

NYS MPO

Integrated Transportation Planning &
Community Design Processes

PLATTSBURGH



Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation

“What we have been working for has actually happened, so it’s hats off to PARC for getting the job done.”

*Daniel Stewart,
Mayor of Plattsburgh*

NEW YORK STATE

Plattsburgh



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Overview

Local and regional governments and organizations formed the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation (PARC) to oversee the transition of the former United States Plattsburgh Air Force Base into a private facility. PARC developed a 20 year plan to bring industrial and commercial development to the area and reuse over 3,000,000 square feet of building space or use the 890 acres of developable land left on the base. The upgrading of existing rail lines, the integration of the base's roadways into the community roadway network and the maintenance of the airport facilities played a part in the redevelopment plans. PARC needed the support of the community to move its plans forward, and it used a variety of communications and marketing techniques to build this support.

Significant Achievements

- ◆ PARC maintained a continuous, successful focus on maintaining a positive community attitude.
- ◆ Highly visible short term successes helped to fuel long term planning.
- ◆ Strong support of other regional projects advanced PARC's own project.
- ◆ The existing transportation infrastructure supported the land use redevelopment plans.
- ◆ The master plan focused on using existing assets to their fullest.

Previous page:
Aerial view of PARC
looking south to
north.



PARC, a former military installation, is rapidly becoming a world-class industrial park.

The Success Story

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Defense closed the Plattsburgh Airbase, which included over 3,000 acres in the City and Town of Plattsburgh. The federal government decided to phase out the Airbase over several years, to provide ample opportunity for the community to plan for the complete withdrawal of Base activity from the area.

Faced with what was perceived as a potential economic disaster for the City, the Town and the region, the various governments, agencies and local organizations formed the Plattsburgh Interdisciplinary Development Corporation (PIDC) to create an action plan. From the beginning, the majority of the players realized that the challenge was regional in nature and would require continued cooperation from all groups. They also decided that the redevelopment plans would need to be tied into an overall regional vision for the area, rather than rest only on a vision for the Airbase. This strategy involved other community players, such as the Plattsburgh North Country Chamber of Commerce.

The various groups involved in the redevelopment planning project gradually refined their organizational structure and the PIDC emerged as the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation (PARC) with its current configuration. It included, and still includes, a governing board representing the City of Plattsburgh, the Town of Plattsburgh, the region's State Senator and State Assembly Representative, the County Legislature, the U.S. Congressional Representative and the Governor of New York State. Each of the representatives worked to maintain the cooperative environment that surrounded the initial meetings.

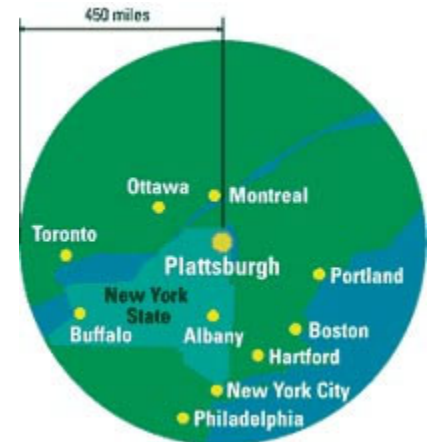
PARC is located in Plattsburgh, NY, off I-87 and along the shores of Lake Champlain.



With PARC's success, Plattsburgh has remained a healthy, vibrant local economy.

Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation

PARC is strategically located within 450 miles of several major markets.



PARC was fortunate with completed transportation infrastructure, including:

- An adjacent interstate (I-87) connecting Montreal with New York City;
- An airfield with 11,700 feet of runway, long enough to accommodate 747 aircraft;
- Connections with an international rail line; and,
- Numerous local road connections to the community.

PARC was given control of the entire Airbase and, eventually took ownership of all of the transportation facilities, buildings and land within the airbase. Even before it assumed ownership, however, PARC had been developing a master plan that included the following actions:

- Improving the railroad connections to and within the commercial and industrial areas of the former airbase;
- Maintaining and eventually improving the airport infrastructure;
- Reopening roadway connections to the community previously closed due to security reasons; and,
- Marketing existing buildings and constructing new facilities in accordance with the master plan.

