# SENECA TURNPIKE Corridor Traffic Study

# **Final Report**



2001-2002 UPWP



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Final Report

Fiscal Year 2001-2002

#### **SMTC Unified Planning Work Program Task 3D**

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# Seneca Turnpike Corridor Traffic Study

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# **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

# 1.1 Purpose of Study / Goals and Objectives

#### Purpose of Study

Seneca Turnpike runs in an east-west direction and provides a major connection between residential and community service land uses to the west and Interstates 81 and 481 to the east. Land use along Seneca Turnpike between Hopper Road and Brighton Avenue is a mix of residential and commercial, with a large portion of land used as a public park.

The section of Seneca Turnpike between Hopper Road and Monticello Drive is congested during peak hour traffic. In addition, the bridge over Onondaga Creek is currently flagged for safety and structural deficiencies. The City of Syracuse requested that this study be undertaken to determine what improvements can be made to mitigate these conditions effectively. After receiving input at the initial public meeting and a direct request from the City, the SMTC Planning Committee extended the study area boundaries to include the area from Monticello Drive to Brighton Avenue. The study has a multi-modal perspective with a primary goal of developing projects that are consistent with the community's needs and historic qualities.

#### Goals

To give the study direction, the following goals were identified:

- Develop recommendations that will provide a safe and well-maintained infrastructure including bridge, pavement, and sidewalk conditions;
- Develop recommendations that will enhance the safety and efficiency of the transportation network for all modes of transportation including vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians; and
- Ensure that all recommendations are consistent with community needs and goals.

## Objectives

The following objectives were identified to assist in attaining the study goals:

- Create an effective public involvement forum to give involved agencies and the public the opportunity to take part in the planning process;
- Consult with the appropriate area of Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) to identify community needs and goals;
- Obtain traffic counts including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians;
- Identify existing conditions, including a capacity, infrastructure, and accident analysis;
- Develop and evaluate alternatives to improve facilities, traffic, and safety;
- Develop criteria to measure and compare alternative solutions; and
- Prepare a recommendations and implementation plan.

# 1.2 Study Process

The following tasks were completed in order to complete this study:

- Task 1: Define the study's goals and objectives;
- Task 2: Establish a Study Advisory Committee (SAC)/Public Involvement Plan (PIP);
- Task 3:Establish study area limits and identify relevant networks (roadways, sidewalks<br/>etc.);
- Task 4: Complete data collection and analysis;
- Task 5: Identify existing conditions;
- Task 6: Identify transportation issues;
- Task 7: Develop and evaluate alternative solutions; and
- Task 8:Prepare recommendation and implementation plan

This report was generated to document the efforts of this study. Upon completion, the report will be submitted to the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) Planning and Policy Committees for their acceptance.

# 1.3 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Engaging the public early and often in the planning process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and is required by numerous state and federal laws. The goal of the Seneca Turnpike Corridor Traffic Study PIP was to:

- 1. Create public awareness relative to the study's goals, objectives and process, as well as publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the study; and
- 2. Involve the public throughout the planning process.

The PIP included the formation of two groups to assist the SMTC in the study effort. A Study Advisory Committee (SAC), consisting of representatives from affected organizations, local government, and community representatives, met three times throughout the study. The SAC provided input and guidance to the SMTC Project Manager.

In addition to this formal committee, a list of interested "stakeholders" (individuals with significant relations and interest in the study area) was maintained by the SMTC. The stakeholders were sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, and were notified of all SAC and public meetings. A copy of the complete PIP for the Seneca Turnpike Corridor Traffic Study, including a list of both the SAC and stakeholders is included in Appendix A.

Two public meetings were held during the study. The first public meeting was held in October 2000 to formally present the study to the public and to provide an overview of the existing conditions. The meeting was attended by approximately 60 individuals and provided an opportunity for the public to ask questions and voice their transportation concerns regarding the

study area. Minutes from the initial SAC and public meetings, as well as other project related correspondence, are included in Appendix B.

A second public meeting was held in June 2001. This meeting served to inform the public of the recommendations made to address the transportation issues identified and provided the opportunity for individuals to comment.

# 1.4 Study Area Boundaries

The initial study area for this project extended along Seneca Turnpike from Hopper Road on the west to Monticello Drive on the east. Based on comments at the initial public meeting and a direct request from the City of Syracuse, the SMTC Planning Committee extended the eastern study area boundary from Monticello Drive to Brighton Avenue in November 2000. Figure 1-1 shows the study area.



# **CHAPTER 2 - TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

## 2.1 Roadway

Seneca Turnpike, designated State Touring Route 173 within the study area, is a paved roadway that runs in an east-west direction. Route 173 is owned and maintained by the City of Syracuse within the City limits. The curb-to-curb width of the pavement varies along the corridor. The minimum pavement width is 30 feet along a segment of road between Monticello Drive and Maywood Drive. A maximum pavement width of 49 feet is located between Academy Green and Midland Avenue. Seneca Turnpike within the study area is functionally classified as an urban minor arterial.

The purpose of minor arterials is to connect and augment the principal arterials that serve major traffic flows between important activity centers. Although Seneca Turnpike provides a major connection between residential and community service land uses to the west and Interstates 81 and 481 to the east, it also serves local land uses located throughout the corridor.

There are 14 intersecting streets within the study area, which extends approximately 1.6 miles. In addition, there are numerous driveways to residential and commercial establishments.

The width of the right of way varies within the study area. Moving from west to east along the corridor the right of way widths are as follows:

- 99 feet between Hopper Road and Valley Drive
- 150 feet between Valley Drive and Midland Avenue
- 99 feet between Midland Avenue and S. Salina Street
- 66 feet between S. Salina Street and Monticello Drive
- Varies from 65 feet to 50 feet between Monticello Drive and Maywood Drive
- 50 feet between Maywood Drive and 450 feet west of the intersection with Brighton Avenue
- Varies between 50 feet and 110 feet from 450 feet west of the intersection with Brighton Avenue to the intersection with Brighton Avenue.

It should be noted that the pavement is not necessarily centered within the street right of way.

#### Truck Route

Seneca Turnpike within the study area is currently operating as a truck route based on the *City of Syracuse Truck Route Study* completed by the SMTC in June 2000. This study recommends the continued use of Seneca Turnpike as a truck route.

## 2.2 Transit

Centro, a subsidiary of the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA), provides transit services within the study area. The transit system is primarily based on a hub and spoke system where the bus service originates and ends in downtown Syracuse. Service

within the study area reflects this system in that the routes that operate along the corridor primarily service the main north-south streets that intersect with Seneca Turnpike. These bus routes include Valley Drive, Midland, S. Salina, and a portion of the South Avenue service. There is one service, Valley Direct, that provides direct service to destinations on the south side of Syracuse without going downtown to transfer. In addition, Route 13B runs one time a week and picks up passengers at area senior citizen centers and takes them to Shoppingtown Mall. Fares for all routes within the study area are \$1.00 with a \$0.25 transfer fee.

## Bus Stop Locations

There are seven bus stops within the study area all located between Hopper Road and Monticello Drive. Only one of the stops, the one located at Valley Drive, has a bus shelter. There are two bus stops located on the east and west side of Seneca Turnpike just south of the intersection with Brighton Avenue. Although these bus stops are outside the study area, they may serve individuals living within the study boundaries. The bus stop locations are shown on Figure 2-1.

#### **Ridership Information**

Minimal ridership information was available from the CNYRTA and therefore valid conclusions regarding transit and bus stop use could not be made.

## 2.3 Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

### **Bicycle Routes**

There are no designated New York State or City Bicycle Routes within the study area.

#### Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks separate pedestrians from the roadway and are associated with significant reductions in pedestrian collisions with motor vehicles. Sidewalks are present on the north side of Seneca Turnpike between Barnes Avenue/Hopper Road and Monticello Drive. However, sidewalks are sporadically placed along the southern side of the turnpike. Between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue, the only sidewalks present on Seneca Turnpike are in the vicinity of the Brighton Avenue intersection.

The City of Syracuse Police Department indicated that there are no school crossing guard locations within the study area. Children who need to cross Seneca Turnpike to attend school are bused.





Bus Shelt Bus Stop



Basemap Copyrighted by NYSDOT Prepared by the SMTC 5/01 UPWP: 3D

# **CHAPTER 3 - EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS**

This chapter examines the existing traffic conditions within the study area.

