment I-337-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-334-1.

Commenter Kurtik, Edward

Comment I-338-1 There is a need for High Speed Rail to reduce travel time and high way congestion. Plans 90A,90B and 110 all have advantages, limiting factor would be funding. It would be necessary to insure that local Public Transportation would be available to transport passengers to the High Speed Rail stations.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In the Tier 2 assessments, individual projects or groups of projects will be further advanced in terms of costs, scheduling, and funding, according to the Service Development Plan. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity can be pursued with the local municipality and transit provider. Station locations identified in the Tier 1 EIS, in most cases, provide access to the public for both public transit and automobiles.

Commenter Kurtik, Elizabeth

Comment I-339-1 HIGH SPEED RAIL EMPIRE CORRIDOR PROGRAM High Speed Rail will enhance the economy of the United States beginning with the corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York, and someday the rest of the country. The reasons for doing this are as follows :
 • Faster travel by people on business or pleasure trips should mean more decisions to go by train rather than airplane. Air travel has become cumbersome and unreliable.

- CSX and others have a stake. If freight can be moved by rail rather than by trucks, it would decrease air pollution, decrease the number of trucks on the roads, and make the roads safer.
- If people are moved by rail rather than by car, it would also decrease air pollution, mean fewer automobiles on roads, and safer roads.
- It would decrease the pounding that roads get, have a longer life and reduce costs to maintain

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Kurtik, Elizabeth

Comment I-339-2 Although there are considerable cost differences among the Base Alternative and the other four proposals, the Base Alternative does not appear to accomplish the desired increase in speed. Alternatives 90A, 90B, or 110 have better cost/benefit ratio(s). Alternative 125 would be the highest speed but the cost jumps considerably high.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. The return on investment for the program and other costs have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Kurya, Jamie

Comment I-340-1 I like the 125 alternative, would have wanted a higher option but understand cost issues.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Kustyn, David M.

Comment I-341-1 I AM FAVOR HIGH SPEED RAIL.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lacari, Mark

Comment I-342-1 After reading the DEIS from the New York State DOT, it should be clear to do a 110mph Service for Amtrak.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly

	higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Lacari, Mark
Comment I-342-2	it should be in the best interest to go for the 110mph High Speed Rail Corridor Plan.
Response	Thank you for your comments relating to Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined above.
Commenter	Lacari, Mark
Comment I-342-3	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-334-1.
Commenter	Lancellotti, Frank
Comment I-343-1	I think spending taxpayer money on high speed rail in N.Y. State is a waste of hard earned & scarce resources.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Langner, Guenther
Comment I-344-1	Q: Grade crossings? Total avoidance joint management of signaling system CSX/Amtrak now/future? In case of the blue track (125) only between Albany/Rensselaer and NY this is ensured.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives.
Commenter	Langner, Guenther

Comment I-344-2	Provision of reliable local transportation to and from the railroad station as well as parking facilities (the municipalities's responsibility)
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In the Tier 2 assessments, individual projects or groups of projects will be advanced in terms of costs, scheduling, and funding, according to the Service Development Plan. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity can be pursued with the local municipality and transit provider. Station locations identified in the Tier 1 EIS, in most cases, provide access to the public for both public transit and automobiles.
Commenter	Langner, Guenther
Comment I-344-3	Is there a convenient continuation at Niagara Falls to Ontario?
Response	Thank you for your comments on connections from Niagara Falls to Ontario. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto/Ontario.
Commenter	Langner, Guenther
Comment I-344-4	Choosing any of the four alternatives (base, 90A, 90B, 110) would very likely preclude that the really attractive choice 125 will ever be realized.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Langone, Louis C.
Comment I-345-1	As much as I would like to see trains and tracks capable of 150+ MPH, I can't help but wonder if it would be feasible to spend 15 or 16 billion to achieve this – and it is questionable as to whether it would bring in the projected revenue.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the alternatives being evaluated in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Langone, Louis C.
Comment I-345-2	If we can build and maintain tracks to withstand 100-110 MPH – to me that would be a great achievement – fast enough for upstate NY. Our present locomotives are capable of this. Therefore, I favor 90A and modify Alt. 110 to reach at least 100MPH+.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the

Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lankenau, Susan

Comment I-346-1 I am in favor of Alternative 110. If those improvements are well received and ridership increases Alternative 125 could be instituted. I believe improvements need to focus FIRST on track and trains and LAST on stations.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternatives 110 and 125 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined above.

Commenter Lankenau, Susan

Comment I-346-2 I suggest Amtrak keep ticket prices the same during holidays and non-holidays. It is a horrible penalty to charge more for holiday travel times.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program Tier 1 EIS. Ticket revenues and ridership projections were part of the evaluation process for each of the alternatives, and details can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix B of the Tier 1 EIS. In Tier 2 assessments, more detailed evaluations regarding the future operation of the Empire Corridor, and revenue policies can be reviewed.

Commenter Lannier, Monica, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-347-1 I believe that the state of NY should invest their money in the 125mph high speed rail for the convince of the people. This rail will stop in Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo and Rochester, these or major cities will make it easier than stopping at many stops for less amounts of people.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Lasher, Ed

Comment I-348-1 a fast rail system serving this area may be what we need to keep from disappearing from the state map..

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lashgar, Shaghafegh, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-349-1 I think New York should have High Speed trains.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lautz, Ellen

Comment I-350-1	Just wanted to add one more vote for high speed rail to Central New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Leone, Corey
Comment I-351-1	I am all for any high speed rail project in New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Leppere, Barney
Comment I-352-1	Alternative 125 looks like a good rt. Thru. Central NY. We need hi speed rail service.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Levy, Josette
Comment I-353-1	The new High Speed Rail system should come to Buffalo, New York. We have a beautiful terminal in the process of coming back to life.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Lewandowski, Karen
Comment I-354-1	This needs to happen! The Central Terminal is an iconic building that is very underutilized and just needs the support of the community and a project such as this to revitalize it and the surrounding community. I support any and all revitalization and reuse of this beautiful place.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central

Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Lewandowski, Nancy J.

Comment I-355-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.

Commenter Lezynski, Scott

Comment I-356-1 Please consider repurposing the Buffalo Central Terminal as part of the project.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.

Commenter Lindblad, K.A.

Comment I-357-1 '90A' – Limited Support (go for this if nothing else)
 '90B' – No Support.
 '110' – Full Support – Recommend rolling 90B into this.
 '125' – No Support
 1. Full support of proposal 110. Fallback position being proposal 90A.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, and Alternative 90A, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into Alternative 90B, which will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight

	rail. Alternative 90B will provide similar trackage as Alternative 110, only situating more of the improvements within the existing right-of-way.
Commenter	Loeser, Sara
Comment I-358-1	The Buffalo Central Terminal would be the perfect place to connect to high speed rail. Please consider it.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.
Commenter	Lofaro, Cynthia
Comment I-359-1	My vote is for the 125 mph Option.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	LoFaso, Fred
Comment I-360-1	Any new hub if the Buffalo should be located at the Buffalo Central Terminal.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.
Commenter	Lofft, Patrick M.
Comment I-361-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central

Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.

Commenter Lombardo, Rosemary

Comment I-362-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-353-1.

Commenter Long, Joseph & Susan

Comment I-363-1 Count us in on improvement of passenger rail service in the Empire Corridor. We don't fly and use the train. Plan #110 looks good

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Moreover, Alternative 90B would have fewer environmental impacts than Alternative 110.

Commenter Lotto, Peter

Comment I-364-1 I strongly support the Alternative 125 that would bring real speed to the trip.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Loughlin Jr., Tom

Comment I-365-1 Do not pass up the stop at the Gateway to the Adirondacks...Utica

Response Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of

Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica (doubling the frequency).

Commenter Loughlin Jr., Tom

Comment I-365-2 Nice new rails, bed improvements , and a decent kick up in speed....not crazy fast ...would be great for all of the state.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Lum, David

Comment I-366-1 What benchmarking structure is in place, and what reports can I view regarding benchmarking efforts with other public people movement efforts?

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. The Federal Railroad Administration maintains on their website, www.fra.dot.gov, an overview of the different high speed rail projects and initiatives they are supporting throughout the country.

Commenter Lundgren, Faith, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-367-1 The option of the train going 120 mph I think would be very convenient; bringing down travel time by a lot.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Lupia, Charles

Comment I-368-1 Unlike the Erie Canal, a high-speed train will not transport freight. But my quickly moving CNY people to such cities as NY, it will provide them with economic opportunities. And sooner or later these increased connections should bring opportunities directly to Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Macdonald, Roderick

Comment I-369-1 I will be your biggest fan of this project. I think it is a great idea on so many levels.

Response Thank you for your comments in the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Mackiewicz, Cheryl A.

Comment
I-370-1 As a supporter and volunteer at the national landmark known as the Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future high speed rail, known as the Empire Corridor Project- Tier I EIS. I feel that you should strongly support the inclusion of the Central Terminal facilities in the plans for this project

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Mackiewicz, Cheryl A.

Comment
I-370-2 this complex should be part of the future of the Buffalo area for the following reasons: - The Terminal is a point of interest to the tourists who visit Buffalo and New York State because of its architectural design and historical transportation legacy. - The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will create educational opportunities, an active arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway-Fillmore district of Buffalo, New York; a neighborhood with a rich history of its own. - The Terminal is located within an easy commute to the center of the city. - The Terminal has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles. - The Terminal already has a main concourse for travelers to dine and shop, and with future renovation, will add to the tourist attraction and an economic benefit for entrepreneurship and small business development. - The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies; working with marble, stained glass, and other reconstructive arts, thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration. The Terminal is a gem waiting for reuse and would be the perfect facility to incorporate in your plans for high speed rail service. am confident that New York State can promote the reuse of this original and historic building; the Terminal was built to be a center for transportation and this is her- and your- opportunity

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Macri, David

Comment
I-371-1 Totally disagree with any of these proposals. Overlaying 'quasi high speed' rail on the existing infrastructure does not provide benefits which outweigh the costs.

Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 address benefits and costs of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Ziehm, Linda
Comment I-372-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-370-1.
Commenter	Maderi, Denny
Comment I-373-1	I was wondering why the tube option, proposed for California for high speed rail, has not been considered as a viable options.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Madison, Dale
Comment I-374-1	It will be spectacular if the High Speed project uses Buffalo Central Terminal
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-370-1.
Commenter	Madison, Dale
Comment I-374-2	if Alternate 125 bypasses Rome, Utica and Schenectady, does it also bypass Hudson and Rhinecliff? If upstate cities are bypassed to achieve faster through put, it's only fair to bypass downstate cities for the same reason

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. One of the advantages of Alternative 90B is that it would double the frequency of service to these cities bypassed by Alternative 125. Communities in the Mohawk Valley (Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica and Rome) would not be served because the route for the 125 Alternative is located south of these communities. South of Albany-Rensselaer, the 125 Alternative would have utilized the existing route, and schedules and stopping patterns for trains would have been developed further in the formulation of the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Madison, Dale
Comment I-374-3	Reroute CSX out of downtown Rochester and onto the West Shore.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding train operations in the City of Rochester. The HSR Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates the operation of passenger and freight trains along the Empire Corridor, and the Preferred Alternative will add approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, including third and fourth tracks in Rochester, to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Specific projects for the Preferred Alternative will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance design for that project, or group of projects.
Commenter	Madison, Dale
Comment I-374-4	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-370-1.
Commenter	Malecki, Joanne
Comment I-375-1	Please insure that any and all bridge alterations, rebuilds, and/or construction projects include safe walk and bikeways across them.
Response	Thank you for your comments concerning the consideration of bicycles and pedestrians in the High Speed Rail evaluation process. Comments from the public, relating to the

accessibility for bicycles and pedestrians, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Any projects resulting from the Preferred Alternative will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2), and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations can be further evaluated at that time.

Commenter **Malone, Evelyn**

Comment
I-376-1 Such a perfect idea to use this beautiful building to begin to build that area of Buffalo. I would love to ride a train from that station again. Hope the State will be wise enough to grab onto this idea and facility.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Mandanas, Linda**

Comment
I-377-1 option 110 makes the most sense to me, best balance between costs and benefits

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter **Mantell, Amy**

Comment
I-378-1 I support bringing high speed rail to the Empire Corridor and believe it is well worth the investment.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Marcus, Aaron**

Comment
I-379-1 I live in Vermont, and it is very challenging to get from Vermont to Central and Western New York, ever since Greyhound cut routes about 10 years ago. Improvements to extend the Ethan Allen to Burlington are in sight, but I would really like to see greatly improved on-time performance and frequency of trips, so that it will be easier to transfer to and from Vermont trains in Albany/Schenectady.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to Vermont (Ethan Allen Express). The Tier 1 EIS addresses Amtrak connections regionally to other destinations (including Rutland).
Commenter	Marcus, Aaron
Comment I-379-2	Please take the most ambitious alternative fiscally possible, and ridership from Vermonters like me – as well as many Vermont tourists – will follow. I will ride New York trains much more, with a dedicated passenger rail corridor.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Markiewicz, Jacob
Comment I-380-1	The attached editorial dated November 20, 2008 was at the time, what I thought was a good idea. People with other personal agendas put the idea down. Today it's even a better idea. My problem is people are currently talking about this and making people believe it is a new idea and for another area. This should be here in Lake Katrine and Kingston!
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 EIS presents the planning and alternatives analysis that culminated in selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Martin, April
Comment I-381-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-376-1.
Commenter	Martin, Ben, Communication Manager , CURE International, Communication Manager, CURE International
Comment I-382-1	I am very much in favor of extending high speed service through the Empire Corridor and encourage any efforts to that end.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Martin, Sharon
Comment I-383-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-376-1.
Commenter	Mathieu, Richard
Comment I-384-1	The Livingston Avenue Bridge Walkway is a critical connection that can be built safely and cost effectively.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Mathner, Susan
Comment I-385-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-376-1.

Commenter Maurer, Maggie

Comment I-386-1 This would benefit the area greatly and my quality of life! Bravo!

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Maurer, Maggie

Comment I-386-2 I would use a high speed rail system.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter McFarland, Jay

Comment I-387-1 I'd like the high speed rail to have some food service on the train and so they have at least coffee and doughnuts, and then if we have wine and beer from New York State right on the trains, hopefully we'll be able to encourage the people to come on the trains and enjoy them,

Response Thank you for your comments relating to amenities on trains operated in the future. The Tier 1 EIS addresses improvements to the Empire Corridor rail system focusing on train operations and performance. These food and beverage services are provided by the service operator (currently Amtrak). Further definition of the Operating Plan and amenities can be performed in the Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Maziarczyk, Michael

Comment I-388-1 As a supporter of the National Landmark known as the Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like to take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project ? Tier I EIS.
 This Historic Building should not be forgotten but instead re-used for a valid project.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city

officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Mazura, Christopher

Comment I ask you to prioritize the reestablishment of a bike corridor between Rensselaer and Albany over the replacement Livingston Avenue Bridge.
I-389-1

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter McColl, William

Comment Get going on 110 right now.
I-390-1

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter McColl, William

Comment Start surveys and possible land acquisitions for 125 ROW.
I-390-2

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter McColl, William

Comment Infrastructure project are good for the economy, after maintenance, or course.
I-390-3

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter McElduff, Kelsey

Comment Construction of new tracks for "high-speed" trains that don't support high-speed technologies such as magnetic levitation will make it more difficult to construct these tracks for bullet trains when reduction of fossil fuel use becomes crucial in the future
I-391-1

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In developing the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, very high speed (VHS) alternatives and alternative technologies were considered, but were not selected in part because they were considered to be cost-prohibitive. In selecting the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on technology that allows connections with other parts of the national rail network.
Commenter	McElduff, Kelsey
Comment I-391-2	Also, the two rejected proposals that operated at much higher speeds were claimed to have more negative environmental impacts. I find this hard to believe with the long-term energy savings that come from operating trains at much higher speeds.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, it was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate.
Commenter	McElduff, Kelsey
Comment I-391-3	I just want to reiterate what these two gentlemen said about this not really being high speed technically and I just wanted to make a comment that if you already have corridors that you can build on potentially, new corridors on the west, then I would suggest saving those corridors for Maglev trains, instead of constructing the same tracks that we have already and then making it harder to develop in the future faster bullet trains that we are eventually going to need.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In selecting the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on railroad technology discussed in the Tier 1 EIS that allows connections with other parts of the national rail network, as discussed in the preceding responses.
Commenter	McLaughlin, David
Comment I-392-1	When it comes to the proposed HIGH SPEED RAIL EMPIRE CORRIDOR PROGRAM, I am very opposed to using money that could go to repair roads and bridges used by far more travelers, transit of goods or commuters to employment.
Response	Comments from the public of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	McLeod, Caitlin
Comment I-393-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-388-1.

Commenter **McMahon, Thomas J.**

Comment I urge you to include the old Central Terminal in Buffalo as the Western New York terminus/station on the high-speed rail link.
 I-394-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-388-1.

Commenter **McNally, Megan**

Comment As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 I-395-1
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-388-1.

Commenter **Mead, Jeffrey**

Comment quicker service can be obtained by expanding track capacity to lessen congestion issues and incremental top speed increases of the trains themselves up to 90-110 mph.
 I-396-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-

	minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered
Commenter	Meara, Thomas
Comment I-397-1	I would be a more frequent user of passenger rail if it would be more frequent and more timely. No need for high rail,
Response	Thank you for your comments on the program, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and would improve the frequency of service along Empire Corridor West.
Commenter	Merriman, Leigh
Comment I-398-1	I think high speed train travel on tracks dedicated only to passenger trains would be wonderful. I support the concept of high speed train travel in New York State.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT. In selecting the Preferred Alternative, which will add additional third and fourth tracks to segregate passenger and freight rail, the focus was on railroad technology discussed in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Merzbach, Ralph K., Attorney, Merzbach Law Office, P.C., Attorney, Merzbach Law Office, P.C.
Comment I-399-1	I strongly support high speed rail – the faster the better. Let's get moving with Alternative 125 and make reliable and sensible rail transport a reality in this state. The cost is fine with me.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Messere, Fritz
Comment I-400-1	1. To make trains a reliable alternative to air, cost, frequency and times are important considerations. Currently it is not possible to catch a train after 5PM in Syracuse. This is not possible to work for the day in Syracuse and then catch a train to NYC that evening. The same is true if one wants to spend the day in NYC and return to Syracuse in the evening.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Operating schedules and timetables will be refined in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Messere, Fritz
Comment I-400-2	2. Speed is an important consideration. Residents in NYC are more likely to consider spending the a weekend upstate if the necessary infrastructure is available and the time factor is short. So, if I can get to the Adirondacks or Wine Country easily, then weekend excursions are more likely
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to

	Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to the Adirondacks (Adirondack Line).
Commenter	Messere, Fritz
Comment I-400-3	3. Upstate medical specialties (Roswell in Buffalo, Children's hospital – Syracuse) could be attractive centers for treatment if there is fast, frequent service.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Mietlicki, James F.
Comment I-401-1	I would first voice full support for the highest available option for the Empire Corridor passenger rail, that being a dedicated high speed passenger line.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Mietlicki, James F.
Comment I-401-2	I would accordingly urge that it is appropriate that the recent resolution of the Buffalo Common Council favoring the reuse of the Buffalo Central Terminal as the high speed passenger rail facility for the area be given full effect in the plan.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-395-1
Commenter	Mietlicki, James F.
Comment I-401-3	Dedicated high speed rail for the Empire Corridor is essential for the ultimate revitalization and growth of the State, in providing efficient and effective transportation between Buffalo-Niagara NYC, and the major populations centers of Rochester, Syracuse and Albany in between, plus the potential of ultimate connection to Hamilton and Toronto.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to destinations such as Toronto and Hamilton (Maple Leaf Line).
Commenter	Mietlicki, James F.
Comment I-401-4	I would express full support for implementation of the reuse of the Buffalo Central Terminal as high speed rail center for the Buffalo area.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-395-1.
Commenter	Mignogna, James E.

Comment I-402-1	Your ambition to bring high speed rail along this corridor is way too expensive for the benefits it would provide.
Response	Thank you for your comments on of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-1	There is no reason to pursue high speed rail in the Empire Corridor; that we can't afford it is good reason not to.
Response	Thank you for your comments on High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-2	CSX rules in New York require that the new high-speed rail track be separated by at least thirty feet from freight tracks. This will undoubtedly create instances in which the state will invoke costly eminent domain.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Because of the required property acquisition outlined in your comment, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-3	Cost outweighs benefits. In his NY Times article "Running the Numbers on High Speed Trains," Harvard economics professor Edward Glaeser examined cost to benefits. Constructing a hypothetical rail link and plugging in a range of assumptions, he found that costs outweighed benefits in every case. He was forced to conclude, "This is the cruel arithmetic faced by people, like myself, who would love to be pro-rail."
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. A report prepared by the U.S. Conference of Mayors projects that incremental speed improvements (79 to 90 mph) and more frequent service (32 roundtrips from NYC to Albany) could result in an addition of approximately 3,184 jobs in 2035 in the Capital District/Albany region alone. This report also forecasts increases in 2035 of sales output in the Capital District alone of \$357.9 million per year and increases in 2035 wages of \$158.7 million per year. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-4	The state is failing to maintain the present transportation system, according to the November 2010 report by then-Lieutenant Governor Richard Ravitch. "New York State currently lacks the revenues necessary to maintain its transportation system in a state of good repair, and the State has no credible strategy for meeting future needs. Simply maintaining the State's existing physical assets will take billions of dollars annually."
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Empire Corridor Program. In developing the program, the program cost and public investment have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-5	Amtrack fares do not cover operating costs. In 2010, Northeastern Amtrak was subsidized between \$32 and \$84 per passenger in its short-distance corridors, it still lost \$1.1 billion in 2008. (Incidentally, the top speed of the proposed high-speed rail line in NY will be 110 mph, and the average speed will be considerably less. Top speed now is 89 mph; billions and billions of dollars for an increase of...31 mph. Does that make any sense?)
Response	Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-6	Most of the jobs created by the high speed rail project would be union jobs; as Transportation Communications International President Bob Scardelletti boasted in 2010, "No industry is more closely tied to politics than the railroad industry." Draw your own conclusions.
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning job creation for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-7	Jobs created by make-work projects deprive the individual taxpayer of the right to use his earnings in a way that makes the best sense for him. The state legislature couldn't possibly know more about how I should use my own money than I do.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Chey
Comment I-403-8	For all these reasons, I urge that the proposal for Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Service be scuttled.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Douglas
Comment I-404-1	I am against the pursuit of high speed rail in New York. I think the money would be better spent on maintenance of existing infrastructure.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Henry T.
Comment I-405-1	This seems like a tremendous waste of taxpayer (MY) money yet.

Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Miller, Michael J.
Comment I-406-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.</p>
Commenter	Miller, Phillip
Comment I-407-1	I think NYS should seriously consider Buffalo Central Terminal for a high speed rail stop.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.</p>
Commenter	Miller, Ted
Comment I-408-1	<p>Many times, automobile travel is a last resort. We can change that. Although 110 mph is not much compared with TGV scheduling 220 mph trains, it is a start. We need dedicated right of way and an approach that would place new stations outside city centers.</p>

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and support for Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Miller, Ted
Comment I-408-2	How about a real study of where new rail line right of way could be placed. And while we're at it, let's update the Empire Corridor rolling stock with some new train sets capable of at least 1978 British 125 mph capability!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates the range of alternatives to optimize rail operations along the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative will add approximately 370 miles of additional trackage largely within the existing right-of-way to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Miller, Ted
Comment I-408-3	Obviously, I'm in favor of better Empire Corridor passenger rail service and "high" speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Moden, Karen
Comment I-409-1	Buffalo's beautiful and historic Central Terminal is the best choice, by far, for the Empire Corridor Project. Gorgeous, existing landmark building and central location...a no brainer!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-406-1.
Commenter	Moll, William
Comment I-410-1	I support option 90B of the NY State High Speed Rail proposal, with the following comments.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Moll, William

Comment
I-410-2

I have been employed in the rail industry for over 30 years in both freight and passenger capacities, primarily in the transportation / operating departments. About 98% of my time in this industry has been right in New York State as an employee of 4 different railroads, two of which are considered Class 1 carriers, one was a regional carrier and another was a passenger carrier. I am very familiar with the operations of freight and passenger traffic on the Empire Corridor and have, at one time or another, been a train dispatcher on this Corridor from north of Poughkeepsie to Niagara Falls. I support the addition of a third main track. However, I suggest the following. All but one of the passenger stations between CP-169 (Hoffmans, NY) and Buffalo - Depew are located on the south side of the current CSX main tracks (with the exception of Amsterdam) and the major freight yards are all located on the north side of the main tracks. My suggestion is to construct a third main track north of the current track 1 to maximum 79 mph for passenger / 60 mph freight. THEN upgrade the current Track 2 to 90 mph speeds and have the southern most track in this Corridor be the primary passenger track. Using this method would allow CSX and Amtrak to continue their normal course of business during the construction phase and minimize single track operations which cause tremendous traffic backups hindering both freight and passenger operations.

Response

Thank you for your comments on track locations. For Alternative 90B, the new passenger tracks along Empire Corridor West would generally be located on the north side. The line historically operated as a four-track system, and, as part of cost-saving measures that started in the late 1950s, the two tracks that formerly existed on the north side were either removed or converted to sidings to save on maintenance. The new passenger tracks would be added in the former locations of these two tracks.

The primary factors for installing tracks on the north side include the ability to upgrade existing sidings in place to become the third and fourth tracks. The current tracks in operation are on the south side of the right-of-way, and there is availability of right-of-way on the north where this area previously had tracks in operation. Supporting track arrangements and operating diagrams were developed for each of the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS. The locations for the additional trackage are outlined in Exhibit 3-6 in Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, and Appendix A presents track schematics. Individual projects, or groups of projects arising out of the Preferred Alternative, will undergo a second evaluation (called Tier 2) to advance the design for that project, or group of projects.

Commenter Moll, William

Comment
I-410-3

About 10 years ago, I was asked by my employer to come up with a list of project I deemed useful for both freight and passenger operations on this corridor. This list was given to NY State but to date, I have not seen any changes made.

Response

Thank you for your comments on the program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The component projects included in Alternative 90B will undergo further evaluation to advance the designs as part of Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Moll, William

Comment
I-410-4

Add an automatic signal just west of the Utica station where former CP-237 was located until it was removed after a derailment in 1992. Currently, there is a 4 mile block between CP-235 and CP-239 which creates traffic congestion as the next automatic signal east of CP-235 is signal 231, again a long block. Signal spacing is critical to minimize traffic flow problems.

Response

Thank you for your comments. The Preferred Alternative incorporates recommendations from railroad professionals to improve operations along the Empire Corridor and upgrade the infrastructure, which have been evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS for their contribution to

	improving passenger train operations along the route. Individual projects, or groups of projects arising out of the preferred alternative, will undergo a second evaluation (called Tier 2) to further advance the designs for that project, or group of projects.
Commenter	Moll, William
Comment I-410-5	Between CP-286 and CP-290 in Syracuse - Track 7 needs the signal system upgraded to permit bi-directional signaling. Currently it is signaled for westbound moves only. Speeds need to be upgraded on this track to equal what the speeds are on the adjacent Tk 1 and Tk 2 main tracks. Track 8, on the north side of Tk 1 in this same location needs to be signaled and speeds raised.
Response	Thank you for your comments on improvements to Syracuse. Currently, the FRA, NYSDOT, CSX Transportation, and Amtrak are supporting a project, Syracuse Track Configuration and Signal Improvements, that will improve operations throughout this area and create a four track railroad between East Syracuse and the passenger station at CP 290.
Commenter	Moll, William
Comment I-410-6	Bi-directional signals need to be added between CP-8 and CP-17 on the Niagara Branch located between Buffalo and Niagara Falls.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The Preferred Alternative incorporates recommendations from railroad professionals to improve operations along the Empire Corridor and upgrade the infrastructure, which have been evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS for their contribution to improving passenger train operations along the route.
Commenter	Moll, William
Comment I-410-7	Additional trackage needs to be added in the Syracuse, NY area to minimize the congestion in the DeWitt Yard area on the main tracks.
Response	Thank you for your comments for improvements to Syracuse. Currently, the FRA, NYSDOT, CSX Transportation and Amtrak are supporting a project, Syracuse Track Configuration and Signal Improvements, that will improve operations throughout this area and create a four track railroad between East Syracuse and the passenger station at CP 290.
Commenter	Mooney, Mike
Comment I-411-1	High Speed Rail What are we wanting for on this high speed rail. It should have been put in place 20 years ago. Let do it.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Moore, Greg D., CEO, QuiCR, CEO, QuiCR
Comment I-412-1	I echo Mr. Robinson's thoughts on the current proposals reeking of false advertising. They're higher speed rail, but hardly worthy of note. And many sections ALB-BUF should be exploring not 90mph, or even 110mph, but 150mph or 2200mph service. THAT is high speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options, with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public

	resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Moore, Greg D., CEO, QuiCR, CEO, QuiCR
Comment I-412-2	Of course the ultimate solution is to extend catenary north so that this section can become a true extension of the NEC much like the Keystone Service to Harrisburg is.
Response	Thank you for your comments on electrification strategies. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT focused on technology in the Tier 1 EIS that is compatible with, and will allow connections with, other parts of the national rail network.
Commenter	Moore, Richard
Comment I-413-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Moore, Scott
Comment I-414-1	<p>As a supporter of high-speed rail, I would love to see Buffalo's Central Terminal reused as a station again.</p> <p>As an architectural gem, it would be a point of pride for Buffalo to see this station back in use for its original purpose. It's location, right along the eastern edge of the city, makes it a convenient spot to bring in trains and send them in different directions without interfering with existing street layouts.</p>

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Moretta, Justin
Comment I-415-1	Buffalo central terminal must be included in these plans.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-413-1.
Commenter	Morgan, Richard
Comment I-416-1	My vote is for the 125 MPH rail Keep the stations to a minimum- Buff, Rochester, Syr,Utica, Maybe Gloversville, Albany and a couple thru the Hudson River area. If you have too many you'll never get to NYC in a reasonable amount of time.
Response	Thank you for your comments from the public, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would have bypassed stations along the Mohawk Valley, including Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Morris, Andy
Comment I-417-1	I'm writing to urge the incorporation of bicycle/pedestrian access to the repair/replacement of the Livingston Avenue Bridge in Albany.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Morris, Fallon, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-418-1	I believe that the state of New York should spend their money on the 125 mph High Speed Rail that would stop in all the major cities like Rochester, Albany, Syracuse, and Buffalo for the convenience of their civilian's.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Mortensen, Annette

Comment I-419-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-413-1.</p>
Commenter	Mount, Lee and Elaine
Comment I-420-1	<p>We think that having on time rail service to NYC from Syracuse would be wonderful. Having a track dedicated to passenger service would eliminate the frequent slowing or stops due to freight priority rail usage. It would seem that 110 mile-per-hour would be the best idea.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.</p>
Commenter	Mount, Timothy
Comment I-421-1	<p>I support alternative 110. Although I would love to see faster times, alternative 125 does not seem cost effective.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative by the FRA and NYSDOT, for the reasons outlined in the preceding response.</p>
Commenter	Murphy, Daniel
Comment I-422-1	<p>I am writing to request that the design and construction of the Livingston Ave Bridge, connecting Albany to Rensselaer, include access for pedestrians and bicycles.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The</p>

Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter **Murphy, John J.**

Comment I-423-1 I feel that the high speed rail in NY State is one of the dumbest things ever.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Namynanik, Mike**

Comment I-424-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-413-1.

Commenter **Nardone, Candice**

Comment I-425-1 Good ideas, update upstate New York. Alt 110 you have to update track 2035 is a long way away. New jobs more business to New York. We should spend the xtra money to improve New York.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter **Nassimos, Joe**

Comment I-426-1	I like the idea of High-Speed rail service for Upstate NY, but I think the idea should be kicked up a notch to something more 21st Century style. I suggest Monorail service through Upstate NY from Albany to Buffalo.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. Alternative 125 would involve construction of a viaduct on structure in places, but it would involve considerable costs and impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land). It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Nedwick, Darlene
Comment I-427-1	I am definitely in favor of high speed rail transportation between Western NY and New York City.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Neffke, Ronald E.
Comment I-428-1	High speed Rail Service is long overdue;
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Neish, Devon, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-429-1	I believe that Alternative 90A would be the best way because of the cheaper cost of the train. Also it would be the best because of how many times the train would be at the station and how fast it goes.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90A, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will improve the service frequency along Empire Corridor West. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Nerode, Nathaneal
Comment I-430-1	The Base Alternative is unacceptable; I support any of the alternatives except the Base Alternative, but I would prefer the 110 alternative
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.

	Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Nerode, Nathaneal
Comment I-430-2	The ridership and revenue estimates are too low. It appears that the ridership estimation method assumes that ridership for upstate stations comes only from the surrounding metropolitan areas. This is incorrect. In fact, stations such as Syracuse have passengers who drive from Ithaca (such as myself) or Kingston (I have witnessed this several times) in order to catch trains at the nearest train station.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding the ridership estimates used in the Tier 1 EIS, which points out that many of the passengers using intercity passenger trains along the Empire Corridor originate beyond the communities where the stations are located. In developing the model used to forecast ridership, the New York City Metropolitan area was deemed an important source of ridership, as many of the riders on the route have their trips linked to either a destination or origination at Penn Station in New York City. The ridership forecast model is based on statewide socioeconomic data and factored in the probability of the passengers from beyond the metropolitan area using the improved rail service. The methodology of the study and the structure of the ridership model, presented in Appendix B, Ridership and Revenue Forecasting, is consistent with the purpose and need of the Tier 1 EIS. The ridership estimates are in line with the different variables being factored into the model.
Commenter	Nerode, Nathaneal
Comment I-430-3	The ridership and revenue study appears not to have considered the ridership from people driving from these more distant points to the upstate train stations.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The methodology for the forecasting is presented in Appendix B, Ridership and Revenue Forecasting. This modeling effort incorporated travel inputs that included automobile travel and major market areas.
Commenter	Nerode, Nathaneal
Comment I-430-4	All designs should include passive provision for future electrification with overhead wires. As a result, what *does* make sense is to do all design to allow for future hanging of overhead wires: this determines overhead clearance of rebuilt bridges or tunnels, spacing between tracks (to allow for poles to carry the overhead wires), design of station platforms (to allow for poles to carry the overhead wires), etc. These passive provisions for overhead electrification should be required as an aspect of all projects built under the auspices of this DEIS. Accordingly, all alternatives except the base alternatives should include, at a conceptual level, passive provision for future overhead electrification at the current world standard of 25kV 60Hz. Unfortunately there is no mention of such provision in the DEIS.
Response	Thank you for your comments concerning electrification strategies on the Empire Corridor. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Section 4.20. One of the alternatives dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 125, would provide for electric trains between Albany and Buffalo. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Nerode, Nathaneal
Comment I-430-5	I support the 110 option because it benefits all the trains running on the corridor at once. But the really important thing is the trains have to run on time.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Newton, Theresa
Comment I-431-1	Please continue work on this project.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	(No Last Name), Nico
Comment I-432-1	I wonder how this will be paid for, and once the project is completed how will it continue to pay for itself?
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding economic sustainability. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Nicolaysen, Bryan
Comment I-433-1	My personal opinion is that the railroad is a good idea but the cheapest option is the one that should be done. The difference between \$290 million and \$14.7 trillion is huge.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Of the three higher speed Build Alternatives (90B, 110 mph and 125 mph) evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would involve the lowest cost (less than half the cost of the most expensive alternative for 125 mph service), while providing the best overall on-time performance and the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Nicolaysen, Bryan
Comment I-433-2	Do you really believe your estimates are correct? So you believe it will be safe for the passengers? Have the tests been completed? I am also not completely for this proposal for the fact that there are other things that the money can be spent on.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Nielson, Eric
Comment I-434-1	I feel that this endeavor will bring a positive impact to the entire state.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter	Nimphius, Donald J.
Comment I-435-1	My understanding is that 110 MPH is the top speed for Class 5 track. Why is the 110 MPH goal not determined by track class? 110 MPH, I believe the top speed for Class 5 track, as a result a determination of a ceiling of 110 may not be as safe as a higher class 6 track would not only provide for safer and higher speed.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the alternatives being evaluated in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Nimphius, Donald J.
Comment I-435-2	As for equipment tilt technology should provide for future higher speeds.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, relating to the types of equipment to be operated as part of the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program. The selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, by the FRA and NYSDOT, considered railroad technology and systems as discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. Electrified dynamic tilt trains were evaluated in Chapter 3 as part of the 160 mph and 220 mph Very High Speed (VHS) alternatives, which were dismissed from further consideration.
Commenter	Nithikasem, Surasit
Comment I-436-1	I think that we should go with the 125 alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Nithikasem, Surasit
Comment I-436-2	We should also have the electrical supply systems to support speeds higher than 125 mph built into the current design of the 125 alternative such as constant tension catenary.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Noblin-Jackson, Lisa A.
Comment I-437-1	Using the railway as a main source of travel throughout New York State is a viable choice for economic renewal, tourist growth and ecological stewardship. Improving the system and continuing to make rail service a priority from Niagara Falls to NYC and all points in between is the best plan this state has had in my lifetime.

Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Nolan, CPA, Rita M.
Comment I-438-1	It is important that pedestrian/cyclist access be included in the design and construction of the new Livingston Avenue Bridge across the Hudson River.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Nordheim, Shirley
Comment I-439-1	My concerns regarding this: 1. Cost? Too expensive (no project finished without cost overruns) 2. Ridership numbers – New York losing population probably need tax-payer subsidies. 3. Impact on communities? 4. Is there a real need for this? (Beyond the temporary construction job).
Response	Thank you for your comment on High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Social, economic, and environmental factors have all been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative, as documented in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Nowak, Elizabeth L.
Comment I-440-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-

	Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Nuzback, Michael
Comment I-441-1	I believe the 110 and 125 alternatives would have the largest positive affect on many of the cities in New York State.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Of the three Build Alternatives (90B, 110 mph and 125 mph) evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would involve the lowest cost (less than half the cost of the most expensive alternative for 125 mph service), while providing the best overall on-time performance.
Commenter	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
Comment I-442-1	I am totally against the Base and 125 proposals because the former is too passive and the latter is too aggressive.
Response	Thank you for your comments relating to alternative preferences for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
Comment I-442-2	I also reject any proposal that has a significant potential to: -- adversely affect farm land and/or -- bypass Utica's train depot
Response	Thank you for your comments discussing the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide 370 miles of additional trackage and would minimize potential impacts on farmlands by adding tracks primarily within the existing right-of-way, as discussed in Section 4.18. In addition, unlike Alternative 125, which would not provide express service to Utica, Alternative 90B would increase the frequency of service to Utica.
Commenter	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
Comment I-442-3	I would vote for Alternative 90A.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90A and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into Alternative 90B, which will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Olds Sr., Dennis F.
Comment I-442-4	every effort should be made to utilize the existing right-of-way.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Olexenko, Peter

Comment I-443-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-440-1.

Commenter Zweig, Brian

Comment I-444-1 Please make pedestrian access a priority in the reconstruction of the Livingston Avenue rail bridge that connects Albany and Rensselaer.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Oswald, Sean

Comment I-445-1 Please consider The Central Terminal building in Buffalo NY as a station for the Buffalo Metro area.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-440-1.

Commenter P., Ajay

Comment I-446-1 For 125 mph option

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

	Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Paarlberg, John
Comment I-447-1	A bicycle and pedestrian connection to the Livingston Avenue bridge is a great idea. Long past due!
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Paladino, Scotty
Comment I-448-1	High speed is very nice
Response	Your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Paladino, Scotty
Comment I-448-2	# 1 Eliminate Railroad crossings big problem with on time performance due to accidents. # 2 Security with terrorist and suicides of people. # 3 proper Drainage for track bed like in the MTA ,
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding safety, security and track maintenance, which are addressed in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Tier 1 EIS address safety, including grade crossings, for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Security and maintenance functions are the responsibility of the owners and operators of the rail lines. Each of these entities has police forces and maintenance forces that handle these needs. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Palmer, Ada
Comment I-449-1	Please consider changing at grade crossings to include 4 quadrant crossings for all at grade crossings. Sadly, I have seen drivers cut between crossing gates.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the grade-crossings along the Empire Corridor. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Palmer, Ada
Comment I-449-2	I enjoyed a 50 mile train ride in Japan 2 years ago. I believe it is important to redevelop our railroad system.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Palmer, Eugene

Comment I-450-1	We don't need high speed rail and additional deficits.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Environmental and economic concerns, operating benefits, capital requirements, and responsiveness to passenger needs have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Palmer, Richard
Comment I-451-1	just get me to NYC at a reasonable hour from Upstate, which can't be done
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Palvino, Jack
Comment I-452-1	There is no reason for expending tax dollars on a service no taxpayers have requested, used in other areas or will use in the future
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Paolini, Edward
Comment I-453-1	With all the problems we have in NY (i.e. high taxes, over regulations, poor schools, government over reach including safe act) the last thing we need is a high speed rail across the state.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Paolini, Margaret A.
Comment I-454-1	we have a wonderful building here in Buffalo- please consider our beautiful terminal and hook Buffalo up!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Paradowski, Mark

Comment I-455-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Parke, Richard
Comment I-456-1	suggest we move slowly on Approval. Would recommend dedicating income from NY fracking towards this project.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Parker, Christine
Comment I-457-1	The investment of the High Speed Rail is necessary for the state of NY linking Western NY to Long Island will encourage economic development on a grand scale.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Parrotte, Jeffrey M.
Comment I-458-1	I wish to voice my opinion in favor of high speed rail travel across Upstate New York. I am fully in favor of redeveloping a transportation system that allows for 125mph speeds, limited interference from freight and commuter traffic, and redeveloped crossings.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Parsons, W.T.
Comment I-459-1	What assumptions have been made regarding the impact of rising sea level and flood frequency in the Hudson estuary's low lying tracks?
Response	Thank you for your comments concerning the impacts of climate change on rail performance in the lower Hudson Valley. The Tier 1 EIS documents potential program

impacts on climate change and flooding (Sections 4.9 and 4.20). Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the design for that project, or group of projects. Further evaluation of the location of tracks and impacts from rising sea level or flood conditions along the Hudson River can be evaluated in the Tier 2 assessments.

It should also be recognized that Metro North Railroad, in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, is taking measures to harden their facilities to better meet weather conditions along their portion of the route. Amtrak and NYSDOT are currently working on improving the tracks and signal system on the portion of the route from Poughkeepsie to Albany to improve operations on this portion of the Empire Corridor.

Commenter	Patalita, John
Comment I-460-1	The project could be extended to include service across the Niagara Frontier to Toronto, further adding to ridership.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the need for connections from Niagara Falls to Toronto. Currently, improvements to the service to be operated as part of the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail project are focused between Niagara Falls and New York City. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to destinations such as Toronto and Hamilton (Maple Leaf Line).
Commenter	Patierno, Michael
Comment I-461-1	Although this seems like a practical way of transportation I feel that this would not only be impractical but a waste of time and money. The high speed rail system is an outdated form of transportation. This technology has been around for decades and I feel that it would be a great waste of resources.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	(No Last Name), Patricia
Comment I-462-1	With more people moving out of the city but yet commuting having only unreliable Amtrak that is prohibitively expensive to the average person or driving 1/2 way to the city to catch Metro North is also a super inconvenience, and archaic. NYS is best poised for rail system more than any other state. Why are we lagging behind? Is some group being paid off?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Pawenski, Chris
Comment I-463-1	I believe a new single station should be built no matter which Alternative is selected. A station near Buffalo's CBD, such as near Larkinville would enable all train riders to utilize it.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-454-1.
Commenter	Pawenski, Chris

Comment I-463-2	The current stations at Exchange St. and in Depew are NOT welcome sites to out of town visitors.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Pawensla, Chris
Comment I-464-1	It would be very helpful if the average speed and time to travel were broken down into two phases, 1. Buffalo to Albany and 2. Albany to NYC. This would better illustrate the true/higher average speed to Albany along with the shorter time, and in turn illustrate a better connectivity between the Queen City and the State Capital.
Response	Thank you for your comments, more detailed information on rail operations is presented in Appendix D, Rail Network Operations Simulation.
Commenter	Pawlowski, Lenore
Comment I-465-1	High speed rail sounds great in theory, but it will only reduce the time to travel across the state by only an hour or two over what it now is with Amtrak. When it can get me to NYC from Buffalo in four hours, then I'll support it. Until then, it's not worth putting public money into it.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In developing the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, very high speed (VHS) alternatives were considered, but were not selected in part because they were considered to be cost-prohibitive.
Commenter	Pellingra, Justin
Comment I-466-1	Building two alternatives 90A and 125 would have benefits in the near term and long term. The additional cost is about 1 ½ billion. Doing them both at the same time results in long term benefits for people riding in 2035 and short term benefits for people in 5 years, 10 years, etc. as improvements are made. Later when the 2035, 125 project is completed the earlier improvements of 90A project could revert to freight traffic. CSX would at that point have it's own area without passenger lines interfering. They, CSX, would also be able to move faster from these improvements.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Pellman, John
Comment I-467-1	I strongly support the notion of building high-speed rail infrastructure here in New York

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Pellman, John
Comment I-467-2	From the DEIS report, I would have to rank the plans for building high speed rail as follows (from most desirable to least desirable): 110, 90B, 125, 90A. 110 seems to be the most practical plan in terms of environmental impact and giving us the most bang for our buck.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.
Commenter	Pellman, John
Comment I-467-3	I would like to add to my previous remarks that I would really like to see alternative 125 put into effect
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Pena, Oscar
Comment I-468-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in

a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Pescrillo, Jordan**

Comment I truly believe that a high speed rail could provide jobs and the traffic the East Side needs to
I-469-1 revitalize instead of continually “bomb out” neighborhoods.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Peters, Ariel**

Comment As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like
I-470-1 take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
-The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
-The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
-The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
-The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-468-1.

