



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

Your Turn: Imagining Future of Transportation in New York State

JEREMY COONEY June 9, 2024



This guest essay featured in the Democrat & Chronicle on Sunday June 9th, 2024

When many people think of transportation, their minds jump to roads, bridges or some form of mass transit. As the new chairman for the Senate Transportation Committee, I challenge us to think bigger. The road ahead is endless, as is the potential of transportation to better the daily lives of citizens across New York state.

Transportation is equity. Transportation barriers are one of the most significant obstacles individuals face when seeking employment. That's why I've been a strong supporter of our

public transit systems. Public transportation is about mobility and access for all. Jobs located in suburban and rural settings must also be accessible to job seekers residing in our cities. An investment in public transit systems across New York is an investment in more frequent and reliable routes, but it's also an investment in empowering our workforce and reducing poverty.

Transportation is multimodal. At its most basic, transportation is about connecting Point A to Point B, but the 'how we get there' is just as important. Whether it's more bike lanes and safer streets for pedestrians, rapid transit bus routes, more direct flight options at our regional airports, or new ferry and rail connectivity – New Yorkers deserve a robust transit portfolio. It's a value that students, workers, and seniors alike care about and prioritize. Communities that offer substantial transit access and options will be the ones to see the most growth.

Transportation is reconnecting New York State. To remain competitive with other states and best prepare for population migration due to climate change, New York needs to better connect upstate to downstate. With innovative solutions like high-speed rail and vertical aviation technology, we have the potential to create the modern-day 'Erie Canal Effect.' By better connecting the population hubs of Toronto and New York City, we can create real economic growth across upstate cities. This opens up new housing and land development options. It also provides businesses better access to our workforce talent, which will help attract more companies – like Micron – to invest in New York.

With federal dollars on the table, now is the time for New York to aggressively build out its transit infrastructure. This requires bold leadership to invest in new technologies, commit to reducing our carbon output, and to prioritize passenger convenience and safety.

Transportation must transcend political and geographic differences – for it is a great equalizer in enhancing the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Jeremy Cooney represents the 56th District in the state Senate. He serves as chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.