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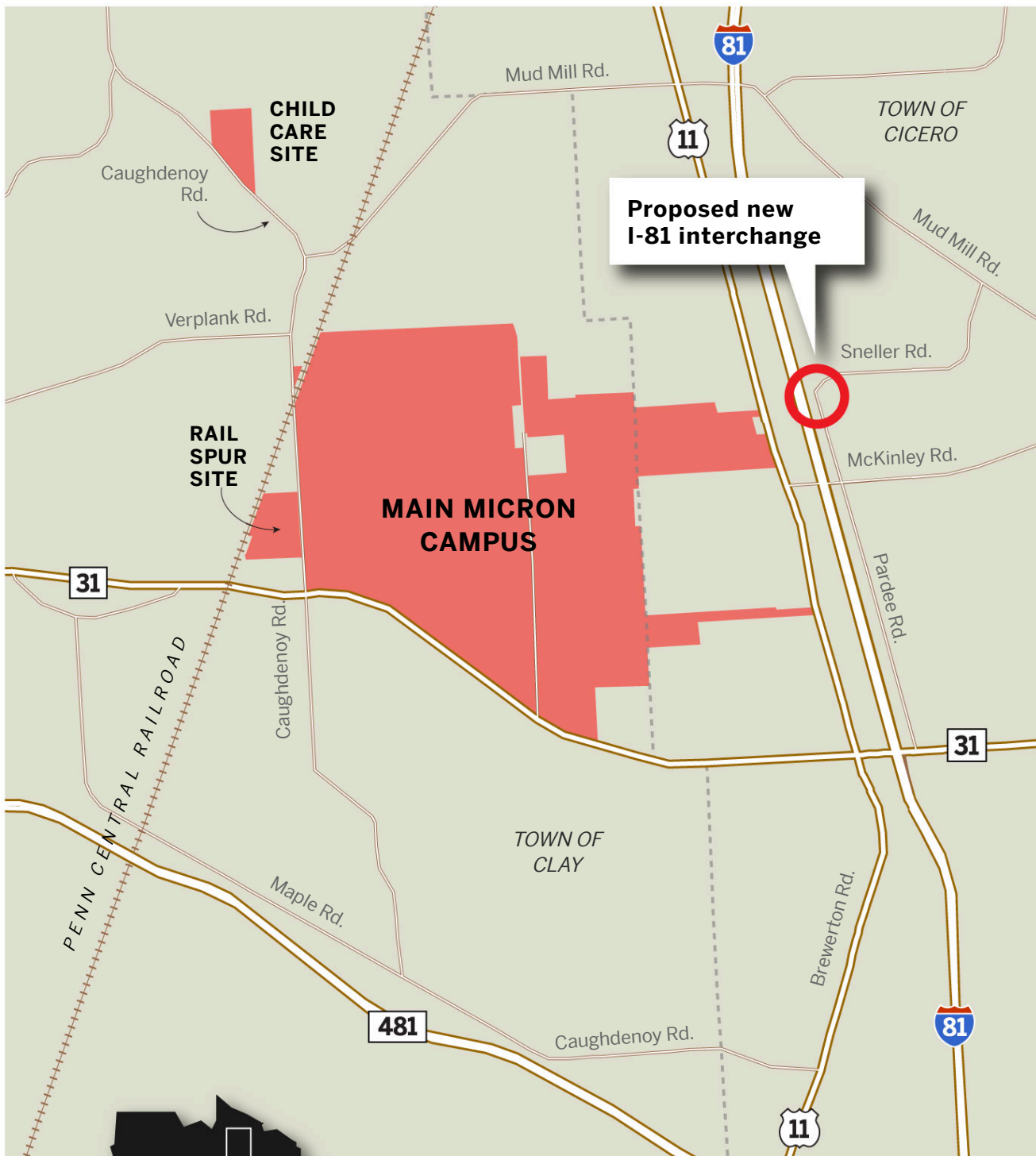
CENTRAL NY NEWS

An I-81 Micron exit: NY proposes \$68 million highway interchange near Clay complex

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By **Glenn Coin | gcoin@syracuse.com**



This map shows the approximate location of the proposed Pardee Road interchange on Interstate 81 in Cicero. The new interchange would serve Onondaga County's northern suburbs as Micron Technology moves forward with plans to build a huge chipmaking plant in Clay.

Syracuse, N.Y. -- New York state is planning to build a new interchange on Interstate 81 in Cicero to handle Micron Technology-related growth in Syracuse's northern suburbs.

The Pardee Road interchange would lie about 2 miles north of the Route 31 interchange. It would include on and off ramps in both directions, two roundabouts and a bridge over I-81 that would connect to Route 11.

The \$68 million interchange would be built directly east of the Micron Technology campus, which extends from Caughdenoy Road in Clay to Route 11 in Cicero.

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The new interchange would make it easier to get to Micron and would relieve pressure at the clogged Route 31 interchange, said James D'Agostino, executive director of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council.

"There's a need for additional interstate access in that part of town," D'Agostino said. "Independent of Micron it's justifiable, but with Micron it's justifiable with an exclamation point."

Micron plans to build a massive computer chip factory at White Pine Commerce Park, at the northeast corner of Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road. The Micron plant could ultimately include four fabrication plants, or fabs, and employ 9,000 people by 2041. The project could create 40,000 additional jobs in the region and increase the county's population by more than 100,000 people, officials estimate.

It's not just Micron. To the west, on the several-mile stretch of Route 31 that runs from the intersection of I-481 to Micron, lies [a sprawling, billion-dollar project that's been proposed](#). The redevelopment of the old Great Northern Mall aims to include seven hotels, nearly 1,700 apartments and condos, and more than one million square feet of retail, office and entertainment space.

The transportation council's policy committee voted unanimously to approve the project earlier this month. That's an early but necessary step to spend federal highway money in the region. About 90% of the cost of the new interchange would come from the federal government, D'Agostino said.

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The interchange is, so far, just a concept. There are no maps or drawings; just a couple of short paragraphs in a public notice issued by the local transportation council. A state Department of Transportation spokesman said by email the interchange was in “the preliminary stages of planning” and offered no further details.

The next step, D’Agostino said, is for the state to launch an engineering design study to determine exactly where the interchange should go and what it should look like. Construction is expected to start in 2026 and be completed in 2027, a schedule D’Agostino called “optimistic.”

The work could be delayed if the Federal Highway Administration determines that the new interchange needs to be studied as part of Micron’s environmental impact statements. If so, D’Agostino said, the project couldn’t start until those statements are done. If not, the work could proceed more quickly, but would still need to be reviewed by the highway administration.

Micron must prepare exhaustive reports for the state and federal governments detailing the fab complex’s impact on the environment, including traffic. Those reports were originally set to be released by now, but they are still months away, officials have said.

D’Agostino said substantial construction work is also planned to [upgrade the Route 31 interchange](#). That would be much easier if the new interchange opens first, he said.

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“You can’t reconstruct 31 without kind of either shutting it down or reducing its capacity dramatically during the construction,” he said. A newly opened exit, he added, “will give you a relief valve to the north that will allow that construction to happen while inconveniencing people significantly less.”

[The state is already rebuilding I-81 and I-481](#) from downtown to Clay. With the addition of the two Cicero projects, construction on the highway could span more than 15 miles over the next few years.

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