Commenter **Peterson, Lorna**

Comment Please make NYS economically competitive by adding high speed rail as a transportation
I-471-1 choice.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Peterson, Lorna**

Comment I am greatly in favor of high speed rail in NYS
I-471-2 The proposed route from NYC to Niagara Falls is also sensible because it will capture tourism as well as business and education dollars. Niagara Falls as the final destination

would encourage Buffalo and the NFTA to improve transportation between the two cities beyond its current #40 Grand Island bus route.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Petko, Stephen**

Comment This would be absolutely fantastic.
I-472-1

Response Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Phillips, Scott**

Comment High Speed Rail to Buffalo? YES! please get this project on the books
I-473-1

Response Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Piecuch, Sarah**

Comment I would like to see alternative 110 progressed.
I-474-1

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.

Commenter **Piecuch, Sarah**

Comment One thing that confused me tonight was why downstate trips increased per alternative at a much higher rate than the upstate lines?
I-474-2

Response Thank you for your comment discussing the frequencies of service on different segments of the Empire Corridor for the different alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The downstate segment, anchored by the New York Metropolitan Area at its southern tip, is expected to grow much faster than the rest of the state, thereby resulting in more trips. Also, highway congestion in the metropolitan area is expected to worsen, thereby resulting in a higher mode shift to rail. Every incremental improvement in the total run times leads to increased trips between the New York Metropolitan Area and all the other upstate stations, largely because of the socioeconomic projections and expected highway congestion. The trips between the upstate cities do not increase at an equally rapid rate because the population base around the station area is comparatively low and non-congested highways provide an easy mode of transportation thereby resulting in a lower mode shift to rail. Service in the segment of the route between Albany and New York City also accommodates many passengers, who use or will utilize the trains for commuting to their places of employment in New York City. It is also anticipated that improvements in the service in this segment of the corridor, will also encourage other individuals to use the trains for their daily commuting.

Commenter **Pieniazek, Nicholas**

Comment I-475-1	I wonder how this will be paid for, and once the project is completed how will it continue to pay for itself?
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding the implementation of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Future funding for the program has not been determined at this time. The program schedule and implementation have been considered in selecting the Preferred Alternative, and the implementation of service initiatives have been investigated in the development of the Service Development Plan. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Plaat, Daniel
Comment I-476-1	Thus I am in favor of the ALt 110; but, should the capital be available Alt 125 is tempting, despite the need to cut a new path for the express line and other causes of higher environmental impact.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and 125 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Of the three higher speed Build Alternatives (90B, 110 mph and 125 mph) evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would involve the lowest cost (less than half the cost of the most expensive alternative for 125 mph service), while providing the best overall on-time performance and the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Plaat, Daniel
Comment I-476-2	A comment on the designs of the new stations; though a massive improvement on the existing, don't look like they would be built in 2016-18, but the 1940's.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In some cases, the station designs need to reflect the historic character of the existing stations, depending on the location. Any individual projects, or groups of projects selected for implementation as part of the Preferred Alternative, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the design for that project, or group of projects. Further evaluation of the specific projects and related improvements to stations can be evaluated in Tier 2 or as separate, independent projects.
Commenter	Plaat, Daniel
Comment I-476-3	A comment that the Livingston Ave rail bridge needs to be considered. This is a local matter for me living a mile away and I can't stress enough the need for a bike and pedestrian path on that bridge for better access to the other side of the river.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Plante, Gerald

Comment I-477-1	I wholeheartedly support the DEIS for the Empire Corridor Project.
Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Prenty, Noreen
Comment I-478-1	I hope bicycle traffic will be considered when the Livingston Ave railroad bridge plans are completed.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Preske, Carl
Comment I-479-1	The best choice for the cost would be option 110.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.
Commenter	Preske, Carl
Comment I-479-2	Increasing Frequency would be an improvement but not as important as increased speed and shortened travel times.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding improvements to service frequency, travel times, and speeds for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, and Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. A comparison of trip times and frequencies are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In Chapter 6, there is a comparison of the travel times and frequency of service for the different alternatives.
Commenter	Price, Joshua, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-480-1	I feel that the new and improved High Speed rail train is a really good idea. With speeds up to 90 mph is good, for the Emerging High Speed Rail going from 100 to 500 miles people could get there in plenty of time.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of emerging high speed rail (speeds up to 90 mph) for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Priestley, Robert

Comment I-481-1	I think its great to have the faster trains going to upstate, NY
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Priestley, Robert
Comment I-481-2	would be nice if amtrax had a stion or atleast a pick up point near suffern,ny.
Response	At this time, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improving intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Amtrak Empire Corridor trains serve stations in Westchester County, at Yonkers and Croton-Harmon, along with Pennsylvania Station in New York City. The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.
Commenter	Provino, Paul
Comment I-483-1	I hope that NYS can incorporate Buffalo's central terminal into their plan for high speed rail!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Pucalski, Christopher
Comment I-484-1	High speed rail access to the Falls, and improvement of other rail systems in the Buffalo/Niagara area is the best way to facilitate new passenger rail efficiencies in WNY.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B will also increase the frequency of service to Buffalo/Niagara Falls.
Commenter	Puckett, Michael
Comment I-485-1	Any and all efforts to make the Capital Region more bike-able should be undertaken. Bike paths along the Livingston Ave Bridge are key to making that happen for those on the east side of the Hudson!

Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Punturiero, Brian
Comment I-486-1	I would love to see a high speed rail stop here in Buffalo.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for a station stop in Buffalo, New York. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will continue to provide service to existing stations. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street.
Commenter	Puritz, Becky
Comment I-487-1	I'd simply like to add my support to bicycle and pedestrian facilities being included in any repairs and development of the Livingston Avenue Bridge in Albany.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Pusateri, Robert G.
Comment I-488-1	I am in favor of the High Speed Rail project.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Putnam, Randal
Comment I-489-1	I am writing in support of a pedestrian and bicycle path on the Livingston Avenue Bridge.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	R., Steve
Comment I-490-1	The % of New Yorkers to utilize this rail system is not worth the time and \$ when the \$ can be used towards Thruway improvements and/or Education.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Environmental and economic concerns, operating benefits, capital requirements, and responsiveness to passenger needs have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rain, Dan
Comment I-491-1	The Livingston Avenue Bridge Walkway is a critical connection that can be built safely and cost effectively. It has significant support both locally and regionally. I urge the Federal Rail Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation take the necessary steps to make the Walkway a reality for our community!
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Randazzo, Robert
Comment I-492-1	Can you provide a breakdown, by alternative, what this would actually cost each NYS taxpayer? That's what people need to know and understand to support something like this.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding the implementation of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 EIS presents costs by alternative in Chapters 3, 5, and 6. Future funding for the program has not been determined at this time. Ridership and revenue performance have been considered in selecting the Preferred Alternative, and the implementation of service initiatives have been investigated in the development of the Service Development Plan. In the Tier 2 assessments, individual projects or groups of projects will be further advanced in terms of costs, scheduling, and funding, according to the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Rathbun, Susan
Comment I-493-1	I vote for Alternative 125.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Rawls, Brittany
Comment I-494-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Reamer, Stephen D.

Comment I-495-1 A maglev train is the only way to go to truly be high speed. I don't see a need for new rights' of way either. Using the land separating the lanes along the national interstate system would not require new easements.

Response Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Reamer, Stephen D.

Comment I-495-2 The project estimate costs for this proposal are not realistic.

Response Thank you for your comment. Capital costs for the alternatives being considered in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS are developed at a high level. The purpose of estimates is to ensure that costs are estimated in consistent terms across the alternatives being evaluated, such that values for each alternative can be reasonably compared. This approach supports rational decision-making by NYSDOT and the public based on common understandings of the likely relative cost of each alternative compared to the others. Details of the development of the cost for each alternative are included in Chapters 3 and 5 and Appendix F of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Rebbeor, James

Comment I-496-1	i think the 120 mph is the best option. faster trip to the city.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Rebmann, Michael
Comment I-497-1	It is my opinion that the Empire Corridor Project is a huge waste of taxpayers' money.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Rebmann, Michael
Comment I-497-2	Bus travel is much more economical. Car travel is much more convenient and flying is much quicker. Instead, the state should consider improving the Thruway and raising the speed limit to at least 80 m.p.h.
Response	Thank you for your comments about the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. At this time, the Tier 1 EIS evaluation focuses on improving intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Improving the New York State Thruway is not included in this program. Consideration of the needs for the interstate highway system was not included in the scope of the program. However, the proposed rail improvements are anticipated to result in a diversion of trips from the highway system, resulting in operational benefits. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Reeher, John
Comment I-498-1	The advantage of high speed rail is "high speed", and while going from 110 to 125 MPH doubles the cost, it also eliminates nearly an hour 1 way in trip time.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Reeher, John
Comment I-498-2	At 125 mph, the service is competitive with car and air, but anything slower and I probably won't utilize the service.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Reichmuth, Elaine

Comment I-499-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-494-1.

Commenter Render, Dave

Comment I-500-1 I whole-heartedly support the re-establishing of the pedestrian and bicycle access to the Livingston Avenue bridge.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Rezak, David

Comment I-501-1 We strongly support high speed rail service for Upstate NY! Alternative 110 will boost upstate access the way the Erie Canal did nearly 200 years ago

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the program, and Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.

Commenter Rezak, Linda

Comment I-502-1 We support alternative 110 and will be regular riders to and from Metro NYC. Please move this project forward.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of

	Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined in the preceding response.
Commenter	Richards, Charles
Comment I-503-1	Let's get this high speed deal going! I'd love to travel by train from Utica to NYC quicker and more often. I'd visit NYC a lot more often. Currently I can drive faster!
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Richardson, David
Comment I-504-1	The information that I have does not mention the economic impact that would result from this project. I suspect that jobs created would be substantial.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts, discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Richardson, David
Comment I-504-2	The base alternative makes little sense to me as the state would be looking for additional improvements within a few years. 90B appears to be the minimum alternative required to meet ridership needs.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90B, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Riley, Jibreel
Comment I-505-1	looking forward to high speed rail to grow the upstate region.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Riley, Jibreel
Comment I-505-2	The high speed I am looking for is more of faster track times, more trains, more availability, and probably just to clear up more track from the freight. I guess both are a win-win situation for passenger rail and freight rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Rittenhouse, Maryanne
Comment I-506-1	I think that this is a TREMENDOUS idea.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Robe, Susan
Comment I-507-1	As a lifelong resident of New York I feel this project would benefit our state for all age groups.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Roberts, Carol
Comment I-508-1	yes to high speed rail and the faster the better. The cost is well worth it!
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rodriguez, Eva
Comment I-509-1	I support any improvement to our bridges (especially those whose walkways & bike trails can be improved, or developed)!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Individual projects, or groups of projects, (such as bridge walkways and bike trails) will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to advance the design for that project, or group of projects.
Commenter	Roertgen, Brandon
Comment I-510-1	I support the development of a new express line along the Empire Service Corridor to improve service
Response	Thank you for your comments, which FRA and NYSDOT have considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rogers, Amanda
Comment I-511-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Rogers, Andy
Comment I-512-1	given the current economic state of NY I believe project level 90A is best as uses much of existing infrastructure - the only drawback would be rerouting of freight at certain locations where traffic highest but still much cheaper than a dedicated line
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of Alternative 90A. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, located primarily within the existing right-of-way, to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rogers, Cheryl
Comment I-513-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-511-1.
Commenter	Rogers, John
Comment I-514-1	I am opposed to spending billions for high speed rail.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Rogge, David
Comment I-515-1	Please make use of the historic Buffalo Central Terminal for your high speed rail project in the empire corridor.
Response	The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-511-1.
Commenter	Rohman, Henry Lee
Comment I-516-1	THE WESTERN NEW YORK AREA NEEDS ALL THE HELP IT CAN GET.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rohman, Henry Lee
Comment I-516-2	I love the railroad and I would ride it my self.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Romanowski, Margaret
Comment I-517-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-511-1.
Commenter	(No Last Name), Ronnie

Comment I-518-1	We need high speed rail in New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Root, Chris
Comment I-519-1	From my studying and understanding of the proposed plans, it seems that alternatives 110 and 125 are clearly the best at promoting fast high speed travel between Niagara Falls and NYC.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the program, and Alternatives 110 and 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Root, Chris
Comment I-519-2	One problem that I see with proposal 125 is that it skips many smaller upstate cities
Response	Thank you for your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica (doubling the frequency).
Commenter	Root, Chris
Comment I-519-3	I feel that the reuse of the Buffalo Central Terminal should be essential to be included in the proposed projects.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Rose, David

Comment I-520-1	If we begin to dream big, and plan around our big dreams, the central terminal could be more than just a mere reuse success story; Buffalo could change the world, again!!!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Rose, Joel S.
Comment I-521-1	I urge you to include Buffalo's Central Terminal in New York's high speed rail system.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-519-3.
Commenter	Rosenberg, Marc
Comment I-522-1	Yes, highest speed rail
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rosenberg, Nancy
Comment I-523-1	Yes! We definitely need high speed trains! Awesome project! Get it done!!!!
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rosenberg, Nancy
Comment I-523-2	Yes! We need "high speed" (fast as possible) rail to NYC from Buffalo... stops need to be a quick turn over and in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Sch/Albany, Rhinebeck, Poughkeepsie, NYC.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will maintain and improve service to existing station stops, and the schedules have been developed in the Service Development Plan to optimize passenger service. Further schedule development will occur as part of the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Rotolo, Tom and Barbara
Comment I-524-1	we don't need to spend money to make the trains travel at a faster speed. We need to upgrade what we already have. It seems the railroads are in neglect. More people are willing to travel by rail than every before. How about putting the capital in the train stations, tracks and railroad cars.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would involve lesser costs and speeds increases

	than Alternatives 110 and 125 and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way.
Commenter	Roy, Eileen
Comment I-525-1	I'm very interested to see high speed rail become a reality for our State.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Rumril, Peter
Comment I-526-1	Improvements to rail safety upstate is more necessary than improvements in rail speed.
Response	Thank you for expressing your concerns about safety improvements on the Empire Corridor. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. These improvements that will reduce congestion, delays and interference between passenger and freight trains will improve safety. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives, and proposed safety and design measures will be further developed in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Rumril, Peter
Comment I-526-2	Until the ROW is safe, speeds should not be increased.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the importance of safety being a part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As discussed in the previous response, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will add additional trackage, the majority of which (over 280 miles) will consist of third dedicated track. This will better segregate passenger and freight rail, which will allow improvements in both rail safety and travel speeds.
Commenter	Rumril, Peter
Comment I-526-3	I believe a better solution would be to work a deal with CSX to acquire the South Shore line as an exclusive passenger line around Rochester. It's shorter and would be a better location for the new station rather than build it in an area frequented by homeless panhandlers and drug dealers.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding train operations in the City of Rochester. The HSR Program outlined in the Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates the operation of passenger and freight trains along the Empire Corridor, and the Preferred Alternative will add approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, including third and sections of fourth tracks in Rochester, to better segregate passenger and freight rail. As projects are considered under the Tier 2 assessments for the program, the impact of railroad operations on grade crossing can be reviewed with a focus on promoting safety.
Commenter	(No Last Name), Russ
Comment I-527-1	Central terminal!

Response	The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-519-3.
Commenter	Russell, CPA, Robert
Comment I-528-1	What I want you to understand is that supporting a pedestrian/bicycle walkway on the Livingston Avenue Bridge upgrade/replacement is just one more piece of the puzzle that will allow me to bicycle from my house to work with virtually no conflict with motorized vehicles!
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Sackett, John L.
Comment I-529-1	OLD TECHNOLOGY- WHY NOT USE MAGNETIC OR MONO RAIL TECHNOLOGY
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sackett, John L.
Comment I-529-2	DISCRIMINATORY- PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT LIVE outside CITIES ! UNLESS elevated transportation SYSTEM IS UTILIZED MOST ROAD CROSSINGS WILL BE ELIMINATED! THAT INVOLVE.S OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FIRE DEPARTMENTS, OUR AMBULANCE SERVICES, OUR CONSIDERABLE FARMERS, AND OF COURSE DISADVANTAGE OF OUR CITIZENS. THE ADDITIONAL MILEAGE ALONE WILL DO more ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE THAN THE NEW CONVENTIAL HIGH SPEED RAILROAD WILL PROVIDE !
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 EIS. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. The Tier 1 FEIS accounts for several types of fencing and warning systems, and safety features for the Preferred Alternative in Section 3.3.3, under the "Safety" section. Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As projects are considered in the Tier 2 assessments for the program, the impact of railroad operations on grade crossing can be reviewed with a focus on promoting safety.
Commenter	Sadowski, Emily

Comment I-530-1	I feel that the Buffalo Central Terminal reuse should be included in all NYS High Speed Rail project proposals.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Salsburg, Fred
Comment I-531-1	For us, the travel speed of the train is not very important and we don't think that any money should be spent to increase it. Going 20 MPH faster increases the difficulty and danger for very little benefit, when it's going to stop at a station pretty soon. Not much effect on the average speed.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Salsburg, Fred
Comment I-531-2	We won't take the train to go west of Buffalo, the schedule for the Chicago train is too inconvenient to leave in the middle of the night and we won't do it.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Currently, improvements to the service to be operated as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program are focused between Buffalo/Niagara Falls and New York City.
Commenter	Salsburg, Fred
Comment I-531-3	So, make changes the so the existing trains don't have to stop due to track usage. And put another Chicago train on a schedule 12 hours offset to the one that runs now and you would have us as customers several times a year.
Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will maintain and improve service to existing station stops, and the schedules have been developed in the Service Development Plan to optimize rail service. Further schedule development will occur as part of the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Salzyn, John
Comment I-532-1	The Central Terminal in Buffalo, an iconic symbol of rail traffic, would make an excellent spot for a rail stop. I would love to see this beautiful building reused.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central

	Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-530-1.
Commenter	Samson, Joseph
Comment I-533-1	Alternative 125, although having the greatest reduction in travel times does not stop in Utica.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Sandberg, Glenn
Comment I-534-1	The planned rebuilding of Albany's Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge presents a one-time, unique opportunity to restore the pedestrian / bicycle walkway between both sides of the Hudson River.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Santiago, Jennifer
Comment I-535-1	The planned rebuilding of Albany's Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge presents a one-time, unique opportunity to restore the pedestrian / bicycle walkway between both sides of the Hudson River.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Santos, Rob
Comment I-536-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles

-The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-530-1.

Commenter **Savage, Anne**

Comment I am writing to express my strong support for re-establishing pedestrian and cycling access in the construction of the New Livingston Avenue Bridge.

I-537-1 The bridge was originally built as a multi-modal facility, and the benefits of returning it to its original role are noted in several planning documents including the Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2011), the City of Rensselaer Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update (2011), the Albany Master Bike Plan (2009), the Hudson River Crossing Study (2008), the Tech Valley Trails Regional Trails Plan (2007), the Patroon Creek Greenway Plan (2004), the Rensselaer County Trail from the Livingston Ave. Bridge to the Troy-Menands Bridge (2004), and the Regional Enterprise for a Vital Economy and Sustainable Transportation (REVEST) (1998).

I add my voice to that of the Albany County Legislature, City of Albany Common Council, Rensselaer County legislature, and the City of Rensselaer Common Council. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Council and Conservancy who have all voted to unanimously support the reconstruction of the walkway.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter **Scammell, G.**

Comment Simply no need for anyone to fund this except those who use it.

I-538-1

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter **Scavo, Dominick**

Comment Here we have the chance to get a high speed rails in our community and now if the 125mph rail is chosen it will by pass Utica. Once again the area that time forgot will be forgotten again. I urge you to include Utica nad go with the 110 mph, this is fast enough. It will give the community an opportunity to get on a train and proceed to their destination with no problems. Please do not forget that NANO Utica will be here and wouldn't it be nice if can offer high speed rail service to NYC to the new employees who may want to visit NYC for a day or two instead of traveling to UTICA or ALBANY.

I-539-1

By the way if you have anything to do with it how about passing the Adirondack Railroad extension from Utica to Lake Placid talk about increasing tourism. I am sure the snowmobilers can work out a compromise, we have a lot going for us...MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Schanne, Joseph

Comment I-540-1 I remember the buffalo terminal as a kid with the big buffalo inside what a solid bldg. with history!!! People would love to see these vacant treasures to make a come back. Please look into using it!!!

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Scheyer, Lawrence W., Attorney at Law, Attorney at Law

Comment I-541-1 any true high speed passenger service we introduce Upstate has got to operate on its own dedicated right of way.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, the majority of which consists of dedicated third track.

Commenter Scheyer, Lawrence W., Attorney at Law, Attorney at Law

Comment I-541-2 Accordingly, I strongly urge you to advocate for the setting aside of existing railroad right of way (and making additional acquisitions, as necessary) that are required for creating a

continuous, dedicated right of way that is needed to support the next generation of truly safe and efficient high speed surface transportation in New York State.

Response Your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program discussing the need for dedicated right-of-way have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, the majority of which consists of dedicated third track. Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way to minimize the impact on surrounding communities and environment.

Commenter Schmidt, Dawn

Comment I-542-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-540-1.

Commenter Schou, Bertil

Comment I-543-1 I am writing to support the effort to restore the bicycle and pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge when it is rebuilt or replaced.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Schroeder, Tim

Comment I-544-1 I think that the 90B and 110 options seem like very sensible ways to improve both passenger and freight transport.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to these different alternatives, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and

	would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Schroeder, Tim
Comment I-544-2	I am wondering if you had also perhaps considered a "110e" that also would electrify the existing corridor?
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and on electrifying the 110 Alternative. In developing the operating criteria for the different alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS, the focus was to utilize technologies that would be compatible with existing operation and within available project funding. Electrification would require some unique engineering challenges in maintaining the vertical clearances for some of the common trackage with CSX Transportation. Also, the frequency of service with the increase from four to eight round-trips west of Albany would not support the level of investment required to electrify the trackage at this time. Alternative 110 was dismissed from further consideration, based on greater right-of-way impacts, since CSXT would require a 30-foot track offset from freight for trains operating at this speed.
Commenter	Schultz, F. Justin
Comment I-545-1	I feel that the buffalo central terminal should be included for all high speed rail proposals from the New York State DOT
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-540-1.
Commenter	Seefeldt, Joanne
Comment I-546-1	Opening up the Buffalo railroad terminal to high speed rail traffic makes perfect sense. Please consider and support using the old Buffalo railroad terminal through the Empire Corridor Project.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-540-1.
Commenter	Seiders, Daniel
Comment I-547-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development

-The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-540-1.

