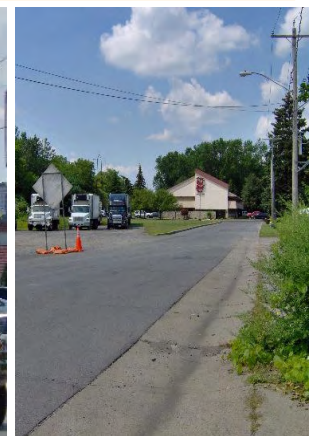
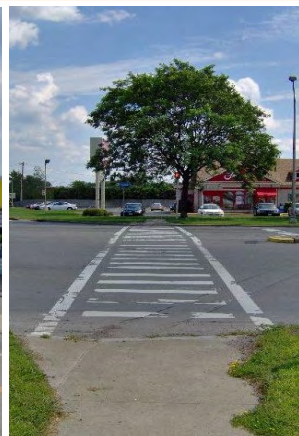


NORTH GENESEE STREET CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT STUDY Final Draft

City of Utica, New York

January 2009



This document was prepared for the New York State Department of State with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan

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Section 1
Project Overview

Section 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION



Entrance to Downtown Utica

Strategically located in Oneida County (within the heart of the Mohawk Valley) and within 500 miles of 17 of the top 50 U.S. markets, the City of Utica has many attributes that make it the ideal location for business and raising a family. Located at the foot of the Adirondack Mountains, Utica is less than an hour's travel to numerous lakes, streams and rivers. Long considered the socioeconomic hub of Oneida County, the City of Utica offers its residents and visitors small-city charm, abundant industry, affordable housing, ample recreational opportunities and a diverse cultural and ethnic community.¹

The City of Utica commissioned this corridor management plan for the North Genesee Street corridor between the NYS Thruway interchange and Oriskany Street. The plan is intended to develop a coordinated strategy to provide new land use management techniques, recommendations for physical improvements, enhanced way finding signage, and innovative redevelopment strategies to guide both public and private investment. The purpose of the plan is to create a signature gateway that gives an enlivened feeling and a sense of arrival into Utica. The New York State Department of State's Environmental Protection Fund provided funding for the creation of this management plan.

1.2 PLAN PURPOSE

The North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan builds upon recently completed planning efforts, including the Interim Waterfront Revitalization Program and the Historic Gateway Canal District Master Plan, intended to foster private sector development at the edges of the City's urban core. The purpose of this management plan is to look at the remaining land use opportunities in the corridor, to better define arterial management actions, and to facilitate a public discussion that will help lead to consensus on an appropriate land use and transportation vision for the corridor that is sensitive to the natural, built, and human environment. The plan provides recommendations for comprehensive plan land use designations, zoning ordinance map and revisions, and transportation / land use design guidelines, each requiring further study.

¹ City of Utica, Official Website. August 15, 2006. www.cityofutica.com/AboutUtica.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF NORTH GENESEE STREET



North Genesee Street

North Genesee Street is an important gateway into the City of Utica and, consequently, an important front door to forming first impressions of the City. The corridor also provides access to a number of important public destinations such as the Utica Memorial Auditorium, downtown Utica, the recently constructed Historic Erie Canal Marina, and Harbor Point and the Utica Marsh, a wildlife management area of New York State, which is often used to promote environmental education along its various trails.

At the southern end of the corridor is Union Station. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Union Station provides connections to Amtrak, Greyhound, the Utica Transit Authority, and the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, which attracts thousands of visitors every year. Also located at the south end of the corridor is the National Distance Running Hall of Fame. Perhaps the most prominent event that takes place in the region is the annual Boilermaker 15K Road Race, the largest 15K road race in the nation. Each year 10,000 competitors and over 30,000 spectators are guided along the North Genesee Street corridor for the big race. In many ways, the corridor offers an important opportunity to develop a favorable first impression of the City of Utica.

Within the City of Utica, the North Genesee Street corridor provides accessibility to the various businesses and neighborhoods throughout the corridor, as well as mobility between the urban center and the greater region via the NYS thruway. The roadway serves a wide variety of vehicle types and trip patterns including a large volume of work trips to office parks; shopping plazas, shopping districts, and free-standing stores; and truck trips to destinations in the corridor. Future land use decisions will directly affect the operation and integrity of this important corridor.