## 3.1 Traffic Volumes

#### Vehicular Traffic Volumes

Turning movement volumes were obtained in the fall of 2000 at six locations within the study area. In addition, turning movement volumes were obtained at four unsignalized locations and at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and Brighton Avenue in the spring of 2001. The turning movement volumes for the PM peak hour are summarized in Figure 3-1. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) provided Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes at two mid-block locations. A complete set of the turning movement and AADT volumes for the study area are included in Appendix C.

#### Pedestrian Traffic Volumes

The pedestrian traffic volumes shown in Figure 3-1 were obtained at the same time as the vehicle turning movement volumes discussed previously. Some of the traffic volumes were obtained on Halloween day; as a result, some of the PM peak hour pedestrian volumes do not represent typical conditions. Therefore, AM pedestrian traffic is discussed here. Based on this data, the intersections of Seneca Turnpike with Valley Drive and Midland Avenue have the highest pedestrian traffic during the AM peak hours with 14 and 17 individuals crossing the intersections, respectively. Pedestrian counts at other locations range between one and nine during the morning peak hour.

#### **Bicycle Traffic Volumes**

Data on the number of bicyclist using the corridor was also obtained during the AM and PM peak hour. Although bicyclists were observed within the study area, few bicyclists were recorded during the peak hours. Where present, bicycle traffic volumes are shown on Figure 3-1.

By law, bicyclists must obey the rules of the road just as vehicle drivers do. Bicyclists on Seneca Turnpike were observed traveling with and against vehicular traffic, as well as on the sidewalk.



Typical bicycle traffic

#### Turning Movement Volumes PM Peak



#### Turning Movement Volumes PM Peak



# 3.2 Traffic Control Devices

## **Parking Signs**

Parking signs are used to inform motorists of regulations established to prohibit, restrict, or limit parking, standing, or stopping of vehicles pursuant to the Vehicle and Traffic Law. An inventory of parking signs along the corridor revealed that the only signs posted were variations on the following two standard parking prohibition signs that are located between Midland Avenue and Monticello Drive.

- No Standing Vehicles may be stopped while actually loading or unloading passengers only.
- **No Stopping** Vehicles may not be stopped except to avoid conflict with other traffic or to comply with the directions of a police officer or traffic control sign or signal.

Parking regulations should be established only after a traffic study indicates they are needed. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) states that the type of parking prohibition should be based on problems caused by parked vehicles, their parking and unparking maneuvers, the need for on-street parking spaces, and adjoining parking regulations. The *City of Syracuse Traffic Code* includes the policy for the placement of parking signs.

#### Speed Limit Signs

The area wide speed limit for the City of Syracuse is 30 miles per hour (MPH). A 25 MPH speed limit sign is posted west of Smith Road in the westbound direction. The MUTCD suggests a speed zone ahead sign be posted to inform motorists of a reduced speed limit ahead. No such sign is posted. Signs noting the 30 MPH speed limit are posted elsewhere along the corridor.

#### Traffic Signals (vehicle and pedestrian)

There are four signalized intersections within the study area as follows:

- Valley Drive
- Midland Avenue
- S. Salina Street
- Brighton Avenue

All of the intersections have pedestrian signals with push buttons except Brighton Avenue. There is one pedestrian signal located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Brighton Avenue, but it was not operating at the time of the field investigation. Push buttons allow pedestrians to request a pedestrian walk interval.

The white WALK message or "walking person" symbol means that a pedestrian may enter the roadway and cross in the direction of the indication. Even with a WALK indication, there may be possible conflicts with turning vehicles. The flashing DON'T WALK or upraised "hand"

symbol is used as a clearance interval during which pedestrians may complete their crossing, but not start to cross. The DON'T WALK or upraised "hand" symbol, steadily illuminated, indicates that a pedestrian shall not enter the roadway. It was identified through the public involvement process that not all individuals understand the pedestrian signal indications.

#### Pavement Markings

Pavement markings within the study area consist of lane and centerline markings, crosswalks, and stopbars. Seneca Turnpike is striped as a two-lane street, however, a number of short left turn lanes have been added along the segment between S. Salina Street and Midland Avenue. Pavement markings will be discussed further in *Section 4.2, Pavement Markings*.

# 3.3 Capacity Analysis

The traffic analysis software Synchro 4.0 was used to determine the existing PM peak hour Level of Service (LOS) at the four signalized intersections along the corridor and to complete an arterial analysis. Highway Capacity Software (HCS) was used to analyze the capacity of four unsignalized intersections. The traffic volumes shown in Figure 3-1 and existing signal timings obtained from the City of Syracuse were used to complete the analysis. Summary reports of the information presented in this section are included in Appendix D.

Level of Service is a measure relating primarily to speed, delay and density. There are six LOS ranging from A through F. Level of Service A represents free flow with individual vehicles unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream, while LOS F indicates that traffic flow is exceeding the amount that can be served by the transportation system. Level of service F is characterized by stop and go waves, poor travel times, low comfort and convenience, and increased accident exposure. Generally, LOS D is considered the minimally acceptable LOS.

## Signalized Intersections LOS

A PM peak hour capacity analysis was completed for the signalized intersections using the traffic analysis software Synchro. In addition to the existing LOS, traffic volumes were projected to determine the 2021 future year LOS. A growth rate of 1% per year for twenty years was used to project traffic volumes based on a review of the SMTC's Travel Demand Model for the area. Table 3-1 summarizes those approaches that currently or may operate below a LOS D in the year 2021. Figures 3-2 and 3-3 present a summary of the existing and future LOS at all of the intersections evaluated for the existing and future years, respectively.

Location	Existing LOS	Future LOS
Valley Drive		
Eastbound through	F	F
Westbound through	F	F
Northbound through	F	F
Southbound through	F	F
Westbound left	Е	F
Midland Avenue		
Westbound through	E	F
S. Salina Street		
Eastbound through	D	E
Westbound left	E	F
C	C) (TC	

Table 3-1Signalized Approaches Operating Below a LOS D

Source: SMTC

#### **Unsignalized Intersections LOS**

Highway Capacity Software (HCS 2000) was used to complete a PM peak hour capacity analysis for the unsignalized intersections within the study area. In addition to the existing LOS, traffic volumes were projected to determine the 2021 future year LOS. A growth rate of 1% per year for twenty years was used to project traffic volumes based on a review of the SMTC's Travel Demand Model for the area. Table 3-2 summarizes those approaches that currently or may operate below a LOS D in the year 2021. Figures 3-2 and 3-3 present a summary of the existing and future LOS at all of the intersections evaluated for the existing and future years, respectively.

Location	Existing LOS	Future LOS								
Barnes Road/Hopper Road										
Northbound	Е	F								
Southbound	F	F								
Smith Road										
Southbound	D	F								
Milburn Drive										
Southbound	F	F								
Seneca Drive										
Southbound	D	F								
<b>Monticello Drive</b>										
Northbound	F	F								
Southbound	D	F								
Sou	rce: SMTC									

Table 3-2Unsignalized Approaches Operating Below a LOS D









#### **Arterial LOS**

An arterial analysis was completed for the PM peak hour using the traffic analysis software Synchro. In addition to the existing arterial LOS, traffic volumes were projected at a growth rate of 1% per year for twenty years to determine the 2021 future year LOS.

The existing and future eastbound arterial analysis revealed that all street segments along the corridor operate at a LOS D or better for both years. The overall existing eastbound arterial LOS is C while the future year may operate at a LOS D.

The existing westbound arterial analysis indicates that the segment of turnpike between S. Salina Street and Midland Avenue operates at a LOS E while the segment between Midland Avenue and Valley Drive operates at a LOS F. Based on the analysis these two segments may both operate at a LOS F in the future year. The overall westbound LOS is currently a D but the westbound traffic may operate at a LOS E in the future year.

Tables 3-3 and 3-4 provide a summary of the existing and future arterial analyses for eastbound and westbound conditions, respectively.

Street Segment	Signal Dela	ay (seconds)	Travel Tim	e (seconds)	Arterial LOS			
Street Segment	Existing	Future	Existing	Future	Existing	Future		
Valley Drive to Midland Avenue	18.3	25.9	60.3	67.9	В	С		
Midland Avenue to S. Salina St.	33.9	56.7	63.0	85.8	D	D		
S. Salina St. to Brighton Ave.	0	0	89.6	89.6	А	А		
Total	213.2	313.0	419.4	519.2	С	D		

Table 3-3Eastbound Arterial Analysis

Source: SMTC

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Street Segment	Signal Del	ay (seconds)	Travel Tim	e (seconds)	Arterial LOS			
Street Segment	Existing	Future	Existing	Future	Existing	Future		
Brighton Ave. to S. Salina St.	25.7	27.8	115.3	117.4	В	В		
S. Salina St. to Midland Ave.	66.6	144.1	95.7	173.2	Е	F		
Midland Ave. to Valley Dr.	land Ave. to ey Dr. 194.1 2		236.1	302.6	F	F		
Total 292.0		439.8	472.3	620.1	D	E		

# Table 3-4Westbound Arterial Analysis

Source: SMTC

## Signal Control

#### Signal Coordination

Coordination of signal operation between adjacent intersections offers an opportunity for significant benefits to motorists. Signal coordination attempts to accommodate platoons (groups) of vehicles with minimal stops. Currently none of the traffic signals within the study area are coordinated.

