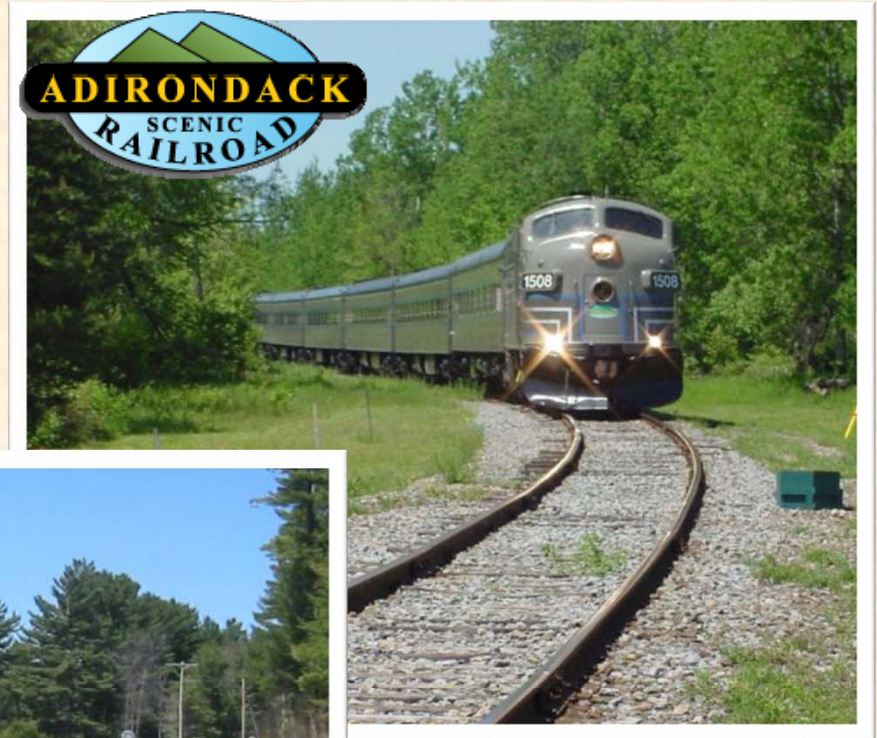
An aerial photograph showing a long passenger train with a yellow and blue locomotive at the front, traveling along a riverbank. The landscape is lush with green and autumn-colored trees, and a large lake is visible in the background under a cloudy sky. The text "New York State's Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor" is overlaid in yellow on the upper portion of the image.

