

The New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative: Laying the Foundation for the Mega-Region's Renaissance

A Project of The National Corridors Initiative

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The New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative: Laying the Foundation for our Region's Renaissance

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I. Executive Summary

The National Corridors Initiative calls upon the elected leaders of all the New England states, of New York, and of the Eastern provinces of Canada, to join with us in working for creation of a New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Authority.

The National Corridors Initiative, a non-partisan, a non-profit organization founded in 1989 to advocate for investment in rail infrastructure¹, is organizing this Initiative because we believe a regional infrastructure authority, like the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, would be an invaluable tool to improve the flow of commerce, reduce the cost of doing business, and help clean our environment by reducing our dependency on trucks and automobiles.

An Infrastructure Authority will be a new and powerful tool to rebuild and renew the region's deteriorated infrastructure --- anything that moves goods, people, energy, or ideas --- which has been largely neglected, with a few large exceptions, for decades. Even though most thinking persons recognize that basic infrastructural weakness drives people and businesses away, the size, complexity, organizational demands, and sheer geographic span of many needed infrastructure projects are often beyond the capability of our small or lightly populated states and provinces --- and whose implementation can be beyond the elected terms of even the longest serving political leaders.

Among other steps, we ask the Governor and Premiers of the states and provinces to designate a "Secretary for Regional Affairs" or the equivalent, and that the House or Assembly Speakers and Senate Presidents of the various states, and the Premiers of the provincial Parliaments, form or designate a legislative "Committee on Regional Affairs". This will facilitate the work needed to create an Authority, and, as importantly, provide a regular, permanent forum through which to discuss and plan regional projects. The formation of a regional Infrastructure Authority could take a decade or more; it is essential that we begin meeting now on joint projects, which such an authority might in future build, but which need to be initiated now to forestall continued economic decline.

¹ In 1990-1991 the National Corridor Initiative negotiated, with the G.H.W. Bush White House Office of Management and Budget, the release of blocked funds for the construction of the Northeast High Speed Rail Corridor, which was completed in 1999. This project reduced rail travel time New York-Boston from 5½ hours to 3½.

The remainder of this document simply gives a brief economic history, explains how we have gotten into our present condition, and makes a start on some of the elements of “the infrastructure to prosperity”. But this will be a long, collaborative process, if it is to work at all, and will need resources, people, and most of all commitment. We hope you will join, and help us all succeed.

II. How the Northeast Arrived at Its Present Condition

It is well known that New England and the neighboring regions of upstate New York and the Eastern Canadian provinces have for more than four decades been in economic and demographic decline relative to the rest of the United States and Canada, and, ominously, in some recent cases, in absolute terms as well.

This relative decline might be explained away by historical settlement patterns on the North American continent over the last 100-150 years but now, increasingly, the decline is beginning to occur in absolute terms: Massachusetts for example, has actually begun to lose population, areas of upstate New York are becoming depopulated, and industry and commerce have been relocating at a rapid pace. Recent increases in the region’s already high energy costs, if they turn out to be structural rather than cyclical, could turn this slow retreat into a rout. Meanwhile, unfunded pension liabilities for legions of retired teachers and state employees from the region’s more prosperous days, are growing, even as the remaining tax base is less able to support and make up those shortfalls. Location of major plants to the region is so rare that when it happens, it is page one news.

Demographically, those leaving the region are often those in their most productive years of employment, income, and child-rearing; while those who are still coming to the region are increasingly less-skilled and less well educated, making demands upon the social services system that is being paid for by an increasingly older population. Job replacement has also involved, with some exceptions, lower-paying jobs than those that over a generation or more have vanished to the South and West and now Mexico, India, China, and the rest of Asia.

Companies leaving the region are either being acquired by larger companies headquartered elsewhere (Fleet Bank by North Carolina-based Bank of America; Gillette by Ohio-based Proctor and Gamble) or relocating due to high costs of doing businesses, among which are energy and transportation. While this trend has been apparent for years, it too seems to be accelerating. Sometimes a company can be lured to the Northeast, or persuaded to stay, by tax breaks and other gimmicks, but these often have the effect of merely shifting the tax burden from corporations to already burdened individual taxpayers.

It is the contention of the National Corridors Initiative that this decline is principally due to a failure of the states and provinces in the region to invest, in any coherent or meaningful way, in the infrastructure

needed to support the growth both of jobs and of population. By relying almost exclusively on taxpayer funded highway construction for half a century while regulating, taxing, or ignoring the rail system, we have squandered the robust infrastructure built between 1800 and 1920 that powered our growth.

This is not because of a failure to see the problem, acknowledge it, or attempt solutions. This has not been a failure of leadership, because our Atlantic region has produced many great leaders --- political, business, academic --- who have gone on to national and even world prominence.

Our economic decline in New England and the Northeast is a structural failure, brought about by an accident of history that created us two centuries ago as a dozen small- and medium-sized states, with the exception of New York and Québec, too puny, economically, to by themselves create the kind of regional well-integrated infrastructure system demanded by today's world-wide economy. While more than adequate to the technologies of the time, our infrastructure stands today as an also-ran. Even when a governor or premier has come to power seeking to build strong regional relationships to make the region "work", each time this has failed. It is a fact of life that leaders, even good ones, come and go, but the problem remains because we lack the permanent structure to address it.

Until and unless we create an entity whose reach spans the region and whose duration exceeds the political lifetimes of individual governors or premiers, we will continue to decline. A fractured region like the Northeast can not respond to the challenges of modern economic life while still relying upon 19th century infrastructure. Undertaking the above essential projects while building the New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Authority will be a serious challenge and require a decade or more of work, but we believe it can be done. Indeed, it must be done, because the alternative is economic oblivion.

