

**Washington/Western Bus Rapid Transit  
Albany, New York  
Small Starts Project Development  
(Rating Assigned November 2018)**

Summary Description	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Bus Rapid Transit 8.5 Miles, 16 Stations
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$80.65 Million
<b>Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$60.49 Million (75.0%)
<b>Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2021):</b>	\$2.87 Million
<b>Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):</b>	9,700 Daily Linked Trips
<b>Overall Project Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Project Justification Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating:</b>	Medium

**Project Description:** The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) proposes to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) in the Washington/Western corridor that extends from downtown Albany, through the State University of New York at Albany and the Harriman State Office Complex, to the Crossgates Mall. The project includes dedicated lanes over a majority of the alignment, limited stops, uniquely branded buses and stations, transit signal priority, queue bypass lanes, real-time bus arrival information, and bus maintenance garage expansion. Service is planned to operate seven days a week, with buses every seven to 10 minutes during weekday daytime hours and buses every 15 to 30 minutes during weekday evenings and weekends.

**Project Purpose:** CDTA's second busiest transit services operate in this corridor, where approximately 30 percent of the population does not own an automobile. CDTA believes the proposed project would provide direct, frequent, quick, and more reliable service. CDTA expects to attract new transit riders and to encourage transit and pedestrian-oriented revitalization in this corridor that serves major institutions, offices, colleges and universities, as well as retail and urban residential areas.

**Project Development History, Status and Next Steps:** CDTA selected BRT as the locally preferred alternative in December 2013, and had it adopted into the region's fiscally constrained long range transportation plan in March 2014. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in July 2014. CDTA completed the environmental review process with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA in February 2015. CDTA anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in mid-2019, and the start of revenue service in spring 2021.

**Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2017):** The total capital cost decreased from \$108.84 million to \$80.65 million to reflect a reduction in project size and scope at the Crossgates Mall Transit Center. The project sponsor reduced the CIG amount requested from \$87.07 million (80.0 percent) to \$60.49 million (75.0 percent).

## Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b> Section 5309 Small Starts	\$60.49	75.0%
<b>State:</b> New York State Department of Transportation Cash Contribution	\$10.86	13.5%
<b>Local:</b> CDTA General Funds	\$9.30	11.5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$80.65</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**NOTE:** The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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***LAND USE RATING: Medium-High***

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average population density across all station areas is 7,303 persons per square mile, which corresponds to a Medium rating by FTA benchmarks. Station area employment totals 73,767 employees, corresponding to a Medium rating. The average daily parking cost in the central business district (CBD) of the City of Albany is approximately \$11.00, corresponding to a Medium rating. The proportion of LBAR housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the county through which the project travels is 2.93, which corresponds to a High rating.
- The project will connect educational institutions, offices, shopping centers, retail districts, and urban residential areas to downtown Albany, the Capital Region’s largest CBD. The corridor comprises two “segments” - a densely developed, pre-automobile eastern segment, and an auto-centric western segment characterized by institutions which have pedestrian-oriented centers, but are surrounded by ring roads and parking lots.
- Much of the corridor has a complete network of pedestrian facilities.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium***

**Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium**

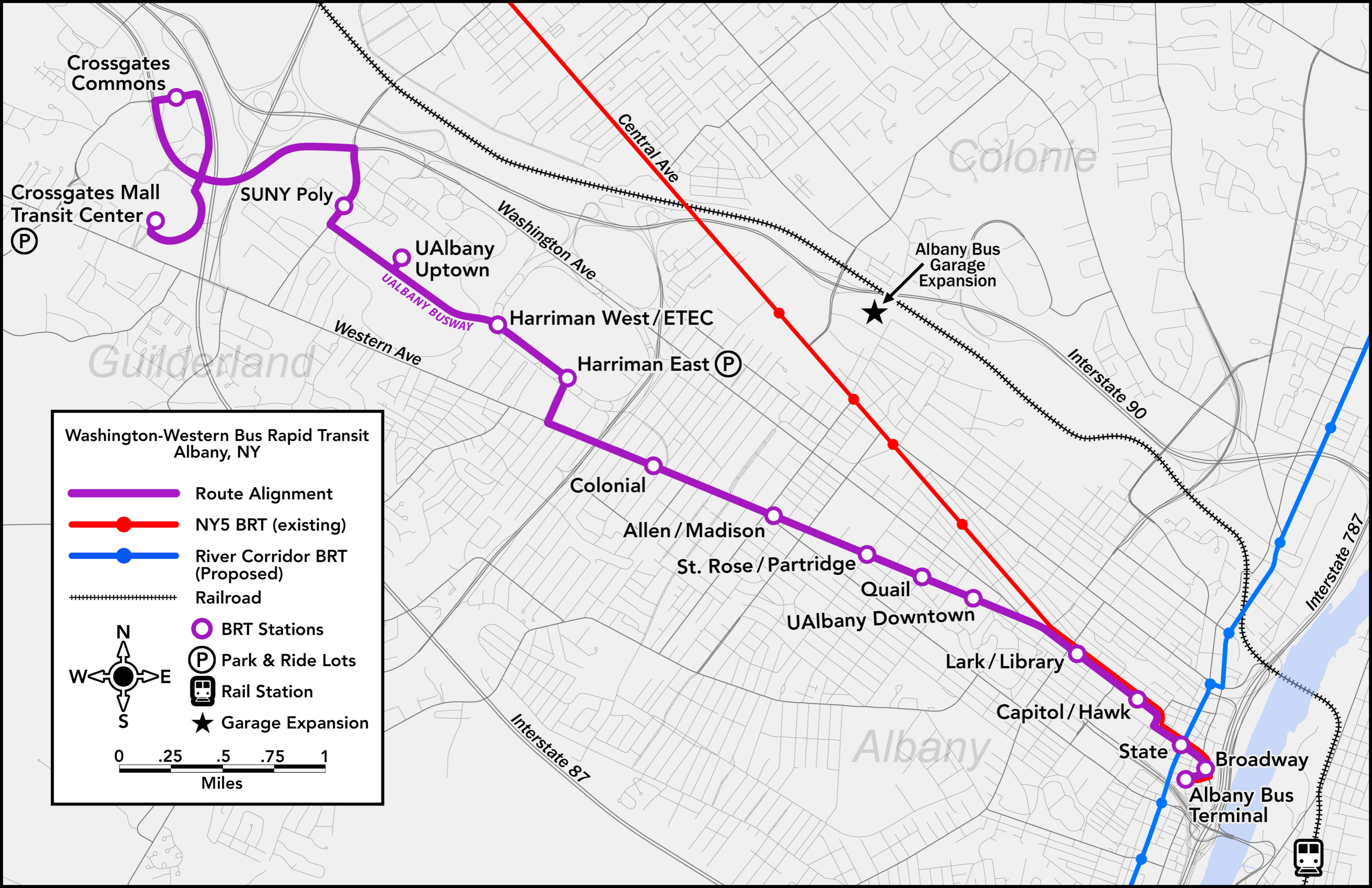
- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Plans identify Washington and Western Avenues as mixed-use, transit-oriented corridors, and focus on creating walkable, transit-oriented station areas supporting pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. However, plans generally do not discuss target development densities.
- *Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations:* Mixed-use and dense residential and commercial zoning districts line much of the corridor. Most mixed-use districts do not prescribe a maximum residential density and some require first-floor retail. Albany’s new zoning ordinance reduces required parking minimums and encourages increased density throughout the corridor and near transit stations. Some multi-family uses such as dormitories and townhomes have minimum bicycle parking requirements.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The project sponsor has engaged developers on characteristics and benefits of transit-supportive development, and reviews major development projects to integrate bus stop infrastructure and pedestrian amenities. Evidence of financial development incentives was not provided.

**Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium**









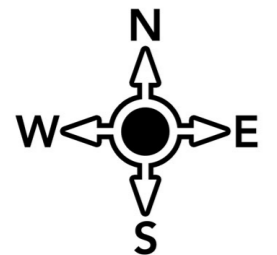

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* The project sponsor identified 15 recent examples of adaptive reuse, building upgrades, and new construction throughout the corridor including large institutional buildings, major event venues, office-to-residential conversions, higher density residential buildings, and building renovations and expansions. Most of these developments are oriented to the street and encourage pedestrian access. Specific plans and proposals for future projects were not provided.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* There are substantial opportunities for development along the corridor, including both urban infill and increased density at campus-style activity centers. The Albany area’s economy is stable and the city’s population has begun to increase after a few decades of decline.

**Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-Low**

- Albany’s zoning ordinance has an inclusionary zoning provision for large residential developments, and provides a height bonus and reduced parking minimum for developments that have at least 20 percent affordable units. Home acquisition assistance programs are available for low-income households. Evidence of measures to ensure long-term affordability was not provided.



**Washington-Western Bus Rapid Transit  
Albany, NY**

-  Route Alignment
  -  NY5 BRT (existing)
  -  River Corridor BRT (Proposed)
  -  Railroad
  -  BRT Stations
  -  Park & Ride Lots
  -  Rail Station
  -  Garage Expansion
-  N  
W E  
S
-  0 .25 .5 .75 1  
Miles