New York State's Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor

NEW YORK STATE'S

Remsen – Lake Placid Travel Corridor

A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION ASSET



NEW YORK STATE'S

Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor

Current Service

Saranac Lake

Lake Placid

Tupper Lake

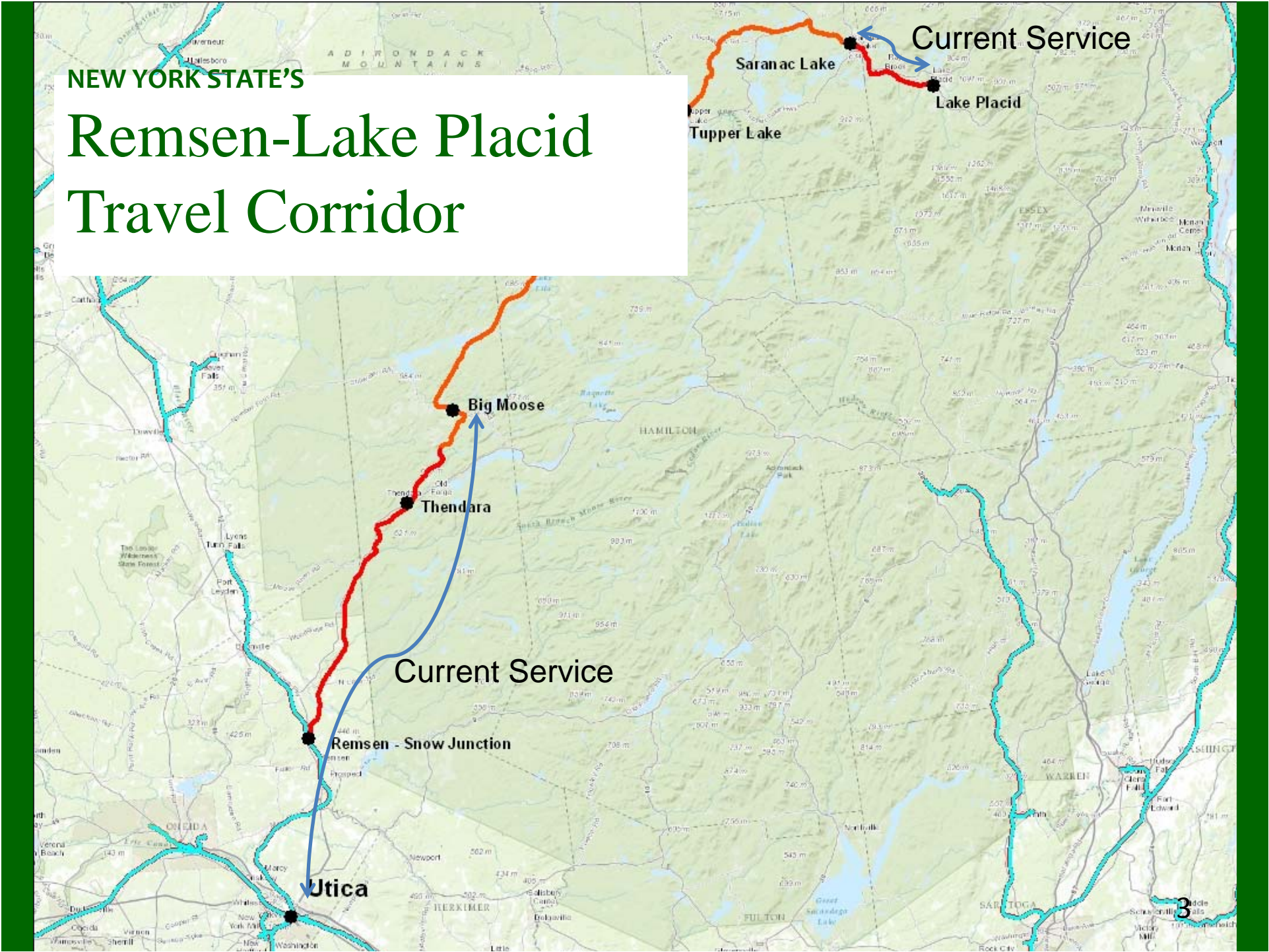
Big Moose

Thendara

Current Service

Remsen - Snow Junction

Utica



Background

- ➔ **1996: Remsen Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan (Corridor UMP)**
 - ➔ Approved by DOT and DEC Commissioners
 - ➔ **Preferred Alternative:** Permit rail uses over the entire length of the Corridor – encourage compatible recreational trail uses
- ➔ **2013:** DOT and DEC Commissioners commit to review the 1996 Corridor UMP and engage public discussion about the best future use of the Remsen Lake Placid Travel Corridor (Corridor)

Background

- ➔ **2013:** Four listening sessions held to receive public input about best future use of the Corridor and whether or not to revisit the preferred alternative in the 1996 Corridor UMP
 - ➔ Utica, Old Forge, Tupper Lake & Raybrook

- ➔ **2014:** DOT and DEC Commissioners announce that they will seek public input into developing an amendment to the 1996 Corridor UMP which:
 - (1) considers conversion of the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment of the Corridor to a recreational trail
 - (2) explores options for bolstering rail service along the remainder of the Corridor between Remsen and Tupper Lake and
 - (3) reviews options to create and expand snowmobile routes and other recreational trails from Old Forge to Tupper Lake