While a lack of structure is a key cause of our infrastructural decline, the region is not without region-wide organizations. There are indeed important existing regional governmental and non-governmental organizations, although relatively few, which over the years have recognized and attempted valiantly to tackle the problems of transportation and energy infrastructure, and other regional issues:

- **New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers:** The New England Governors Conference, based in Boston, was founded in 1937 and incorporated in 1981 as a 501(c)3 non-partisan, nonprofit corporation; it also serves as the secretariat for the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers which has met annually since 1973. Both

transportation and energy are often on the agenda for the annual meetings, which alternate between New England and the Eastern Canadian provinces.²

- **The New England Board of Higher Education**, also a non-profit based in Boston, was created in 1955 “...when six visionary New England governors – realizing that the future prosperity of New England rested on higher education – committed their states to the shared pursuit of academic excellence.” NEBHE was then “...approved by New England's six state legislatures and authorized by the U.S. Congress” as an interstate compact to foster educational cooperation.³ NEBHE also publishes “Connections” magazine which treats with regional economic and education-related issues.
- **The New England Council** acts as the voice of New England business in Washington. Founded in 1925 by business and industry, and also based in Boston, it recently released the AT Kearney Report⁴, which investigated the region’s economic challenges and suggested possible approaches to remedy our shortfalls. AT Kearney is a consulting firm and a member of the New England Council.
- **The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston** has recently launched The New England Public Policy Center⁵ to provide unbiased economic advice to regional elected and appointed officials, who otherwise usually get their data from lobbyists seeking either contracts, special-interest legislation, or both. “The Center is dedicated to enhancing access to high-quality analysis of economic and public policy issues that affect the region.”

These organizations have worked, in most cases for decades, to develop and advance policies and programs to benefit the New England region’s economy and its world-renowned colleges and universities. Many of the issues now confronting New England, upstate New York, and Eastern Canada have been the target of those efforts.

Despite these great and repeated exertions by some of the brightest and most dedicated of our elected officials and leading citizens, businesspeople, and academics, the region has continued to decline both politically and economically, and to suffer from the fundamental on-going challenges of high transportation and energy costs.

In addition, the region’s political power has been declining slowly for most of this century. In absolute numbers, the seats held in the United States House of Representatives by residents of New England

² The New England Governors Conference, www.negc.com

³ The New England Board of Higher Education: www.nebhe.org

⁴ The New England Council website and the Kearney Report:
www.newenglandcouncil.com/pdf/rep_webReports/rep_atKearney.pdf

⁵ The New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston: www.bos.frb.org/economic/neppc

and New York dropped, from 38 to 29 between 1800 and 1900, and from 29 to 22 --- with an important anomaly --- between 1900 and 2000. See Charts 1 and 2.

More importantly, as a percentage of total seats, the region’s share of House seats dropped from 36% in 1788, to 17% in 1900, to 11 % in 2000; Charts 3 and 4⁶:

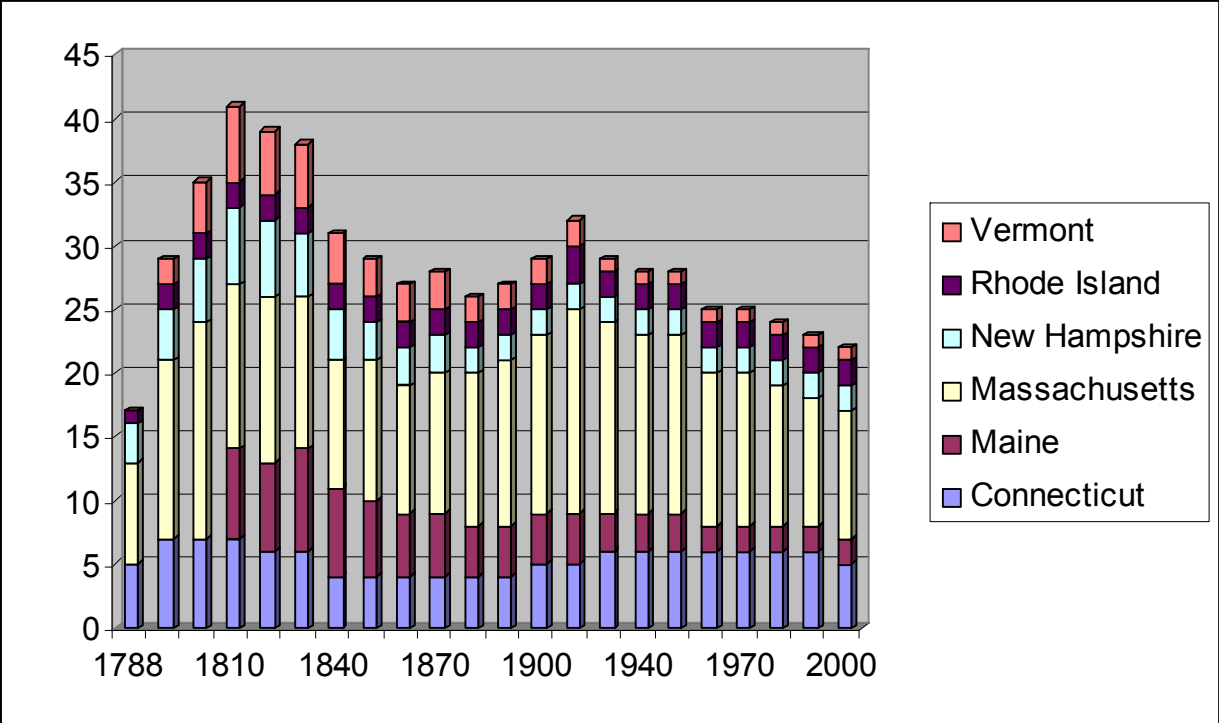


Chart 1: New England House Seats By State 1788-2000

⁶ Data and chart information for Charts 1-4 and Table 1 from “Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-2005”, US Government Printing Office, 2005

