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Erie Boulevard \$14 M Redesign Concept to be Unveiled for Public Comment in Open Meeting This Week

**Mayor Stratton, City Officials, Business Leaders, Engineering Firm to Discuss Design
and Construction Time Table for Planned Makeover of Major Downtown Corridor**

SCHENECTADY -- Mayor Brian U. Stratton will join city and county officials, as well as representatives from Schenectady businesses and organizations, Thursday evening for a public presentation and discussion of the preferred design concept for \$14 million in reconstruction and other improvements to Erie Boulevard, between I-890 and Liberty Street. It will be the first of at least two public meetings designed to provide information, answer questions and receive public comment on the roadway reconstruction project which is scheduled to begin next year.

"I invite all Schenectady residents, as well as those who frequently travel through our downtown for work or for pleasure, to attend this important public meeting to see the exciting and dramatic design concept that will transform Erie Boulevard from a sea of asphalt to a pedestrian-friendly, business-friendly technology corridor," Mayor Stratton said.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, November 29th, 2007, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 pm in the Atrium at Proctors Theater, located at 432 State Street in Schenectady. Free parking is available in the lot behind Proctor's or in the Parking Garage. The project design and schedule will be presented at this time. The meeting will also include opportunities for the public to ask questions and provide input on the future of the corridor.

Mayor Stratton, who initially proposed a technology business park concept for Erie Boulevard during his first campaign for Mayor in 2003, said the City of Schenectady has successfully secured \$14 million in State and federal funding for the project, which will begin with design and engineering in 2008 and construction in 2009.

Susan Savage, Chair of the Schenectady County Legislature, said “The Erie Boulevard project is critical to the success of our redevelopment efforts. It is key to the revival of Schenectady County.”

The City of Schenectady is sponsoring the project with assistance from the Federal Highway Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation. It was placed on the Capital District Transportation Commission’s list of priority transportation projects in 2005 and was originally programmed to received \$11.5 million in state and federal funds.

An additional \$2 million in funding was secured for the project by U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton, bringing the total budget to \$14 million. The project is 80 percent federally funded and 15 percent State-funded, with the remaining 5 percent funded by the City.

Earlier this year, Mayor Stratton appointed an Erie Boulevard Project Advisory Committee to work with Clough Harbour and Associates to develop design principals for the heavily-traveled Erie Boulevard corridor. These principles, which form the basis of the preferred design that will be presented at Thursday’s meeting, include enhancing the aesthetics of the corridor and improving its function as a major gateway to and from the City of Schenectady.

In addition, it is anticipated that the improvements will provide access to convenient parking, encourage private investment and redevelopment, promote a vibrant atmosphere by emphasizing public spaces, and reflect the rich history of the City.

“In its current state, the excessive width of Erie Boulevard encourages high traffic speeds and makes it extremely difficult for pedestrians to cross,” Mayor Stratton said. “The preferred design concept transforms that additional width into green space and apply traffic calming measures. This will not only slow traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, but serve as an attractive environment for future business growth downtown.”

“The preferred concept provides an important direction for the future of Erie Boulevard, but we want to ensure that members of the public have the opportunity to comment and to ask questions,” continued Stratton. “I encourage all interested members of the public to come to the meeting, learn about the proposed design, and provide their input on this critical economic development and transportation improvement initiative.”