Commenter Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-548-1 High Speed Rail will be an important part of society in both the coming years and beyond.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-548-2 The most beneficial alternative is the 125 mph HSR for many reasons.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Seifritz, Griffin, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-548-3 Without high speed rail New York will not be able to grow and prosper to become the society that we want. The shinkansen high speed rail in Japan traveled at speeds of 130 mph, shuttling 100,000 passengers in its first three years of service. There is no reason New York cannot achieve the level of success with our high speed rail.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for reasons outlined in the preceding response. Alternative 90B would also result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Semler, Dylan

Comment I-549-1 The alternative with 125 MAS distinguishes itself in the following ways:
 * It is the fastest of the remaining alternatives
 * It is the safest of the remaining alternatives
 * It is the only remaining alternative that calls for powering trainsets via electricity along the majority of the trackway
 * It offers the most viable alternative to air travelers between NYC and upstate cities, helping to relieve the congestion of the NYC area airports
 For the reasons stated above, I strongly support the 125 MAS alternative.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the

costs for the Preferred Alternative). As described in the preceding response, Alternative 90B would also result in the least freight delays and best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Semler, Dylan

Comment I-549-2 Section 2.2.2 discusses the current transportation market in the Empire Corridor. For this discussion, the automobile market was only determined based on trips taken over the New York State Thruway (I-90 and I-87). However, for travel between New York City and the three major upstate markets: Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo/Niagara Falls, a rational automobile driver would take a route through the southern tier because it is more direct. Therefore these automobile trips are not accounted for in the data presented in this section. While Appendix B acknowledges the limitations to the methodology for determining automobile trips, it does not state the severity of this limitation. Because the New York State Thruway represents a slower *and* costlier travel route, the data presented in Exhibit 2-11 severely understate the automobile market between New York City and Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo. At a minimum, this shortfall should be explicitly stated in Section 2.2.2 as well as the caption to Exhibit 2-11. At best, a proper sampling should be attempted in order to accurately determine this market size. As it stands presently, the data not only useless, but actually misleading. There are other ways in which the market is understated in this section. It does not consider trips that start in the Empire Corridor and terminate just outside the corridor, like Toronto, Boston, New Jersey, or Philadelphia, the latter already having very frequent, high speed rail service. The ramifications of this understatement propagate to the ridership and revenue forecasting.

Response Thank you for your comment. Exhibit 2-11 of the Tier 1 DEIS (Exhibit E-4 of the Tier 1 FEIS) was intended to be a conservative estimate of the automobile market for many of the reasons noted in your comment.

Commenter Semler, Dylan

Comment I-549-3 Has the group considered a 125 MAS alternative where the 4 regional Empire Corridor West trains terminate at Syracuse?

Response Thank you for your comments regarding the Alternative 125, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the alternatives considered for further study. Alternative 125 includes service in the Empire Corridor West from Albany to Buffalo, including service through Syracuse.

Commenter Semler, Dylan

Comment I-549-4 Section 3.5 of Appendix B speaks of "Appendix 3". Is this Appendix C?
Section 3.3 of Appendix B should be numbered Section 3.2.2
Section 3.2.1 of Appendix B refers to the "Buffalo-Erie Metropolitan Region" Do you mean Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Region?

Response Thank you for your comments. Sections 3.2.1, 3.3, 3.5 of Appendix B the Tier 1 EIS document have been reviewed and revised to clarify these references in the document.

Commenter Sennett, John

Comment I-550-1 I support Alternative 110.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.

Commenter	Sexton, Laura
Comment I-551-1	I am for the 125 alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which has been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Sexton, Luke
Comment I-552-1	Alternative 125 would best suit the needs of New York
Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, regarding Alternative 125, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined in the preceding response. Alternative 90B would also result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Sexton, Luke
Comment I-552-2	I would like to give my support to the high speed rail systems that have been proposed. At least 100 miles per hour.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Shanebrook, Robert
Comment I-553-1	I have used high speed rail several times in Europe and Asia. I do not think it would be a wise use of resources to pursue high speed rail across New York State this at this time.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Shants, Terry
Comment I-554-1	New York State does not need a high speed train. The cost of running and maintaining a high speed train would be astronomical. For scarcely populated upstate New York, the expense of this project would outweigh any benefit the train would provide. No one has mentioned the ticket prices or the cost of upkeep after the initial project is put into place. Many people take a bus to NYC because it is cheaper than taking the current train. A one hour time difference would not make the high speed train a viable option, considering the added expense. When people travel to Buffalo, they want their cars. The American people like their automobiles. New York wants to spend billions for a train while our cities are in financial trouble, roads are crumbling and need to be widened in some places, bridges need repair and schools are failing. Where is the common sense?

Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Shapp, Mark
Comment I-555-1	So has NYStateDOT finally made its peace with a 90mph maximum?
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Shapp, Mark
Comment I-555-2	I would be pleased with reliably being to operate across the state at 79! I would be pleased if funding was available only to re-engineer the railroad for the benefit of CSX and Amtrak with re-configured chokepoints and higher crossover speeds at interlockings.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Shapp, Mark
Comment I-555-3	And what of the bridge over the Seneca River dry bed out at MP320? Maximum authorized speed over that bridge is, I believe, 40mph. Surely NYStateDOT doesn't want 90mph trains to have to reduce to 40mph at MP320.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Service Development Plan identifies the Seneca River Bridge Replacement to eliminate the speed restriction as a component project. Elimination of segments of the Empire Corridor that slow train movements has been part of the review process by the FRA and NYSDOT in determining the Preferred Alternative. In Tier 2 assessments, individual projects or groups of projects for the Preferred Alternative will undergo a more detailed evaluation to further advance design.
Commenter	Shapp, Mark
Comment I-555-4	And what of Metro North territory from approximately MP46 to POU? Are there plans to expand track capacity there? If not there is going to be congestion and delays trying to add more Amtrak frequencies.
Response	Your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Improvements to the Empire Corridor in Metro-North territory were incorporated as part of Alternative 90A, which is part of the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 EIS reviews the operation of multiple tracks, including developing specific track diagrams and modeling and simulation of rail operations to identify the necessary infrastructure projects that will improve travel times and the reliability of service. Details on each of the alternatives being considered can be found in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Shapp, Mark
Comment I-555-5	Also what of upgrading Tk3 between CP72 and CP75? Amtrak sometimes has to go that way when two MNR trains are in the depot and Tk3 is cleared for 30mph only.
Response	Thank you for your comments. A component project of Alternative 90A addresses track upgrades in this area, and the 90A improvements are included in the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Shearer, Adam

Comment I-556-1	I feel that adding high-speed railways to New York would be very beneficial to our state.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sheldon, Jerry
Comment I-557-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Sheridan, Jim
Comment I-558-1	Let's have a Livingston Avenue Bridge that does it all.
Response	<p>Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.</p>
Commenter	Shipherd, Sam

Comment I-559-1	I am enthused to hear that improvements to our rail infrastructure are in discussion. As a resident of Albany, I very much hope for better service out of Albany.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will increase the frequency of service and travel times out of Albany.
Commenter	Shipherd, Sam
Comment I-559-2	Also as a resident of Albany, I ask that any updates to the system include provisions for pedestrian and bike access. The Livingstone Avenue Bridge in Albany should be updated to include passage for bikes and pedestrians.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Shusler, Irene
Comment I-560-1	YES! we need a faster way to get to NYC.
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sillars, Rodger James
Comment I-561-1	As a nation we need the leadership of NY in high speed rail and revival of service to Buffalo Central Terminal!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-557-1.
Commenter	Skill, Lisa
Comment I-562-1	I am voicing my support for the need for a pedestrian/cyclist pathway over the to-be-replaced Livingston Ave. Rail Road Bridge.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Skompinski, Carl B.
Comment I-563-1	I would like to argue for Buffalo's Central Terminal to be a stop along the HS Rail line. The \$1.5M identified for improvements does not do the station justice - so why spend a penny on it. Buffalo needs a signature terminal. here is discussions in the community to

extend light rail to Buffalo's Airport, which would run to Buffalo's Central Terminal. There is also community discussion on revamping a commuter rail loop "The Belt Line" to loop to various part of the city. All three line - High Speed, Airport Extension, and The Belt Line all come together at Buffalo's Central Terminal. SO it's a natural place to place the terminal.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 557-1.

Commenter Skompinski, Carl B.

Comment I-563-2 I am in support of High Speed Rail through NYS although I think that speeds of 110/125 are not going to cut it for modern travel.

Response Thank you for your comments regarding the High Speed Rail, Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, it was determined that the focus would be on a range of options, with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.

Commenter Skompinski, Carl B.

Comment I-563-3 The plan needs to eliminate the Depew station and move gates to Buffalo's Central Terminal.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 557-1.

Commenter Skowron, Frank

Comment I-564-1 I am disappointed in the fact that the 125 Plan does not have an option to stop in Utica, my hometown. With the NanoCenter opening in the near future a 125 option to go from Utica to Albany would be a nice option but given the est. price of the 125 option the 90B option seems to be the best value.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica (doubling the frequency).

Commenter Smcarelli, (No First Name)

Comment I-565-1	High speed magnetic tubes should be the future of NY transportation. Please do some research on it before we spend 14B to move in the wrong direction
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Smietana, Sophie
Comment I-566-1	The Central Terminal is ideal.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 557-1.
Commenter	Smigelski, Casey
Comment I-567-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 557-1.
Commenter	Smith, David C.
Comment I-568-1	The absolute test of long term success is speed and the creation of a system that will be built with the ability to incrementally upgrade speeds over time. Building anything less than that will not serve the long term interests of NY State.

Response	Thank you for your comments, supporting the program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative. The selection of the Preferred Alternative included consideration of constructability, and one of the advantages of Alternative 90B is that more of the additional trackage is constrained to the existing right-of-way (than Alternatives 110 or 125) and benefits can accrue within 2 to 5 years of the start of construction. The program schedule is outlined in the Service Development Plan, and building individual segments and supporting infrastructure, based on identification of funding and other factors, may follow an incremental approach to bringing the program into revenue service.
Commenter	Smith, David C.
Comment I-568-2	The biggest problem will be the opposition that will emerge and potentially delay construction until the proposed level of service is already dated technology. We could never build the Transcontinental Railroad today with all of the NIMBY's.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Smith, David C.
Comment I-568-3	Please consider a stop in Wayne County too, because it is on the longest stretch of the Empire Corridor without a station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. At this time, the program focuses on improving intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls, using existing stations. Adding stations to the route could be part of future studies for expanding service beyond the current area outlined in the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Smith, Max
Comment I-569-1	My name is Max Smith and I believe we need to save the section of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad between Big Moose and Saranac Lake. Many people who snow mobile and hike through the Adirondacks want to rip up the tracks and turn it into a hiking trail. We need to save the tracks because it is the only route through the heart of the Adirondacks. Also the scenery is beautiful. The line was busy during the 1980 Winter Olympics bringing people to and from Lake Placid.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. The program considers improvement alternatives for the Empire Corridor between New York City and Albany and Albany to Niagara Falls. Improvements in Empire Service would also improve service on regional lines that use the same trackage, such as Amtrak's Adirondack Line. However, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, a separate right of way, would not follow the areas outlined in the program and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor. Utica's train station has been extensively restored in partnership with Oneida County, and recently had an additional platform constructed on the westbound side that also provides connections with the Adirondack Scenic Railroad.
Commenter	Smith, Max
Comment I-569-2	Another thing we should save the line because the Saranac and North Creek Railroad would allow us to run their passenger cars through the area such as dome and sleeper cars. The Saranac & North Creek operates out of Saranac Lake and it will be nice for them to help us to run trains to and from Saranac Lake. If the tracks get ripped up, it will ruin our history and business. Save the railroad!

Response	Thank you for your comments. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. However, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, a separate right of way, would not follow the areas outlined in the program and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Smith, Max
Comment I-569-3	My name is Max Smith and I believe we need high speed rail service in New York State.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Smith, Max
Comment I-569-4	we need a high speed rail system to replace the turboliners that is safer, fast, and environment friendly. Also, there is no overnight passenger train that runs between Albany and Niagara Falls except for Amtrak train 49 "Lake Shore Limited." Amtrak used to run train 65 and 66 an overnight train of "Maple Leaf" but due to lack of ridership, train 65 and 66 were eliminated many years ago. If we have an overnight high speed train, we should have sleeping cars.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding overnight train service needs on the Empire Corridor. Comments, for improvements to the service, have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan for the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program and the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Operating timetables will be examined in further detail in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Tanti, Carol
Comment I-570-1	I'm interested in, you know, having trains that are going west that have, west of Albany, that have the same potential that we can make a day trip to another city and then come home in the same day.
Response	Your comments regarding schedules and travel times have been considered in the development of the Service Development Plan. Although final future timetables have not been determined, Appendix D of the Tier 1 EIS provides simulated future timetables for each of the program alternatives. A day trip from Albany to western cities within the state was examined in the Service Development Plan developed for the Preferred Alternative. Operating timetables will be examined in further detail in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Smith, Robert
Comment I-571-1	only the Base MAS is reasonable and necessary at this time.
Response	Thank you for your comments in the support of the Base Alternative. Operating benefits, capital requirements and responsiveness to passenger needs have been part of the criteria used for the FRA and NYSDOT to select the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Smith, Robert
Comment I-571-2	I would love to see 90A or B but the cost not only to build these and to operate them precludes there adoption, given the poor state of NY's economy at present and presumably in the near and far future.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and environmental impacts.
Commenter	Smith, Stephen
Comment I-572-1	I vote for option 110 it seems the best value although its has potential for high adverse affects for the "historic" impact area. It would be good to try to avoid as many adverse affects to that area as possible.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Smithling, Cody
Comment I-573-1	Let me just start by saying that the 125 MPH should be out of the question. Not only would it require more money to build a whole new line, but it would go around the city of Utica.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Smithling, Cody
Comment I-573-2	The economy of the Utica/Rome area is already on the rebound. With new drone jobs at Griffiss International and Nano technology jobs coming to the area, investors or outside business partners from NYC would most likely love the ability to travel on high speed rail rather than paying a ton of money for airlines. Union Station is also Utica's only primary transportation connection to other cities in the state. The closest airport that offers an opportunity for civilians to travel outside of CNY is Hancock International in Syracuse. I am in high favor of any resolution that includes Utica as a stop on the new high speed rail line.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, relating to preserving and providing train service for the cities of Utica and Rome, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As outlined in the preceding response, Alternative 90B would improve the frequency of service to Utica and Rome, unlike Alternative 125, which would not provide express service to these cities.
Commenter	Smith, Wayne
Comment I-574-1	I believe the 125 option would be the best solution to help entice people out of planes and on to trains.

Response	Thank you for providing your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, as described in the preceding responses.
Commenter	Snodgrass, Randall
Comment I-575-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.</p>
Commenter	Soman, Sheldon
Comment I-576-1	If we are going to spend money on high speed rail, it makes sense to go for the highest speed possible. We should try to have the 125 mph speed
Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Soman, Sheldon
Comment I-576-2	I am in favor of the NYS High Speed rail improvements. The plan looks great

Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sopchak, Carl
Comment I-577-1	I don't see the 125 MPH Option worth the cost
Response	Thank you for your comments concerning the 125 Alternative, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sopchak, Carl
Comment I-577-2	Looking at the options, IMHO, that line is drawn after the 90 MPH Option A - and maybe even after the Base Option. The difference in cost of these options seems extremely large for the minor incremental benefit.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative, for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Spadafore, Mark
Comment I-578-1	I would encourage all regulatory bodies to not only do the improvements for higher speed rail, but to look at installing "mag lev" tracks across Upstate.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Spula, Jack Bradigan
Comment I-579-1	I strongly favor "Alternative 125." This plan offers both the best, fastest service of all the alternatives under consideration, and it also literally lays the groundwork for eventual development of ~200 mph service with state-of-the-art equipment. Do not take this as my rejecting Alternatives 90A. 90B or 100, however. There's no doubt we must move beyond the status quo and seriously upgrade passenger rail across New York State. But we should aim for the highest level of service possible.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For the reasons outlined above, very high speed rail was dismissed from consideration in the Tier 1 EIS. Alternative 125 was dismissed from further consideration, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Stadler, Rebecca

Comment I-580-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 575-1.</p>
Commenter	Staley, Bian
Comment I-581-1	<p>How can the NYS DOT hope to maintain a high speed rail line when you can't keep Route 8 or Rt 28 or Rt 12 in decent shape? We have THOUSANDS of bridges that are crumbling, wouldn't the money be better spent fixing what we already have?</p> <p>No way, no high speed rail, Not in this New York.</p>
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the Empire Corridor Program. In selecting the Preferred Alternative, the program cost and public investment have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT.</p>
Commenter	Stamm, Corina
Comment I-582-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	<p>Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with</p>

	evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-575-1.
Commenter	Stanlis, Ingrid
Comment I-583-1	Although the fastest option will cost the most, I strongly support the fastest option.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 125 was dismissed from further consideration, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Stark, Barry E.
Comment I-584-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Stevens, Marty
Comment I-585-1	Buffalo needs to utilize the Central Station to get it back to its original beauty and stature. The High Speed Rail would be a fantastic solution to utilization.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.
Commenter	Stewart, Jr., Robert J.
Comment I-586-1	Yeah, I'd be willing to spend a little bit more in my taxes for this imperative project!!
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Stieger, Matt
Comment I-587-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-584-1.
Commenter	Stimmer, Jonathan
Comment I-588-1	It is 2014, let's build a high speed rail system in New York.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Stimmer, Jonathan
Comment I-588-2	You probably already guessed that I am living in Japan. Japan in many ways is the gold standard for high speed rail everywhere. The Bullet Train or JR Shinkansen as it is known here in Japan; is both profitable and efficient. It is much safer than road traffic. In more than 50 years of operation, not a single person has perished on the Shinkansen in a train crash -- in a country that experiences thousands of earthquakes every year.

Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Stimmer, Jonathan
Comment I-588-3	I say, go all the way, and build a maglev. At least build an experimental track over a short distance.
Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Stimmer, Jonathan
Comment I-588-4	I have read the plans for the upgrading of NY State to high speed rail. Go for it. Even at 125 mph, we are already behind the rest of the world.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed from further consideration, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Stimmer, Jonathan
Comment I-588-5	But having a maximum speed of 125 mph in the Empire Corridor is better than what we have today.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined in the preceding response. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-1	Has any consideration been given to purchasing the mainline tracks of CSX' Mohawk, Rochester and Niagara subdivisions as part of the project? Dedicated passenger tracks would be in the center of the corridor as previous rather than to one side. Minimum track centers could be based on FRA regulations and not CSX mandates. Construction could be done by competitive bid rather than CSX force account. a. Fund purchase through bonds issued by a State Rail Authority (similar to STERA) secured by the value of the corridor and by future trackage rights revenues b. Use trackage rights revenues from Amtrak and freight railroads to fund the debt service, operation and maintenance of the corridor. c. Offset the property tax impact to municipalities with PILOT payments, phasing them out over a 10 or 20 year period.
Response	Thank you for providing your comments. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates the range of alternatives to optimize rail operations along the Empire Corridor, and the Preferred Alternative will add approximately 370 miles of additional trackage largely within the existing right-of-way

	to better segregate passenger and freight rail. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to improve intercity rail passenger service in New York State through infrastructure investments and operational improvements.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-2	Has a change of locomotive for through trains at Albany-Rensselaer been considered? This would free up additional (3,200 hp) P32AC-DM dual-mode locomotives for increased service on the Empire Corridor South, and allow use of Amtrak's 4,200 hp P42DC units West, East and North of Albany-Rensselaer. When future replacement locomotives or trainsets are ordered, this would require the purchase of fewer of the more expensive and complex dual-mode units, reducing capital and operating costs.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The acquisition of trainsets/locomotives and coaches to support service expansion is addressed in the Service Development Plan. Equipment needs would be further refined as part of Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-3	Why was electric traction selected for the rejected 125 mph alternative on the existing corridor? Capital and O&M costs for electrification are staggering! Restored passenger tracks on the corridor can be constructed to FRA class 7 (geometry permitting) if Barrier Gates are used at level crossings. Technology to operate conventional diesel-electric trains at 125 mph service speeds has existed since at least 1976. Bombardier and Talgo have FRA Tier II compliant designs ready to go into production, and Siemens (in partnership with Cummins engines) is developing a new 125 mph locomotive for Illinois DOT.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, relating to the types of equipment to be operated, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-4	For Alternative 125, if a dedicated, grade-separated ROW and electrification are proposed, what makes the 160 mph alternative over \$12 billion more than the 125 mph alternative when the infrastructure is virtually identical? And why is the 220 mph alternative another \$12 billion above the 160 mph alternative?
Response	Your comments regarding alternative cost and selections have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In developing the alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, cost estimates were determined on the engineering and infrastructure that were required to support each alternative. For the 160 mph and 220 mph MAS alternatives, between Albany-Rensselaer and New York City, there would be an entirely new station and market configuration, with construction of new right-of-way on a viaduct structure aligned with existing highways (assumed to be I-87/NY State Thruway). Physical and environmental characteristics of the existing Empire Corridor South would result in either extraordinary encroachments and

	impacts or a diversion so far to the east as to fall outside the Empire Corridor as defined. The Very High Speed (VHS) alternatives were rejected for their extremely high costs (nearly triple the next costly alternative)– due to the likelihood of significant community and environmental impacts and the significant engineering design difficulties necessary to create a sufficiently straight track alignment to permit these speeds. Details on the cost of each of the alternatives considered can be found in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-5	Please reconsider a 125 mph alternative on the existing corridor, based on State ownership, without electrification. Excluding the purchase price of the Corridor, capital costs should be incrementally higher (say 10%) than Alternative 110, or about \$68 billion. O&M costs would likely increase similarly- approx. \$190 million. If revenues follow the pattern, then the operating deficit would only be approx. \$26.4m compared to \$59m for the current Alternative 125.
Response	Your comments have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In developing the engineering criteria for operating at 125 miles per hour, it was determined that the current alignment used by the existing service on CSX Transportation right of way was not acceptable. It was also determined that the engineering requirements for 125 mile per hour operation would have significant environmental impacts on the communities along the route and that the 125 alternative should be developed on a new alignment in many locations between Albany and Buffalo.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-6	Use Barrier Gates in normally closed mode to secure low-traffic private crossings. The gates will only open upon request to the Rail Dispatcher. For higher traffic private crossings (as to an industry) consider normally open Barrier Gates, or possibly normally open during business hours and normally closed at all other times.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding grade crossing safety and operations. Section 2.6. Safety Considerations, and Appendix E, Section 3.3.4 Grade Crossings discuss safety and grade crossings. Rail operations at individual crossings will be further reviewed in Tier 2 assessments for the program, as individual projects are further developed for constructability.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
Comment I-589-7	Use existing Defect Detector technology to ensure safe operation of freight and high-speed passenger service on FRA minimum track separation. To maximize corridor capacity, consider allowing fast Intermodal freights to share the passenger tracks, if capable of maintaining a 60 mph minimum speed and traversing increased super elevation on curves.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Rail operations along the Empire Corridor on Metro North Railroad, Amtrak and CSX Transportation are already protected by a variety of defect detectors to inspect the trains for dragging equipment and other wheel and axle irregularities.
Commenter	Stockman, Mark, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation, Emergency Relief Unit, Local Programs Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation

Comment I-589-8	Initially, upgrade entire corridor to 3 or 4 bi-directional tracks, with PTC signaling, freight tracks engineered to FRA class 5 and passenger tracks engineered to FRA class 6 and 7 where practical. This will allow use of current Amtrak equipment at its full potential of 110 mph. Next, make incremental improvements to the corridor, eliminating speed restrictions, capacity constraints, points of conflict, and improving both freight and passenger performance. Finally, when 125 mph passenger equipment becomes available, upgrade crossings to Barrier Gates to allow operation at Class 7 speeds (125 mph.)
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. The 125 alternative includes creating new trackage on a new alignment for much of the route west of Albany and was dismissed due to higher costs and impacts. Diagrams of the installation of additional trackage is shown in Appendix A (Volume 2) of the Tier 1 EIS for each of the alternatives.
Commenter	Stokes, Belle Louise
Comment I-590-1	Will comment on plans when have gathered thoughts, but do agree need to plan for world-standard high speeds, dedicated passenger rails + integrated systems + CENTRAL TERMINAL as Buffalo hub!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Stowe, Richard
Comment I-591-1	Please consider siting a train station in Albany north of downtown and the State Capitol Design it as a last mile station that is walkable and bikeable. Include bike share.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding a new station in Albany. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is a corridor-level evaluation that considers use of the existing stations. The inclusion of additional stations or expanded pedestrian/bicycle access along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.
Commenter	Stowe, Richard
Comment I-591-2	Please include bike (bicycle) parking in the new train sets that are procured for improvements HSRECP.

