

# Ontario County Freight Rail Corridor Development Plan: Area 2

## Scope of Work

### A. Objective

This project will identify potential rail enabled industrial development sites along the Finger Lakes Railway rail and Norfolk Southern rail corridor in the study area. Development capacities will be developed for the candidate properties and their impact of supporting transportation infrastructure evaluated. Comprehensive plan and zoning changes will be recommended to support the proposed development. At the same time, options for either relocating the existing Finger Lakes Railway's rail yard away from Seneca Lake will be sought and compared to options for improving aesthetics and connectivity between the City of Geneva's northeastern neighborhoods from the lakefront. Finally, options for re-routing the Finger Lakes Railway rail to eliminate its route within the core downtown area of the City of Geneva will be sought and compared to the costs for making any identified improvements in the rail geometry, signage, operations, etc. in the city's downtown area to improve rail/vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Collectively the recommendations made in the final report will guide Ontario County and the involved municipalities to seek funds to implement physical projects and for the County's Planning Department to work with the municipalities to update local comprehensive plans and zoning.

### B. Background

This project will extend the Ontario County Freight Corridor Development Plan – Area 1, (UPWP Project Task 8620), completed in 2017, located in the Town and Village of Manchester, Village of Shortsville, and Village of Clifton Springs, to the east along the Finger Lakes Railway through the Town and Village of Phelps and south into the Town and City of Geneva. It will also study the Norfolk Southern Railroad corridor from the southern end of the City of Geneva north through the City and Town of Geneva and through the Town of Phelps to the northern Ontario County Boundary. As transportation costs continue to rise, Ontario County has proposed this study to identify sites and potential businesses that could benefit from rail transportation, including agricultural related businesses. At the same time, the 2003 Route 14 Truck Study (UPWP Project Task 6610) found that this State Highway has a disproportionately high percentage of heavy truck traffic. Thus this report is intended to both identify opportunities for increased industrial growth and to maximize opportunities to support those businesses via rail.

The City of Geneva in its existing comprehensive plan identifies the existence of the Finger Lakes Railway's main rail yard just north of Route 5 and 20 on the north side of Seneca Lake as being disruptive to the community. In addition to aesthetic concerns, physically the rail yard is an impediment to vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity to the Seneca Lakefront from the residential neighborhoods of the city's northeast quadrant. While recognizing the important role rail has in supporting local industries such as Guardian Glass and Seneca Foods, the city is looking for ways

minimize the negative impacts of the rail yard as well as the impact of the rail lines running through the city's central business district. While Route 5 and 20 is being 'put on a diet' through a project to reduce it from four to two lanes to minimize the separation it creates between downtown and the lakefront, identification of methods to reduce the impact of Norfolk Southern's rail line in separating the lake front from downtown also needs to be examined. Similarly, the safety issues involved in Finger Lakes Railway's at grade crossings in the city's downtown district also merits analysis and comparison with opportunities to relocate Finger Lakes Railway's rail outside of downtown Geneva while maintaining the connectivity between Finger Lakes Railway's line to the east (running to Solvay where it connects to the CSX main line) and to Phelps, Shortsville, and Canandaigua.

The Genesee Transportation Council is concurrently undertaking the Route 96 and Route 14 Strategic Divestment Analysis (UPWP Project Task 7213). This project aims to determine the feasibility and any benefits to eliminating the existing grade-separated intersection of NYS Route 96 and NYS Route 14 in the Town of Phelps. A component of the study is to review potential economic benefits and land use opportunities that may arise from a new intersection design at Route 96 and Route 14. The Freight Rail Corridor Plan and the Divestment Analysis will be conducted in a cooperative manner and final recommendations coordinated, where applicable, as to not preclude the objectives of either plan.

### **C. Tasks**

**TASK 1: Project Steering/Advisory Committee formation:** Ontario County Planning Department has already solicited and received recommendations from the City of Geneva, Town of Geneva, and the Town of Phelps for an elected representative from each board to serve on the Steering Committee along with the County Director of Planning, a representative of Finger Lakes Railway, the County Economic Developer, and Jody Binnix from Genesee Transportation Council. County Planning will solicit a representative from the Village of Phelps and GTC staff will solicit involvement from New York State Department of Transportation-Region 4 to complete the steering committee.

The City of Geneva has also formed a rail subcommittee that includes interested citizens from the community that will interface with the Steering Committee to provide additional input and links to key stakeholders. The Ontario County Planning Department, in partnership with the City of Geneva, will oversee and facilitate the rail subcommittee, and shall be responsible for communicating project updates, soliciting feedback at key project milestones, and distributing information and project deliverables to rail subcommittee members as appropriate.