Based on the Synchro analysis, coordination between Valley Drive and Midland Avenue is probably recommended and coordination between Midland Avenue and S. Salina Street is definitely recommended. The analysis indicates that it is not recommended that the traffic signal at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and Brighton Avenue be coordinated with the traffic signals to the west due to the high travel time between the two locations.

## 3.4 Accident Analysis

Using the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Centralized Local Accident Surveillance System (CLASS), locations within the study area where ten or more accidents occurred during the latest available three years were analyzed. The analysis revealed four intersections and three street segments that met that criterion.

A request was made through the NYSDOT to obtain actual Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Police Accident Reports for the most recent three-year period available. Consequently, Police Accident Reports were received and evaluated for the period January 1996 through December 1998. Since the accident reports had already been requested at the time the study area was extended, the City of Syracuse Police Department provided accident reports for the Brighton Avenue intersection covering the period from January 1998 through December 2000.

The accident rate is the ratio of the number of accidents at an intersection, or within a segment, for every million vehicles entering an intersection or million vehicle miles of travel in a segment within the specified study period. The equations used to calculate the accident rate for intersections and road segments are as follows:

$$AccidentRate_{RoadSegment} = \frac{TotalAcc*10^{6}}{AADT*\#ofDaysStudied*SegmentLength}$$

$$AccidentRate_{Intersection} = \frac{TotalAcc*10^{6}}{PeakHourVol*AdjFactor*#ofDaysStudied}$$

TotalAcc	=	Total number of accidents analyzed during the period studied
AADT	=	Average Annual Daily Traffic
#ofDaysStudied	=	Total number of days during the study period
SegmentLength	=	Length of road segment in miles
PeakHourVol	=	Volume of traffic during the PM peak hour
AdjFactor	=	The PM peak hour volume was divided by 0.11 to determine the
-		AADT

Accident rates were calculated at all of the intersections and street segments identified. The accident rates were then compared to the latest NYSDOT Average Accident Rates available, which are based on facility and intersection type. All of the locations analyzed exceed the NYSDOT average accident rates as shown in Table 3-5.

The fourth edition of the *Traffic Engineering Handbook* states that pedestrian accidents account for 15% to 45% of all traffic accidents worldwide with rates in North America being among the lowest. Assuming bicycle/pedestrian accidents represent 15% of all traffic accidents in the United States, none of the locations analyzed exceed that threshold.

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Location	Total Accidents	Accident Rate	NYSDOT Average Accident Rate	Number of Bike/ Pedestrian Accidents	Percent Bike/ Pedestrian Accidents of Total								
Street Segments													
Midland Ave. to S. Salina St.	18	4.63	1.97	2	11%								
Riverdale Dr. to Valley Dr.	6	3.60	1.97	0	0								
Valley Dr. to Milburn Dr.	7	2.91	1.97	0	0								
		Intersectio	ons										
Valley Dr.	28	1.40	0.60	1	4%								
Midland Ave.	31	1.57	0.60	3	10%								
S. Salina St.	35	1.33	0.60	2	6%								
Brighton Ave.	11	0.51	0.40	1	10%								

Table 3-5Accident Rate Summary

Source: SMTC, NYSDOT

Accident summary sheets and diagrams were prepared for each of the locations analyzed and are included in Appendix E. The analysis revealed that twenty five percent of the accidents analyzed resulted in injury and that the four most frequently occurring accident types were as follows:

- 1. Rear end collision 53%
- 2. Sideswipe 11%
- 3. Left turn 12%
- 4. Right angle 10%

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Traffic Engineering Handbook* states that while human error contributes to 70% - 90% of all accidents, road and vehicle improvements can greatly reduce the likelihood of human error or the consequences of the accident.

Based on our review of the accident reports, driver inattention and/or driver error was a major cause of many of the accidents along Seneca Turnpike. However, as noted above, street geometry and physical features can play a role. The high number of rear end collisions along the corridor is due in part to the high number of curb cuts and intersections that create stop and go traffic. Right angle accidents are also impacted by the high number of intersections and driveways that set the stage for this type of collision. Finally, the width of Seneca Turnpike allows it to be used as a four-lane street even though it is primarily striped as two lanes. The driver confusion caused by this condition may contribute to the high number of sideswipe accidents. Table 3-6 provides a summary of the type of intersection and street segment accidents.

Table 3-6Intersection Accident Summary

Intersection	PDO	Injury	Fatal	Total	Right Angle	Rear End	Head On	Side Swipe	Left Turn	Right Turn	Ped	Bicycle	Fixed Object	Backing	Unable to Detect	Total
Valley Dr.	23	5	0	28	1	18	0	5	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	28
Midland Dr.	21	10	0	31	1	22	0	3	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	31
S. Salina St.	23	12	0	35	3	18	0	6	4	0	1	1	0	2	0	35
Totals	67	27	0	94	5	58	0	14	5	2	2	4	1	3	0	94

Source: SMTC Department of Motor Vehicles

Table 3-7Road Segment Accident Summary

Road Segments	PDO	Injury	Fatal	Total	Right Angle	Rear End	Head On	Side Swipe	Left Turn	Right Turn	Ped	Bicycle	Fixed Object	Backing	Unable to Detect	Total
Valley Dr./Riverdale Dr.	6	0	0	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6
Valley Dr./Milburn Dr.	6	1	0	7	3	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
S. Salina St./Midland Dr.	15	3	0	18	4	4	0	1	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	18
Totals	27	4	0	31	8	9	0	1	9	0	1	1	1	1	0	31

Source: SMTC

Department of Motor Vehicles

# **CHAPTER 4 - FACILITY CONDITIONS**

# 4.1 Bridge

The one bridge on Seneca Turnpike within the study area spans Onondaga Creek. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) inspected this bridge on April 19, 2000 and has notified the City that they have flagged two conditions on the bridge as follows.

- A yellow structural flag has been placed on the bridge due to 50 percent section loss to the web of one of the beams above an expansion bearing. The section loss has caused the web to buckle and the bottom flange to bend upward.
- A safety flag has been placed on the bridge due to settlement or uneven conditions on the northern sidewalk that have caused a tripping hazard.

The notification letter from the NYSDOT states that the City must take action to 1) close, 2) post, or 3) repair the bridge in order for the NYSDOT to withdraw the structural flagged status.

The City has received federal funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to rehabilitate the bridge within the next five years. In the meantime the City is working with an engineering consultant to make temporary repairs to the bridge that would address the flagged conditions.

# 4.2 Pavement

Pavement conditions of State owned facilities and locally owned sections of state touring routes such as State Route 173 are assessed using the NYSDOT Pavement Condition Rating Manual. The surface rating scale ranges from very poor to excellent. The NYSDOT's 2000 Highway Sufficiency Ratings for Region 3 indicate that the portion of Seneca Turnpike from Hopper Road to Valley Drive is in excellent condition. The segment of road between Valley Drive and Brighton Avenue is considered to be in fair condition meaning that distress is clearly visible.



Typical pavement rated fair

## 4.3 Pavement Markings

Pavement markings within the study area were evaluated by the SMTC to determine whether they were in good, fair, or poor condition. A good rating indicates that the markings are intact, reflective and easy to comprehend. A fair rating indicates that the markings are intact but are faded, and a poor rating indicates that the markings are not intact, faded, and difficult to comprehend.

The markings, including lane markings, crosswalks, stop bars, and directional arrows, were evaluated in September 2000. The rating represents the overall worst condition for each location. The markings at the intersections of Seneca Turnpike with Valley Drive, Midland Avenue, S. Salina Street, and Brighton Avenue all received poor ratings. The centerline markings along the western portion of the corridor were in good condition, however the markings between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue were in poor condition.



