



Sen. Chuck Schumer spent the year championing the Amtrak Gateway Program.

2015 a good year for infrastructure projects, but more work needs to be done; Building Congress

The New York Building Congress saw important progress made on its 2015 New York City and New York State Policy Agenda.

The document sets out the year's top policy priorities and cites a number of public officials who were instrumental to the progress of the agenda.

Senator Chuck Schumer championed the Amtrak Gateway Program in 2015, bringing one of the nation's most important new infra-



SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER

structure projects closer to reality.

Senator Schumer led the call for new federal funding streams and a dedicated development corporation to oversee planning and construction of the proposed cross-Hudson rail tunnels.

Senator Schumer then won several critical funding tools for Gateway in the new federal surface transportation bill.

Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a full redesign of LaGuardia Airport in 2015, which will transform this

critical gateway to New York City.

The 2015 Building Congress Policy Agenda argued that the redesign was essential to "support the extraordinary growth in regional air travel and its vital economic impacts."

Mayor Bill de Blasio implemented a 2016 capital program that included commitment levels among the highest of the past thirty years.

The Mayor's ten-year capital program was similarly strong. However, as the City faces unprecedented economic expansion and population growth, the demands on infrastructure continue to increase.

The Building Congress will advocate augmenting the strong budget with new, dedicated revenues and improvements to project delivery in the coming year.

Senator Diane Savino was instrumental as the prime sponsor in passing the New York Emergency Responder Act in the Senate.

This legislative priority for the Building Congress would indemnify firms in the design and construction industry when they respond to a declared emergency. The Building Congress will make passage in the Assembly a top priority for 2016.

Another Building Congress priority to make substantial progress was a funding plan for the MTA's \$29 billion 2015-2019 capital program.

However the State Legislature must still approve the funding during the 2016 legislative session in order for projects to move forward. Gaining final approvals will

be a top priority in the early part of the next session. Assembly Member James Brennen was a forceful advocate for the plan.

In its Policy Agenda, the Building Congress urged the City to increase its support for the MTA Capital Program. The City ultimately committed an unprecedented \$2.5 billion over the life of the program. The City's contribution had shrunk to an average of \$100 million per year since the late 1990s.

The State Legislature reauthorized the State Department of Transportation to employ Design Build procurement and delivery of road and bridge construction projects.

NYS DOT has used Design Build effectively to build projects efficiently and cost effectively in several high profile projects. Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morrelle helped ensure passage of this legislation.

Finally, the Building Congress continued its advocacy campaign with New York City Council Members, communicating the need for dedicated revenues for infrastructure.

Individual Council members, including City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito, have been receptive to this idea, and the Building Congress will work to build on this interest in the coming year.

Building Congress President Richard T. Anderson said, "In many ways, 2015 was a successful year for New York's infrastructure priorities. However, much work remains to be done.

"In addition to completing a funding plan that will jump start the MTA capital program, the State, the City and

lected officials should use their authority to encourage innovation — like the creation of new dedicated funding streams and alternative project delivery methods — tools that are increasingly essential to the long-term health of New York's infrastructure and the larger economy."