In developing its master plan, PARC relied heavily on its transportation assets to develop and create a strategy for economic development. PARC's master plan, therefore, tried to maximize the use of the existing transportation facilities without requiring extensive upgrades.

The Airbase played an important role in the transportation element of the master plan. Clinton County, for example, was operating a commercial

Bombardier, a PARC tenant, constructed and operates a rail car test track at PARC.



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airport that offered users limited facilities and incurred an annual loss. The master plan called for the County to close that airport and move its facilities to the former Airbase, where it would build a new terminal. The relocation of the County airport to the former Airbase facility both improved County commercial airport facilities and financed most of the improvements. The new County airport is expected to be profitable within a few years.

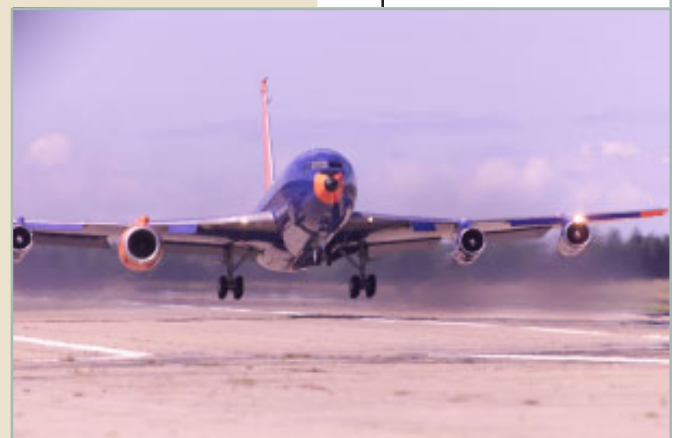
As part of its effort to encourage community support, PIDC and PARC developed an extensive network to disseminate information to the region. They relied on this network to publicize plans, meetings, project success, and statistics that would help generate community support for the overall project.

One objective of the information network was to maintain a positive attitude in the community about PARC's work. This effort not only helped the community work positively with PARC in the development of the Airbase, but also helped the community maintain a healthy attitude in the face of dramatic change.

One of the components of the information network was an extensive series of community meetings. PARC held meetings throughout the development of the master plan and its subsequent implementation. PARC used the meetings

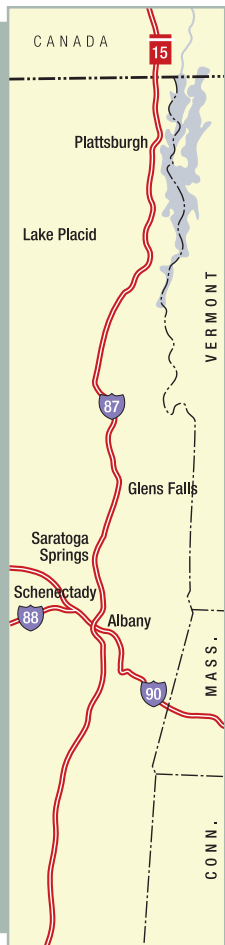
Pratt and Whitney test their 720B jet engine on site.

Architect's rendering of the new terminal building proposed for Plattsburgh International Airport.



Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation

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Plattsburgh lies along the I-87 corridor, a key north-south international trade route. By supporting improvements to the border crossing at the northern end of I-87, PARC enhanced its strategic location.

not only to gather public comment and input, but also to convey information that built community support for the overall project. PARC structured their plans and information in order to redirect local pride to new projects.

PARC incorporated several short term goals into its overall plan and worked to realize these goals quickly. As each of the goals was reached, PARC used the information network to publicize success and progress. These short term goals did several things:

- Encouraged belief in the viability of the overall project;
- Increased belief in the ability of PARC to successfully accomplish the elements of the plan;
- Promoted general support of the Master Plan; and
- Expanded the positive attitude about the area being generated by PARC, the Master Plan and other community leaders.