Typical pavement markings in poor condition

# 4.4 Type and Condition of Bus Stops

There are seven bus stops within the study area that are designated with a blue Centro sign. All of the bus stops except one, located at the southeast corner of Valley Drive, are unsheltered. The majority of the locations lack a lead walk paved surface between the sidewalk and the curb. As a result, individuals are often forced to walk and/or stand on muddy, wet or snow covered ground.



Typical bus stop with no lead walk

## 4.5 Sidewalks

A sidewalk inventory of the corridor was completed by the SMTC in the spring of 2000. Sidewalks exist along the north side of Seneca Turnpike between Hopper Road and Monticello Drive and on both sides of the Turnpike in the vicinity of the Brighton Avenue intersection. However, sidewalks are only sporadically located on the south side of the turnpike and there are no sidewalks from Monticello Drive up to approximately 400 feet west of the intersection with Brighton Avenue. Figure 4-1 identifies the sidewalk conditions. The condition rating shown represents the worst-case condition for the sidewalk segment. In many locations, the concrete sidewalk has been overlaid with asphalt, especially in areas adjacent to parking lots. These wide expanses of asphalt make it difficult to distinguish the pedestrian path.

Sidewalks were rated as being in good condition if they showed few signs of wear. A fair rating indicates that the sidewalk is showing signs of wear such as pitting or unevenness. The sidewalk received a poor rating if it was cracked, upheaved, missing chunks or vegetation was growing through it. Extensive areas of sidewalk were rated as being in fair or poor condition.

In addition to sidewalk conditions the following issues were identified:

- Commercial sites use sidewalks for snow storage;
- Sidewalks are often not cleared of snow/ice, stones, dirt or other debris; and
- Overgrown vegetation obstructs the sidewalk in some locations.



Typical sidewalk in poor condition



Sidewalk discontinuity





Sidewalk Condition Good Fair Poor Streets

# 4.6 Curb Ramps

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires curb ramps to be provided in all existing sidewalks and for new construction and alterations. Curb ramps do not exist at the following locations:

- East and west corners of the Barnes Rd. intersection
- East and west corners of the Ames Ave. intersection
- East and west corners of the Smith Rd. intersection
- East and west corners of the Milburn Dr. intersection
- West corner of the Seneca Dr. intersection
- West corner of the Munson Dr. intersection
- Northwest and southwest corner of the Monticello Dr. intersection

Curb ramps should be designed to minimize the grade, cross-slope, and changes in level experienced by users. The transition between the ramp and the street surface should be flush. At many of the curb ramps along the corridor there is a significant difference in elevation between the bottom of the curb ramp and the street surface (see photo). This height transition can create difficulties for individuals with disabilities.



Typical missing curb ramp

Typical poor transition at curb ramp

## 4.7 Curbs

An inventory of the curb conditions was completed at the same time as the sidewalk inventory. The majority of the curbs along Seneca Turnpike were rated as being in good condition except for the areas adjacent to the bridge over Onondaga Creek. The curbs in this area were in fair condition. Curb is missing or was never installed on the north side of Seneca Turnpike between the I-81 bridges.

## 4.8 Guiderail

Guiderail (w-section) is currently in place east of the intersection with Monticello Drive due to the steep slope and curve at this location. Representatives of the study advisory committee suggest that replacing the existing w-section with box beam guiderail may provide additional protection.



Guiderail east of Monticello Drive

# **CHAPTER 5 - DEMOGRAPHICS AND LAND USE**

The following demographic information is based on 1990 census data. More recent data is currently unavailable. The data is broken down by Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ). Transportation analysis zones are similar to census tracts, but are geographic units delineated especially for transportation planning.

## 5.1 Population

The population of the City of Syracuse peaked in 1950 at 220,583 and has decreased steadily to a population of 163,860 in 1990. After 1970, the older towns surrounding the city also began decreasing in population. While the City's population has decreased, population within Onondaga County has experienced growth in the northern, eastern, and western parts.

Population density within the study area is highest on the north side of the turnpike (see Figure 5-1).

## 5.2 Income and Percentage of Households with No Vehicles

Figure 5-1 lists the median household income for each TAZ within the study area. Median household incomes range from \$14,700 in TAZ 298, to \$37,763 in TAZ 297, with the northeastern portion of the study area having lowest median household incomes.

Figure 5-2 shows the percentage of households with no vehicles. The number of households with no vehicles ranges from 7 percent in TAZ 294 and 296 to 38 percent in TAZ 298. In general, the number of households with no vehicles is greater in the northeastern portion of the study area.

Transportation Analysis Zone 298 has both the lowest median income (\$14,700) and highest percentage of households with no vehicles (38%), followed by TAZ 295.





# 5.3 Mode of Transportation to Work

Table 5-1 shows the mode of transportation used by individuals to get to work by TAZ. Driving alone is the primary mode of transportation to work for all TAZ's. Carpooling and taking the bus are the next most popular modes of transportation.

TAZ	Drove Alone	Car- pool	Bus	Taxi	Motor- cycle	Bicycle	Walk	Other	Work at Home
294	841	143	50	0	0	0	10	6	13
295	1068	204	143	8	9	0	52	0	31
296	531	109	54	0	11	7	15	23	14
297	1053	185	69	0	0	0	62	0	0
298	425	40	67	0	0	6	6	13	6

Table 5-1Mode of Transportation to Work

## 5.4 Land Use

Land use within the study area and surrounding areas is shown in Figure 5-3. Land use within the study area is primarily residential with some commercial and public service facilities clustered near major intersections. Meacham Park and the Village Green historic area, designated as park land, also occupy a significant portion of land.

Areas to the north and south of the study area are primarily residential with some commercial land uses mixed in. Land use to the east of the study area is mostly a mix of residential, commercial and vacant lands, while areas west of the study area are primarily residential and public service. A high concentration of commercial and industrial land uses are located to the northeast of I-81 and I-481.

Source: Census Transportation Planning Package Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council





## CHAPTER 6 - EXISTING REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

There are a variety of methods used to regulate and control what property owners are allowed to do with their land. Discussed below are zoning, the process for site development and ordinances that citizens and developers must adhere to in the City of Syracuse.

# 6.1 Zoning

The most well known form of land-use control is zoning. Zoning is a set of requirements that apply to every property in the City of Syracuse. For each of the different zone districts, there are controls over allowable uses of the property, such as parking, signs, location of buildings on the lot, fences, swimming pools, garages, satellite dishes and home occupations. The corridor is primarily zoned residential with clusters of properties zoned business surrounding the intersections with Valley Drive and S. Salina Street. An exception is the property located at the southwest corner of the intersection with Brighton Avenue, which is zoned as a planned shopping district.

Zoning along the corridor is shown in Figure 6-1, and a description of each of the zoning types represented in the study area follows:

#### Residential District, Class A-1 (RA-1)

Residential Class A-1 provides for areas where the living environment associated with single-family residential development is preserved and/or where the development of such environment is encouraged.

#### Residential District, Class A (RA)

This district provides for one- and two-family dwellings within the City of Syracuse at a greater density than a single-family district. It also serves to protect the basic low-density character of areas developed with a mixture of one-and two-family dwellings.

#### Residential District, Class B-1 (RB-1)

Residential Class B-1 provides for areas which permit medium density residential development consisting of a mixture of single-, two-, three-, and four-family dwellings and apartment houses.

#### Residential District, Class B (RB)

This district provides for areas within the City which permit high-density residential development. This development consists of a mixture of single-, two-, three-, four-, and multiple-family dwellings, and other compatible land uses that are characterized by similar high land use intensity.



#### Residential District, Class C (RC)

This district provides for the development of areas for medium density residential and certain compatible office and business uses. It provides a means of transition between areas used for residential and nonresidential uses.

#### Local Business District, Class A (BA)

The intent of this district is to provide areas within the City, but outside the Central Business District (CBD), which permit the intensive development of land for mixed residential, retail, service and certain industrial uses.

#### Planned Shopping District (PSD)

The intent of this district is to provide areas outside of the CBD, on or adjacent to highways characterized by large traffic volumes, for well planned and designed shopping center facilities to serve adjacent residential areas and the motoring public.

#### Commercial District, Class B (CB)

The purpose of this district is to provide areas on or near major routes that would permit more intensive development and continued use of lands for compatible retail, commercial, and light manufacturing uses.

Enforcement of zoning regulations begins with the Zoning Office and may be forwarded to the Division of Code Enforcement and can be pushed as far as the Legal Department if warranted.