Purpose of Public Comment Meetings

- ➔ Present findings from 2013 public discussion about the best future use of the Corridor
- ➔ Present plan for developing an amendment to the 1996 Corridor UMP
- ➔ Identify potential issues to be reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)
- ➔ Accept public comment on amending the 1996 Corridor UMP

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **GENERAL:**

- ➔ Public interest in the future of this Corridor is high
 - ➔ Approx 650 attendees at 4 public listening sessions
 - ➔ More than 2000 written comments received
- ➔ Public opinion is nearly unanimous on one point
 - ➔ The Corridor is a key to foster economic growth
- ➔ Public opinion is fairly evenly split
 - ➔ Rail use as the best way to generate growth
 - ➔ Trail use as the best way to generate growth

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **STATE & REGIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS:**

➔ State Rail Plan

➔ Makes no specific commitments to Corridor

➔ Notes contribution to regional economy

➔ North Country Regional Economic Development Plan

➔ 2012 Progress Report identified preservation and rehabilitation of Remsen – Lake Placid Rail Corridor as a Key Economic Development Strategy

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **CORRIDOR OWNERSHIP:**

- ➔ Corridor was abandoned by Penn Central in 1972
 - ➔ Abandonment predated Rails-to-Trails Act
 - ➔ No federal jurisdiction over rail Corridor

- ➔ Corridor acquired by DOT in 1975 via eminent domain
 - ➔ NYSDOT acquired fee title to Corridor
 - ➔ Eminent domain process extinguished any reversionary property rights that may have existed