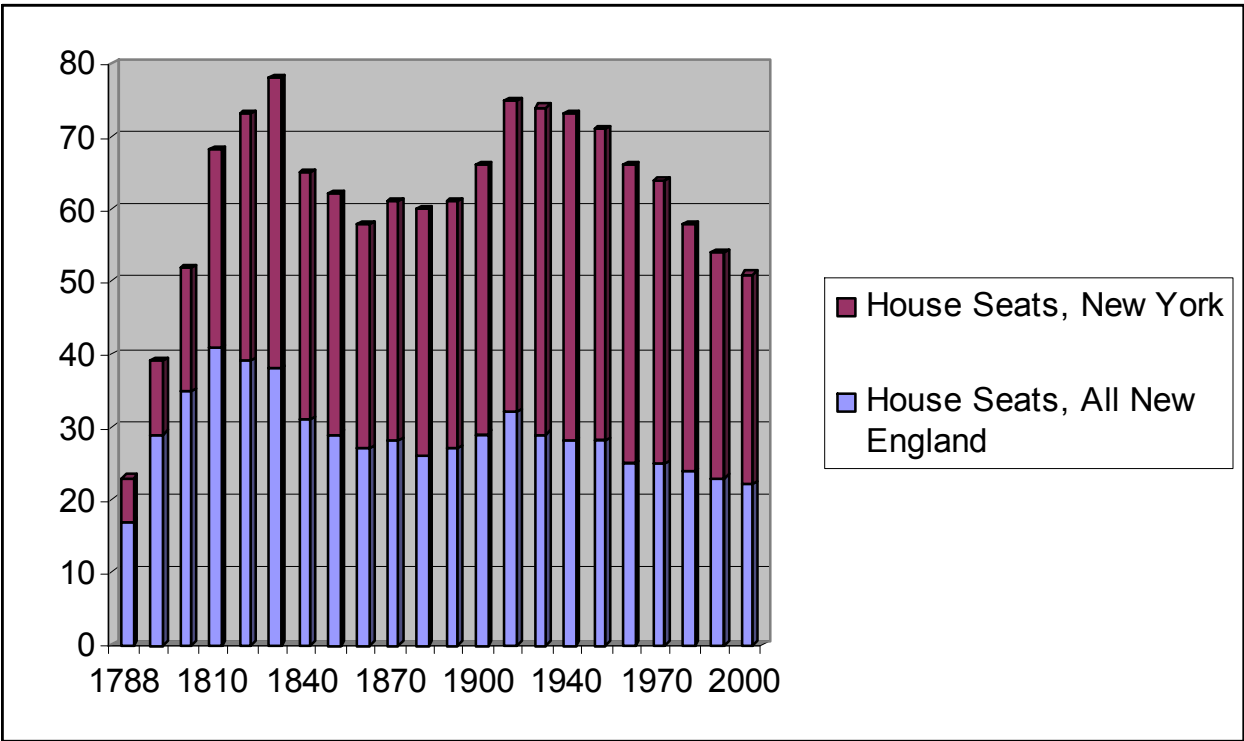


Chart 2: House Seats Northeast By Region 1788-2000

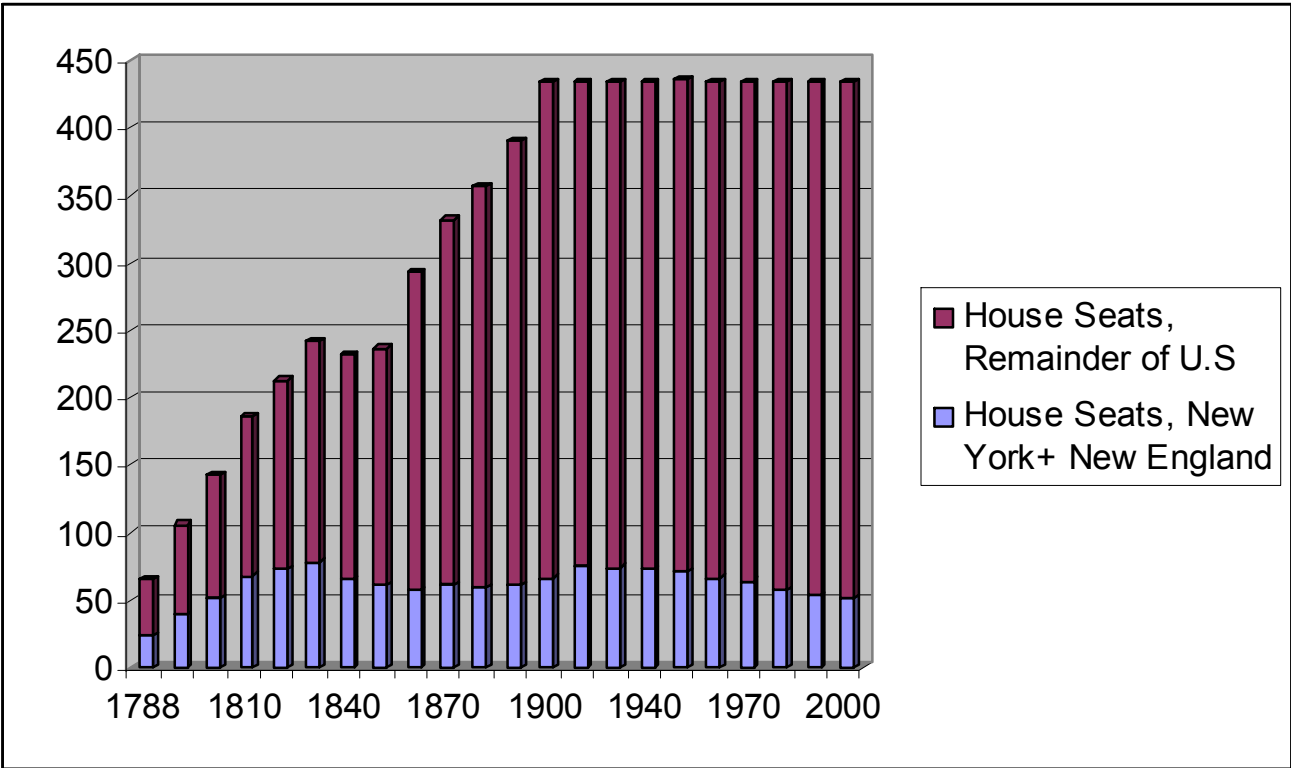


Chart 3: Combined NE/NY House Seats Vs. Rest of U.S. 1788-2000

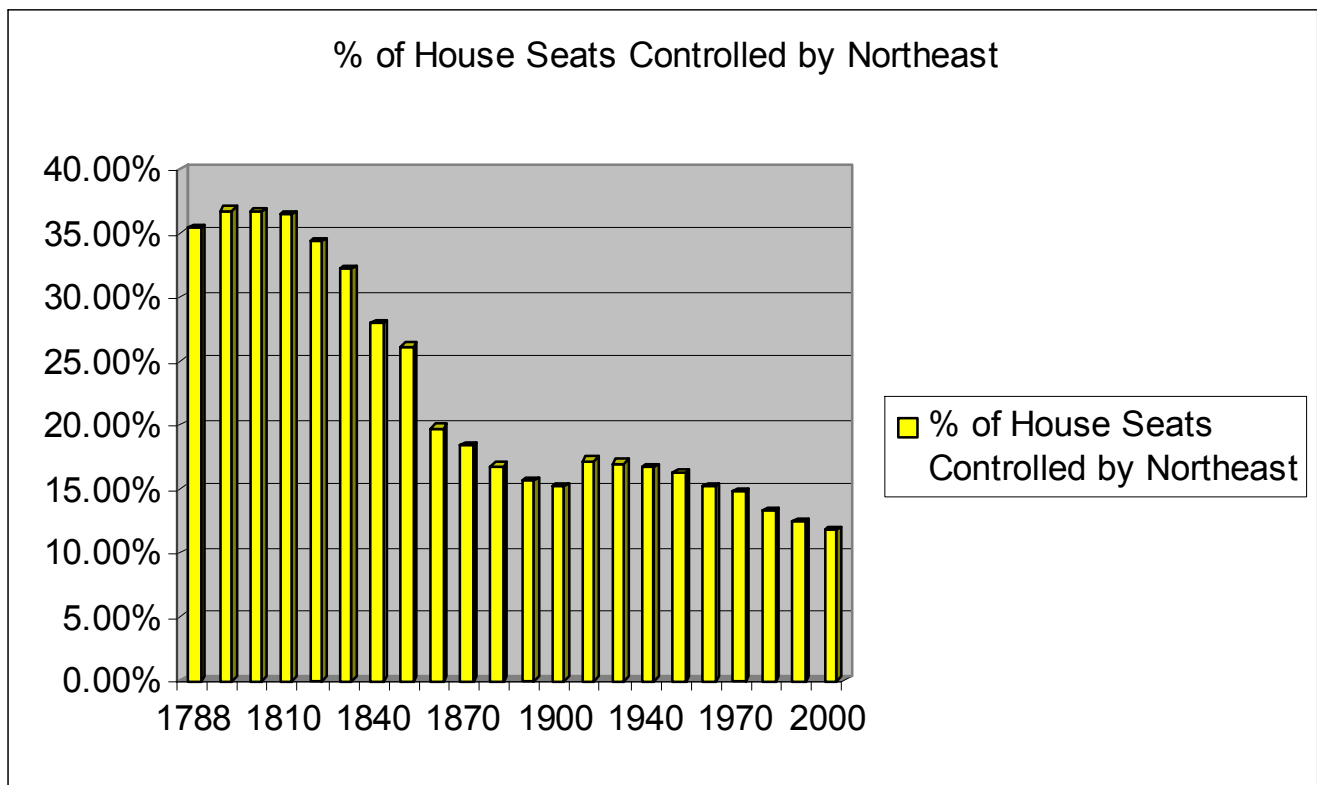


Chart 4: Political Power of NE+NY 1788-2000 as a Percentage of Total House Seats

This shift was in part a natural function of the way America was settled --- East to West --- and of the rapid populating of the continent that followed the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. But that is not the complete picture. There is an important anomaly, as can be seen by examining more closely Charts 3 and 4: even though there was massive Western migration throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, the *relative* population share and Congressional representation of the Northeast, after 40 years of decline in the latter part of the 19th century, *increased* between 1900 and 1950, *not falling to the 1900 level again until 1960*. What is more, because of the Congressional seniority system in the assignment of leadership positions, and because the U.S. Constitution gives two Senators to each states, which favors states with smaller populations, the region’s relative political power remained high for another 30 years. Today, for the first time since the founding of the country, not a single House leadership position is filled by a representative of the Northeastern United States.

In other words, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Northeast’s political clout increased in strength --- in absolute as well as relative terms --- insofar as it can be measured by Congressional power.⁷ This was due in part to waves of immigrants: while many of those immigrants joined “The Way West”, many others stayed to work and live in the factories of the Northeast. Also, there was a

⁷ Even after 1960, due in part to seniority rules, Northeastern Congressmen remained in leadership positions of both the House and Senate for many decades

great regional in-migration from the impoverished South as the Depression, which hit there first in the teens and early 1920's, deepened. Also, many Southern African-Americans headed North at this time, to escape racial segregation in the South.