Consultation with the City Zoning Office revealed the following concerns regarding land use and zoning within the study area:

- Further commercial encroachment into the residential area to the east at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and S. Salina Street;
- The re-use of some of the older/larger homes on the north side of the turnpike; and
- The impact potential development of the Hopper Road area would have on traffic in the area.

## 6.2 Historic Sites

There is one nationally and three locally protected sites within the study area as follows:

#### Nationally Protected

• John Gridley House (located at 205 E. Seneca Turnpike)

#### **Locally Protected**

- *Academy Green* (an open green space situated behind the Onondaga Valley Presbyterian Church located at 275 W. Seneca Turnpike)
- Samuel Forman House (located at 417 W. Seneca Turnpike)
- *Village Green* (bounded by Valley Drive to the west, residential properties to the north, Onondaga Creek to the east, and Seneca Turnpike to the south)

# 6.3 City Ordinances and Enforcement

The City of Syracuse has a number of ordinances that city residents are responsible for adhering to. One of the many ordinances, Section 27-72 D, involves the maintenance of sidewalks. The owner, occupant, or agent of any property in the City of Syracuse is responsible for maintaining and keeping sidewalks clear of snow and ice. The clearing of snow and ice must be completed by 6:00 p.m. of the day following the accumulation.

If there is a violation of this ordinance, it can be reported to the city through their hotline, 448-CITY (2489). At this point, the Division of Code Enforcement would write up a violation and mail it to the property owner who would then have 15 days to clear the sidewalk. The Division of Code Enforcement finds it more effective to have the Office of Police Ordinance Enforcement stop by the property owner's residence or business and ask them to clear the sidewalk. This is often done in lieu of sending a violation notice and yields faster, better results. City property owners are also responsible for keeping their sidewalks clear of trash, yard waste and any other type of debris.

# CHAPTER 7 - PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR DEVELOPMENT

Outlined below are projects that may have an impact on Seneca Turnpike.

# 7.1 Private Development

Currently there is one proposed private development that may have an impact on the study area. The project site, referred to as Valley Gardens, is located on the south side of Seneca Turnpike between I-81 and Lafayette Road. Based on a traffic impact study completed by a consulting firm for the developer, the proposed development of the site will consist of a 60,000 square foot supermarket and 79,600 square feet of additional shopping center uses.

The proposed development includes an access point on Seneca Turnpike located 550 feet west of the intersection with Brighton Avenue. It is intended that this driveway will only allow right turns in and right turns out of the development. A line of sight profile completed by the consultant indicates that appropriate sight distance of 360 feet can be obtained. Two additional access points are planned for Lafayette Road.

The LOS analysis completed by the consultant indicates that the Brighton Avenue and S. Salina Street signalized intersections will continue to operate at an acceptable level after development occurs.

# 7.2 City of Syracuse Department of Public Works (DPW)

During any given year the City DPW may undertake a variety of transportation related projects. Projects may range from basic maintenance such as the painting of pavement markings to street pavement rehabilitation. Currently, the City of Syracuse DPW has no paving projects planned within the study area.

The City DPW has an annual pavement-marking program that allows for all City pavement markings to be painted at least once a year.

# 7.3 Onondaga County Settlement Plan

Onondaga County recently hired a consulting firm to examine a variety of neighborhoods in Onondaga County and make suggestions for improvements. In the Fall of 1999, the firm examined eight "pilot neighborhoods" in Onondaga County. The team worked with town and village leaders and business and property owners to identify urban design problems and develop design proposals for specific residential and main streets. The aim was to tackle universal problems on a local scale and leave behind a design blueprint to help remedy and avoid them in the future. Any Central New York community can adopt the ideas. The Settlement Plan is intended to be a new tool that can be provided to the city, towns and villages in Onondaga County. The final plan will provide a template that can be used and applied to various specific locations within Onondaga County. The final report is completed and is available at the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA).

# **CHAPTER 8 – ISSUES, ALTERNATIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 8.1 Introduction

Through the course of completing the existing conditions inventory documented in Chapters 1-7 and the public involvement process, a number of transportation issues along the Seneca Turnpike corridor were identified. These issues are outlined below along with possible alternatives for implementation intended to address these issues. The alternatives discussed were derived from an assessment of baseline information collected, public comments, and meetings/discussions with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC).

A range of potential alternatives was developed for addressing various items identified. Where applicable and appropriate, these alternatives are grouped/classified according to the associated level of effort and/or capital investment necessary for implementation, as follows:

- *Low*, meaning items primarily associated with management, enforcement, or procedures;
- *Medium*, indicating a middle range of effort, such as larger measures of management or enforcement, possible further examination through more detailed or focused future studies, and/or lower cost capital investments; and
- *High*, indicating a major change of policy, regulations, and/or high level of capital investment and time for approvals/funding.

Each of the alternatives were evaluated against the following performance criteria which have been used in similar, previously completed SMTC corridor studies:

- Ability to improve the safety and security of the transportation system for vehicular and non-vehicular users;
- Ability to facilitate integration and connectivity among various modes of transportation (i.e., automobile, bus, pedestrian, bicycle);
- Specific ability to improve the experience, access, and mobility of pedestrians and transit users in the corridor;
- Ability to maintain adequate traffic mobility for vehicular users in the corridor; and
- Ability to be reasonably implemented, considering policy and regulatory jurisdictions and prerequisites to achieve project funding.

Based upon the evaluation of alternatives, recommendations are proposed for further study and implementation along the Seneca Turnpike Corridor. In many cases, given the presence of closely related issues, the evaluation indicated that aspects of individual alternatives could be merged into more comprehensive proposals.

## 8.2 Issue: Bridge over Onondaga Creek

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) inspected the bridge over Onondaga Creek on April 19, 2000 and has notified the City that they have flagged two conditions on the bridge as follows.

- A yellow structural flag has been placed on the bridge due to 50 percent section loss to the web of one of the beams above an expansion bearing. The section loss has caused the web to buckle and the bottom flange to bend upward.
- A safety flag has been placed on the bridge due to settlement or uneven conditions on the northern sidewalk that have caused a tripping hazard.

#### Alternatives

#### Medium

In the short term, make temporary repairs to the bridge that would address the flagged conditions.

#### High

Complete a full rehabilitation of the bridge to remove the flagged conditions. As part of the rehabilitation, plan for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities including five-foot sidewalks on both sides and incorporate banners and other decorative elements on the bridge that would be in character with the Valley area.



Example of decorative elements incorporated into bridge design

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

Both of the alternatives listed meet all of the evaluation criteria. The City has received federal funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to start design work to rehabilitate the bridge within the next five years. In the meantime the City is working with an engineering consultant to make temporary repairs to the bridge that would address the flagged conditions.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that both the medium and high-level alternatives be implemented.

# 8.3 Issues: Pavement, Pavement Markings, Curbs, and Guiderail

Seneca Turnpike is the primary east-west corridor in the southern portion of the City of Syracuse that handles not only local traffic but also a significant amount of commuter traffic. Pavement, pavement markings, curbs, and guiderail that are in good condition may enhance traffic flow and improve safety. The following issues were identified regarding these items:

- The pavement between Valley Drive and Brighton Avenue is considered to be in fair condition, meaning that distress is clearly visible.
- The pavement markings, including stop bars and crosswalks, at the intersections of Seneca Turnpike with Valley Drive, Midland Avenue, S. Salina Street, and Brighton Avenue all received poor ratings.
- The centerline markings between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue are in poor condition.
- The curbs adjacent to the bridge over Onondaga Creek are in fair condition.
- Curb is missing or was never installed on the north side of Seneca Turnpike between the I-81 bridges.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb ramps are missing at the following locations
  - East and west corners of the Barnes Rd. intersection
  - East and west corners of the Ames Ave. intersection
  - East and west corners of the Smith Rd. intersection
  - East and west corners of the Milburn Dr. intersection
  - West corner of the Seneca Dr. intersection
  - West corner of the Munson Dr. intersection
  - Northwest and southwest corner of the Monticello Dr.
- Curb ramp transitions are not smooth at a number of locations.
- Guiderail east of Monticello Drive may provide additional protection if upgraded.

## Alternatives

## Medium

- Refresh all pavement markings within the study areas as part of the City Department of Public Works (DPW) annual pavement-marking program.
- Install new or reset existing curbs adjacent to the bridge over Onondaga Creek as part of the bridge rehabilitation project discussed in the previous section.
- The City should evaluate why the curb is missing or was never installed on the north side of Seneca Turnpike between the I-81 bridges and replace it if appropriate.
- The City should undertake a program of inspection and installation/repair of missing or inadequate ADA compliant curb ramps.
- The City should consider upgrading the guiderail east of Monticello Drive.

