

Routes 96 & 318 Rural Corridor Study

Ontario & Seneca Counties, New York



Executive Summary

March 2009

Prepared by:



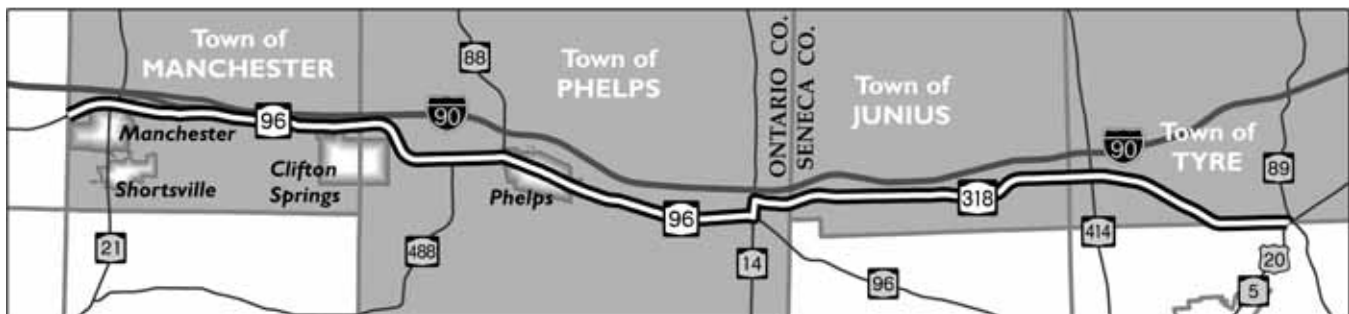
Financial assistance for the preparation of this report was provided in part by the Federal Highway Administration. The Ontario County Planning and Research Department and the Seneca County Planning and Community Development Department are solely responsible for its content. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Executive Summary

The State Routes 96 and 318 Rural Corridor Study project is funded by the Genesee Transportation Council through the United Planning Work Program (UPWP) at the request of Ontario and Seneca Counties. The UPWP is the program of federally-funded transportation planning activities to be undertaken each year by GTC staff, its member agencies, and other jurisdictions in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region. Ontario and Seneca counties are members of the Genesee Transportation Council.

STUDY AREA

The Study Area, shown below, spans 25 miles through eight municipalities within two counties. The corridor begins on State Route 96 at the Farmington/Manchester town line in Ontario County and extends east to State Route 14 at Five Points. It then continues north along State Route 14 to State Route 318, and then east along State Route 318 into Seneca County. The corridor ends at the intersection of Routes 5 and 20 in the Town of Seneca Falls. The Study Area encompasses the entire corridor and includes properties to the north and south within 1,000 feet of the roadway. The approximately fifteen square miles of Study Area is predominantly agricultural and rural residential in character, with pockets of development at primary intersections, Thruway interchange nodes, and villages.



STUDY PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project is to develop a corridor management plan that will facilitate development of a safe, efficient, and integrated transportation network that maintains community character, coordinates decision-making, and advances appropriately-scaled residential, commercial and industrial development.

The objectives of this Study are to:

- Identify a set of strategies to maintain and enhance access, mobility, safety, economic development, and environmental quality along the State Routes 96 and 318 highway corridor.
- Provide land use and zoning guidance to local officials to manage growth and development in the corridor.
- Foster intergovernmental cooperation between multiple municipalities by bringing them together to address common planning and development issues.
- Identify existing agricultural, historic and natural assets, including the corridor view sheds, and coordinate their enhancement.
- Address transportation issues that may arise from changes in land use in the corridor.
- Build consensus on a vision for land use and design concepts for future development of the corridor.