But then, somewhat suddenly, Northeastern strength and representation fell. Between 1960 and 2000, the Northeast's share of House representation fell from 15.17% to 11.72%, a relative decline of nearly 25% in only 40 years:

House Seats	1900	1910	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
NE	29	32	29	28	28	25	25	24	23	22
NY	37	43	45	45	43	41	39	34	31	29
NE+NY										
US	66	75	74	73	71	66	64	58	54	51
%Control	15.17%	17.24%	17.01%	16.78%	16.25%	15.17%	14.71%	13.33%	12.41%	11.72%

Table 1: New England/Northeastern House Membership vs. National Total

(Note: there was no re-apportionment in 1920)

Why did this relative downward population share decline --- and therefore loss of political representation --- reverse itself between 1900 and 1960? Why did that decline then resume, and even accelerate, after 1960? While the answer to those questions could be the subject of a book or PhD thesis --- and probably should be --- we believe that the fundamental cause of the Northeast's economic, [relative] population, and political decline is due to our continuing reliance on aged, outmoded infrastructure. For as long as we fail to renew that infrastructure, the decline will continue.

America was settled from East to West, and colonists took advantage first of whatever natural features might be available to aid in settlement and commerce: after moderate climate and tillable land, those natural features were rivers, natural harbors, and defensible islands.

In New England and New York such natural features were abundant, and settlement thrived. The advent of water-powered mills on the region's fast-flowing streams, and commerce on its broad rivers and coastal passages, advanced that growth and attracted population to the new jobs in the mills. Manufacturers sought new markets for their products.

The definition of "economic region" or "market" was once the distance that a man on horseback might ride in a day: farm to market. As manufacturing grew, owners sought to expand that market. Reliance on naturally occurring features of land was supplanted by built-infrastructure: the invention of steam power and then in the early 19th century, railroads, accelerated that expansion.