## High

• Monitor the pavement conditions between Valley Drive and Brighton Avenue until milling and overlay is warranted. At that time, undertake a comprehensive improvement program including full reconstruction of the right of way to include five-foot wide

sidewalks on both sides of the road for the full length of the corridor and a comprehensive pavement-marking program. Additional improvements could include creation of enhanced crosswalks and streetscape improvements. The intent would be to create a consistent design character and positive pedestrian setting, such as new street trees, identification banners, and installation of textured concrete verges (areas between the curb and sidewalk.

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

It was determined that both the medium and high-level alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that all of the medium and high-level alternatives be implemented.

# 8.4 Issues: Intersection and Arterial Level of Service (LOS)

#### Signalized Intersections LOS

Level of Service D is considered the minimally acceptable LOS. Table 8-1 summarizes signalized approaches that currently or may operate below a LOS D in the year 2021.

Location	Existing LOS	Future LOS		
Valley Drive				
Eastbound through	F	F		
Westbound through	F	F		
Northbound through	F	F		
Southbound through	F	F		
Westbound left	E	F		
Midland Avenue				
Westbound through	E	F		
S. Salina Street				
Eastbound through	D	E		
Westbound left	E	F		

Table 8-1Signalized Approaches Operating Below a LOS D

Source: SMTC

## **Unsignalized Intersections LOS**

Table 8-2 summarizes the unsignalized approaches that currently or may operate below a LOS D in the year 2021.

Location	Existing LOS	Future LOS			
Barnes Road/Hopper Road					
Northbound	Е	F			
Southbound	F	F			
Smith Road					
Southbound	D	F			
Milburn Drive					
Southbound	F	F			
Seneca Drive					
Southbound	D	F			
Monticello Drive					
Northbound	F	F			
Southbound	D	F			
Source: SMTC					

	Table	8-2			
Unsignalized A	oproaches O	perating	Below	a LOS	D

Source: SMTC

## Arterial LOS

The existing westbound arterial analysis indicates that the segment of turnpike between S. Salina Street and Midland Avenue operates at a LOS E while the segment between Midland Avenue and Valley Drive operates at a LOS F. Based on the analysis these two segments may both operate at a LOS F in the future year. The overall westbound LOS is currently a D but the westbound traffic may operate at a LOS E in the future year.

## Alternatives

Low

- Add a continuous two-way center left turn lane between Monticello Drive and Hopper Road.
- Add a westbound left turn lane that would accommodate two turning vehicles at the intersection with Monticello Drive.
- Consider adding a climbing lane, through striping retaining the existing curb-to-curb width, eastbound up the hill between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue. The climbing lane would allow faster moving vehicles to pass.
- Time base coordinate the traffic signals at Valley Drive, Midland Avenue, and S. • Salina Street.

- Coordinate staggered shift changes with the major employers on Onondaga Hill in order to reduce the high volumes of traffic during peak hours.
- Educate the public on alternate forms of transportation including using public transportation, carpooling, and bicycling. Through the education process, encourage employers to have incentives for their employees who use alternate forms of transportation.

#### Medium

• Undertake a study to evaluate the potential for the development of a primary eastwest corridor that would be more suitable for handling the level of commuter traffic anticipated over the next 20 years.

## High

• Widen the Turnpike to accommodate four lanes of traffic. Throughout most of the study area, the road is wide enough to accommodate four lanes of traffic with minimal widening (as little as two to four feet from Hopper Road to Salina Street).

## **Evaluation of Alternatives**

All of the low level alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria. Review of existing mapping provided by the City of Syracuse indicates that there is adequate curb-to-curb width to implement these recommendations. These alternatives are relatively low cost and can be implemented in the short term.

The medium level alternative to undertake a study to evaluate the development of a primary east-west corridor in itself does not meet the evaluation criteria but it is possible that recommendations made as a result of the study may. The alternative to develop the center left turn lane as a reversible lane during peak periods would meet the evaluation criteria.

The high level alternative to widen the Turnpike would not improve the experience, access, and mobility of pedestrians in the corridor. Based on public comment at the initial public meeting (see Appendix B) the community would not support the widening of the corridor. Although the City has considered widening the Turnpike in the past, this option is not being recommended in this study due to the recent emphasis of both the SMTC and Onondaga County on context sensitive design as put forth in the recently completed Onondaga County Settlement Plan. In addition, there has been extensive public opposition to the widening of the Turnpike. "The Valley" area is defined by the Area 4 Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) as an active, involved, residential, and pedestrian oriented community. The widening of the Turnpike, which may allow commuter traffic to move more efficiently through the area, would be inconsistent with the goals of the community as identified by the Area 4-TNT.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the low and medium level alternatives be implemented.

## 8.5 Issues: Signal Control

Currently the signalized intersections within the study area are not coordinated. Based on the Synchro analysis, it is recommended that the following three signalized intersections be coordinated.

- Valley Drive
- Midland Avenue
- S. Salina Street

#### Alternatives

#### Medium

• Time-base coordinate the aforementioned signalized intersections

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

The medium-level alternative meets the evaluation criteria. Coordination of traffic signals between adjacent intersections offers an opportunity for significant benefits to motorists by attempting to accommodate groups of vehicles with minimal stops.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the medium level alternative be implemented.

## 8.6 Issue: High Accident Locations

Accident rates at the following locations exceed NYSDOT average accident rates for similar type locations:

#### Street Segments

- Midland Ave. to S. Salina St.
- Riverdale Dr. to Valley Dr.
- Valley Dr. to Milburn Dr.

#### Intersections

- Valley Dr.
- Midland Ave.
- S. Salina St.
- Brighton Ave.

The accident analysis revealed that the four most frequently occurring accidents within the study area are as follows:

- Rear end 53%
- Sideswipe 11%
- Left turn 12%
- Right angle 10%

## Alternatives

Low

- Add a continuous two-way center left turn lane between Monticello Drive and Hopper Road.
- Add a westbound left turn lane capable of accommodating two turning vehicles at the intersection with Monticello Drive.
- Consider adding a climbing lane eastbound up the hill to allow faster moving vehicles to pass.

#### Medium

• Explore opportunities for consolidation of curb cuts for adjacent businesses to reduce vehicle conflicts. One specific location where this may be considered is at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and Brighton Avenue where there are a number of curb cuts along the east side of the intersection.

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

It was determined that all of the alternatives meet the evaluation criteria. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Traffic Engineering Handbook indicates that significant reductions in accidents can be accomplished with the addition of a two-way center left turn lane. Assuming two eleven-foot wide travel lanes and a ten-foot wide two-way center left turn lane, a curb-to-curb width of 32 feet is required to implement this alternative. Based on plans from the City of Syracuse Mapping Department, there is adequate pavement width between Hopper Road and Monticello Drive. A two-way left-turn lane may provide extensive benefits as listed below:

- Protection for motorists turning left from a driveway
- Utilization where opposing driveways are adequately offset
- Increased maneuverability in case of an emergency condition (permitting vehicle in left lane to swerve to avoid an accident or go around an existing accident)
- Increased storage during peak left-turn conditions
- Ability to utilize the center lane as a reversible lane during peak periods

The alternative to add a westbound left turn lane at the intersection of Monticello Drive is based on public and SAC comments regarding perceived danger for turning vehicles due to the steep grade and limited sight distance at this location.

The high number of curb cuts (driveways) and intersections along the corridor create stop and go traffic and may contribute to the number of rear end and right angle accidents. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Traffic Engineering Handbook states that while human error contributes to 70% - 90% of all accidents, road and vehicle

improvements can greatly reduce the likelihood of human error or the consequences of the accident. Enhancements such as modified pavement markings and consolidation of curb cuts where and when possible may have a positive impact on vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the low and medium level alternatives be implemented.

## 8.7 Issue: Bicycle Travel

A number of issues regarding bicycle travel were identified along the corridor including the following:

- There are no designated State or local bicycle routes or lanes;
- There are no bicycle racks (although many Centro buses are equipped with bicycle racks); and
- There is a widespread lack of awareness and compliance with bicycle safety guidelines including lack of helmet use, riding on sidewalks, and traveling against vehicular traffic.

#### Alternatives

Low

- As part of an awareness campaign/community policing effort, issue informational "citations" (flyers) to bicyclists noting key issues on bicycle safety in the field, when instances of unsafe practices are observed.
- The SMTC is currently preparing a Bicycle Pedestrian Plan. Upon completion, review the document for potential action to be taken on Seneca Turnpike.
- Coordinate with the Onondaga County Traffic Safety Board to implement a needs-based discount or giveaway program for bicycle helmets for area parents. Such a program could have a prerequisite of children's attendance at a safe bicycling course.