- Identify specific issues and opportunities related to improving pedestrian, bicyclists, etc. use and access.
- Identify linkages/access to regional trail projects or other recreational or tourism-related resources.
- Identify areas where interagency and/or inter-municipal partnerships (formal or informal) are necessary to implement the plan. For example, communication between localities and NYSDOT or County Highways regarding issuance of curb cut permits and the local planning/review process.
- Identify implementation projects, including capital, operational, regulatory and legislative, that are necessary to implement the Plan.
- Identify implementation projects (additional studies, etc) that the project partners can pursue that address critical issues identified in the corridor plan.
- Educate the public about community and quality of life benefits of land use controls.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Routes 96 and 318 Rural Corridor Study provides a comprehensive approach to land use and transportation policy across the corridor’s multiple communities. Regional planning efforts such as this require an inclusive public participation process that provides multiple opportunities for public involvement, comment, and discussion. The project’s public participation process included public informational meetings, vision-building workshops, and area-specific Focus Groups. The common thread tying the public involvement process together was the formation of a Steering Committee composed of residents, business owners, organizational leaders and County staff.

In addition to the public input opportunities described above, study materials were also posted on the Ontario and Seneca County web sites.

STUDY ORGANIZATION

The Study is separated into two parts: a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and a set of three Sub Regional Plans (SRPs). The CMP contains a corridor-wide vision and set of goals and objectives that provide the framework for general recommendations. The SRPs break the corridor into manageable segments and include a greater level of detail regarding implementation steps. Plan elements at the corridor level provide a broad framework from which to develop specific action items that will be implemented at the sub regional level. The corridor Vision, Goal Areas, and Objectives were developed during the project’s previously discussed public participation process, and deal directly with the issues facing corridor communities.



Existing Conditions Report

The Existing Conditions Report, found in Report #1, explores a variety of topics and data in the corridor. The Report contains information on land use, natural and community resources, demographics, retail market analysis, and build-out estimations. The Report also contains a series of maps addressing these topics.

CORRIDOR-WIDE VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Vision

The Towns and Villages of the Routes 96 & 318 Rural Corridor Study will incorporate policies of “smart growth,” preserving rural and farmland areas while promoting economic development near existing population and commercial centers. These policies will include a progressive planning approach to a variety of issues, including community character, natural and historic resources, sustainable land use and design, transportation systems, and regional context and cooperation.

In order to accomplish this vision, the study identifies the following objectives for six goal areas.

Goal Area #1: Community Character

- Preserve rural character and encourage long-term viability of agricultural operations and protection of farmland resources.
- Enhance mixed-use, commercial, and industrial areas.

Goal Area #2: Safe and Efficient Transportation

- Improve vehicular safety throughout the corridor.
- Ensure existing and future commercial developments utilize best practices for access management.

Goal Area #3: Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

- Expand opportunities for recreational biking and hiking.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in the corridor.
- Encourage bicycling and walking to and between commercial uses.

Goal Area #4: Economic Development

- Capitalize on the presence of historic and cultural assets adjacent to the corridor.
- Encourage sustainable business development that meets the needs of residents and expands the employment base.
- Support agriculture-based economic development initiatives.

Goal Area #5: Regional Cooperation

- Ensure this Study is utilized by developers, municipal officials, and residents.
- Continue the regional and collaborative approach to planning established by this Study.
- Leverage the corridor’s status as a significant gateway to the Finger Lakes Region.

Goal Area #6: Sustainable Land Use and Design

- Enhance access to and preservation of important natural features.
- Target growth to areas where sufficient transportation and water/sewer infrastructure is already present.

CORRIDOR-WIDE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

A Future Land Use Plan (portion shown below) was developed for the Study Area and is intended to be a visual representation of the community's desired land use pattern. The purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to identify where specific development types and patterns are most appropriate and to support the goals and objectives articulated in the rest of the Study. The Future Land Use Map consists of the following land use categories:

- *Agriculture and Open Space (AO)* - intended to preserve farmland and allow limited development of uses including residential, commercial, and industrial activity in a manner preserves the undeveloped nature of certain areas along NYS Route 96 and 318.
- *Gateway Transitional (GT)* - intended to foster the creation of a moderately dense node of activity at the edge of villages with a variety of uses including residential, commercial, and industrial activity that serves the daily needs of local residents and the traveling public.
- *Village Core (VC)* - intended to foster the preservation and enhancement of existing small-scaled, mixed use areas consistent with the pedestrian-oriented and historical character of the downtown area.