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

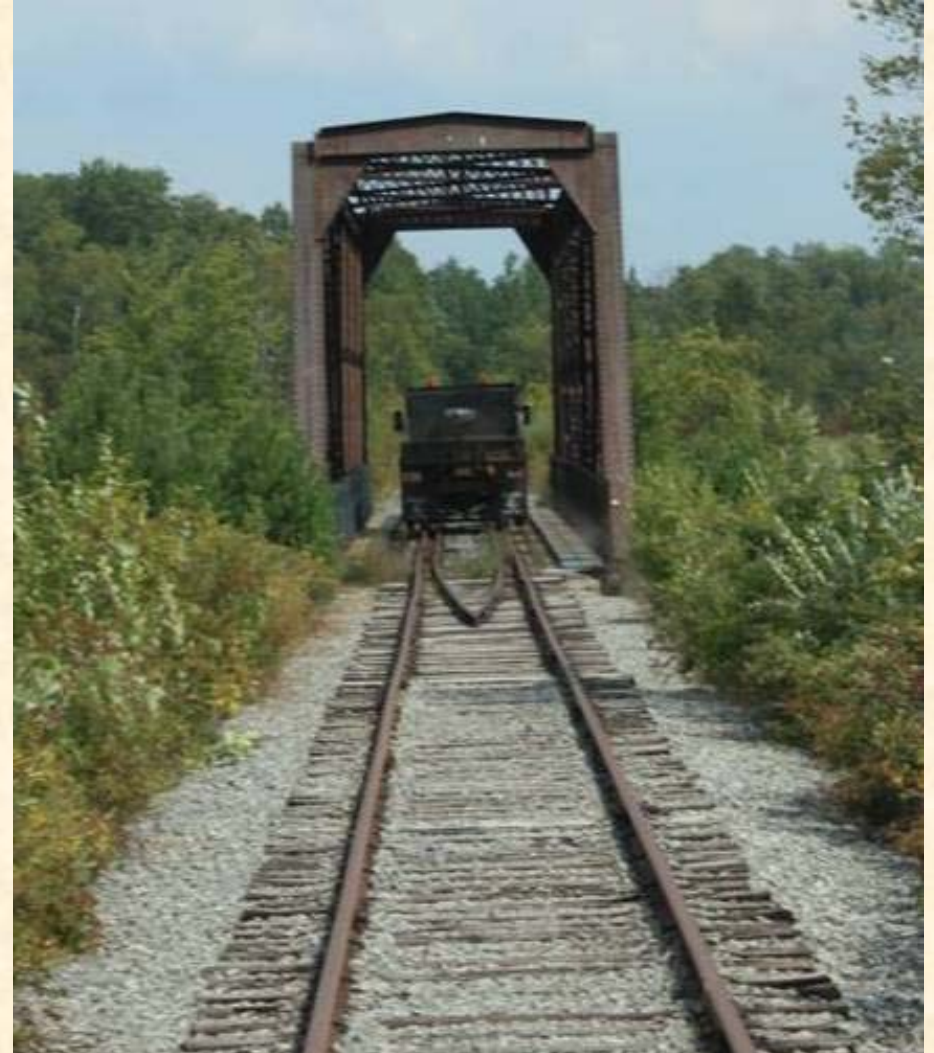
➔ **OVERALL CORRIDOR CONDITION:**

- ➔ Overall condition of the Corridor is better than during 1996 UMP
- ➔ Rail infrastructure is in good condition where trains currently operates:
 - ➔ Remsen and Big Moose
 - ➔ Saranac Lake and Lake Placid
- ➔ Rail service not offered between Big Moose to Saranac due to poor tie conditions
 - ➔ Isolated erosion or slope stabilization issues
- ➔ Illegal ATV use is occurring in a number of locations

Remsen Lake Placid Corridor at Raquette River



1992



2013

Remsen Lake Placid Corridor Near Raybrook



1992



2003

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **EXISTING RAIL SERVICE:**

- ➔ Well received by the communities south of Tupper Lake
- ➔ Viewed as a positive engine of economic growth south of Tupper Lake
- ➔ Strong ridership growth 2009 (42,000) – 2012 (71,354)
- ➔ The communities of the Tug Hill region value the train and want to maintain train linkages to Lyons Falls from Remsen/Utica
- ➔ “Theme” trains have strong ridership draw
 - ➔ Snowmobile permit prohibits operation of “Polar Express” service from Lake Placid in December

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE ISSUES:**

- ➔ Engineering and constructing a parallel trail over the entire length of the Corridor is not feasible
- ➔ DOT, DEC and APA staff concluded that engineering and constructing a universally accessible parallel trail along the Lake Placid to Saranac Lake section would require costly trail construction through wetlands or trail construction on adjacent Forest Preserve lands which would be non-conforming in Wild Forest
- ➔ The road system along Routes 73 & 86 is challenging for bicyclists and pedestrians
- ➔ The road system south of Tupper Lake, including Routes 30 & 3, provides more accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- ➔ The communities in the Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid region have sought an evaluation of alternate uses of the Travel Corridor

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **SNOWMOBILE ISSUES:**

- ➔ Corridor available Dec 1 thru April 30 each year
- ➔ Use is hindered during periods of lesser snow as the track becomes exposed
- ➔ DOT installed snowmobile counters this past winter at Big Moose and Sabattis

	Peak Daily Count
Big Moose (2/13 – 4/20)	610 (3/22)
Sabattis (2/1 – 4/1)	465 (3/22)

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ STATIONS BUILDINGS:

- ➔ There are many structures and small out-buildings along the Corridor owned by NYSDOT or local communities

Station:	Owner:	Current Use:	Future Use w/ Rail	Future Use w/ Trail
Remsen	Local	ASR Station / Community Center	ASR Station / Community Center	ASR Station / Community Center
Thendara	NYSDOT	ASR Station	ASR Station	ASR Station
Tupper Lake	Local	Community Center	ASR Station / Community Center	ASR Station / Community Center
Saranac Lake	NYSDOT	ASR Station	ASR Station	Unknown
Lake Placid	Local	ASR Station / Museum	ASR Station / Museum	Museum / Unknown

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **PRIOR FEDERAL INVESTMENTS:**

