

## **I-87 EXIT 3 or 4 AIRPORT CONNECTOR: A240**

**Post 2014 Funding:** \$15.2 M Construction (NHS)

### **History:**

- The original Interstate Highway System Plan for the Capital District included the construction of I-687 connecting I-90 Exit 5A with I-87 at Exit 3. A connection between NY 85 and I-687 was also planned, as was a connection between Exit 3 and the Albany International Airport. No funding was earmarked for the airport connector.
- Due to the unacceptable community disruption and environmental impact of constructing I-687, the facility was deleted from the plan in 1973 and withdrawn from the Interstate system plan by request of CDTC and the Governor of New York in 1977. Funds allocated for construction of I-687 were reprogrammed by CDTC to other projects of immediate need, including the construction of (Alternate) Route 7.
- To accommodate traffic concerns that would have been partially addressed by I-687, CDTC completed the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study in 1979. Among a number of items, the study identified the need to examine Wolf Road related traffic issues in detail. This recommendation, combined with a desire by NYSDOT to determine the final disposition of land it owned in the area led to initiation of CDTC's Wolf Road Area Transportation Improvement Study. The resulting plan called for continued operational improvements and managing land use in the corridor; completion of the service road network; and construction of Exit 3/Airport connector. The study noted that Exit 3 would improve accessibility to both Wolf Road and the Airport.
- A broader Albany County Airport Area Traffic Assessment and Airport Area Generic Environmental Impact Study completed in the early 1990's generally confirmed the findings of CDTC's Wolf Road planning effort.
- Exit 3/Airport Connector was first programmed in the 1993-1998 TIP.
- NYSDOT initiated project design in 1996 to examine a number of potential alternatives, ranging from a new interchange to reconfiguring the existing Exit 4 ramps and connecting roadways. Due to an uncertain funding scenario for construction and disagreement over necessary project scale to meet future traffic volumes and commitments to air carriers, the NEPA process was delayed such that this past year, FHWA invoked the ten year rule for implementation and revoked federal participation in the project until such time as either NYSDOT purchases right of way or constructs a portion of the improvement.
- State funding was encumbered to continue the NEPA and Design Phase I-IV processes. A project advisory committee was formed to guide the design process.

### **Status:**

- The project remains a committed element of the New Visions 2030 Plan at an estimated \$44.0 M. The project is shown as one-third congestion management and two-thirds economic development.
- The design team is currently working on the preliminary design Phase II of the project. The consultant has completed modeling of the existing traffic conditions and has started work on the significant task of modeling the feasible alternatives. The operational modeling effort will ascertain whether and how new ramp construction can be accommodated and still maintain satisfactory main line traffic flow on I-87 in this busy corridor.
- NYSDOT Region 1's strategy, given the uncertain budget climate, is to proceed to design approval and program staged construction of the recommended alternative. The first stage will be replacement of the I-87 bridges over Albany Shaker Road. That stage is currently programmed for SFY 2012-13.
- Depending on what construction option is chosen, the cost of this project could be \$7M or more than the cost shown here. Additional funding is dependent on identification of a fund source.