Response	Your comments, relating to the accessibility of bicycles on trains operated in the future, has been considered as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the design for that project, or group of projects including looking at options for pedestrian/bicycle accommodations.
Commenter	Stowe, Richard
Comment I-591-3	I support the 110 mph alternative.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Stuczynski, Ken JP
Comment I-592-1	If Buffalo is to be part of the high-speed rail system, I sincerely hope the Buffalo Central Terminal (old NYCT) will be a part of it.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for station improvements in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo, including a new station development at Buffalo-Exchange Street and updates at the Buffalo-Depew Station, are discussed in the response to Comment I-590-1.
Commenter	Sullivan, E.B.
Comment I-593-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for station improvements in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo, including a new station development at Buffalo-Exchange Street and updates at the Buffalo-Depew Station, are discussed in the response to Comment I-590-1.
Commenter	Sullivan, Susan

Comment I-594-1	I am so in favor of this. Albany needs this!
Response	Thank you for comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Sunser, Penny
Comment I-595-1	Just a quick note to say how very much I oppose the High Speed Rail proposal.
Response	Comments from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Sweat, Laura
Comment I-596-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-590-1.
Commenter	Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-597-1	I think that the High Speed Rail would not be a great idea. I think this because all of the options range from \$390 million to \$14.71 billion. New York state is in major debt.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School
Comment I-597-2	I understand that the "No Build" alternative includes the option called "Base Alternative" and that this includes 8 projects that have already been approved and started. This option is costing NYS 290 million dollars. I think it is financially irresponsible for NYS to spend all of this money.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Base Alternative includes eight projects that have either been built or are under construction

that address previously identified capacity constraints. Individual projects, or groups of projects for the Preferred Alternative, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the design for that project, or group of projects.

Commenter Sweeney, Cameron, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-597-3 Another reason that the High Speed rail is not a good idea is for environmental reasons.

Response Thank you for commenting on High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Social, economic and environmental factors have all been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. The net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.

Commenter Swift, Adam

Comment I-598-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Szczupak, Anne

Comment I-599-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-1 Of the four Alternatives most relevant, 90A, 90B, 110, and 125, I cannot agree with E.S.P.A. in thinking that Alternative 110 is the superior proposal. Rather, I believe that it adds too little improvement over Alternative 90B so that the meager benefit does not offset its extra expense of (roughly) \$750,000 million.

Response Thank you for your comment, relating to alternative selection, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-2 I really feel that Alternative 125 is the best proposal, mainly because it offers the highest MAS, the highest average speed, and because its trains would be electrically propelled on Corridor West.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternative 125.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-3 Might it be advisable to subtract one or two trains from the 15 proposed to run on the 125mph new corridor and add them to the existing corridor so that some degree of improved scheduling may be afforded Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, and Rome?

Response Your comments regarding train service on the Empire Corridor have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, Alternative 90B will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-4 If the subtracting and adding of trains is not an alternative, might it then be possible to consider that along the new Albany-Syracuse corridor an “intermediate” stop be considered.

Response Thank you for your comments. As addressed in the preceding response, Alternative 125 has been dismissed from further consideration. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would improve frequency of service to existing stations, particularly west of Albany where frequency would roughly double. Alignments, physical improvements, and service frequency for each of the program alternatives are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-5 In consideration of the route proposed for construction of the Alternative 125 West corridor, I wonder if any thought had been given, or study undertaken, in the route of the abandoned ex-West Shore Railroad that had at one time run from (south of) Albany to Buffalo. Its right-of-way is still mostly unused, and it also runs in a closer proximity to the cities that your proposed 125 corridor bypasses.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). The West Shore Railroad right of way, in many locations, has been redeveloped for other uses and is still utilized by CSXT in the Rochester area. It does not offer access to Albany-Rensselaer Station or a direct connection to Manhattan.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-6 I also feel that a “second look” may be in order for Alternative 160, which NYSDOT had initially ruled out due to its high environmental impact and prohibitive cost (\$37 Billion).

Response Thank you for your comments. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focused on studying alternatives using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Taibi, John

Comment I-600-7 Lastly, in your Alternative 125 portion of the program one of the maps shown located Utica lying to the west of Rome. I’m sure this was an oversight and that you know, in actuality, it lies to the east.

Response	Thank you for your observation. The presentation will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect any corrections in the geographical location of stations along the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Tanck, Carol
Comment I-601-1	Please drop the high speed rail project.
Response	Comments from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Tanck, Ron
Comment I-602-1	Please drop this ridiculous project before another penny is wasted.
Response	Comments from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Taylor, Charles
Comment I-603-1	<p>As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for station improvements in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo, including a new station development at Buffalo-Exchange Street and updates at the Buffalo-Depew Station, are discussed in the response to Comment I-598-1.
Commenter	Taylor, Elizabeth
Comment I-604-1	I am concerned that the proposed high speed rail corridor would negatively affect business operations.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. In the Tier 1 EIS, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the positive impacts of the program. Specifically, Section 4.3, Regional Population and Employment, and Business Districts,

discusses how the program will create employment opportunities and support the labor markets in the regions served by the improved rail service.

Commenter Taylor, Elizabeth

Comment I-604-2 I encourage the selection of the base alternative to maintain our ability to easily use and rely on the freight rail network for safe, reliable and efficient service. The proposed 90A, 90B, and 110 alternatives put forth in the DEIS commingle freight and high speed rail, significantly constraining freight rail operations.

Response Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. As noted in the prior responses, the addition of dedicated third and fourth tracks along Empire Corridor where freight operations are heaviest will represent an improvement in freight operations, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Tedesco, Greg

Comment I-605-1 I am so excited about the potential for high speed rail in NY! I am not sure if you are aware but there is a perfect property and complex to re use and make into a wonderful train station, it is called the bBuffalo Central terminal. No need to build a new facility just restore an already built beautiful historical building!

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Terenzetti, Terry

Comment I-606-1 Please ensure that the High-Speed Rail stops in UTICA
PLEASE DO NOT EXCLUDE THE UTICA-ROME AREA AND THE MOHAWK VALLEY FROM A DIRECT STOP ON THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL, REGARDLESS OF THE TRAINS SPEED.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Terrana, Tammy L.

Comment I-607-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-605-1.

Commenter Terry, Carol

Comment I-608-1 I am fully in favor of anything to improve the rail service in NY State. I frequently travel via rail from Syracuse to NYC. I would like to utilize the system more – it needs improvement – especially from Syr. To Albany

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would substantially increase the frequency of service west of Albany. This alternative would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Teter, Edward and Barbara

Comment I-609-1 As a NY State taxpayer I fully support proposal #125 to drastically improve the Empire Corridor.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternative 125, while improving passenger and freight operations as described in the preceding response.

Commenter Thomas, Erin

Comment I-610-1 Please consider the value of the walk/bike component of the community

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian and bicycle access. Currently, bicycles can be accommodated on the Empire Corridor, but require separate ticketing. Comments

from the public, relating to the accessibility of bicycles and pedestrians, have been considered in the design of station facilities and other facilities constructed as separate projects along the route and in the Tier 1 assessments for Empire Corridor. Individual projects, or groups of projects, will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance design for that project, or group of projects including looking at options for pedestrian/bicycle accommodations.

Commenter	Thompson, Ted
Comment I-611-1	Double-tracking between Albany and Schenectady is vital.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding the need for multiple tracks between Albany and Schenectady. Additional trackage has been installed as part of the Albany-Schenectady Double Track Project, part of the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Thompson, Ted
Comment I-611-2	There is essentially no demand for high speed travel between Buffalo and Albany as witnessed by the absence of direct air service.
Response	Thank you for your comments on High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Currently, at least three major airlines provide air service between Albany and Buffalo, and this had been the fastest growing segment for rail ridership historically, as measured as a percentage of overall growth.
Commenter	Thompson, Ted
Comment I-611-3	while improved Amtrak service between city pairs by judicious upgrades to trackage and signaling (as well as the provision of Wi-Fi on the trains) would seem justifiable, I question whether billions in improved rail passenger service between Albany and Buffalo can be justified.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Thompson, Ted
Comment I-611-4	Therefore, I am comfortable up to Alternative 90A with 90B a consideration for future years if improved ridership justifies the additional cost.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90A, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Thurgs, J.
Comment I-612-1	In favor of the 110. Need to stop in Utica. Like the extra daily train trips and like the 30' distance from the freight line.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the

major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Tobin, Dave

Comment I-613-1 I fully support 110 Alternative. However, I am concerned that by the time that alternative is completed, it will be outdated.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Tonning, Nils A.

Comment I-614-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including

Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter **Torcello, Frank**

Comment
I-615-1 I just want to take a moment to encourage that this project bring the high speed rail line through Buffalo, NY. Ideally the track could come straight from NYC up to Buffalo and then out to Albany, etc.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will improve service along Empire Corridor, providing more frequent, reliable service to Buffalo, Albany, and New York City.

Commenter **Trinder, Stephen**

Comment
I-616-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
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 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
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 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-614-1.

Commenter **True-Frost, Cora**

Comment
I-617-1 My family wholeheartedly embraces the plans for a high speed rail connecting Syracuse and NYC.

Response Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative, which will improve service between NYC and destinations along Empire Corridor West, including Syracuse.

Commenter **Trufelman, Lloyd**

Comment
I-618-1 High speed rail would be a prudent 21st century infrastructure investment for NY State. However a conventional system would be very costly, so I would encourage state planners to investigate the option of testing the Hyperloop,

Response	Thank you for your comment on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing national and regional rail network on the Northeast Corridor. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Tulloch, Timothy
Comment I-619-1	I support the 110 option for these reasons: 1. For not much more cost than that of 90B, the 110 proposal provides an additional 325 miles of dedicated passenger track, providing the maximum segregation--as I understand it--between passenger and freight trains using the corridor. In addition to increasing safety and expediting traffic (for both rail and passenger services), 110 delivers the maximum speed and travel times among the non-electric options. 2. Track and other infrastructure projects under this plan will begin to improve performance incrementally, long before the entire program is completed. Its benefits will be quickly apparent. 3. This plan's maximally improved infrastructure will be better able to handle higher-speed trains that will very likely be developed in the future.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 Alternative, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Tulloch, Timothy
Comment I-619-2	In the hearing and in the informational handouts, I notice the absence of any mention of the fact that this is an international corridor, connecting two megacities, New York and Toronto.
Response	Thank you for your comment. The scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York, and passenger forecasts conservatively exclude trips that may have one trip end in Toronto. The program will improve service that operates along Empire Corridor, including Maple Leaf service that continues into Toronto.
Commenter	Tulloch, Timothy
Comment I-619-3	Further, has any thought been given to cooperation with Canada to improve total NYC-Toronto and Toronto-NYC travel times by upgrading the Canada leg?
Response	Thank you for your comments. The scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. Additional improvements on routes in Canada out of this corridor are not being considered as part of the Empire Corridor Program at this time. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to destinations such as Toronto (Maple Leaf Line).
Commenter	Michaelson, Kirsten

Comment I-620-1 When I initially heard about the High Speed Rail Project, it was in a Wall Street Journal article about six months ago. It said it was being orchestrated by the Pullman Company and they were intending to use Pullman-type cars, sleeping cars as part of the project and it was going to go over to Lake Placid. It was a Wall Street article about six or nine months ago and I wonder if any of that is happening still or in the plans?

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. Except for the Lake Shore Limited service, Pullman-type sleeping cars are not envisioned for the Empire Corridor service.

Commenter Michaelson, Kirsten

Comment I-620-2 Did you cover that at the beginning of your talk or is that online, the timetable of how long it will take to build once the project is selected?

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The schedule for implementation of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program was addressed in the Service Development Plan and will be further developed in the Tier 2 assessment. The program will continue with the identification of funding for individual segments of the route and specific projects. As described in Section 6.3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would begin to confer benefits to the users by 2 to 5 years after the start of construction..

Commenter Michaelson, Kirsten

Comment I-620-3 My name is Kirsten Michaelson and my comment is, my vote is for the 125 train with it stopping in Utica.

Response Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Tylicke, Scott

Comment I-621-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for

certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Umhauer, Kitty

Comment I-622-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
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 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Valerio, John

Comment I-623-1 Why not use SYR as a hub and build a high speed rail SYR - BGM - AVP - NYC. Runs North to South. Less stops and train could reach full potential of speed. Current BUF - ALB could be upgraded and used to connect to SYR hub.

Response Thank you for your comments on the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail Program. The scope of the program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls on or near the current Empire Corridor alignment. Comments from the public, for improvements to the service outside of these limits, have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred

	Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT, selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.
Commenter	Vallelonga, Damian
Comment I-624-1	I fully support faster train service throughout the state, and would likely travel more often via train if this were available.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Mink, Dan
Comment I-625-1	To have an average time of 77 miles per hour, I can do that in my car. What is the benefit to the rider as opposed to the massive benefits for unions, for suppliers, for construction companies, for producers of raw materials, all these people benefit greatly but the end user will get virtually no benefit from this.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Van Ness, Cynthia
Comment I-626-1	As a supporter of the National Landmark known as the Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project ? Tier I EIS. Please bring rail back to this extraordinary building!
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-621-1.
Commenter	Van Patten, Chris
Comment I-627-1	Please make this happen! Option 125 sounds like the best possible option.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Van Patten, Chris
Comment I-627-2	One idea: construct a new high speed station in Herkimer.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding a new station in Herkimer. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program evaluates a range of corridor-level service

improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 EIS considers using the existing stations in each of the alternatives. The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.

Commenter Van Riper, Daniel W.

Comment I-628-1 This concerns the Livingston Avenue Bridge in Albany NY, which is disintegrating at the base and desperately needs to be replaced. The new bridge MUST have a dedicated pedestrian walkway AND a dedicated bike lane on BOTH sides.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Van Valin, Robert

Comment I-629-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

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- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
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Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.

Comment I-630-1	I support Alternative 110, partly because of its superior Cost Effectiveness (low Annualized O&M Cost per Rider). However, I also support ongoing planning work for higher-speed alternatives such as 125.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the 110 and 125 Alternatives and the benefits from high speed rail, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125. Although Alternative 110 has the lowest subsidy, the subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Alternative 90B's costs would also be less than that for Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
Comment I-630-2	The Tier 1 DEIS should be updated to reflect current status of the Niagara Falls station
Response	Thank you for your comments. Information on the reconstructed Niagara Falls International Station has been incorporated into the Tier 1 EIS. This facility replaced the existing Amtrak facilities and provides a facility that recognizes the international tourist destination at Niagara Falls, New York and included improvements to the track and signal systems to improve train operations at the new station location. Section 2.5.5 discusses the current status of improvements at stations along Empire Corridor. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS does reflect the current status for the station and the project is included as part of the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
Comment I-630-3	The Empire Corridor High Speed Rail program should not defer improvement/replacement of the downtown Buffalo station until Alternative 125. Buffalo needs a better station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. Alternative 125, which would have required a new or relocated Buffalo station location, has been dismissed from further consideration. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. In the spring of 2017, the committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-629-1.
Commenter	Vaughan, Ph.D., Raymond C.
Comment I-630-4	Alternatives analysis for the Buffalo station is complex and needs to be undertaken as soon as possible. The alternatives should include at least two geographic locations near downtown Buffalo (reuse of restored Central Terminal, and a potential new location immediately north or west of the "Larkinville" area of Buffalo) that are capable of serving trains to/from Cleveland and Chicago as well as trains to/from Niagara Falls and Toronto. Analysis of such alternatives should be sufficiently detailed to show how freight and passenger rail traffic would be separated (e.g., by flyovers or by passenger tracks that remain elevated) at the Belt Line and elsewhere, and should provide at least a preliminary

assessment of light rail and automobile traffic flows (for passengers going to/from the station) in relation to existing light rail and traffic arteries.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-629-1.

Commenter Venturi, Jim

Comment Is 125MPH really high speed rail service?
I-631-1

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, it was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125.

Commenter Venturi, Jim

Comment What are the most traveled flight routes?
I-631-2

Response Thank you for your comments about air travel in the Empire Corridor. Chapter 2 and Appendix E of the Tier 1 EIS provides details on the existing transportation systems in the Empire Corridor, including air travel. A detailed assessment of market demand and projected ridership was completed for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. Ridership and revenue performance have been important considerations by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Venturi, Jim

Comment What about electrifying present service between Albany and New York City?
I-631-3

Response Thank you for your question regarding electric propulsion services in the Empire Corridor. The operating alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor continue to utilize diesel locomotives for the movement of trains between New York City and Albany-Rensselaer in the Hudson Valley. It was determined that diesel-electric locomotives could deliver the same operating performance as electric motive power.

Commenter Venturi, Jim

Comment What about improving times to Montreal?
I-631-4

Response Thank you for your comments. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improving intercity rail passenger service along the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Amtrak service to Montreal is currently provided via the Adirondack Line. New York State has had a long partnership with Amtrak to provide service to Montreal dating back to 1974, and utilizes the tracks of the Canadian Pacific for this route. Over the years, New York State DOT has improved the tracks, including recently new

double track in the area of Ballston Spa, to upgrade passenger trains operations on this route. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to Montreal (Adirondack Line). Improving service to destinations in Canada could be part of future studies for expanding service beyond the current area outlined in the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Verburg, Tom

Comment I-632-1 Please consider constructing a bicycling friendly lane on the Livingston Ave bridge for cyclists.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Vester, Nathan

Comment I-633-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Vincent, Jim

Comment I-634-1 The last thing NY needs is a "high speed rail Empire Corridor." As all high speed rail projects have shown they are not economically feasible and in many cases the overall rail system and equipment will not support them. Less spending and lower taxes will bring more business to NY not projects like this.

Response Concerns from the public on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.

Commenter Vitale, Joe

Comment I-635-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:
 -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
 -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
 -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
 -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
 -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
 -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-633-1.

Commenter Volcko, Meghan, D.S. Ray Middle School, D.S. Ray Middle School

Comment I-636-1 I think that we should support the High Speed Rails. Although it is very costly, building these trains would benefit our economy and people greatly.
 I personally think that the government should fund the Alternative 110 option

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance

Commenter	Waack, Peter
Comment I-637-1	I am deeply concerned about the lack of progress with trains in the US. I understand that train cargo is very important so I don't see a way that the cargo moving and passenger moving can co-exist on the same train tracks. We should do all we can develop our own tracks for passenger travel.
Response	Your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preservation and the improvement of freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of a preferred alternative.
Commenter	Walsh, Charles
Comment I-638-1	There are many more benefits to installing a high-speed railroad system in New York State, which is why the railroad system should be updated to a high-speed rail or at least have the current tracks upgraded so that trains would be able to travel faster than they do now.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail, the majority of which is located within the existing right-of-way.
Commenter	Walter, Christine
Comment I-639-1	With regards to the Livingston Avenue bridge, I support its restoration with full pedestrian and bicycle access.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Walter, Robert C.
Comment I-640-1	the first priority of the state and Amtrak is to increase track and station capacity to reduce conflicts that cause delays.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Walter, Robert C.
Comment I-640-2	Add a third track between Buffalo and Albany dedicated to Amtrak that could offer increased speeds.