- ➔ NYSDOT has invested approximately \$12.9 million of federal funding on restoration of rail infrastructure between Remsen and Lake Placid
 - ➔ Section 130 Grade Crossing Safety
 - ➔ Transportation Enhancement Grants
- ➔ Federal rules may require NYSDOT to repay FHWA for abandonment of federal investment
 - ➔ Up to \$ 2 million of federally funded rail work could be removed under rail trail alternatives, primarily between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **FREIGHT RAIL OPPORTUNITIES:**

- ➔ Adirondack Scenic Railroad has received inquiries about handling small volumes of freight shipment
- ➔ Adirondack Scenic lacks Federal authorization to handle freight
 - ➔ Would require availability of rail service 365 day/year
 - ➔ Would become subject to federal jurisdiction
 - ➔ Would impact continuing snowmobile use

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **TOURIST RAIL OPPORTUNITIES:**

- ➔ Other tourist railroads have been very successful in partnering with parks
 - ➔ Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (OH)
 - ➔ Operated by not-for-profit 503(c)
 - ➔ Railroad owned by National Park Service
 - ➔ Provides transportation to visitors within Cuyahoga National Park
 - ➔ Carried over 210,000 passengers in 2012

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ RECREATIONAL RAIL TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES:

- ➔ Most successful when the trails connect directly to and travel through population centers, where points of interest and adequate services for travelers are located directly along the trail
 - ➔ Lake Placid to Tupper Lake segment links population centers
 - ➔ Tupper Lake to Big Moose segment traverses remote area with no services
- ➔ The 90-mile Genesee Valley Greenway is visited by more than 70,000 users along it's northerly section near Rochester (*The southern portion of the route which travels through more rural areas receives fewer users, 2,455 annually*)

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **POTENTIAL COSTS:**

- ➔ Annual maintenance costs for rail or trail are not significantly different – approx \$1,500 / mile / year
- ➔ The cost to remove the tracks will likely exceed the scrap value of any materials recovered
 - ➔ Volume of rail will exceed market demand for reuse
 - ➔ Removal & disposal costs for creosote-treated ties
 - ➔ Limited corridor access & mobility, distance to market

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ **POTENTIAL COSTS:**

- ➔ DOT reviewed the capital costs of recent track rehabilitation projects and trail construction projects to develop order of magnitude costs of various alternatives
- ➔ Assumptions about level of track rehabilitation required or trail design (width, surface, etc.) can greatly affect cost
- ➔ Different costs for both rail and trail alternatives are appropriate between Tupper Lake and Lake Placid
 - ➔ Level of track rehabilitation required
 - ➔ Remoteness, Limited access, Maneuverability

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ POTENTIAL COSTS – RAIL REHABILITATION:

	<i>Big Moose – Tupper Lake 44 miles</i>		<i>Tupper Lake – Lake Placid 33.5 miles</i>	
	<i>\$1,000's / mi</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>\$1,000's / mi</i>	<i>Cost</i>
<i>Track Rehabilitation</i>	<i>\$ 250</i>	<i>\$ 11.0 m</i>	<i>\$ 200</i>	<i>\$6.7 m</i>
TOTAL RAIL REHAB	\$ 11.0 million		\$ 6.7 million	

2013 Review Findings: What did we Learn?

➔ POTENTIAL COSTS – TRAIL CONSTRUCTION:

	<i>Big Moose – Tupper Lake 44 miles</i>		<i>Tupper Lake – Lake Placid 33.5 miles</i>	
	<i>\$1,000's / mi</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>\$1,000's / mi</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Trail Construction	\$ 220	\$ 9.7 m	\$ 200	\$6.7 m
Net Salvage Value	<i>(\$ 38)</i>	\$ 1.7 m	<i>(\$ 34)</i>	\$ 1.1 m
FHWA Payback	\$ 0	\$ 0.0 m	<i>(\$ 60)</i>	\$ 2.0 m
TOTAL TRAIL COST	<i>\$ 11.4 million</i>		<i>\$ 9.8 million</i>	