#### Medium

• Institute a grammar school curriculum on issues of bicycle and pedestrian safety in the Syracuse public schools as part of the local, county, or state police community relations programs.

#### High

• Extend the Onondaga Creek Trail currently planned for extension to Kirk Park, all the way to the southern City Line. This proposal was made as part of the City of Syracuse Element of the 1980 Onondaga County Bikeway System Plan.



Onondaga Creek looking north



Creekwalk near Franklin Square

## **Evaluation of Alternatives**

It was determined that the low and medium alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria and should be implemented as part of a coordinated effort. It was determined that implementation of the high-level alternative to implement a program for providing bicycle helmets may be limited to the long-term, based upon funding availability.

Further consideration of the high level recommendation to extend the Onondaga Creek Trail should be made as part of the SMTC's current project to complete a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The primary goals of the plan are to preserve and enhance the area's bicycling and pedestrian network, and to improve the safety, attractiveness, and the overall viability of cycling and walking as legitimate transportation alternatives in the SMTC MPO area.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that each of the alternatives discussed be implemented. It is recommended that the City examine the potential for securing state and/or federal funding for extension of the Onondaga Creek Trail to the southern City line.

## 8.8 Issue: Pedestrian Travel

The following issues regarding pedestrian travel were identified:

- The majority of sidewalks were rated as being in fair or poor condition
- Sidewalks are sporadically located along the southern side of Seneca Turnpike between Hopper Road and Monticello Drive.
- There are no sidewalks between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue except for in the vicinity of the Brighton Avenue intersection.
- Road geometry and surrounding topography limit sight distance making it dangerous to walk along the road segment between Monticello Drive and Brighton Avenue.

- Sidewalks are often not cleared of snow/ice and other debris.
- Residents do not feel the pedestrian walk phase at the intersection with S. Salina Street is adequate for individuals to cross the street safely.
- Sidewalks have been paved with asphalt in some locations, especially adjacent to parking lots, making it difficult to distinguish the pedestrian path.
- Many individuals do not realize the benefit of pushing a pedestrian push button or understand pedestrian signal indications.
- Crosswalk pavement markings throughout the study area are in poor condition.
- Curb ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) do not exist or have transitions that are not smooth at a number of locations.

## Alternatives

#### Low

- Undertake a community awareness campaign to distribute informational materials to area homeowners/businesses on their responsibilities for sidewalk maintenance and hotline numbers on safety issues (sidewalks, lighting etc.).
- As part of the City's capital programs, install pole mounted pedestrian information signs at locations with pedestrian crossing buttons, noting procedures for safe movements.
- Complete a review of the pedestrian phasing at intersections to increase pedestrian safety.
- Change the crosswalk pavement markings to a ladder- style marking in order to reduce faded markings and to clearly distinguish the crosswalks.

## Medium

- Install pedestrian countdown timers at the four signalized intersections within the study area that provide information to the pedestrian regarding the amount of time remaining to safely cross the street.
- Adopt minimum sidewalk improvement standards at the Common Council level to prevent future use of asphalt paving by private property owners.
- Institute spot improvement or replacement program for sidewalks along the corridor. Such a program could be administered by the City as an eligible area benefit activity in its community development block grant program or be structured as a needs-based 50/50 match program tied to a stepped-up enforcement program (i.e., property that could not afford to comply with the standards would be eligible for a grant).
- As part of City's capital improvement activities, install missing ADA curb ramps and undertake spot repair of existing ramps through milling/overlay to improve sidewalk to street transition.
- Explore opportunities for business/community organization-sponsored maintenance from group purchase of services, such as snow removal along frontages/sidewalks.

## High

• Undertake a coordinated program of streetscape and pedestrian improvements along the corridor. Such a program would include continuous five foot sidewalks on both sides of

the turnpike, enhanced pedestrian improvements such as new pedestrian crosswalks with contrasting pavement treatments, patterned concrete verges (area between curbline and sidewalk), and appropriate street furniture. These improvements could be incorporated into the comprehensive improvement project discussed in *Section 8.3 Pavement, Pavement Markings, and Curbs*.

• Extend the Onondaga Creek Trail currently planned for extension to Kirk Park, all the way to the southern City Line (see *Section 8.7 Bicycle Travel*)

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

It was determined that each of the alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria with two exceptions/clarifications. Under the medium level alternatives, it was recognized that adoption of minimum sidewalk improvement standards would have citywide implications and would best be achieved through a comprehensive adoption of site plan improvement standards. Secondly, it was recognized that the creation of a matching grant program for sidewalk replacement might be constrained by funding availability.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that all of the alternatives be implemented.

# 8.9 Issues: Transit Travel

The following two issues were identified relating to Centro bus service:

- A number of bus stops are located at the near side of intersections, which may result in buses obstructing traffic flow and compromising pedestrian safety.
- All of the bus stops except one are unsheltered and the majority of the locations lack a lead walk paved surface between the sidewalk and the curb forcing individuals to walk and/or stand on muddy, wet, or snow covered ground.

## Alternatives

## Medium

- Where feasible, move bus stops to the far side of intersections and construct appropriate lead walks at all locations. Far-side bus stops would be preferred because they generally produce fewer delays in the traffic surrounding the stop, give more area for the manipulation of the vehicle, allow greater sight distances for both the driver of the bus and passengers boarding and disembarking the vehicle, and, in general, provide a safer environment for vehicle/passenger interaction.
- Examine opportunities for installation of bus shelters and/or seating at most heavily used stops along the corridor.

## Evaluation of Alternatives

It was determined that each of the alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria. Improvements to pedestrian/transit facilities would also be consistent with Area 4 - Valley TNT goals.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that both of the medium level alternatives be implemented.

## 8.10 Issue: Zoning

Consultation with the City Zoning Office revealed the following concerns regarding land use and zoning within the study area:

- Further commercial encroachment into the residential area to the east at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and S. Salina Street;
- The re-use of some of the older/larger homes on the north side of the turnpike; and
- The impact potential development of the Hopper Road area would have on traffic in the area.

#### Alternatives

Low

• Monitor development of the Hopper Road area for impact on the transportation network

#### Medium

• Implement alternative or parallel zoning approach promulgated by the Onondaga County Settlement Plan to ensure development consistent with the urban/pedestrian nature of the area.

#### **Evaluation of Alternatives**

It was determined that both of the alternatives would meet the evaluation criteria.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that both the low and medium level alternatives be implemented.

## **CHAPTER 9 – PRELIMINARY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Table 9-1 presents a preliminary plan of implementation for recommended improvements discussed in Chapter 8. Programmed short-term actions (0-5 years) would include additional planning, community education, and enforcement activities along the corridor, as well as lower cost capital projects to enhance mobility and access. Since the funding is currently secured, rehabilitation of the bridge over Onondaga Creek is also scheduled for the short term. In addition, further review and assessment of funding availability would be conducted for larger-scale improvements.

Medium-term actions (5-10 years), if determined to be financially feasible, would focus on comprehensive pavement and pedestrian improvements and the development of the center turn lane as a reversible lane. In addition, if determined to be reasonable in the context of the SMTC's Long-Range Transportation Plan and TIP, preliminary engineering and necessary environmental clearance would be conducted in this period for the construction of an east-west corridor and extension of the Creekwalk to the southern City line.

Long-term actions (10-20 years) include the ultimate final design and construction activities associated with the development of an east west corridor and the extension of the Creekwalk to the southern City line. An estimated range of costs represented as low, medium, or high is included for each action in the implementation plan.