Again, growth came first in the populous Northeast, which industrialized rapidly and where, because of access to capital, railroads could be readily built⁸. The Northeast invested heavily in infrastructure, including just rail but also an elaborate canal system before that, and boomed as the rest of the country was being settled and beginning to grow.

This strong Northeastern economic growth continued even as population balance and therefore Congressional representation shifted westward throughout the latter half of the 19th century, following the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869.

Why, then, starting in 1900, if so many were headed West, did the attractiveness of New England and the Northeastern U.S. become so powerful that its population and Congressional representation rose in both absolute and relative numbers? Because it had spent so much on infrastructure, and was reaping the benefits.

Between 1900 and 1920 the number of rail miles in the United States jumped from 200,000 to 260,000 (see Chart 5) and stayed at that level for a decade, making travel and transportation faster, cheaper, and more accessible than previously possible. The same decade of the 1920's also saw the growth of the National Highway System, enabled by Congress in 1916, which added to the transportation mix and spurred hundreds of small trucking and bus companies to go into business. While this cut into rail travel and shipping --- as did the growing Depression --- the combination of rails and highways made travel and transportation less costly than ever before. By the start of WWII America had put in place a transportation network, heavily concentrated in the Northeast, that was the best in the world. *The population and therefore political clout of the Northeast bucked what should have been continual and gradual relative decline from 1900-1960, due to Western-oriented settlement patterns, because we built and used massive amounts of infrastructure from 1900-1940.* See Chart 5 below:

⁸ The first scheduled passenger railroad was built in Charleston, South Carolina, but most of the growth came in the industrializing North.

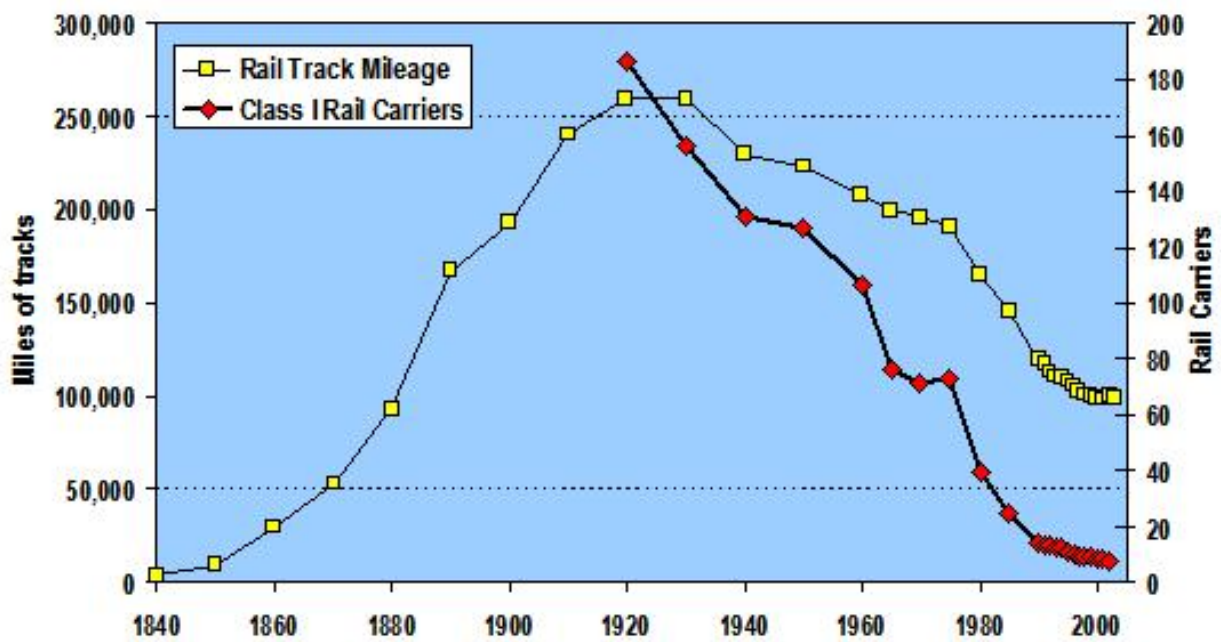


Chart 5: U.S. Track Mileage 1840-2000

Source: BTS and Association of American Railroads.

What of the Interstate Highways? Unlike the rail system and the 1920's-30's era National Highway System, which fed the rail system as well as competing against it, the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System turning 50 in 2006 was unique in the world: a continent-spanning, *completely grade-separated* transportation system – from sea to sea and from Mexico to Canada --- that could, and often did, provide faster service than rail or “local” NHS non-grade-separated highways (See Chart 6). This interstate program was first authorized in 1944 but not funded, until 1952, on a 50-50 basis, and got off to a slow start. It did not flourish until the 90/10 federal/state funding program, which had been lobbied heavily by the legendary New York road builder Robert Moses and then by the newly-elected President Dwight David Eisenhower. Eisenhower's “Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956” more well known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956, broke the mold. During that time, at the height of the Cold War, “Defense” was a magic word, and tying “defense” to a highway-building program ensured broad support.

“Grade-separation” is an engineering term meaning no road (or other transport mode) crosses over another road at the same level --- or “grade” --- for the length of the structure, whether 10 miles or 1000. The Interstate Highway System, named for Eisenhower because he advanced the project strongly based on his exposure in WWII to Germany's “Autobahn” highway system, was and is the world's most extensive grade-separated transportation system.⁹

⁹ From the Eisenhower Library and Museum; Abilene, KS: The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 created a 40,000-mile “National System of Interstate Highways,” but without national importance and no increase in federal funding. Construction of this system began in August 1947, but without increased federal support, many states balked at the idea. Road design standards were not always uniformly applied. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1952 authorized funds on a 50/50 state/federal matching level. These were the first funds dedicated to this cause. But even then, the amount (\$25 million) was

While the older and less direct¹⁰ infrastructure of rail and NHS highways was heavily represented in the Northeast, the grade-separated Interstate Highway System, although heavily criss-crossing the Northeast, introduced fast, grade-separated transportation to areas of the country that had not had such powerful infrastructure before. Coupled with the widespread introduction of air conditioning, a luxury for the wealthy until the 1960's, the Interstates made commerce and residence easier in those parts of America than in the Northeast, thereby enabling fast growth in the South and West than before

Simultaneously, exacerbated by the opening of the Interstates, the privately-owned but heavily regulated¹¹ rail infrastructure upon which the Northeast was so heavily dependent began to fail, with nearly all major railroads approaching or entering into bankruptcy in the late 1950's, or 1960's. While Federal funds created Conrail out of the wreckage of Northeastern railroads, and purchased equipment (locomotives) little money was invested in new infrastructure.

