

Genesee County Central Corridor Plan

A Guide for Future Land Use and Transportation Decisions in the Batavia Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview/Project Purpose

The City and Town of Batavia are geographically located at the center of Genesee County and serve as the regional hub for commercial, industrial, and service enterprises for not only the county, but also the surrounding region. The recent construction of big-box style retailers and development of several large-scale industrial, agri-business, and high-tech business parks have and will likely bring jobs and new economic development opportunities to the area. Four major state highways (State Routes 5, 33, 63, and 98) carry traffic through the Town of Batavia and converge within the center of the City. Additionally, the NYS Thruway is located directly north of the City with direct access to Batavia from exit 48 via Route 98.

With the growth and development that has occurred and will likely continue to occur in the greater Batavia area, traffic volumes have increased, causing some circulation issues and concerns from residents in specific areas.

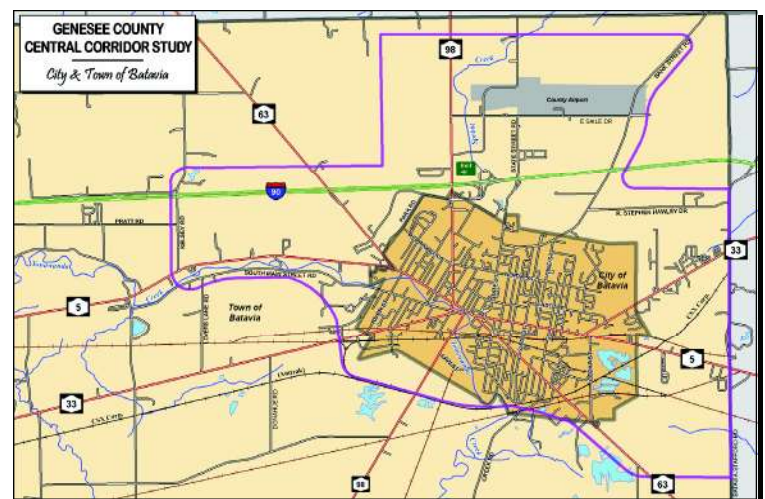
With assistance from the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Town and City initiated a collaborative planning process to prepare a plan for transportation improvements, including existing and proposed roadways. The plan provides an analysis of current zoning and land use plans and their implications on projected future development of the area. Specific recommendations and strategies for transportation and land use improvements are provided in the plan to address any current and potential transportation and land use issues.

Study Area

The Genesee County Corridor Study encompasses the entire City of Batavia and significant portions of the Town of Batavia as shown in the graphic at right. This central corridor includes the major roadways outlined above, as well as other existing and proposed federal aid eligible roadway systems. Collectively, the roadways in the corridor provide primary travel routes for local residents and employees, as well as commercial truck traffic and visitors.



Five major roadways carry traffic to Batavia from various points in the region and State.



Project Components

The project consists of the following components:

- Examination of the existing conditions, including the physical and natural features, land use and zoning, and planned development in the greater Batavia community
- Identification of opportunities available and constraints that may impact transportation and land use in the future
- Analysis of the existing transportation system, including condition and functionality
- Development of a future traffic model based on existing zoning, planned development, and the transportation system
- Analysis of various transportation and circulation scenarios based on recommendations from the Town and City Comprehensive Plans, steering committee guidance, and community input
- General and strategic recommendations to improve, enhance, or maintain efficient and safe circulation within the study area, including physical improvements, policies, and zoning recommendations
- An implementation guide for future follow-on activities, phasing/prioritization of improvements, and opportunities for funding

Existing and Future Conditions

The City of Batavia, which is largely built-out, has little land available for significant development. Although more development opportunities are available in the Town, future traffic circulation and volumes would likely impact the primary arterials in the City. In the Town, approximately 400 acres of land is zoned as a Planned Business District on Route 98 north of the Thruway and the area surrounding Veterans Memorial Drive is also available for additional development based on current zoning regulations.