Response	Thank you for your suggestion regarding a third track between Albany and Buffalo. As described in the preceding response and Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would add additional trackage, including more than 280 miles of third track between Schenectady and Buffalo.
Commenter	Walters, John
Comment I-641-1	Thoughts and/or studies on faster service are just a waste of money
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Walters, John
Comment I-641-2	Considering the rate of diminishing returns, it makes little sense to look beyond the (90A) plan projected to be in the range of \$1.6 billion.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 90A. Economic costs and benefits, relating to the different alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Walters, John
Comment I-641-3	In any event a track update regardless of the plan selected is a worthy effort.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the infrastructure improvements for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage, located primarily within the existing right-of-way, to better segregate passenger and freight rail.
Commenter	Walton, Richard
Comment I-642-1	A better use of money would be to push up repairs of long neglected roads and bridges before spending on a project that will never see it's projected use claims. The upstate area has little use for mass transit as we are not as densely populated as downstate. If it were not for big and continual subsidies mass transit systems in upstate cities could not survive.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Walton, Richard
Comment I-642-2	If you want to improve rail system from Boston to Washington DC you have a population thru that corridor that should make enough use as to make it viable. After this past winter so many roads in this area need major rehabbing and state grants to cities and towns for road and bridge repairs would be a far better use of any money earmarked for the High Speed Rail Project.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 DEIS, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Empire Corridor route traverses the largest population centers in the state, including New York City, Yonkers, Albany, Rochester, and Buffalo.
Commenter	Wang, Jason

Comment I-643-1	It would seem alternative 90B and 110 are the best alternatives.
Response	Thank you for your comments on these alternatives, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Wang, Jason
Comment I-643-2	The 125 alternative seems utterly ridiculous, however much I would like to see HSR using catenary rather than diesel run throughout the state. Page Accessed From: https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor/contact
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor and was dismissed due to higher costs and impacts.
Commenter	Warner, Tom
Comment I-644-1	Just do it! It has to be good to have a fast, easy and inexpensive rail system from Buffalo to Albany and New York City.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would involve lesser costs and speeds increases than Alternatives 110 and 125 and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way.
Commenter	Washer, Steve
Comment I-645-1	I WOULD LIKE FOR AMTRAK TO INCREASE SPEEDS OF 175 MPH OR 195 MPH
Response	Thank you for your comments concerning very high speed train technologies, which were considered in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, it was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-1	Assumptions about rolling stock, necessary to calculate trip-times, must be clearly stated. Is the assumption a F32 locomotive, 6 Amfleet cars? If not 8 or 9 cars would give different performance.
Response	Thank you for your comment. Equipment for rolling stock for the Preferred Alternative is addressed in Chapter 3 and Appendix E of the Tier 1 EIS. The acquisition of trainsets/locomotives and coaches to support service expansion is addressed in the Service Development Plan. Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed and evaluated as the program moves forward in the Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-2	“New Rolling-Stock” in options 90A, 90B, 110: would it have similar or difference performance?
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding new train set performance for the alternatives considered. The operating performance is similar for the new rolling stock in the different alternatives, and, as addressed in the preceding response, equipment and equipment needs for the alternatives are outlined in the Tier 1 FEIS and the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-3	Locomotive change at Albany: this adds 10 to 20 minutes. Do trip times for 90A, 90B, 110 alternatives assume a locomotive change, or not?
Response	Operating plans for the alternatives include the provisions at Albany-Rensselaer for changing of crews and operating requirements (servicing of locomotives and passenger coaches). Albany-Rensselaer is the main crew headquarter and equipment servicing location on the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-4	125 mph diesel locomotives are being ordered from Siemens, with Cummins QSR95 diesel motors, by a consortium of 5 states with funding by FRA (32 locomotives) 4.a. These provide a different 125 Alternative, costing about \$1 billion less without electrification.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the diesel engine locomotives for Alternative 125 for the High Speed Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and in the selection of the Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-5	These lighter weight, more powerful 4000 HP locomotives will give higher performance even in the 110 alternative. Travel Times with these locomotives should be re-calculated. Since these 125 MPH locomotives have AC drive, a dual-mode version should be easy to produce.
Response	Thank you for your comments on operation with dual-mode locomotives, which is a requirement in the operation of trains between New York City and Albany-Rensselaer in the Hudson Valley. Consideration for the next generation of dual-mode locomotives for this route will include the performance standards necessary for achieving the trip times and maximum operating speeds.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-6	At the Poughkeepsie hearing on the Tier 1 DEIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, you told me that you would be interested in getting more information on the 125 mph Diesel locomotives which are being ordered by a consortium of 5 Midwestern and Western states headed by Illinois DOT. I promised to send links to information. LINKS are given below. I think the availability of `125 mph diesel locomotives has implications for the Empire Corridor Program under 4 headings: (1) An alternative version of the 125 option, not requiring electrification; (2) Reduced travel times for the 110 option, due to higher performance; (3) Higher speeds up to 125 mph may be possible on some segments, in the 110 option, giving a third 'low-impact' 125 option; (4) Dual-Mode version of the locomotive should be easy to produce. I attach brief discussions of these 4 issues following the links.

Response	Thank you for your comments, which have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In the Tier 2 assessments, the FRA and NYSDOT will be reviewing the types of locomotives and rolling stock necessary for High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-7	Availability of 125 mph diesel locomotives provides an alternative variant of the 125 option, without electrification. Under NEPA ('alternatives to the proposed action') this should be mentioned in the EIS, as a 125 sub-option. The biggest difference will probably be about \$1 billion lower cost, by omitting electric catenary, substations etc. The performance of the 125 mph diesel locomotives may also differ from performance of electric locomotives, yielding different trip times. (2) Re-calculate travel times for the 110 option: the 125 mph locomotives are more powerful, 4000 hp instead of 3200 hp for the Dual-Mode GE P32DM locomotives now used on the Empire Corridor, whose continued use is assumed in the DEIS. They will also be lighter.
Response	Thank you for your comment. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Chapter 3 and Section 4.20. For Alternative 125, a dual mode diesel-electric locomotive was considered.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-8	Possible higher speeds in an 'upgraded 110' option. it may be possible to increase speeds on some segments such as Rochester-Buffalo and Syracuse-Utica where there is less curvature, using the 125 mph locomotives and allowing speeds above 110 mph where possible. Travel times might be slightly faster. This might be labelled as a new 'Low-Impact 125 option.'
Response	Thank you for your suggestions regarding opportunities to achieve high speeds and faster service times for Alternative 110. However, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Moreover, Alternative 90B would have fewer environmental impacts than Alternative 110. The operating speeds outlined for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program are determined by thresholds for speeds that correlate with different classes of tracks established by the FRA. Increases to operating speeds of the trains will need to reflect FRA requirements for both the infrastructure and train operations. In the future, additional improvements to the right of way may be required in areas to raise maximum authorized speeds.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-9	Dual-Mode Version of Locomotive. The 35 locomotives in the Illinois DOT order are not dual-mode. However, Siemens states that they have AC motors, which implies that a dual-mode version with third-rail electric pickup should be easy for Siemens to produce, since the power electronics used with AC motors includes virtually all that is needed to control power flow from the third rail. (That is the reason why the GE dual-mode locomotives now used between New York City and Albany have AC motors, unlike most of Amtrak's GE locomotives. The AC circuitry includes circuitry needed to control third-rail power).
Response	Thank you for your comments. Locomotive and rolling stock performance and specifications will be reviewed by the FRA and NYSDOT in advancing the Preferred Alternative outlined in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. It

	should be noted that the locomotives utilized on the Empire Corridor need to be able to function on a 600 volt Direct Current (DC) third rail and locomotives equipped with Alternating Current (AC) traction motors need to carry inverter systems to convert the DC power to AC power, adding to the complexity in the locomotive design.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-10	Unstated Assumptions about Rolling Stock Need to be Clarified. That assumption should be explicitly stated..
Response	Thank you for your comments. The Tier 1 FEIS (Chapter 3 and Appendix E) and the Service Development Plan outlines the assumptions for locomotives and rolling stock.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-11	Unexplained Assumption: 'New Rolling-Stock' in Alternatives 90A, 90B, 110: Will this 'New Rolling-Stock' have different performance from :present rolling-stock, affecting trip times? If so, how will it differ? If not, please state that performance will be unchanged.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The assumptions for locomotives and rolling stock performance are outlined in the Tier 1 FEIS and SDP (as addressed in the preceding response), and the trip times are defined for the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-12	Unclear Assumption: the Costly and Time-Consuming Locomotive Change in Albany: Do travel times in Alternatives 90A, 90B, 110 assume that locomotives will continue to be changed in Albany? Or do they assume no locomotive change? What assumption is being made?
Response	Thank you for your comment. Operating plans for the alternatives include the provisions at Albany-Rensselaer for changing of crews and operating requirements (servicing of locomotives and passenger coaches). Albany-Rensselaer is the main crew headquarter and equipment servicing location on the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. These assumptions are outlined in the Tier 1 FEIS and SDP.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-13	125 mph Siemens Diesel Locomotives: On March 18, 2014, an order was placed by five States headed by Illinois DOT for thirty-two high-speed 125 mph 'Charger' diesel locomotives to be supplied by Siemens with Cummins QSK95 diesel motors, with an option for 225 additional locomotives. These locomotives with 4400 horsepower and a lighter weight of 120 tons will offer higher performance than the current General Electric P32DM locomotives. What trip times on the Empire Corridor would result from use of these locomotives? (I mentioned these 125 mph locomotives in an E-mail to Marie Corrado, Director, Major Projects Office, NYSDOT, who replied that my comments will be incorporated in this record).
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The performance and specifications of locomotives and rolling stock, as outlined in the Tier 1 EIS and Service Development Plan, will be further developed for the Preferred Alternative in the Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-14	Superelevation of New Third Track, 110 Alternative: Please State What Assumption is Made in the DEIS:

If higher superelevation for the third track is assumed in the DEIS, leading to faster trip times, the DEIS should so state. What maximum superelevation on the third track is assumed?

Response Thank you for your comments. Alternative 110 has been dismissed from further consideration, however, assumptions regarding the conceptual design for Alternative 110 are discussed in Chapter 3 and Appendix C of the Tier 1 EIS. Track super-elevations will have to comply with FRA requirements for different classes of tracks. The Tier 1 EIS compared the alternatives based on conceptual design, and Tier 2 assessments will advance designs for Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Wasiutynski, Christopher

Comment I-646-15 Question: When the New York Central RR operated extensive passenger services from 1935 to 1955 on a 4-track railroad with separate tracks for Express and Local trains, what was the maximum superelevation on Express tracks?

Response Thank you for your question regarding track super-elevations on the New York Central Railroad. The New York Central used a formula for determining the super-elevation in curves based on the degree of curvature, length of the curve, desired operating speed and adjoining track alignment. The company followed a practice of allowing a maximum of 6 inches of super elevation per their engineering standards.

Commenter Wasiutynski, Christopher

Comment I-646-16 Lack of Coordination with Local Transit: A Very Important Issue which Deserves to be Mentioned.

Response Thank you for your comments on transit connections. Transit connection opportunities are addressed in the Service Development Plan, and have been considered in design of new stations built as separate projects, including those constructed at Albany-Rensselaer, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, and Niagara Falls.

Commenter Wasiutynski, Christopher

Comment I-646-17 I am not suggesting that the DEIS provide detailed plans for Amtrak - bus transit coordination. But I believe the DEIS needs to state clearly and emphatically that this is an important issue. To assume that intercity rail can attract good ridership while remaining un-integrated with local transit is totally unrealistic.

Response Thank you for your comment. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor and to improve reliability, travel times, levels of train service and passenger amenities. Transit connections are identified in the Service Development Plan, which also identifies station improvements and amenities and opportunities to build on current intermodal connections along the route.

Commenter Wasiutynski, Christopher

Comment I-646-18 Is the 'Upstate' rail travel market restricted to persons travelling to and from New York City? If not, then the schedule just described, where all trains must either originate or terminate at Penn Station in Manhattan, will be inadequate for travellers within the Albany - Buffalo corridor.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The market and ridership analysis for the program is documented in Appendix B, and includes all of the Amtrak stations and major markets along Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Improvements to schedules and the frequency of train trips along the route were evaluated in the Service Development Plan and the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter	Wasiutynski, Christopher
Comment I-646-19	If reductions in trip times greater than those achieved in the 110 Alternative are a priority, then consideration should be given to tilt-body trains.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative. Alternative 90B would provide substantial travel time savings, but would constrain more of the additional trackage within the existing right-of-way than Alternative 110. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Consideration of the types of locomotives and rolling stock will be further evaluated in the Tier 2 assessments. The use of tilt trains on the route may present a challenge where the clearances of the tilt train wheel and axle assemblies may not meet the recommended allowances to operate on lines equipped with third rail. The Empire Corridor trains must use Metro North Railroad and Pennsylvania Station, New York, where both sections of the route utilize third rail for providing electric current for train operations.
Commenter	Waszkiewicz, Ed (Butch)
Comment I-647-1	DO NOT PASS BY UTICA and ROME with High Speed Rail. YES for 110. NO for `125
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the cities of Utica and Rome have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would increase service to Utica.
Commenter	Weekes, Michael
Comment I-648-1	I recommend option 90A and look forward in the not too distant future to a national solution utilizing the 220 MPH capability
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, relating to Alternative 90A, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90A improvements are included in the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Weekes, Michael
Comment I-648-2	Five factors will drive the effectiveness of the effort: leadership, process, people, technology, and performance measures. I would be glad to help support the development and deployment of any key activities related to the initiative.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Weekes, Michael

Comment I-648-3	My review of the alternatives seems to reveal that 90A would be the best alternative unless certain factors like cost or ridership are weighted other than they appear to be.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, in support of Alternative 90A, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Alternative 90A improvements are incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Welch, Alan
Comment I-649-1	I believe Alternative 125 is the best course of action for the Empire Corridor.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).
Commenter	Welch, Alan
Comment I-649-2	If we lay the foundation now, alternatives 160 and 220 could become more feasible in the distant future. I think it is more important to build the Empire Corridor West first, as there needs to be station improvements and the 247-mile stop of track to be built.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing rail network, and development that was within possible funding levels and time constraints for construction. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Welker, Richard
Comment I-650-1	I believe utilization of the Buffalo Central Terminal would be beneficial to HS Rail in the US
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee,

tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Wells, Maurice

Comment I-651-1 I would like to add my support for the New York State High Speed Rail Empire Program.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Westcott, Lynn

Comment I-652-1 Please consider the Buffalo Central Terminal as part of a future New York State high speed rail system.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-650-1.

Commenter Westermann, Kevin

Comment I-653-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-650-1.

Commenter Whipple, John

Comment I-654-1 Wonderfull to get an updated train line in the state.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Whipple, John
Comment I-654-2	However we need the train station to be in the Capital in ALBANY (downtown) with another train station up town. The Rensselaer train station with a cab into the city is an option that does not work well. Please move the Albany-Ren station into the city of Albany.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding a new station in Albany. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is evaluating a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system wide levels of service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The Tier 1 EIS considers using the existing stations along Empire Corridor. The inclusion of additional stations along the Empire Corridor could be part of future studies for expanding service.
Commenter	White, Toney
Comment I-655-1	Please consider high speed rail through the Buffalo Central Terminal. Strategic placed and historically revitalizing to the entire region and Historic Polonia neighborhood.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-650-1.
Commenter	Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)
Comment I-656-1	I can imagine myself as a customer of the Adirondack Scenic Railroad coming in from New York City or Buffalo and coming by High Speed Rail and getting off at this station rather than at another station or have to get there than here, so I'm in favor of 110 from that standpoint. A couple of people said this evening we paid for the High Speed Rail, we want it here. And third, I am an individual of the Chamber of Commerce and as such, I will be very disappointed if the High Speed Rail does not stop here.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)
Comment I-656-2	Another is groups of college students. If you come here in the weekends when there are college kids -- I've seen Hamilton College, I've seen Utica College vans outside these doors

and many others. They should not have to go to an alternate station to get to the High Speed Rail, and just customers generally.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS focuses on improvements and alternatives on or near the current alignment of the rail passenger service between Albany and Niagara Falls, New York. Additional alternatives that were considered and eliminated from further study can be found in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT, selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.

Commenter Moskowitz, Ed (Butch)

Comment I-656-3 I'm here in favor of 110 and I'm totally against 125. I don't speak just for Utica and Rome, there's a couple others, Schenectady and Amsterdam. It's good for all of us, and what about the Naval Science. Could you imagine the Naval scientists being in New York City and he or she wants to get on the train to get to Utica and hop on the fast train, the High Speed Rail, and it goes right by Utica, that just doesn't cut it.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternatives 110 and 125, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, for the reasons outlined in the above response. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West for the service leg that includes Utica and Rome. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered and would increase ridership by 1 million over the Base Alternative.

Commenter Wiesner, Devin

Comment I-657-1 If this is viewed as a project that will be in existence for 50 to 100 years then I support the larger, more expensive upgrades
It seems to me that the corridor between Schenectady and New York should also receive significant improvements as the number of riders is so high.

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.

Commenter Williams, Collin

Comment I-658-1 I believe that New York should not implement the plan for high speed rails until we see the result of them in California, since California seems be far ahead of the project in New York. If the project is not successful there, I believe it is a good indicator of how the people of New York will react to essentially the same project.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Williams, Maureen R.

Comment I-659-1 However – I strongly feel that a train from Utica to Lake Placid would do well – all of us athletic people – hike-bike-boat-ski-roller blade would use it. It appears Utica is not even on the map

Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Improvements in Empire Service would also improve service on regional lines that use the same trackage, such as Amtrak's Adirondack Line. However, the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, a separate right of way, would not follow the areas outlined in the program and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor.
Commenter	Wilson, Bonnie
Comment I-660-1	I know that the cost is huge and my concern is that I don't feel this would benefit the majority of New Yorkers. The proposed rail-line would not greatly speed-up transportation and to spend money on this at a time when our highways and bridges are in such desperate need of repair and replacement seems very wasteful to say the least. Financial concerns have had a lot of project on hold for some time.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT as part of the review process for the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Wilson, Bonnie
Comment I-660-2	Let's concentrate on updating what we have and forget about a rail system that is not necessary at this time and does not help the majority of people.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Environmental and economic concerns, operating benefits, capital requirements, and responsiveness to passenger needs have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Winship, Micah
Comment I-661-1	As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons: -The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy. -The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York -The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center -The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles -The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development -The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee,

tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Wisinski, Patrick J.

Comment I-662-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Wnorowski, Mark

Comment I-663-1 The scope of the Empire Corridor Tier 1 Draft EIS is too narrow and too conservative.

Response Thank you for your comments. The scope of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS is consistent with the program purpose and need and requirements of the tiered NEPA/SEQR process. The transportation and environmental evaluations focused on discussing the different alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 EIS.

Commenter Wnorowski, Mark

Comment I-663-2 There is an assumption that current congestion in Pennsylvania Station in New York City will not be relieved. The Long Island Rail Road will complete it East Side Access project. That will free up capacity in Penn. Station. Amtrak will add capacity with it's Gateway Project.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Operations at Penn Station in New York will be organized around a number of factors as the Long Island Rail Road begins operations of their East Side Access service. It is anticipated that Amtrak operations, on the Northeast Corridor, will grow with the Gateway Project and repairs to the current North River Tunnels. The continued use of the station by New Jersey Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Authority will introduce Metro North Railroad service into Penn Station to allow their riders to access new employment opportunities on the West Side of Manhattan.

Commenter	Wnorowski, Mark
Comment I-663-3	People in Amsterdam and Rome could drive or be driven or take a bus or taxi to a nearby high speed rail station as people in places not Rome or Amsterdam will.
Response	Thank you for your comments, relating to the support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would increase the frequency of service to stations on the west such as Rome and Amsterdam.
Commenter	Wnorowski, Mark
Comment I-663-4	If we build a system capable of 125 miles per hour they will run on it at 125. Amtrak is planning on having trains capable of 220 miles per hour someday. If we build a 125 mile per hour system we will not be able to take advantage of those speeds. Building a 125 mile per hour system, between Albany and Buffalo, is not going to be significantly cheaper than building one capable of 220 miles per hour some day.
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning train technologies considered in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative). Alternative 90B would involve less right-of-way and environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wokan, Sara
Comment I-664-1	Why is no hearing scheduled in the Southern Tier? Is the railroad going to bypass us along with everything else that has? Does Albany realize that NY has a Southern Tier??
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Improvements to the service to be operated as part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program are focused between Niagara Falls and New York City. Additional routes out of this corridor are not being considered at this time as part of the program.
Commenter	Wolf, Phillips
Comment I-665-1	In favor of the “110” option
Response	Your comment in support of 110 Alternative has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Wolfe, Greg
Comment I-666-1	Bring high speed rail to buffalo!!

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of bringing high speed rail service to Buffalo, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. The frequency of service to Buffalo stations will also increase.
Commenter	Wolfe, Wm. F.
Comment I-667-1	I support any upgrade and expansion to AMTRAK that is feasible and makes economic sense.
Response	Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wolfe, Wm. F.
Comment I-667-2	I am contacting you about a smaller issue, and that would be the upgrading of the remaining 90 miles of the former New York Central Adirondack Division between Big Moose and Lake Placid. The Adirondack Scenic Railroad operates the Utica to Big Moose section and the Saranac Lake to Lake Placid section. In the past 21 years, they have safely moved over a million passengers. High-speed rail is not needed here!
Response	Thank you for commenting on upgrading the Adirondack Scenic Railroad north of Utica. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. Extending improvements beyond the area outlined by the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS is not being considered at this time as part of the program, but could be part of future studies for expanding service as part of a separate project.
Commenter	Wolfe, Wm. F.
Comment I-667-3	Finally, one thing other than the track upgrade is needed, and that is a clear plan and procedure for interchanging private cars or chartered equipment from AMTRAK at Utica onto the Adirondack Scenic. CSX, AMTRAK, MA&N and ASR have issues involving union agreements, trackage rights, liability insurance and CSX is hostile to any type of passenger operation. Breaking that log jam is as necessary as upgrading the track.
Response	Thank you for your comments. The purpose of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is to introduce higher passenger train speeds on the Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls. Utica's train station has been extensively restored in partnership with Oneida County, and recently had an additional platform constructed on the westbound side that also provides connections with the Adirondack Scenic Railroad.
Commenter	Wolff, Adam
Comment I-668-1	I strongly recommend integrating the historic Buffalo Central Terminal in the EIS
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for station improvements in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo, including a new station development at Buffalo-Exchange Street and updates at the Buffalo-Depew Station, are discussed in the response to Comment I-661-1.
Commenter	Woolley, Jonathan

Comment I-669-1	I also believe the study should investigate ensuring good connections between the rail lines (both the potential 125mph HSR line and the improved current rail line) and local transit
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. Station locations identified in the Tier 1 EIS, in most cases, provide access to the public for public transit. The Service Development Plan identifies transit opportunities at station sites, many of which have been reconstructed as part of separate projects. For station projects, opportunities for multimodal connectivity have been, or can be, pursued with the local municipality and transit provider.
Commenter	Woolley, Jonathan
Comment I-669-2	There really is no reason the speed limit between Spuyten Duyvil and Albany-Ren. should be less than 110 mph as it is a pretty straight, flat line of track, this study should look at increasing that stretch to at least 110 mph, or, better yet, faster.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding train operating speeds between New York City and Albany. Increasing operating speeds on the Empire Corridor, between New York City and Albany-Rensselaer, presents many challenges. In the lower section of the route on Metro North Railroad, curves following the shore line of the Hudson River limit opportunities for increasing speeds. The sections of tangent track on the route are not continuous, and the possibilities for straightening the tracks are constrained by the river shore on one side and limited available properties. Further to the north, Amtrak and NYSDOT have been cooperating for a number of years to reduce running times and increase track speeds. Currently, the route is engineered for 110 miles per hour between Stuyvesant and Albany-Rensselaer.
Commenter	Woolley, Jonathan
Comment I-669-3	It should also be possible to build additional tracks north of Poughkeepsie to allow freight and passenger trains to pass each other as this should be a four track right-of-way, perhaps using a sensor fence system, to allow passing at faster than 110 mph. Additionally, the study should consider an additional track connecting into the Penn Station terminal fan in New York City; such a track would prevent a loss of service in the event of a breakdown in the existing tunnel.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Appendix B of the Tier 1 EIS developed track alignments for each of the alternatives. Future projects have been identified for the Hudson Valley route that includes additional tracks on the Metro North Railroad portion of the route. Improvements to the Penn Station area will need to be coordinated with other projects in that location. This area is constricted by the close proximity to the Empire Connection tunnel and the North River Tunnels and is constricted by the ability to pass beneath the Long Island Rail Road's entrance to their West Side Yard facility.
Commenter	Woolley, Jonathan
Comment I-669-4	both south and west of Albany, building more grade-separated junctions may have to be considered to achieve this reliability, and the long term savings in terms of speed maintenance, as well as both accident prevention a reduction in insurance liability, may be worth the cost.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding potential improvements needed on the Empire Corridor to achieve improved reliability, speed and safety. In developing the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program (Appendix B),

track alignments and supporting projects have been identified to support each of the options. The option of constructing grade separated junctions in the section between New York City and Albany-Rensselaer may be limited by the close proximity of the route to the Hudson River. However, in the 90B and 110 Alternatives, several grade separated junctions, or crossovers, are included in track arrangements to expedite the movements near Syracuse and Rochester. The connection of the passenger line from Albany-Rensselaer, with the freight line from Selkirk, west of Schenectady, is already designed to allow the routes to meet without conflicting movements.