Indeed, deciding that the future would consist of few, but long and very slow, freight trains, rail operators in the 1980's merged lines and ripped up and sold off many miles of steel rail to improve earnings and cut maintenance expenses, reducing rail capacity drastically in the Northeast (and elsewhere). By 2000 the 260,000 track miles of 1920 had been reduced to about half that number, 140,000 miles. At the same time, the freight operational model that had been predicted turned out to be wrong, and demand was for faster, more frequent, just-in-time rail shipments.

This meant more track capacity, not less, was needed, but by then operators had effectively hobbled themselves, and then did not have the capital to replace vast lengths of track sold off. New England and the Northeast is paying for those decisions today through higher shipping and travel costs, and lost jobs, even as the once-free-flowing Interstate Highway System exceeds capacity and --- even after periodic highway widening --- becomes slow and costly to use. The recent run-up in gasoline prices in the U.S., which will be permanent at about the \$2.50 level [or higher] for some time, will drive people to rail and transit but will not, by itself, ease transportation congestion. Such a small amount of capital has been invested in rail relative to highways over the past half century that its capacity is also low. Demands made by increased ridership will in the short run make overall service levels worse, as is being experienced now by MetroNorth riders who will be receiving new equipment in 2009, some 40 years after existing equipment was purchased.

not enough. When President Eisenhower assumed office in 1953, only 6,000 miles had been completed at a cost of \$955 million.

¹⁰ Railroads, while not grade separated, offer more direct service than roads between given endpoints. However, the number of railroads in the 1920's and 1930's was large, and interchange between those railroads made shipping slow and cumbersome compared to trucking. Over time, trucks captured more and more of the time-sensitive shipments of higher valued goods. Rail share of shipping by dollar volume was 80% in 1930 while trucking was 20%; today trucking has 80% of the value of all shipped goods, and rail, shipping mostly low-value commodities, 20%.

¹¹ The Interstate Commerce Commission regulated railroads tariffs (prices) until 1980.

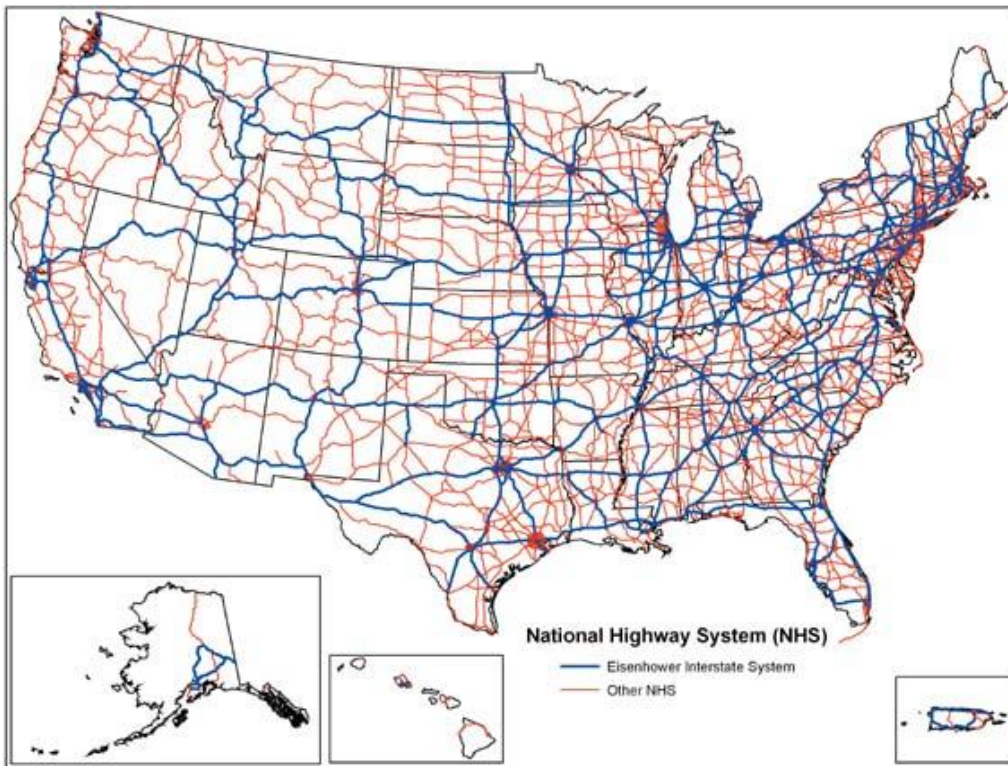


Chart 6: National And Interstate Highway System Map, United States (Source: US DOT/FHWA)



Chart 7: National Highway System Map, Canada (Source: Transport Canada)

There is much more to this overly-simplified story, but the facts remain: the Northeast prospered because of its natural and purpose-built infrastructure, and has declined because it has failed to renew its infrastructure, while other regions have newer infrastructure. We are less competitive now than at any time in our country's history. Unless we act, we will continue to decline and lose population to

other regions of America who have newer, better, and more functional infrastructure. There is also a lesson for America in this, but that is beyond the scope of this project.

III. Renewal and Growth

The decline of the Northeast is not inevitable. If it were due only to demographics or settlement patterns, the region's relative decline to the rest of the United States would not have stopped in 1900, and then spiked upward through 1960. The fate of our part of the world is not a fixed event. It is in our hands.

And there is a resource within reach: a remnant of our previous strength which could be revived, re-invented, and renewed. We have hundreds of miles of under-utilized railroads, and even more hundreds of miles of unused or abandoned railroad right of way. Some of these have been encroached upon; some has been sold to abutters. But much remains, throughout the Northeast, and could provide the sinews upon which we can rebuild our economic musculature.