Table 9-1Preliminary Implementation Plan

Action	Range of Costs	Potential Responsible Agencies			
Short-Term (0 to 5 years)					
Coordinate traffic signals	Low	City of Syracuse			
Refresh corridor-wide pavement markings	Low	City of Syracuse			
- Add a continuous two way center left turn lane	Low-medium	City of Syracuse			
between Monticello Dr. and Hopper Rd.,					
- Add a westbound left turn lane at Monticello Dr.					
- Consider adding a climbing lane between					
Monticello Dr. & Brighton Ave.					
Community Enforcement/Education Programs	Low	City of Syracuse, Onondaga			
(Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety, Sidewalk maintenance)		County			
Corridorwide Capital Upgrades:	<b>T</b> 1'				
- Curb ramp & curb installation/repair	Low-medium	City of Syracuse			
- Guiderall upgrade					
- Pedestrian count down timers					
Far side bus stops lead walks & shalter at key	Low medium				
locations	Low-meanum	CNIKIA			
Temporary renairs to bridge over Opondaga Creek	Medium	City of Syracuse			
Rehabilitation of bridge over Onondaga Creek with	High	City of Syracuse			
aesthetic improvements	Ingn	City of Sylucuse			
Review of potential to extend Creekwalk to southern	Low	City of Syracuse			
City line					
Undertake study to evaluate the potential	Low-medium	City of Syracuse, Onondaga			
development of a primary east west corridor		County, NYSDOT			
Medium-Term (5 to 10 years)					
Comprehensive improvement project including mill	High	City of Syracuse			
and overlay pavement, construct continuous					
sidewalks, and streetscaping					
Explore opportunities to consolidate curb cuts	Medium	City of Syracuse			
Develop center turn lane as a reversible lane during	Medium-high	City of Syracuse			
peak traffic periods.					
Preliminary Engineering & Environmental Review of	High	City of Syracuse, NYSDOT,			
Creekwalk extension to southern City line		Federal Highway Administration			
Preliminary Engineering & Environmental Review of	Hıgh	City of Syracuse, NYSDOT,			
an east west corridor		Federal Highway Administration			
Long-Term (10 - 20 years)					
Final Design & Construction of an east west corridor	High	City of Syracuse, NYSDOT,			
		Federal Highway Administration			
Final Design & Construction of Creekwalk extension	High	City of Syracuse, Federal			
to southern City line		Highway Administration			

## APPENDIX A Public Involvement Plan

# Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study

# **Public Involvement Plan**

## SMTC Unified Planning Work Program -- Task 3D

Financial assistance for the preparation of this document was provided, in part, by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations and the New York State Department of Transportation. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is solely responsible for its content.

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## I. Introduction

Engaging the public early and often in the planning process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and is required by numerous state and federal laws. Such legislation underscores the need for public involvement, calling on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) such as the SMTC to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs.

While public participation is mandated, it is also practical. No one organization has a monopoly on good ideas – they often germinate through an open exchange of information. It is the SMTC's intention to promote the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define goals and objectives of the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**, to develop alternatives, and to evaluate the alternatives.

#### II. Goals

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) of the Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study is intended to identify and set out to:

- (1) Create public awareness relative to the study's goals, objectives, and process, as well as publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the study;
- (2) Involve the public throughout the planning process.

# III. Formation of Study Advisory Committee and Interested Stakeholder Group

The Public Involvement Plan includes the formation of two groups to assist the SMTC in the study effort. A Study Advisory Committee (SAC), consisting of representatives from affected organizations, local government, and community representatives, meets regularly with the SMTC Project Manager to assist in managing the project. The SAC also advises the SMTC on the technical content of deliverables, and provides needed input and decision-making throughout the project. It is anticipated that three (3) SAC meetings will be held throughout the course of the study.

In addition to this formal committee, a list of interested "stakeholders" (individuals with significant relations and interest in the study area) will be maintained by the SMTC. The stakeholders will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, notified of all public meetings, and encouraged to provide feedback and comment regarding the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**.

## **IV.** Meetings and Public Comment

The SMTC will schedule two (2) public involvement meetings/workshops, to be held at specific stages during the study. The location, date and time of the meetings will be scheduled one at a time.

The first public meeting will be held in Fall 2000. This meeting will include explanations and/or presentations on the study and an open exchange (between the SMTC and the public) where existing transportation conditions can be discussed. The public will also be invited to speak out on the next phase of the study process, which will document relative transportation issues.

The second public meeting (to be held in early portion of 2001) will involve the discussion of recommendations and an implementation plan to address the transportation issues identified. This meeting will allow the public to make comment prior to the SMTC staff submitting the draft final report of the Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study to the SMTC Planning and Policy Committees for their acceptance.

The SMTC will be responsible for the establishment and set-up of all meetings and distribution of meeting documentation; preparing meeting minutes that documents the discussions and decisions of the committees, including the documentation of public input.

To further increase its outreach to the public, the SMTC will be initiating and conducting a variety of public involvement activities:

**Introductory Flyer**: The SMTC will be distributing a one-page introductory flyer throughout the study area that will serve to introduce the public to the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**. Having the appearance of a project newsletter, this flyer will focus on the purpose, goals and objectives of the study, and will seek to educate, inform and encourage feedback and public comment, as well as publicize the details of the study's first public meeting.

<u>Material Distribution at Locations Within Study Area</u>: If deemed necessary (at the discretion of the SAC and/or other appropriate SMTC committees), the SMTC may distribute miscellaneous study-specific information at sites throughout the study area (e.g. gas stations, restaurants, convenient stores, etc.). This information may include one or more of the following: introductory flyer, meeting notice, comment card, and a pre-addressed survey on a particular study issue. It is also the SMTC's intent to encourage other agencies to include this information in their publications or to assist in material distribution. For example, the SMTC will be working with the City of Syracuse's Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT), seeking their assistance in "getting the word out" in the various TNT areas about the study, and helping to publicize public meetings.

All citizens (especially those who are not able to attend the public meetings or participate in direct contact with the SMTC staff) are encouraged to submit comments to the SMTC at any time. This message will be publicized and made clear throughout the study's project schedule, verbally, and on all study material and publications. The public is also welcome to attend any of the publicized SMTC Executive, Planning and Policy Committee meetings in which the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study** may be on the agenda as a discussion item.

## V. <u>Press Releases/Media Coverage</u>

The SMTC will issue news releases (announcing the details of all public meetings) to all major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio well in advance. If necessary, the SMTC will also send additional news releases, or take the initiative to prompt media coverage on pertinent developments pertaining to the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**.

If possible, all media inquiries should be directed to the SMTC Communications/ Public Information Specialist. However, this is not always possible. If you (e.g. SMTC committee members, SAC members, and/or interested stakeholders associated with the study) are interviewed by the media, please limit your comments to your respective agency's opinion or involvement in the study. As for speaking to the media on <u>specific issues and questions</u> regarding the Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study, its progress and development, this is the responsibility of the SMTC.

## VI. SMTC Publications

The SMTC publishes a quarterly newsletter, DIRECTIONS, that offers news about its activities and particular studies. This newsletter is distributed to nearly 1,500 individuals, some of which include the media; local, state, and federal agencies associated with the SMTC; municipal and elected officials; community agencies and representatives; and a large number of interested citizens. Articles on the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study** have already been published in the most recent issue of DIRECTIONS (Summer 2000). Such coverage of the study will continue to appear in subsequent issues of DIRECTIONS. Should the need arise for the production of a separate newsletter/flyer/report to convey a timely study development, the SMTC staff is prepared to perform this additional task. It is also important to note that the mailing list of the SMTC newsletter, DIRECTIONS, will be updated to include all members of the SAC, stakeholders, and others interested or involved in the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**.

## VII. Miscellaneous Public Involvement Efforts

To further its public involvement efforts, the SMTC will be asking the SAC members and interested stakeholders to assist them in better notifying citizens living and/or working in the study area about the public meetings and the study in general. Such a request is imperative in order to get the "grassroots community" involved. By helping to distribute flyers/announcements, and speaking to the members of the community about the **Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study**, the SAC and interested stakeholders will serve to further promote public involvement in areas (and to individuals) that were not reached through the standard outreach.

Meeting notices and study-specific material previously mentioned will also be posted at libraries, local stores, shopping centers, and/or businesses.

Approved documents, such as the study's final report, may be made available at libraries within the study area. News releases will be produced to announce the availability of such items, as well as invite written comments to be submitted to the SMTC.

If a certain need arises to get public perception/opinion on a particular topic/issue, surveys may be used at one or more of the public meetings.

## VIII. Conclusion

It is important for the SMTC to understand public attitudes and values in the early stages of the Seneca Turnpike (Rt. 173) Corridor Traffic Study, as well as solicit input from affected citizens and community representatives. It is the SMTC's belief that the public involvement plan set forth, one that solicits input frequently, will bring people inside and provide the opportunity for the public to develop greater awareness and active involvement. In such a study that pays particular attention to preserving and enhancing the pedestrian and transit oriented nature of the neighborhoods, such involvement is paramount.

# APPENDIX B Correspondence

# APPENDIX C Traffic Volumes

# APPENDIX D Synchro and HCS Reports

# **Existing Conditions**

#### **Future Conditions**

# APPENDIX E Accident Summary Sheets