Commenter Woolley, Jonathan

Comment I-669-5 I support the goal of this study to enhance both passenger and freight rail in the Empire Corridor.

Response Thank you for your comments, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State have been an important factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Woolley, Jonathan

Comment I-669-6 I support the choice of alternatives of 110 or 125 miles per hour service. I would prefer to see service of 125 miles per hour, as I think the improvements that would result would most benefit the public, but am aware the delay in implementation until at least the mid-2030's (and likely later) might not make this the best choice. However, if improvements to only 110 mph are chosen, then I believe that improvements to 125 mph should be made as soon as subsequently possible.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Of the three higher speed Build Alternatives (90B, 110 mph and 125 mph) evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would involve the lowest cost (less than half the cost of the most expensive alternative for 125 mph service), while providing the best overall on-time performance and the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would also constrain the majority of work within the right-of-way, involving fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110 and 125.

Commenter Wozniak, Mark

Comment I-670-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for

certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Wright, Nancy

Comment I-671-1 As a supporter of the National Landmark known as the Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like to take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project ? Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The terminal is easily accessible from Toronto and other points North.
- It is the half way point between Chicago and NYC.
- It is a project already in progress with rail lines running to the area.
- The terminal is an integral part of Buffalo's historic architecture and therefore would be a beautiful destination for those traveling on the high speed rail.
- The building complex is huge so as much area as needed could be found to accommodate the needs of a high speed rail operation including parking, bus and taxi pick-up areas, passenger embarking and disembarking needs, baggage collection and distribution, restrooms, and restaurant facilities.
- Because the building complex is huge the rapid transit rail would not be the only tenant. Other tenants would be helping to support the complex.
- Buffalo and the surrounding area has a large, diverse workforce to fill positions as needed.
- Buffalo has many attractions including a thriving theater district, many diverse restaurants (both local and national) and a developing water front to draw people to the area.
- ? economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- ? The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the prior response.

Commenter Yanik, John S.

Comment I-672-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities,

an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York

- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for certification and degree programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-670-1.

Commenter Young, Dennis

Comment I-673-1 I am writing to request that you approve the full-blown version of implementing cross-state, intercity high-speed rail in New York state.

Response Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Young, Dennis

Comment I-673-2 Please implement the High-Speed Rail 125 option.

Response Thank you for your comments, relating to Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve far fewer environmental impacts than the other Build Alternatives considered.

Commenter Young, Jennifer

Comment I-674-1 As a supporter of the National Historic Landmark, Buffalo Central Terminal, I would like take a moment to voice my support regarding the Terminal's use for future High Speed Rail aka Empire Corridor Project Tier I EIS for the following reasons:

- The Terminal is an integral Tourism site in New York State due to its architectural design and transportation legacy.
- The Terminal is currently working with various future tenants and funders for a major adaptive reuse project of the complex which will, in turn, create educational opportunities, an active Arts center, workforce and economic development and neighborhood reinvestment in the Broadway Fillmore District of Buffalo, New York
- The Terminal is centrally located within a two-mile radius of city-center
- The Terminal also has secure parking facilities for up to 450 vehicles
- The Terminal already has a Main Concourse for travelers to dine and shop adding to the tourism and economic values for entrepreneurship and small business development
- The Terminal will also house education classrooms and shared space accommodations for local, regional, state and national colleges and universities to locate essential classes for

certification and degreed programs in adaptive reuse studies thereby creating a benchmark for historic rehabilitation and restoration

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-670-1.

Commenter Young, Michael

Comment I-675-1 Given the alternatives proposed and the impacts considered in the DEIS, I suggest choosing Alternative 110 for the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail project.

Response Thank you for your comment and support of 110 Alternative, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered (see Exhibit 6-8 in the Tier 1 FEIS). Moreover, Alternative 90B would incur lower costs and fewer environmental impacts than Alternatives 110.

Commenter Zaffuts, Michael

Comment I-676-1 I am writing to voice my support for the expansion of a high speed rail system through the state.

Response Your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Zalucki, Richard

Comment I-677-1 Just a comment that I use Amtrak between Albany & NYC approx. 6 times per year and would LOVE to see travel time reduced.

Response Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours.

Commenter Zamow, Allie

Comment I-678-1 I vote for alternative 125, let's get NYS up to speed!

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Zarabozo, Peter

Comment I-679-1 I think the plan for high speed rail in the empire corridor is an excellent idea. I strongly support this initiative.

Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Comments from the public have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Roate, Connell
Comment I-680-1	Although, I'd love to see the 125, I think the dedicated extra railway is going to leave out quite a few of the cities, mainly Utica, Rome, Schenectady and Amsterdam, and the build-out time would be a lot longer on the 125.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as Preferred Alternative. Because it is situated largely within the existing right-of-way, it can be constructed in substantially less time than Alternative 125 and will begin to confer benefits within 2 to 5 years after start of construction. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS, the Preferred Alternative would increase service to Utica Rome, Schenectady and Amsterdam.
Commenter	Robinson, Martin
Comment I-681-1	Four out of five of the speeds proposed here at this presentation don't meet the Federal requirements to be labeled as high speed, let alone the possible public perception of high speed rail... In the 1940s, many of the speeds that are listed here that would be slightly higher in average, used to be the regular speeds for trains in the 1940s. I mean, trains used to average between 60 and 70 miles per hour with express routes often hitting the 80 to 90 per hour on a regular basis.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Section 3.1, of the Tier 1 EIS, describes FRA's definitions of high-speed rail. The FRA, which was tasked by Congress to implement the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program, has defined three (3) categories of high-speed rail: Core Express (speeds 125-250+ mph); Regional (speeds between 90-125 mph); and Emerging (speeds up to between 90 mph). The Preferred Alternatives (Alternative 90B) for the Empire Corridor program is classified as Emerging and Regional and therefore qualifies to be called a "high-speed rail" project.
Commenter	Switzer, James
Comment I-682-1	I'm curious as to how much of the funding of this is going to be taxes or whatever.
Response	Thank you for your comments on funding. Future funding for the program has not been determined at this time.
Commenter	Switzer, James
Comment I-682-2	I'm a construction worker and I'd like to see that the work is done locally with local workers in the -- in municipalities that the train goes through.
Response	Thank you for your comments. Individual projects or groups of projects will be advanced according to the Service Development Plan to Tier 2 environmental evaluations and design development. Selection of contractors and workers has not been determined at this time.
Commenter	Tucker, Donald

Comment I-683-1	I am very much for improving rail service in New York both to Albany and to New York City. I think it makes environmental sense.
Response	Your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Tucker, Donald
Comment I-683-2	I would like the 110 proposal.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and Alternative 110, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisition, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance.
Commenter	Wieczorek, Rich
Comment I-684-1	I'm in favor of the high speed rail.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Wieczorek, Rich
Comment I-684-2	My concern; I have two private crossings, the 110-mile one, corridor building, I think that's a little too much. I have concern with building new line, is it going to be like the thruway and what's it going to do the land where it's already -- where it's going to be proposed to go through? I don't believe we can afford to lose anymore farmland in this state or in this country, having suffered what the New York State thruway did to my family's farm. Just come and take it and, well, we'll cut you off from the other 40 acres and tough. Anyways, that aside, I'm concerned with having private crossings, what the impact there is going to be as far as safety. The other thing I noticed, one of the gentleman here from the DOT was showing me on one of the books over here, a proposed access road that would run parallel to the CSX corridor. Again, you going to drive back through my front yard now or what? That -- that's kind of where my concerns are, the safety issues on this and how they are going to be addressed.
Response	Thank you for commenting on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and environmental impacts. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Tier 1 EIS address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. The designs for each improvement or project for the Preferred Alternative would be further refined and advanced in the Tier 2 assessments, including further reviews for public access and grade crossings and analysis to determine procedures for maintenance of the tracks and access to the rail infrastructure.
Commenter	Alberin, Ken
Comment I-685-1	Somehow Utica seems to be conspicuously left out from the process as we are not going to be a stop on this network. With the drone base coming along, I think you ought to consider including the Utica Train Station in the high speed options that are coming down the pike.

Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Russell, Gary
Comment I-686-1	I guess some of my questions are projected annual ridership. Is it -- What's it really based on? Is it somewhat of a guess?
Response	Thank you for your comments on ridership patterns on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor. A detailed assessment of market demand and projected ridership was completed for each of the alternatives discussed in the Tier 1 EIS. Chapter 2 documents historic/existing ridership for Empire Corridor, Metro-North commuter rail, and stations, based on actual usage, and Appendix B: Ridership and Revenue Forecasting provides details on forecasting. Ridership and revenue performance have been important considerations in selecting the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Russell, Gary
Comment I-686-2	Is there -- is there, like, a study of percentage of the cars have to be full, cost analysis to break even on, you know, operation, maintenance? Is there something out there we can read about that? I mean, do they have these 25 percent full to make money or is the tax payer going to, you know, be subsidizing that money. That -- that was my question.
Response	Thanks you for your comments. Ridership and revenue projections and subsidies are addressed in the Tier 1 EIS (Chapter 6 and Appendix B-Ridership and Revenue Forecasting). The cost analysis, performed for the Tier 1 EIS, considers operating and maintenance costs of the various alternatives. When used in conjunction with projected ridership, the subsidy or surplus per rider can be calculated. All alternatives are projected to have an operating subsidy during the planning horizon. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125. Although Alternative 110 has the lowest subsidy, the subsidy for the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 90B) would be \$13 per rider, which would be lower than both Alternative 125's subsidy per rider of \$14 and the Base Alternative's subsidy per rider of \$17 per rider. Alternative 90B's costs would also be less than that for Alternatives 110 and 125.
Commenter	Barren, Dan
Comment I-687-1	One thing that comes to mind is that the fastest plan for six-hour travel time, I can do that in my car right now. I don't really see the advantage of investing \$15 billion in something I can do right now driving from here to New York City.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Of the three Build Alternatives (90B, 110 mph and 125 mph) evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS, Alternative 90B would involve the lowest cost (less than half the cost of the most expensive alternative for 125 mph service), while providing the best overall on-time performance.
Commenter	Barren, Dan

Comment I-687-2	Another thing that I think should be a big consideration if we do go with the electric high speed rail is where is the energy coming from to power this rail. I hope that it is powered by some sort of combination of solar and wind power, something that's clean and renewable that takes a step forward. I think that three out of the four options are oil based. It's kind of ridiculous especially with electric cars starting to make a big comeback with Tesla and other car companies starting to pick electric cars as the future for transportation.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding train propulsion methods in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of energy used for trains in Chapters 3 and 4. For Alternative 125, a dual mode diesel-electric locomotive was considered. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed and determined as the program moves forward in Tier 2 assessments.
Commenter	Barren, Dan
Comment I-687-3	Another interesting thing just to kind of correlate to this is the paper just got released by Elon Musk. It's called the Hyperloop which is a kind of innovative high speed transportation concept that I think would be very interesting for the state to take a look at.
Response	Thank you for your comments. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing national and regional rail network on the Northeast Corridor. In developing the alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, very high speed (VHS) alternatives were considered, but were not selected in part because they were considered to be cost-prohibitive. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Behr, Michael
Comment I-688-1	Speeds of 75 miles to 125 miles is not high speed anymore. 200 miles or 300 miles is out there. The trains in China, India, and South Africa are going faster than you are proposing. I do appreciate that you said "in steps," that you're -- there are further capabilities that will be enhanced to provide higher speeds.
Response	Thank you for your comments. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public, relating to the different service alternatives, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Behr, Michael
Comment I-688-2	The other thing in terms of this incremental process might be considered the -- an overhead electric rail so that, instead of using the polluting diesel electric engines, you could use all electric.
Response	Thank you for your comment. Your suggestion to use electric power for operating the trains would be achieved by Alternative 125, which was dismissed from further consideration in the Tier 1 FEIS. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative

125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS discusses the types of power used in each of the alternatives considered. Equipment selections and specifications will be further reviewed and determined as the program moves forward in Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Behr, Michael

Comment I-688-3 You mentioned the right of way, that CSX owns it, but Conrail still has priority. If it is not a separate dedicated rail, two things, Conrail has priority over passenger -- Amtrak, that's number one, and, number two, Conrail, with its heavy loads, demolish the road beds.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Alternative 90B would also result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered. These improvements that will reduce congestion, delays and interference between passenger and freight trains will improve safety.

Commenter Behr, Michael

Comment I-688-4 This is an intrastate train. As such, will the DOT maintain the engines as it does in interstate trains.

Response Thank you for the question of train maintenance. Maintenance plans and programs will be further developed as the Preferred Alternative advances in Tier 2 assessments.

Commenter Berger, Richard G.

Comment I-689-1 Having a 125 mile per hour high speed rail is already twenty years from now which is when it's going to be fully implemented is far behind the rest of the world in this type of high speed brand. There is no reason for planning for the past. We should be planning for the future and much higher speeds and a much quicker time. Basically 450 miles between -- on the entire corridor, from New York to Buffalo, and they have that done in six hours in 2035 is ridiculous. That should be a four-hour trip. There is no reason why this should be taking that long. We're having inefficient transportation.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the range of options advanced would be those with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was also determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. Comments from the public relating to the different service alternatives have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Berger, Richard G.

Comment I-689-2 The one thing I was pleased to see is that you thought even with putting in the dedicated rails for high speed rails only that is a complete lie for only \$14 billion. That's a highly reasonable, as a matter of fact I think, low risk of what it would cost the high speed rail. For instance, one building, new apartment building in New York City has a value of two billion dollars. Here we're making a twenty-year investment for only \$14 billion. By comparison, you can look at what the United States is spending hundreds of billions of dollars each year to support automobile and truck traffic all across the United States.

Response	Thank you for your comments. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Berger, Richard G.
Comment I-689-3	We need to have better, faster rail transportation to connect this country and all parts of it, not just New York and Buffalo and go up to Toronto and from Buffalo to Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago.
Response	Currently, the scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls, New York, and passenger forecasts conservatively exclude trips that may have one trip end in Toronto or other locations beyond the Empire Corridor. Amtrak regional lines, such as the Maple Leaf and Lake Shore Limited, that traverse the Empire Corridor provide access and connections to the Toronto, Cleveland, and Chicago. Improvements to Empire Corridor service will improve service on these regional lines. Access to Detroit is available through other regional lines. Comments from the public, relating to support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Myers, Tom
Comment I-690-1	I'm a parent here in Rochester and I have a daughter that goes to college in Boston. It's eleven hours by train when it works. There's been times that she's tried to get back and we just couldn't really come up with other ways. And it's twelve/fourteen hours because of a delay around the Albany area. It's just terrible what happens there. So it's not a reliable way for us. I drive to Boston often now to drive my daughter back, partially because it's nice talking to her in the car, but it's a six-hour drive, six-and-a-half-hour drive, for an eleven-hour train. It's just not acceptable.
Response	Thank you for your comments about the need for higher train speeds in the implementation of a high speed rail corridor in New York State. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program is focused on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. Amtrak service to Boston is provided via the Lake Shore Limited Line. The Preferred Alternative will improve service along the Empire Corridor, and improvements to Empire Service will benefit travel on connecting regional lines, including connecting trains to Boston (Adirondack Line). Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Myers, Tom
Comment I-690-2	A hundred and twenty-five miles is certainly in the right direction, but we need much faster than that eventually also just to make it viable.
Response	Thank you for your comment concerning train technologies considered in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to

construct and require more public resources to operate. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter Catalli, Joseph

Comment I-691-1 I would like to have the 125 also. And, as far as going to Canada, I've got relatives up there and I took the train a couple times last year and I enjoyed it; but, again, it's an hour and a half inspection at the border. But then you make up the time from Niagara Falls, Canada to Toronto.

Response Comments from the public, relating to support of Alternative 125, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. The Niagara Falls Station Intermodal Transportation Center, which was reconstructed as part of a separate project, was designed to improve the border crossing process.

Commenter Cates, David

Comment I-692-1 I was discussing the corridor and the 125 high speed sounds good except we all know it's going to be trouble when you're taking someone's land.

Response Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Your observation notes the need for land acquisitions to build the 125 Alternative. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

Commenter Cates, David

Comment I-692-2 the question came down to being how does it interact with the regional lines and which regional system are they going to have? Are they going to do the basic? Are they going to do 90A/B, whichever? Which one was going to be there to catch you because hypothetically was, okay, I am taking the high speed to Syracuse and waiting for regional training to go back to Schenectady, how long of a wait do I have? Would it be better just to take the regional with it running consistent enough it's a half-hour wait or will it be a two-hour wait?

Response Thank you for your comments. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would provide rail service that would operate with more frequent and faster service to Syracuse and Schenectady and other destinations currently served by the Empire Corridor. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered. Operating schedules and the implementation of service initiatives have been investigated in the development of the Service Development Plan. Individual projects that are part of the program will undergo a second evaluation (Tier 2) to further advance the designs. Schedules and frequencies between stations would be further refined in the Tier 2 evaluations.

Commenter Cates, David

Comment I-692-3	That's the main thing, the trains are sharing the tracks with the freight is the biggest problem right now.
Response	Your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of the alternatives considered. Improvement of passenger rail service while maintaining freight operations along the Empire Corridor is one of the major goals for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program.
Commenter	Cates, David
Comment I-692-4	I am leaning towards the 110 now more than anything else just because I think the end result would be nice.
Response	Thank you for your comment in support of the Alternative 110 and the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property. Because of the required property acquisitions, Alternative 110 would have significantly higher costs and greater potential for environmental impacts than Alternative 90B, while only achieving a modest improvement in overall performance. Alternative 90B provides similar trackage as Alternative 110, only situating more of the improvements within the existing right-of-way.
Commenter	Chelbach, Sue
Comment I-693-1	The rest of the world is way ahead economically from a tourist perspective, just everything. I don't think it's enough to do 125.
Response	Your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. During the selection of the alternatives for review in the Tier 1 EIS, alternatives with speeds of 160 mph and 220 mph were considered but not advanced. It was determined that the focus would be on a range of options with trains operating at 90, 110 and 125 miles per hour. It was determined that operating trains at higher speeds would have greater impact on the environment, require more financial investment to construct and require more public resources to operate. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternatives 110 and 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Tsotsky, Richard
Comment I-694-1	A while ago, I was going some research on a corridor between Toronto and Detroit, and it just seemed that there was much more population or something like that in excess of ten million along that corridor. And thinking as of Buffalo and what would help Buffalo, it seems to me at the time that connecting with those cities with Cleveland, with Toledo, with Detroit, down to Chicago in connection with the, I think it was called the American 2020 plan or Ohio rail plan which also called for extending to Buffalo and opening up the Dunkirk station as well which is between Buffalo and Erie is longer -- it's the longest stretch without a station even longer through Albany to Utica I believe. It just seems as though for Buffalo and Niagara Falls connecting Toronto with Detroit makes much more sense

Response Thank you for your questions regarding the expansion of connections to the Empire Corridor beyond Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Currently, the scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. New York and passenger forecasts conservatively exclude trips that may have one trip end in Toronto or other locations beyond the Empire Corridor. Amtrak regional lines, such as the Maple Leaf and Lake Shore Limited, that traverse the Empire Corridor provide access and connections to the Toronto, Cleveland, and Chicago. Improvements to Empire Corridor service will improve service on these regional lines. Access to Detroit is available through other regional lines. The Tier 1 EIS is a corridor level evaluation that considers use of the existing stations only. Extending trains beyond the current study area could possibly be studied in partnership with other states.

Commenter Tsotsky, Richard

Comment I beg you that Mr. Chan sent me, two-inch binder, and the southern tier group going from I-694-2 Buffalo, you know, down to the southern tier of New York State to New York City would seem to be better for Buffalo, to connect us directly, forget the other upstate cities, but again it requires buy-in from political leaders, citizens, other groups,

Response Thank you for your comment on the HSR Empire Corridor Program. Currently, the scope of the Tier 1 EIS focuses on the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls. The route mentioned (Pocono Corridor) is approximately 80 miles south of the Empire Corridor and does not service the same cities as the Empire Corridor. Additional routes out of this corridor are not being considered at this time as part of the program.

Commenter Tsotsky, Richard

Comment my preliminary research indicated and riding the rails indicated that there were a number I-694-3 of stations that weren't in downtowns, that were in urban hubs. I thought the whole rational for high speed rail is to get office workers and people looking for entertainment from downtown to downtown.
You go from Buffalo to Rochester. That is close. That's very close to downtown. You go to Syracuse, that's what two and half miles out from downtown. Utica on the other hand is downtown, and then you're not going to ever get to downtown Albany on the train. I mean to the capital of New York State that we're trying to connect with everything else, you have to get off at Schenectady or Rensselaer.
I don't know what thought was put into rerouting or getting these tracks closer to the urban corridor so we can have smart growth so we can create urban -- I mean transit-oriented element and density and all of those other principles that should go hand in hand with the siding of the train house -- or I mean the rail house.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding the location of stations on the Empire Corridor. The Tier 1 EIS for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for intercity passenger rail with the purpose of making decisions on system wide level service, including service reliability, frequency, and train speeds. The focus was on using existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. At Rochester, the existing station was reconstructed by NYSDOT in partnership with FRA, Amtrak, and the City of Rochester. In Syracuse, a new station was built, that provides intermodal connections with other bus companies, and CENTRO, the local transit provider. Utica's train station has been extensively restored in partnership with Oneida County, and recently had an additional platform constructed on the westbound side that also provides connections with the Adirondack Scenic Railroad. In Albany-Rensselaer, a new station was constructed, adjacent to the Amtrak support facilities, by the Capital District Transportation Authority that could provide ample parking for passengers, expedite train movements, and allow for retirement of some redundant operating infrastructure. Station planning at these various station sites

along Empire Corridor considered and incorporated, to the extent possible, access to downtown areas (i.e., reconstruction of Buffalo-Exchange Street was selected over other more distal locations considered) and incorporated adequate parking and intermodal access.

Commenter Tsotsky, Richard

Comment I-694-4 I understand that you can't eliminate Depew or Buffalo. You have to have both downtown Buffalo because, one, you can go west. You can go west from Depew but you can not go west from downtown Buffalo the way the tracks are currently configured, but I understand that the Central Terminal if I am not mistaken you can go in both directions north through Toronto and west.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.

Commenter Cupoli, Edward

Comment I-695-1 My name is Ed Cupoli. I'm a resident of the Town of Guilderland. I worked for the State Legislature back in the '80s for a long time and in 1984 I was asked by then Assemblyman Bill White from Buffalo to go to a hearing in the building, the Mahoney Building, and it was on this question of high speed rail and I didn't know anything about it. I was supposed to be one of these guys that can figure things out.