These renewed sinews and new steel musculature must be created as part of a systems-based design process that includes existing and proposed airports, highways, ports, refineries, wind farms, power plants, and all the other elements of infrastructure. This is what we propose to do, *but we must do it as a region*, with The New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Authority, or we will simply continue to fall short of what is needed.

Paying for any major infrastructure project is difficult; paying for a region-wide system will be very expensive, and we must find new ways of tapping the wealth that still exists here to do so. One concept proposed by NCI is the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Zone ("Tizzie") wherein a percentage of the growth of all future tax revenues gained from locales 20 miles (Or 10 - Or 50) on either side of an Authority rail or highway corridor.

An initial part of the infrastructure-rebuilding process, the re-development of the regional rail system, has already begun with the passage in Connecticut May 1 2006 of a comprehensive transportation bill which explicitly endorses two new interstate rail projects and the need for regional cooperation in transportation planning. This project is a necessary forerunner to creation of the new "Smart Growth Triangle", bounded by Providence, New London, and Worcester, which NCI is proposing, to provide travel between the major cities, and access to that relatively rural region, without paving it over. The Providence-New London leg is already in place, the Providence-Worcester leg is beginning to build support, and the New London-Worcester leg was included in Connecticut legislation designed to boost investment in rail transportation, including specifically that route. That legislation followed several years of work by NCI to revive interest in rail transport in Connecticut; we have been working with rail owners as we proceed so that they will be an integral part of the project.

The National Corridors Initiative invites you to join in its New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative to assess the infrastructure needs of New England, upstate New York, and the Eastern Canadian provinces, and develop an entity – the New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Authority -- that can address and act upon those needs. This includes determining how the region, *acting together through an Infrastructure Authority*, may best plan, fund, build, and operate major infrastructure systems, including but not limited to projects that are too large for any one state or province to embrace, but which are necessary to restore the economic competitiveness, enhance the environmental well-being, and improve the quality of life for all who live here. This also includes developing the personnel and ability to supervise and/or operate large, complex regional infrastructure systems.

To that end, we seek your input and advice on essential, regional infrastructure projects and, as importantly, how we might best pay for them, build them, and maintain them. Throughout the region individuals and groups are working to bootstrap their part of New England, New York State, or Eastern Canada out of economic decline/congestion. In Connecticut, the Sierra Club is active; in Maine, Train Riders NorthEast wants to get passenger service restored to Brunswick, Augusta, and Bangor; in Vermont the state already supports enhanced Amtrak service and is seeking to do more; a High Speed Rail project from Montreal to Boston is in the works but stalled by anachronistic (1930's era) restrictions on the spending of gas tax money for anything but highways: what we need to do is coordinate all these efforts, connect them, and help them help each other.

While a listing of all the specific projects that might be considered is well beyond the scope of this paper – indeed, identifying such projects is a part of the work product of the Initiative --- there are some major projects that suggest themselves.

As noted, the first of these is the pressing need to create an alternative transportation system to the Interstate Highway System so as to reduce its congested condition. The cost of building new Interstate capacity in the region is so prohibitive and time-consuming --- and environmentally destructive --- that few major highway projects are likely to go forward --- even those already approved, which increasingly are being stopped with lawsuits even after they have been begun.

The region does have, however, a system of underutilized rail that could be far more productive for both freight and passenger service than at present. In many if not most cases existing right-of-way already exists, so that land purchases would not be necessary, to rejuvenate this asset.

As part of the Initiative and this project NCI is working to restart commuter rail service, and improve freight service, between New London (CT) and Worcester (MA) on an existing freight-only line. Because of intense transportation pressure brought about by the growth of the gaming industry in Eastern Connecticut, coupled with obsolete or inadequate transportation infrastructure for surging

freight truck traffic, implementation of this project will set a good example of how interstate cooperation can benefit the region. Also under discussion and/or planning/funding are projects to improve regional rail service Boston-Portland-Montreal/Québec City, New Haven-Hartford-Springfield-Brattleboro, Boston-Worcester-Springfield Albany, NYC-Albany-Buffalo-Toronto, and Montreal-Vermont-New Hampshire-Boston. While in various stages these projects speak of the intense interest in creating an alternative to highway travel/shipping.

It should be obvious that the beneficiaries of such projects will be all of the businesses and people of upstate New York, New England and Eastern Canada. Lowering the cost of travel and the cost of shipping reduces the cost of living for all, attracts businesses and boosts tourism, and creates jobs. Implementation of this project will also generate tax revenues, which will reduce reliance on the already over-burdened cities and towns on the property tax. While organizations heavily dependent upon shipping of raw materials or finished products will benefit most directly, this rising tide will indeed lift all boats.

The six New England states have always been proud of their independence and distinctiveness, but that pride has served as a barrier to cooperation as well. Combined with the competing priorities of six governors and state legislatures, and you have a recipe for entropy.

Invited to participate in this significant undertaking for the future of the Northeast are government and non-government organizations, foundations, corporations, elected and appointed officials, media leadership, academic institutes and leaders, environmentalists, and others with an interest in creating a successful life environment through better planning, funding, building, and operating of infrastructure projects that the independent states have been unable to identify, plan and build by themselves.

We are particularly interested in learning from a lot of good work that has already been done, and in helping to pull that work together in a structure that is accessible to all interested parties. To that end NCI will be dedicating a section of its website, www.nationalcorridors.org, to this project.

This project will involve research into the meaning of infrastructure and how it has been built historically, as well as investigating and recommending new ways to successfully implement large infrastructure projects. Most of all, we wish to stress that infrastructure assessment is not limited to what already is, or what used to be: the assessment also demands that we think not only of new ideas, but of new ways to implement them.

