

**September 25, 2003: A Breakfast with Kevin Corbett  
Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Empire State Economic  
Development Corporation**

More people in government and the public need to recognize the link between transportation and economic development in their planning strategies, said Kevin Corbett, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Empire State Development Corp., at the opening session of the Rudin Center's Policymaker Breakfast series on Thursday, September 25, 2003

"I am honored to be here," he said. "I think the turn-out today reflects the appreciation that this crowd has for the nexus between economic development and transportation."

Corbett said he has helped to bring the weight of the Empire State Development Corporation to supporting our transportation agencies focus on "the core mission of transportation." According to Corbett, "If you get the transportation infrastructure right, economic growth will follow in the wake".

After September 11, one of New York's top priorities was the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. Businesses and government cooperated better than they ever had in achieving this goal. Corbett is confident that the PATH train will be opened by the Thanksgiving target date.

"It's remarkable what has been done," he said. But when the national economy took a dive, it diverted the momentum of the collective endeavor for transportation. The pressure was on to find funding for transportation projects not just downtown, but all over Manhattan, including East Side Access and the Second Avenue subway project.

"When times are tough, the discretionary spending for transportation is vulnerable," Corbett explained, and with so many different agendas in Washington, it's important that state representatives are reminded that transportation is a priority for New York, particularly in the post 9/11 political environment.

In tough economic times, Corbett suggested finding funding alternatives for on-going transportation projects. For example, the Port Authority has begun deeper dredging of the New York/New Jersey Harbor to make it easier for larger ships to travel through. Pre-funding has allowed the project to continue, even before receiving the cash from Washington. "It proves that where there's a will, there's a way," said Corbett.

Finally Corbett stressed the importance of students continuing to pursue careers in the transportation industry. The industry needs future managers, and also

knowledgeable people in the public sector, to maintain the goals of transportation.