Amending the Corridor UMP

- ➔ The UMP Process:
 - ➔ Is the appropriate way to determine the best use of the Corridor
 - ➔ Will provide a transparent and public means of assessing potential amendments to the 1996 Corridor UMP
 - ➔ Will produce a Draft UMP amendment that will outline a series of alternatives for use of the Corridor
 - ➔ Will insure a proposed UMP amendment will conform to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan

Amending the Corridor UMP

- ➔ A Corridor UMP Amendment will:
 - ➔ Evaluate use of the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment for a recreational trail
 - ➔ Examine opportunities to maintain and realize the full economic potential of rail service between Remsen and Tupper Lake
 - ➔ Review options to create and expand alternative snowmobile corridors and other recreational trails to connect communities from Old Forge to Tupper Lake

Amending the Corridor UMP

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

- ➔ Amending the 1996 RLPTC UMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is an action subject to SEQR
- ➔ DEC and DOT have determined that the potential changes in land use along the Corridor could significant environmental impacts
- ➔ DEC and DOT will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to identify the potential impacts

Amending the Corridor UMP

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

Potential Land Use Impacts

- ➔ Changes in access within the Corridor
- ➔ Changes in access to and use of adjacent State lands
- ➔ Potential for ATV trespass

Potential Economic Impacts

- ➔ For both State and local government
- ➔ For local business
- ➔ To the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society

Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA)

Corridor crosses (3) Wild or Scenic Rivers - Moose River, Bog River and Raquette River

- ➔ These crossings exist south of Tupper Lake
- ➔ Rail infrastructure is prohibited in both Wild and Scenic River corridors
- ➔ The RLPTC predates the law, thus it is grandfathered as an allowable, existing use
- ➔ However, if the tracks are removed for more than 1 year, WSRRA regulation would prohibit replacement of the rail along the segment of the Corridor south of Tupper Lake

Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act (WSRRA)

Corridor crosses 1 Recreational River (Saranac River)

- ➔ This crossing exists north of Tupper Lake
- ➔ Rail infrastructure is permitted in Recreational River corridors
- ➔ Therefore, if the tracks are removed, WSRRA regulation would allow for rail to be replaced along the segment of the Corridor north of Tupper Lake

Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS

Historic and Cultural Resources

- ➔ Corridor listed on the National Register of Historic Places
 - ➔ New York Central Railroad Adirondack Division Historic District
- ➔ Subject to Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) between NYSDOT, SHPO and FHWA
 - ➔ Identifies actions unlikely to have any impact on historic properties
 - ➔ Requires consultation pursuant to Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act when actions have potential to impact historic properties

Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS Schedule

- ➔ **2015:** Draft Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS will be developed based on public comment received in November/December 2014
- ➔ **2015:** Draft Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS will be released for public review
- ➔ **2015:** Final Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS is anticipated to be approved

We are Listening!

Questions for the Public

- ➔ Should the 1996 RLPTC UMP be amended to convert the Tupper Lake to Lake Placid segment of the Corridor to a recreational trail?
- ➔ Should the 1996 RLPTC UMP be amended to bolster rail service along the remainder of the Corridor?
- ➔ What opportunities exist to expand snowmobile routes and other recreational trails to connect communities between Old Forge and Tupper Lake?

60 Day Public Comment Period

- ➔ DEC and DOT accepting public comment on development of a Corridor UMP Amendment/SEIS until:

December 15, 2014

- ➔ Public comment can be made at Public Comment Meetings:
 - October 28** **6-8 PM in Utica at State Office Building**
 - October 29** **1-3 PM in Old Forge at View**
 - November 6** **6-8 PM in Tupper Lake at Wild Center**
 - November 7** **1-3 PM in Lake Placid at ORDA**

60 Day Public Comment Period

Public comment can be sent:

➤ **ELECTRONICALLY:**
nysttravelcorridor@dot.ny.gov

➤ **BY MAIL:**

NYS Travel Corridor
NYSDOT Freight & Passenger Rail Bureau
50 Wolf Road, POD 54
Albany, NY 12232

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