According to the 2006 NYS Department of Transportation Traffic Volume Report, the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) along North Genesee Street has experienced little recent growth (less than 1%) in recent times

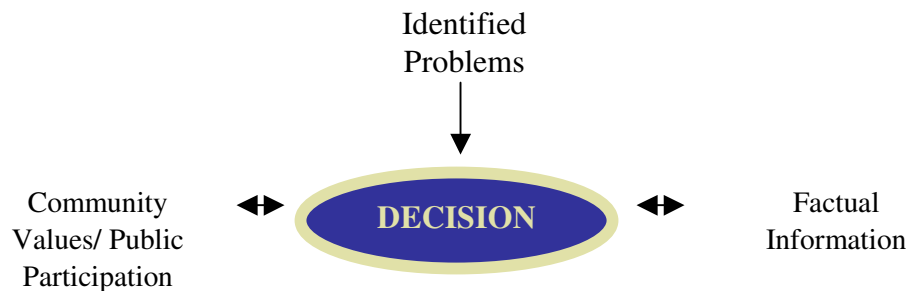
1.4 METHODOLOGIES AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Development of the Corridor Management Plan included the following major tasks performed by the consultant team, on behalf of the Advisory Committee:

- > An assessment of existing conditions
- > Identification of key issues
- > Design and execution of a public workshop (issues identification and corridor charrette)
- > Preparation of traffic impact study
- > Preparation of a redevelopment strategy and implementation plan

Project Approach

The overall approach to the project was a collaborative process involving the public and key stakeholders at many levels to facilitate effective decision-making. The goal was to achieve consensus by agencies, project participants, residents and business interests in the area. The findings of this report reflect the highest level of consensus available among the range of views of committee members and their understanding of public input.



Stakeholder-Driven Process

A seventeen member Advisory Committee led the project through its closely defined scope of work guided by the City of Utica's planning director, and a professional consulting team consisting of Saratoga Associates and the Laberge Group. The Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from Utica Department of Urban & Economic Development, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council, Utica Department of Public Works, NYS

Department of Transportation, and Niagara Mohawk, as well as representatives from the business community and neighborhood.

The Advisory Committee actively involved the public throughout the project. Public meetings were announced by direct mailings to addresses within 500 feet of the corridor, public announcements in the newspaper, newspaper cover stories, and the City of Utica's website.

The public workshop was a hands-on design charrette held at the City Hall on June 25, 2007. The workshop included a presentation of existing conditions, a Visual Preference Survey, and a Visioning Workshop.



Community residents participate in a Visual Preference Survey

Visual Preference Survey

One of the public outreach techniques used in the development of the North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan was a Visual Preference Survey (VPS). A VPS is a method for assessing community preferences regarding the built and natural environment.

Workshop participants were asked to view a series of images and rate them from on a scale of -3 (lowest) to 3 (highest) in terms of their own preferences, and whether or not they were appropriate for North Genesee Street. Images were divided into the following categories:

- > Street Design
- > Sidewalks
- > Parking
- > Buffers
- > Crosswalks

- > Traffic Signals
- > Street Lights
- > Gateway Signage
- > Directional Signage
- > Street Signs
- > Group Signs
- > Banners
- > Commercial Signage
- > Amenities, including benches, trash receptacles and public spaces
- > Commercial Buildings

A copy of the complete Visual Preference Survey is provided in Appendix B. A summary of the statistical results is provided in Appendix C.

Visioning Workshop

Following the Visual Preference Survey, workshop attendees participated in a visioning exercise. Participants were provided with a base map of North Genesee Street and drawing materials. They were then asked to discuss the following five topics: the corridor's assets, problem areas, development potential, ideal streetscape, and their vision for the corridor.

A summary of the participant's comments are provided below:

1. Corridor's Greatest Assets:

- > Traffic drives business
- > Visibility off thruway ramp
- > Area near the canal – how can businesses take advantage of proximity to Canal/Mohawk River?
- > Hotels and pizza places benefit from canal and thruway traffic.