Excerpt from Map 9: Corridor-Wide Future Land Use Plan

- *Interchange Commercial (IC)* - intended to provide for the placement of commercial and industrial facilities while preserving the interchange's ability to carry traffic to and from the freeway in a safe and expeditious manner.
- *Regional Destination (RD)* - intended to provide for the placement of specialty commercial uses that cater to patrons from across western New York and beyond.
- *Sensitive Environmental Area (SEA)* - intended to protect valuable environmental features from potentially harmful development impacts.

Ultimately, the corridor communities should consider revising or adopting zoning codes that are consistent with the spirit of this Future Land Use Plan. While zoning regulations are tied to specific parcels, the edges of the future land use categories are intentionally drawn irrespective of property lines. The refinement of the land use edges, as well as identifying specific land use categories and permitted uses, is a more detailed exercise that is a function of future zoning code updates.

CORRIDOR-WIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Corridor-Wide Transportation Plan is meant to complement and support the Future Land Use Plan, as well as other goals and objectives in this Study. The Transportation Plan includes general recommendations for operational and safety improvements of the highway itself. These recommendations include:

- Access points (driveways and intersections) should be more defined. This involves reducing unnecessary widths where an access point connects to the highway, forming perpendicular intersections whenever possible, and maintaining consistent shoulder widths. Access points should also be kept out of intersections, consolidated whenever possible, and should not be larger than necessary to accommodate driveway traffic.
- Limit parking on roadway edges, enforce property setbacks.
- Consider designation of shoulders as multi-purpose spaces (bike lanes with bike symbols, emergency pull-offs and snow storage).
- Maintain appropriate corner clearances within village settings.

In addition to these general transportation recommendations, the Study includes a Corridor Overlay District (COD). The COD identifies access provisions, driveway spacing standards, building setbacks, sign regulations, and landscaping requirements to ensure the safety and efficient flow of traffic along NYS Route 96 and 318 while enhancing the overall character of the corridor. It should be noted that the COD is presented in a code-ready format that can be customized by localities to suit their needs.

SUB-REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Regional Plans break the corridor into manageable segments in order to provide recommendations with a greater level of detail. This Study divides the Study Area in the following three focus areas:

- Focus Area 1 SRP covers the Ontario County Villages of Manchester, Shortsville, and Clifton Springs and the Town of Manchester. These communities comprise roughly a third of the Study Area on the western end.
- Focus Area 2 SRP covers the Town and Village of Phelps, located in Ontario County. These communities comprise roughly a third of the Study Area, centered between the other two Focus Areas.
- Focus Area 3 SRP covers the Seneca County Towns of Junius and Tyre. These communities comprise roughly a third of the Study Area on the eastern end.

The Sub Regional Plans (SRPs) contain a Transportation Recommendations section that is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the Corridor Management Plan (CMP), but outlines specific improvements that can be made within each Focus Area. Finally, the Sub Regional Plan contains an Action Plan that lists the specific steps necessary to achieve the vision, goals and objectives found in the CMP. Each of these sections has a certain degree of overlap in their content, as is the case between the CMP and the SRPs. They are organized in this fashion to allow communities to use this as a workbook, wherein each section addresses a specific issue, yet is consistent with and reinforced by the remainder of the document.

AREA SPECIFIC CONCEPTUAL PLANS

Conceptual Plans were developed for five locations in the corridor, as identified by County staff and the consultant team. Each Plan represents a development scenario for that area, but it should not be interpreted as a master plan for a particular site. The purpose of the Plans is not to show how specific parcels will be developed, but rather what they could look like if certain design principles were applied.

The following locations were identified for Conceptual Area Specific Plans to be developed:

- Clifton Springs Gateway (area around Route 96 & Kendall Street)
- Knickerbocker Corners/Phelps Junction (area around Routes 96, 488 and Phelps Junction Road)
- Five Points/West Junius (area around Routes 96, 14, and 318)
- Regional Shopping Destination (area around Waterloo Premium Outlets)
- Magee (area around Routes 318 and 414)

For each of the five selected locations, two Conceptual Plans are included. The first is based on conventional commercial/residential design, using existing zoning and land use regulations as parameters. This scenario represents how a series of disconnected and uncoordinated developments might lay out over time. It is designed to show how building sites would look under current practices and regulations, should enough development pressure materialize.