My thinking is you should think in your plan about the future, not the past.

Because, I'm an economist. So do an analysis of the competitive advantages of each of those proposals on Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and get some really good sense, or New York City.

What is the sustainability of these cities in the way we've known them with this kind of rail, versus the other kinds of transportation.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative for the program have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1 ½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative.

Commenter Stone, Jeff

Comment I-696-1 I am looking at the plans of the Buffalo area of the basic model that's already being done no matter what happens, and I don't see anything happening with like the Buffalo stations and

the Depew stations. I mean to me it seems like the high speed is coming right into Buffalo and it ends at the Depew station, to me it seems like there should be something more there than just that little tiny station.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the stations in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-694-4.

Commenter Stone, Jeff

Comment I-696-2 I mean they're building nice stations at all of the other ones and figuring stuff out for them, I think that this is the other end of the crown over here. This is the jewel on the other end of the line, and it should show that. What they're doing there, what's there now, doesn't show that.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Commenter Stone, Jeff

Comment I-696-3 I also think that they should take into consideration in between Buffalo and Niagara Falls and the Tonawanda area since the Buffalo/Niagara Falls section is never going to be high speed it would be a good idea to possibly think about putting a station somewhere in Tonawanda because I think that it would definitely get a lot of use.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding the location of stations on the Empire Corridor. The Tier 1 EIS considers using the existing stations in each of the alternatives at this time. Trip time reductions for the Build Alternatives as discussed in the Tier 1 EIS were based on the trains operating non-stop between the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station and the Niagara Falls Station, without any intermediate stations in the Tonawanda area, which is roughly midway in between. Tonawanda is considered to be driving distance (roughly 13 to 15 miles) from these stations, and adding a stop would increase travel times for other travelers.

Commenter Stone, Jeff

Comment I-696-4 My other thing is I think if this thing is ever built, the higher speed stuff, it needs to be completely separate from freight. That's what I got. That's really what I got. It's never going to work without it being separate from freight lines. There is no way to ever make it safe and fast enough without separating it completely. No matter what option that it is. That's what I got.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Improvement of passenger rail service while maintaining safe and efficient freight operations along the Empire Corridor is one of the major goals for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The importance of preserving and improving freight rail traffic to the economy of New York State has been a critical factor in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail and will involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.

Commenter **Doff, Frank C.**

Comment
I-697-1 I have been recently appointed director of board member of J. Park, Inc., which is a transportation organization. But in order for us to move ahead, surpass what's happening in Europe, we should come up with a more revolutionary concept in high speed rail. For example, so that U.S. will be ahead of the rest of the world. And we have a technology here right now, and I want to pass on some information. What is available in technology is available today in U.S. organizations. Because right now ET3 is setting up a pilot—a demonstration unit at Meadowlands, together with J. Parks. J. Parks is overhanging personal rapid transit, okay. That's nothing new. It is something that comes up with the energy crisis. It was put up at the college campus of West Virginia. So, since '93, that system has been in operation, and it has no fatality, or no injury on the over hundred something passengers.

Response Thank you for your comment in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. In reviewing the types of technologies to be used in providing the service, the focus was on using systems that would allow for connecting with the existing national and regional rail network on the Northeast Corridor.

Commenter **Ebina, Alexander**

Comment
I-698-1 And as a member of the Millennial generation, we Millennial recognize the importance of rail transportation. Many of my friends from college take the train.

Response Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and for the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Comments from the public have been considered in the selection by the FRA and NYSDOT of the Preferred Alternative, which will improve reliability, travel times, and frequency of train service..

Commenter **Ebina, Alexander**

Comment
I-698-2 I also endorse the Empire State Passenger Association's 110 option because it does offer the best of all worlds.

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 110 Alternative, which has been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. For reasons of safety, CSXT, the owner of the right-of-way, requires a 30-foot track separation between freight and passenger tracks when passenger trains operate at 110 mph. In many places on the route, this is only possible by acquiring significant additional property.

Commenter **Ebina, Alexander**

Comment
I-698-3 Right now, the limitations you have is only giving you four trains a day doesn't give you a lot of travel flexibility.

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Chapter 3 and Exhibit 6-9 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the increase in service proposed by the Preferred Alternative.
Commenter	Elias, Byron
Comment I-699-1	I think keeping the train separate would be good for everyone when you do have that occasional train derailment. Then you would have the additional tracks for both CSX and freight and for the passengers, to continue moving people with a very high percentage amount of service.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight rail. Alternative 90B would restore large sections of third and fourth track and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Ellis, Tom
Comment I-700-1	I endorse the comments that Dominick Calsolaro said about the Livingston Avenue Bridge.
Response	Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge .
Commenter	Ellis, Tom
Comment I-700-2	One is, I think we need more rail stations. Two concerns the frequency of travel and the third issue is safety issues. I'd like to see stations constructed in downtown Amsterdam and in Fonda and in Little Falls that could be used.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS is a corridor level evaluation that only considers use of the existing stations. Alignments and rights of way for each of the different alternatives do not include new stations. Additional stations could be addressed in future studies. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives.
Commenter	Ellis, Tom
Comment I-700-3	As far as frequency, I would like to see trains between Albany and Buffalo running at least eight times a day, and I'd like to see more frequent rail travel on weekends.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which will improve intercity rail passenger service in New York State through infrastructure investments and operational improvements. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West.

Commenter	Ellis, Tom
Comment I-700-4	I think that in the United States we need to establish a much higher level of safety in the rail industry overall. We need to raise it to the level, if possible, to the safety level that we have in the air industry.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the importance of safety being a part of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will add additional trackage, the majority of which (over 280 miles) will consist of third dedicated track. This will better segregate passenger and freight rail, which will allow improvements in both rail safety and travel speeds. Chapters 2 and 3 address safety for the existing corridor and the program alternatives. The Tier 1 FEIS accounts for several types of fencing and warning systems, including installation of perimeter fencing on both sides of the right-of-way on portions of the right-of-way to prevent trespassing. The Tier 1 FEIS addresses fencing and other safety features for the Preferred Alternative in Section 3.3.3, under the "Safety" section.
Commenter	Olejniczak, Hank
Comment I-701-1	I am here mainly because I am promoting along with the high speed rail improvements, which I think we need, the concept of using the Central Terminal as the train stop in Buffalo. money is being spent in Niagara Falls over \$50 million to give them a train station. Rochester just got \$23 million. Schenectady is getting money. Syracuse is getting money. Albany had money to build their station. if that building isn't used in the next couple of years, it's going to be something that the city and the county is going to be stuck with it. It's going to be costing them over 20 million minimum to knock that building down if the group walks away from it because it's getting to that point right now. This would be a catalyst for the East Side development, and it would be a horrible shame to see that building end up being torn down as opposed to spending the money on it to fix it up and keep it as a useful part of the community.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo area is an important goal of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. NYSDOT has implemented upgrades at the existing rail station at Buffalo-Depew to improve/rehabilitate the parking lot and enhance passenger access to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Olejniczak, Hank
Comment I-701-2	We only have one pick at the can. Whatever we build is going to be something we're going to be stuck with for the next 100 years. There is not going to be someone saying in 2035 let's upgrade that track to something else.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the Tier 1 EIS. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B will provide approximately 370 miles of additional trackage to better segregate passenger and freight traffic and will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours in 2035, compared to the Base Alternative. Alternative 90B, the Preferred Alternative, would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would double the frequency of service on Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would also involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Descriptions of the alternatives considered and comparisons of benefits, costs, and environmental and social impacts can be found in Chapters 3 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Olejniczak, Hank
Comment I-701-3	If you have trains that were reliable and could do it in less than six hours or six hours, you're going to see no one taking airplanes in to New York which is what they want because there is enough people traveling farther around the country than we have right now.
Response	Thank you for your comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. Alternative 90B will reduce travel times between New York City and Niagara Falls by 1½ hours and would increase ridership by 1 million in 2035 over the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Olejniczak, Hank
Comment I-701-4	Another thing that really, really bothers me is all the stations that I stop in from New York to Philadelphia, Buffalo is the only place in the state that has not seen any money expended on their train station.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for station improvements in Buffalo, New York. Improvement to the passenger rail facilities in the City of Buffalo, including a new station development at Buffalo-Exchange Street and updates at the Buffalo-Depew Station, are discussed in the response to Comment I-701-1.
Commenter	Giles, Elizabeth
Comment I-702-1	I am first of all in favor of I believe it's Alternative 125, the highest speed possible. It would have been better to have even higher speeds, but that's what is in the offing so we will try and go with that if that's all the choice we have. I believe that we should move towards rail replacing air travel, particularly on the shorter distances like between here and New York, here and Boston, here in Chicago. Locally, I would see the benefit as being, you know, the higher speeds we have, the tighter the connection between the New York City area and Upstate so that a lot of businesses who are finding it maybe a little on the expensive side to do business down there would think that relocating in Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo would be more feasible if it were almost like a suburban commute instead of as long a distance as it seems right now.
Response	Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts. Alternative 90B would also shorten the trip from New York City to Niagara Falls by 1½ hours. Alternative 125 was dismissed, based on greater impacts (to 2,000 to 3,000 acres of land) and higher costs (more than double the costs for the Preferred Alternative).

A substantial drawback of Alternative 125 is that it would take the longest time to construct and would be the costliest alternative. One of the drawbacks of Alternative 125 is that express service would not be directly provided to Niagara Falls, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, and Schenectady.

Commenter Giles, Elizabeth

Comment I-702-2 I think it's crucial to revive Central Terminal as part of any of these plans that would go through. I would be for closing the Exchange Street Station and of course closing the Depew Station and then serving preferably by light rail but however it can be done to get a local rail going between downtown and the airport by way of Larkinville, the Central Terminal, Walden Galleria Mall, thruway mall, airport.

It would help to save one of our great historic relics, get it relevant again and seen, and I would think in the long run it would be a lot less costly to revive the Central Terminal as a premiere train station than to start building a multimillion dollar multimillion transit center from scratch somewhere else. Central Terminal was located where it was for a reason. It's not downtown because trains going to Chicago I guess would have to kind of back up from downtown, and it added an hour onto the trip.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment I-701-1.

Commenter Giles, Elizabeth

Comment I-702-3 I do believe that Central Terminal would be a perfectly viable passenger station for Buffalo provided that it is served by local rapid transit between downtown and the airport preferably light rail but I believe the NFTA is looking at bus rapid transit along existing publicly owned rights of way that would -- I believe some one was telling me earlier like 125 plan will maybe necessitate a new station located between somewhere between Exchange Street and Depew, and that's the terminal right there.

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Alternative 125, which would have required a new or relocated Buffalo station location, has been dismissed from further consideration. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, for the reasons described in the response to Comment 701-1.

Commenter Glass, Bradley

Comment I-703-1 regarding the restoration of a pedestrian connection on the Livingston Avenue Bridge. I think this is something that should be greatly considered.

Response Thank you for your comment regarding pedestrian access on the Livingston Avenue Bridge between Albany and Rensselaer, New York. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project (and associated EA) is along the same corridor and is considered a component of the program for Tier 1 assessments, but is being designed and implemented as a separate project. The Livingston Avenue Bridge Project has independent utility due to its physical condition. For more information on the Livingston Avenue Bridge, please visit the LAB project website www.dot.ny.gov/livingstonavebridge.

Commenter Greenburg, Richard

Comment I-704-1	I hate to see this, but I am probably standing up here as a conspiracy theorist. I looked at these plans, all of the plans, as being only marginally better than what we have today. They're really not going to change transportation in New York State or any place else.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. As noted in the Tier 1 FEIS, Alternative 90B would double the service frequency along Empire Corridor West. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 of all of the alternatives considered and would increase ridership by 1 million over the Base Alternative.
Commenter	Greenburg, Richard
Comment I-704-2	There is one thing that's missing I believe is the link between Buffalo and New York City and the link between Erie and Lackawanna. It's still there. It's sitting there largely abandoned.
Response	Thank you for your comments and interest in the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The HSR Empire Corridor Program connects New York City with the largest cities in New York State. The Empire Corridor is identified with the rail route that extends from New York City to Albany through the Hudson Valley, and then west from Albany-Rensselaer to Niagara Falls, through Mohawk Valley and across Central and Western regions of New York City. Use of the Erie and Lackawanna abandoned right of ways would not follow the areas outlined in the program.
Commenter	Haremza, Jason
Comment I-705-1	I'm in support of Option 125. fourteen billion dollars sounds like a lot, but how many billions are we spending on the Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement which is the replacement of a single bridge?
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor. Alternative 90B would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts. Based on this, and resulting lower costs and impacts, Alternative 90B has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered.
Commenter	Haremza, Jason
Comment I-705-2	Option 125 effectively makes Buffalo and Syracuse commutable and expands the job market to combine metropolitan areas of three million people or more.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Although Alternative 125 would improve service to Buffalo-Exchange Street and Syracuse, the 125 express service would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, will improve service to these existing stations.
Commenter	Haremza, Jason
Comment I-705-3	Connections to Canada are good and necessary, but I feel usage is limited until a more effective border crossing process is made. It doesn't matter how fast the train goes if you sit at the border for two hours while customs does its work.

Response	Thank you for your comments on the border crossing process. Currently, the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program focuses on improvements between New York City and Niagara Falls. The newly reconstructed Niagara Falls Station Intermodal Transportation Center was designed to improve the border crossing process.
Commenter	Haremza, Jason
Comment I-705-4	I know this hearing is about High Speed Rail, but it cannot be divorced from the Rochester Station Project. I would respectfully ask NYSDOT to update the website in regards to the project time line and schedule a public meeting specific to the Station Project to address some of the issues that have been raised by other speakers tonight.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding the Rochester Station Project. NYSDOT and the City of Rochester are supporting a project to build a new station at Rochester, with the construction completed in 2017. Further information is available at: www.dot.ny.gov/rochesterintermodalcenter .
Commenter	Hellwitz, Bob
Comment I-706-1	I am in favor of the 125 plan because there is a dedicated line. Also in Western New York we have a beautiful train station on the East Side of Buffalo, and I would like that be incorporated into these plans. It would be development for East Side of Buffalo and bring jobs, and it would be a benefit to the East Side.
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the use of the former Central Terminal in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo Central Terminal was not included in the analysis of the Build Alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS, since the focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor, including the stations at Buffalo-Depew and Buffalo-Exchange Street. The building is on the north side of the main tracks at the west end of CSX Transportation's Frontier Yard and is not easily accessible for passenger trains. Alternative 125, which would have required a new or relocated Buffalo station location, has been dismissed from further consideration. In the spring of 2017, the Governor and Mayor formed and participated in a Train Station Site Selection Committee, that also included elected, state, county, city officials, Amtrak, and other public and private transportation officials. The committee, tasked with evaluating prospective locations for a Buffalo Amtrak/bus station, including Central Terminal, voted to approve a downtown station site closer to the existing Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Some of the primary reasons for the selection of the downtown site included economic benefits to the downtown business district, as well as population densities that support the transit use. Construction of a new terminal at the Buffalo-Exchange Street Station site finished in November 2020.
Commenter	Hubiak, Joe
Comment I-707-1	We have land, farmland on the other side of the railroad tracks and I know there's farmers all the way from Albany to Buffalo that have land on the other side of the railroad tracks and that's what we're here for, to know if our access to our land is still going to be -- is going to be accessible.
Response	Thank you for commenting on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. Alternative 90B would provide 370 miles of additional trackage and would minimize possible impacts on farmlands by the location of tracks primarily within the existing right-of-way, as discussed in Section 4.18. Section 4.18 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the general impacts of the program alternatives on farmlands, potential mitigation, and further analysis to be conducted in Tier 2 studies. Potential mitigation measures for work affecting agricultural properties could include installation of crossings for farm animals or creation of new temporary farmland access roads, if the proposed work may impinge on these uses. In Tier 2, the mapping of the railroad alignments will be further refined and access across the right

of way will be reviewed with measures identified to provide for the safe movements of trains at grade crossings.

Comments from the public, discussing the safety of the operation of the high speed trains for both grade crossings and along the right of way, have been an important consideration in the selection of the Preferred Alternative by FRA and NYSDOT.

Commenter **Thomas, Colin Fox**

Comment I'm right now supporting the 125 plan
I-708-1

Response Thank you for your comment supporting the 125 Alternative and the benefits from high speed rail. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 90B, was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance. Alternative 90B would result in the best overall on-time performance for Amtrak service in 2035 and, at the same time, would involve the least delay-minutes per 100 train miles operated for freight trains of all of the alternatives considered. Unlike the 125 express service, which would bypass existing stations at Schenectady, Amsterdam, Rome, Utica, and Buffalo-Depew, it will improve service to these existing stations.

Commenter **Thomas, Colin Fox**

Comment I like how there's more intermodal transport centers in locations. I hope that can be expanded somehow to all the locations, and as well as to make sure they are accessible to the downtowns
I-708-2

Response Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS evaluates a range of corridor-level service improvements for the purpose of making decisions on corridor-level service, including service reliability, service frequency, and train speeds. The focus was on utilizing existing stations along the Empire Corridor. A number of stations along the route that are accessible to downtown urban centers (including Niagara Falls, Buffalo-Exchange Street Station, Rochester, and Syracuse) have been reconstructed in recent years.

Commenter **Thomas, Colin Fox**

Comment And I just support the idea of increasing ridership on rail to help reduce the amount of drivers on the road, which saves on transportation costs, wear and tear on our roads and highways, as well as reduces pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.
I-708-3

Response Thank you for your comments, your environmental and economic concerns have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Ridership and revenue opportunities have been an important consideration in selecting the Preferred Alternative. The net annual operational benefits for the Preferred Alternative would be roughly equivalent to eliminating the emissions associated with the energy and electricity consumption of 2,500 to 4,200 average U.S. single family homes every year.

Commenter **Lepine, Maurice**

Comment I'm also a teacher at Baldwinsville Central District, teaching technologic education. However, I support the 110 and the 125. Being a person who works with young people, I think that if we want to keep best and brightest in this area, in Central New York, whether you're at Buffalo or anywhere along the corridor, you want to have transportation where they can go to school and come back, go to their jobs come back home and stay home to their business and bring -- and bring the monies in.
I-709-1

Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternatives 110 and 125 and the program. Economic costs and benefits of each alternative, for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 90B was selected as the Preferred Alternative, as it would add 370 miles of tracks and would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way than Alternatives 110 and 125. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Lepine, Maurice
Comment I-709-2	However, I support the 110 and the 125.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of Alternative 110 and 125, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 would create a dedicated, 2-track passenger right-of-way over much of the Empire Corridor and was dismissed due to higher costs and impacts. Alternatives 90B and 110 would restore large sections of third and fourth track, but Alternative 90B would constrain more of the additional trackage to the existing right-of-way, substantially reducing costs and impacts.
Commenter	Love, John C.
Comment I-710-1	The high speed rail corridor of New York State, I believe, ought to be upgraded to a 90 mile per hour, or 110 mile-per-hour corridor, at least.
Response	Thank you for comments supporting the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program and the need for improving rail passenger service on the route. In selecting Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative for the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, the FRA and NYSDOT selected a program of improvements largely situated within the existing rights-of-way, thereby minimizing both costs and impacts.
Commenter	Love, John C.
Comment I-710-2	Just to give some statistics, Amtrak makes over 40 million dollars in operating revenue on its routes under 400 miles in length. Those are Amtrak's regional routes. Amtrak is not a money losing proposition. As one man put it, there are two systems within Amtrak. There is a regional system. There is a long distance system. The long distance system, we know, has had financial conundrums that have come against it. The regional system is profitable. And a higher speed for the regional trains, I think, is fully justifiable, especially in light of the fact that they are making a profit. According to the Brookings Institute, above 40 million dollars a year profit.
Response	Thank you for your comments regarding economic concerns, which have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Ridership and revenue opportunities have been an important consideration in selecting the Preferred Alternative. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Tier 1 EIS describe the costs and benefits of the program alternatives.
Commenter	Love, John C.
Comment I-710-3	Now, another fact, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Norfolk Southern Corporation, paid almost a billion dollars in taxes in one of the recent fiscal years, within the last five years. Should not revenue coming into our government from railways be used to improve railway infrastructure. Even for privately half freight hauling railroads, as we upgrade these to higher speeds, and dare I say high speed.
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The program is supported by both the Federal Railroad Administration and the New York

	State Department of Transportation and would be subject to the funding requirements of both the federal and state governments.
Commenter	Maray, Carl, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks
Comment I-711-1	<p>The other opportunities I've worked with is RL Banks in Washington. I represent them tonight and they work largely with FRA funding and service of transportation board issues in Washington.</p> <p>Getting back to the NEPA Process. One of the things we learned in Dallas on system quarters was to get a categorical exclusion. I would suggest breaking the program down into pieces. You already broke it down between Poughkeepsie and Albany which is smart, very smart on Joe Boardman's part and you folks on the DOT. I think you will need that to get through the CSX issues with the service transportation board.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments on the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program. The Tier 1 EIS outlines a program of individual improvements to be further evaluated for implementation in Tier 2, as suggested in your comment. In the Tier 2 assessments, individual projects or groups of projects will be further advanced in terms of costs, scheduling, and funding, according to the Service Development Plan.
Commenter	Maray, Carl, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks, Licensed Professional Engineer, RL Banks
Comment I-711-2	I would be in favor for the 125. I would like to see that with a stop in Utica. I think it was previously mentioned with partially the new partnership between The School of Health and Science in Albany and the school in Utica IT, SUNY IT. I think it would be a big plus to move scientists and engineers back and forth because they will be working together. I think the station stop in Utica, it seems you've got one in the Falls, but I think it's the gateway to the Adirondacks.
Response	Your comments about preserving and offering intercity rail passenger service for the City of Utica have been considered by the FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 125 was designed to help cut the distance between Albany and Syracuse by 14 miles, but one of the major drawbacks of this route is that it passes to the south of the stations on the current Empire Corridor in the Mohawk Valley between Syracuse and Albany. Therefore, 125 express service would not serve Rome, Utica, Amsterdam and Schenectady. Alternative 90B was selected over Alternative 125, based on its substantially lower costs, impacts, and its performance, and would increase service to Utica, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS.
Commenter	Pyke, Gayle
Comment I-712-1	<p>And I was mostly here tonight to find out what the time table was for the new station in particular. I also represent retirees in the area and I do go to Albany to lobby for health care protection and so forth in the interest of seniors. I can't get the seniors that are local to use the train. So we have seventy and eighty-year-old people driving seventy miles an hour on the thruway, which really scares me.</p> <p>But let's get that new station. And I'm also interested what is meant by the High Speed Rail.</p>
Response	Thank you for your comments in support of the High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Program, which have been considered by FRA and NYSDOT in the selection of Alternative 90B as the Preferred Alternative. Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 EIS describes the improvements and operations proposed, and Section 2.5.5 presents a description of the status of station improvements along Empire Corridor.