Other major infrastructure projects to be investigated would include *but are not limited to*:

- A high speed (80 mph+) grade-separated freight rail system with supporting materials-handling infrastructure to reduce trucking dependency
- Introduction of new transit technologies and systems such as “DMU’s” (Diesel Multiple Unit) and where possible DMU/EMU (Electric Multiple Unit) pairings to provide one-seat rides
- Creation of “New England/Northeastern Smart Growth Triangles,” special smart-growth research, development and residential sub-regions anchored, for example, by Worcester, Providence, and New London, or Boston, Springfield, and Keene, etc., to be served by frequent rail passenger service and improved rail freight handling capabilities, by enhancing and using existing but inadequate rail lines. Note that one of these Smart Growth Triangles, New London-Worcester-Providence region contains two of the largest casinos in the world and is the proposed home a new theme park on the scale of Disneyland, and if Rhode Island proceeds with a casino will add yet another to the region, yet is at present accessible almost exclusively by automobile and truck. Unless this region can become a Smart Growth model and be served by rail, it will develop along the lines of Orlando, FL, and will lose the semi-rural and small-town quality of life that much of the area now possesses. Southern New Hampshire and Coastal Maine are also threatened with sprawl as home-buyers look further and further from Boston for affordable homes; the list goes on
- Construction of a rail link between North and South stations in Boston. This will more than double the size of the effective employment/employee pool, and even more if it is done in conjunction with...
- A high speed grade-separated regional passenger rail system (125 mph+) for both intercity and commuter travel, interconnected with all major airports and interstate highway corridors, such as track improvements to expand the current Boston/495 commutation reach to include Eastern Connecticut, and also open up...
- The Pioneer/Knowledge Valley region (New Haven-Hartford-Springfield-[Brattleboro]; this project has begun in Connecticut and awaits Massachusetts’ participation), Rhode Island, all of Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire and coastal (“Downeast”) Maine, and
- Rationalization of the port system, so that we can concentrate resources on large ports that should be developed and connected to the rest of the U.S., and also streamline smaller ones that can serve special purposes
- Comprehensive planning and zoning programs to encourage widespread adoption of bicycle paths/ safe-to-school programs
- Construction of more freight rail capacity, especially double-stack (clearance height) freight rail corridors (that can also accommodate bi-level¹² passenger cars), and strengthened roadbed and rail bridges that can support modern, heavy freight cars
- Widespread Wi-Fi hotspot implementation to the broadest possible user base

¹² Amtrak “Superliners” are two stories high and more efficient than single-level cars

- Innovative energy production and distribution systems (i.e., wind power, solar power, fuel cell, nanotechnology), including region-wide standards for windpower/solar power installations (commercial, industrial, residential, Independent Power Producers)
- New home construction/materials systems development

IV. NCI's Track Record

To call this project “ambitious” would be an understatement. It would be the most broadly-based economic project in the region's history, eclipsing eventually even Boston's famous “Big Dig”. To undertake such a project without reasonable hope of success would be foolish.

We do indeed have reasonable confidence that we can succeed, based upon our unusual track record. NCI is the organization, founded in 1989, that successfully obtained release of embargoed Federal funds for the high-speed rail line serving the Boston-New York transportation corridor. This project, eventually totaling \$2.7 billion including new trainsets, was completed in 1999, and has reduced New York-Boston travel time to 3½ hours (two hours faster than previously possible), and Boston-DC travel time to 6½-7 hours. That achievement has made a major difference in the life of New England. Despite being private citizens and elected by no one (although we include former Governors in our number) we accomplished that outcome in the same way we propose to accomplish this one: by building alliances, by being absolutely non-partisan, by listening to everyone who has an idea to contribute, and by being relentless.

We did this without being elected to any office, and without being employed by any company with a private interest. We did this because it needed to be done, and were able to convince enough like-minded people that it should.

We will take the same approach here. NCI asks political leadership, foundations, corporations, and other stakeholders to help in three ways:

- 1) as funders of and/or advisers in launching this effort;
- 2) for guidance in the development and execution of the project as it moves forward;
- 3) as advocates to develop support for this program with other prominent New England foundations, corporations, individuals and stakeholders by helping to bring them in as funders, supporters and/or advocates in their own cities/districts.

The objective is to lay the foundation for a sustained revival of New England's fortunes by strengthening cities' access to each other and to other regions of the country, as well as other nations,

and by fostering the movement of people, goods, energy, and ideas: the fundamental elements of infrastructure

The New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative is an important part of NCI’s new national grassroots program, TransPlan 21, to change the way America funds transportation. Most people do not realize that the fundamental reason America is so completely highway-dependent is that the Federal transportation budgeting process, which determines Federal transportation funding, dictates that outcome. NCI is also engaged in a regional program in Southeastern Connecticut¹³ to develop an alternative transportation paradigm for that region that involves more transit and commuter rail and less highway dependency. This laboratory has seen the birth of Stop Stealth Highways, a grass-roots organization to block highway-only construction agendas.

V. Conclusion/Action Plan

Going forward, we propose a 10-year, \$14-million project to create and implement the New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative/Authority in three phases:

- Phase I: \$ 2 million
- Phase II: \$ 6 million
- Phase III: \$ 6 million
- Total: \$ 14 million

Below is a project budget outline. Also attached is a Pro Forma budget. Ongoing now is the organization of city-based advocacy and support for NE NE II, in places such as Worcester, Springfield-Hartford, Nashua, Portland (ME), Albany, Danbury, and so on. These core action groups will include representatives not only from the cities, but from those in the surrounding area who value the cities and recognize their importance to the long-term health and survival of the region as a whole:

New England/Northeastern Infrastructure Initiative/Authority				
Year	Actions	Annual Budget \$	Phase Total \$	Cumulative \$
Phase I: Years 1-2: NE/NE II	Public education; design basic Infrastructure Initiative; Define “Infrastructure”; solicit aid and advice from foundations, corporations, and stakeholders; name members from both public and private sector; publicize project; meet with Infrastructure Initiative members in each of the New England states, upstate New York, and Eastern Canadian Provinces; complete initial fact-finding and project analysis	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Phase II: Years 3-6: NE/NE II	Strengthen presence throughout the Northeast; engage in further fact-finding, organization, recommendations for action, feedback; draft model legislation	1,500,000	6,000,000	8,000,000
Phase III: Years 7-10: NE NE IA	Draft and introduce legislation in all states via Infrastructure Initiative leadership and civic influencers/See through to passage.	1,500,000	\$6,000,000	14,000,000

Table 2: Budget Estimates

¹³ The Shore Line Renaissance Project, encompassing communities on or near Long Island Sound