The second is based on a more concentrated land use pattern with consideration given to community character, mixing of uses, access management, pedestrian accommodation, and landscaping/ reforestation. These features are addressed within the framework of the goals and objectives outlined in this Study. This scenario is referred to as the “Best Practices” design.

In addition to these five locations, two hypothetical scenarios are included for a rural portion of the corridor. The first presents a build-out scenario that could result from current land use regulations. The second balances farmland protection with future development in an effort to protect rural character and viable agriculture.

The Best Practices Design for the Five Points/West Junius Conceptual Plan is shown on the following page.

Five Points / West Junius: Best Practices Design

- 1) Pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between development parcels
- 2) Pedestrian passageway between buildings to adjacent development
- 3) Use of curbed islands and medians for pedestrian sidewalks across parking lots
- 4) Shared access
- 5) Buildings provide definition to edge of roadway
- 6) Cohesive pedestrian network between buildings
- 7) Parking setback behind building line
- 8) Coordinated fencing and street trees provide gateway enhancements
- 9) Rear access road between parcels limits vehicle trips on Routes 96 and 14
- 10) Rows of grape vines strengthen gateway to Finger Lakes wine country
- 11) Roundabout improves vehicular circulation, includes iconic feature or element in the center



12) Dedicated truck access to service area

General Notes:

- Enhanced landscape elements designed around the Finger Lakes wine country theme strengthen gateway status
- Consistent setbacks and building frontages along Route 14
- Pedestrian connections between buildings and street
- Improved appearance and function of truck service stop
- Utilize shared service roads to provide rear access to parcels

This plan is intended to illustrate quality design principles. It should not be misconstrued as an implementation plan for actual development of these locations.

Peak hour trips generated by potential new construction: 1,400

	Potential New Construction
	Existing Building

↑ N

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Overview

There are numerous options available to corridor communities to achieve the Vision and Goals outlined in this Study. Ideally, each community will adopt a consistent set of regulations throughout the corridor. This will enhance the safety and functionality of Routes 96 and 318, as well as work towards various quality of life objectives identified in the Study. Each community has the option of pursuing any given combination of initiatives identified below, each of which will move the corridor closer to the goals identified through this publicly-driven project. Certain items are found in the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) while others can be found in the Sub Regional Plans (SRPs). Implementation options are grouped into land use and transportation categories.

Land Use Regulations

- Adopt/revise a **zoning ordinance**, addressing permitted uses and other regulations consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. Future infrastructure investments such as water and sewer improvements should also be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. *See Future Land Use Plan and Map 9.*
- Adopt/revise **subdivision and site plan review** regulations to be consistent with the Goals and Objectives outlined in this Study. *Various sections.*
- Adopt/revise residential and/or commercial **design guidelines**. *Illustrated by Area Specific Conceptual Plans on page 41 of the CMP and the Future Land Use Plan.*
- Adopt **Planned Development District (PDD)** regulations or develop a **master plan** to ensure desirable development of large parcels or multiple adjacent parcels. *Illustrated by Area Specific Conceptual Plans on page 41 of the CMP.*

Transportation Improvements

- Adopt a **Corridor Overlay District (COD)**, using the example provided in the Study as a base. The COD addresses access management, building setbacks, signage, and landscaping. *See page 34 of the CMP.*
- Work with NYS DOT to pursue the various **roadway and intersection improvements**. *See Transportation Recommendations in each SRP.*
- Pursue projects identified in the **Transportation Plan**, including pedestrian enhancements and various multi-use trail projects. *See Maps 11, 13, and 15.*

Additional Initiatives

- Review **Area Specific Conceptual Plans** which illustrate a variety of techniques and initiatives that can achieve quality site design and access management principles. *See page 41 of the CMP.*
- Pursue specific items identified in the **Action Plan**, which are organized into six Goal Areas. *See Action Plan in each SRP.*
- Establish a “**Corridor Liaison**” from each of the participating municipalities. Liaisons would meet periodically to discuss the progress of specific action items and potential developments that would impact the corridor. This would also serve as an advisory forum, where liaisons can learn about policies and techniques used in neighboring communities.