**TASK 2: Finalize Request for Proposal for Consultant Services:** Ontario County Planning Department will submit a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to Genesee Transportation Council staff for review. The RFP shall be finalized and released by GTC on behalf of Ontario County

**TASK 3: Consultant Selection:** The Consultant Selection Committee, a subset of the Steering Committee, will rank proposals, conduct interviews if warranted, and recommend a firm to be hired after negotiating a final scope of work that meets the project objectives and budget.

**TASK 4: Project Kickoff and Inventory Phase:** Consultant shall work to collect all relevant information from the Steering Committee, identify other stakeholders – including freight related business interests, and establish the remaining project schedule. Conduct the first public outreach session to explain the project, its scope, and to solicit public input on related issues. During this phase Ontario County Planning will set up a publicly accessible project web site that will be maintained throughout the project where interim reports, analysis, meeting announcements, meeting minutes, and other project information will be maintained.

**TASK 5: Analysis Phase:** Consultant will synthesize inventory information and input from public and key stakeholders to identify potential industrial development sites, transportation safety issues in downtown Geneva, Finger Lakes Railway's rail yard needs and potential relocation sites meeting those needs, and options for relocation of Finger Lakes Railway lines out of the central business district of downtown Geneva, including costs involved. Including, methods to reduce the impact of Norfolk Southern's rail line in separating the lake front from downtown.

**TASK 6: Rail Enabled Industrial Site Development Concepts:** Consultant will work with the Steering Committee and landowners to determine potential uses and concept layout plans for identified rail enabled development sites throughout the study area.

**TASK 7: Public Review and input:** A series of presentations to local boards and the public are anticipated to review the findings and draft alternatives, and to gauge local preferences for the alternatives developed. The Consultant will conduct a public meeting for this Task in an agreed upon manner. The project sponsors will be responsible for sharing public meeting materials/findings with local municipal boards.

**TASK 8: Recommendations:** The consultant will take public and local government input and review costs and effectiveness to prepare draft recommendations to the Steering Committee. After review and revision, recommendations will be finalized into a draft project report.

**TASK 9: Public Presentation of Recommendations:** The consultant and Steering Committee will make a final presentation to the Public with County Planning making follow-up presentations to multiple local government boards on the final project recommendations. Any public input/reaction will be collected and appended to the final report.

**TASK 10: Final Report:** The consultant will provide the final project report, including a funding and implementation strategy, and the project will be closed.

## **D. Products**

All project products will be in Adobe Acrobat file format. In addition, some products will be also provided in a native format (such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Word, and Excel) that are editable. All maps and plan data will be provided in ESRI Arc GIS Pro or compatible file format.

1. Request for Proposal for Consultant Services
2. Inventory Phase Presentation: PowerPoint Presentation and Printed Maps in ESRI compatible files for site analysis, lists of stakeholders and property owners (likely in Microsoft Excel file format).
3. Rail enabled industrial development site concept plans: Printed maps and ESRI compatible files in large page (Architectural C or larger) size.
4. Public Outreach Materials: PowerPoint Presentation, Printed Maps in ESRI compatible files, and options in MS Word.
5. Draft Report
6. Final Report

## **E. Public Participation Plan**

Ontario County Planning Department will establish and maintain a project web site wherein all project materials will be publicly accessible and where meeting announcements will be posted at least five working days in advance of all Public meetings. Press releases for all public meetings will be provided on the County's general website and released to the Finger Lakes Times newspaper in Geneva. At least 3 public meetings are anticipated through the course of the project as detailed in the tasks above.

## **F. Schedule**

The project will begin as soon as approved by GTC in August of 2022 and will be completed by September 2023.

## G. Project Budget

Sources of Funds		Uses of Funds	
	<u>FY 2021-22</u>		<u>FY 2021-22</u>
<u>Federal Funds</u>		<u>GTC</u>	
FHWA	\$117,000	Staff	\$0
FTA	<u>0</u>	Contractual	<u>126,500</u>
Subtotal	\$117,000	Subtotal	\$126,500
<u>Matching Funds</u>		<u>Other Agency</u>	
State (In-kind)	\$0	Staff	\$3,500
Local (In-kind)	3,500	Contractual	0
Local (Cash)	<u>9,500</u>	In-kind Exp.	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	\$13,000	Subtotal	\$3,500
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$130,000</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>\$130,000</u>