The results of the build-out analysis, shown at left, show the commercial development potential of various areas in the Town. Yellow indicates more than 500,000 square feet could be developed per parcel.

A build-out analysis was provided to determine the extent of the development that could occur in these areas between 2010 and 2035. The analysis shows the full future build-out of developable lands (vacant & agricultural) in the study area based on current zoning and subdivisions regulations. This was a conservative estimate and is dependent on various outside factors, including market conditions and whether the zoning regulations are maintained or revised. This information was used to estimate future infrastructure demands as well as testing the practicality of existing zoning and development regulations.



Current conditions found along Route 98 - predominantly farmland and some commercial businesses on West Saile Dr.

Transportation Scenarios

Based on the Town of Batavia’s Comprehensive Plan, several roadways were proposed to provide efficient circulation through the area and improve connections. Different combinations of the various roadways, along with the results of the potential future build-out, were analyzed by the traffic model to determine which would offer the greatest benefit to the community.

The combination of proposed roadways connecting Veterans Memorial Drive to Route 63 and continuing on to Route 5 near Town Hall (segments 4 & 5) would have the greatest benefit to the overall community. Given the development that has occurred in this area and the potential for future development, these roadways would provide an alternative route, reduce traffic volumes in the area, and maintain existing service levels.

With the potential development on Route 98, the preferred option for preventing congestion and maintaining adequate service levels in the City would be a combination of sustainable land development and physical roadway improvements.



FIG 5.13: PROPOSED FUTURE ROADWAYS
 Segments 4, 5 & 10 are the preferred roadways based on the results of the traffic model. The numbers correspond to the proposed roadways outlined in the study (Section 5).

Recommendations and Conclusion

While the preferred roadway scenario described above provides a framework for prioritizing larger, long-term capital improvements, smaller, more strategic land use and transportation improvement options may provide greater benefits in the short and mid-term.

With the corridor study examining a large geographic area, encompassing several important roadways in the town and city, general recommendations for the corridor were categorized into six topic areas. Recommendations for specific locations or intersections are also included within each topic area (Route 98 example shown at right).

- Land Use and Development
- Vehicular Circulation
- Pedestrian / Bicycle / Transit Systems
- Streetscape
- Site Design
- Safety

Roundabouts should be considered at the intersections of Route 98 at West Saile Drive (pictured below) and Call Parkway (Gateway II Park) as well as the Thruway exit to maintain effective service and provide for efficient traffic flow should full build-out occur along Route 98.



In addition to the roadway scenarios and recommendations, two focus areas were selected and reviewed based on their potential future development and overall impact to the corridor. General land uses were indicated and potential alignments of future roadways were illustrated. The development of these roads and the surrounding development would be dependent on the current zoning and economic and market conditions.

The Route 98 (left) and Veterans Memorial Drive (right) focus areas showing conceptual land uses and roadway alignments.



Through the planning process, various opportunities and strategies were identified to enhance mobility in the region. Although some of the more significant recommendations hinge upon long-term build-out, a proactive approach to minimize future traffic impacts will help ensure safe and efficient traffic operations in the future. Other opportunities for collaboration and partnerships should be pursued as development moves forward in the area and sections of the plan are implemented. This cooperative effort can be critical for specific funding opportunities as well as a cost-savings measure.

Moving forward, several follow-on activities were identified for the City and Town to pursue or strive towards as resources allow or opportunities arise.

- Prepare a funding strategy plan to fund future infrastructure improvements
- Revise zoning for the City and Town where necessary to implement some of the strategic recommendations in the plan
- Develop a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan to identify multi-modal initiatives and improvements
- Develop sub-area access management plans as development increases along Route 98
- Study and encourage the installation of a roundabout at the Thruway exit at Park Road/Route 98.

Funding

The Plan also provides a brief review of possible funding strategies that could be used to implement future infrastructure improvements as development occurs in the study area. The report briefly describes eight possible funding strategies ranging from Transportation Development Districts and transportation mitigation fees to sources of grant funding. A case study of three of these strategies is provided that documents potential costs to developers and the Town is also included.