PARC also recognized its own success could be enhanced by regional projects outside of their jurisdiction. For example, the U.S. Immigration and Customs department was considering upgrading the New York State/Canadian border crossing at I-87, 22 miles north of PARC. Recognizing that businesses in and around Montreal, Quebec were among PARC's target markets and that cross-border trade would be greatly enhanced by faster, more efficient border facilities, PARC became an active advocate for the proposed improvements. The border crossing improvements eventually gained the support of the Department of Homeland Security and were



PARC constructed two new buildings in as many years; both buildings were constructed on speculation to meet the needs of tenants.

approved, greatly enhancing PARC's efforts to enhance its international market.

PARC's support for the border crossing improvements was typical of its approach towards external projects. PARC actively looked for projects that would reinforce their goals, even if such projects were beyond its immediate jurisdiction. This strategy helped PARC expand its network and markets as well as create support and awareness for their objectives; ultimately it helped them achieve their goals.

Results

PARC, as an economic development corporation, used a community process to develop a master plan that built on existing transportation infrastructure to revitalize the local economy. PARC's approach incorporated the community into the master planning process not only to encourage community input to the plan but also as a technique to motivate and inspire the community in the face of a seemingly devastating series of events.

PARC's success as a catalyst for economic development is impressive; it has nearly reached its 20 year goals in about 10 years. To date, PARC has 250 industrial, commercial and office buildings in its portfolio and has attracted more than 60 tenants ranging from manufacturing to medical care to market research to its facilities.

Westinghouse Stone Air manufactures air conditioning units in their PARC facility.



GM designs hybrid cars at PARC.

Lessons Learned

- **Focus on facts to dispel myths.** The Airbase closing generated a significant slump in community spirit. The community leaders examined the real economic impact of the Airbase on the community and found that it constituted far less than expected, due to the isolated nature of the facility.

The community leaders, and then PARC, continually reinforced this fact with the community and used it as part of their efforts to create a positive community attitude, a critical step in gaining support for the Airbase redevelopment Master Plan.

- **Integrate land use and development plans with existing transportation facilities to minimize the need for subsequent improvements.** Faced with the task of redeveloping a large facility in the midst of an existing urban area, the Master Plan developers used the existing transportation facilities as one of their defining factors. They considered basic upgrades, but did not assume that new facilities would be acceptable to the community. They sought to maximize use of the existing system, and adopted a multimodal approach to make the most of the existing rail, air and roadway facilities.

Plattsburgh, NY offers an idyllic natural location and excellent quality of life.





The NYS-supported One Work Force Center is located in the historic district on the old base at PARC.

- **Continually supply information to shape perceptions, generate support and build trust.** Community leaders and PARC opted to share as much of their information with the community as possible through a combination of local media, project websites and public meetings. The flow of information helped generate community familiarity with and trust of PARC and its plans.

- **Use short term success to build momentum and support.** The importance of short term achievements was critical to the community acceptance of the Master Plan. Seeing positive results from the efforts of implementing the Master Plan gave credibility to PARC's continued messages to the community. This, in turn, generated more support for PARC's efforts in the community, helping to advance the PARC Master Plan.



- **Support regional projects that bring local benefits.** PARC considered projects planned for a wide region when it considered partnerships and connections. For example, PARC

By reaching out to a wide group of residents, business owners and local officials and keeping them as a partner throughout the process, PARC built trust and consensus in the community.

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provided considerable support for an initiative to improve the border crossing facilities on I-87 because increased speed and reliability at the border increased PARC's connection to Montreal and Quebec Province.



The Champlain Administration Building is an artists rendering of the facility; the building is made almost entirely from special glass that will let in natural light and allow light from inside the building to shine through to the outside. The design is intended to present a welcoming, lighted view for people entering the United States from Canada.

Project Details

Plattsburgh Airbase
Redevelopment
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