2. Problem Areas along the Corridor:

Area near bridges:

- > The road shrinks down – too narrow.
- > No turn lane
- > This is where accidents happen.
- > Bridges need to be widened, so that road can include a turn lane.
- > Install traffic light to slow traffic
- > Limited visibility over/near the bridge.

- > People are afraid to stop and make a left hand turn along this section for fear of being hit from behind.

Traffic Calming:

- > Needs to be more pedestrian friendly in the area between the new hotel and Delmonico's.
- > The City did add green space at the old Ho Jo's site (took down building).
- > Speed of vehicles and city operations (maintenance, snow removal) are issues.

Greenspace:

- > We want greenspace, but you can't take frontage away from business owners.
- > Landscaping must happen in City right of way.
- > Snow plows ruin green areas.
- > Buffered areas do much better; not as affected by the salt.
- > When buses go by and hit puddles, cars in parking lot (automobile dealership) get covered.

Parking:

- > Having enough space for parking is NOT seen as a problem. Getting in and out of the parking areas is the problem.
- > Businesses have plenty of parking.
- > Clarifying code is important.

3. Areas along the Corridor that have the greatest development or redevelopment potential

Tax parcel 300:

- > Good space for development
- > Small shopping center
- > Has access to water
- > Problem is that there is no access to N. Genesee St. from parcel.

No real need for more development. There are for lease signs everywhere. The economy of the area is the problem.

4. Describe your ideal streetscape.

- > Looking for something “traditional.”
- > City has a great museum in town – no one goes there. Community isn’t ready for modern design.
- > Need to slow traffic around the bridge.
- > Changes to the streetlights won’t make this area boom.

5. In 3 – 5 words, describe your vision for the corridor.

- > More development. Tax map parcels 71 & 300.
- > More retail.
- > Would like to see a center turn land from one end of the corridor to the other.
- > Unified streetscape
- > Turn lanes of either side of the bridge
- > Gateway – Welcome sign when you come off the Thruway.

Section 2
Existing Conditions

Section 2

In order to prepare an effective redevelopment strategy for the North Genesee Street corridor, a common understanding of the existing conditions within the study area had to be established.

2.1 STUDY AREA

The North Genesee Street corridor is currently a mix of commercial development, auto-dependent franchised (fast food restaurants and gas stations), office buildings, small shopping plazas and individual businesses. Although sidewalks are present for the majority of the corridor, it remains unfriendly to pedestrians due to the spread out pattern of development, and the width of the highway itself. There are numerous driveways along the corridor, and unlimited left turn access to and from properties on either side of the road, a characteristic of current roadway design. Much of the historical tree canopy has been lost to utility work and highway improvement leaving corridor aesthetics lacking.

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the study area included in North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan begins just past the Interstate 90 interchange at Riverside Drive and continues southwest to Oriskany Street. The eastern and western boundaries are delineated by the existing parcel boundaries that align with North Genesee Street. The concise area is essentially the gateway to the City of Utica as people exit off of the NYS Thruway.



TAX PARCELS

Genesee Street
Corridor Study
March 2007

- KEY**
- ROAD
 - PARCEL BOUNDARY
 - PROPOSED STUDY AREA
 - SITE VISIT CLASSIFICATION
 - UNDERUTILIZED
 - UNDEVELOPED
 - VACANT STRUCTURE

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**CITY OF UTICA,
NEW YORK**

2.2 VISUAL INVENTORY

For the purpose of this study, the North Genesee Street corridor has been divided into three sections: South Region, Central Region, and North Region.

2.2.1 SOUTH REGION

The south region of North Genesee Street extends from Oriskany Street to the CSXT Railroad overpass. This section of the corridor serves as the gateway to the City's downtown.



Broad Street Exit



Corridor's connection to downtown Utica

2.2.2 CENTRAL REGION

The central region of the North Genesee Street corridor runs from Frederick Place to the north and Lee Street to the south. The area is characterized by auto-oriented uses (i.e., fast food franchises, gas stations, and chain hotels).



Central Region heading southbound towards Downtown Utica



Central Region looking north toward NYS Thruway

2.2.3 NORTH REGION

For the purpose of this study, the North region of the corridor extends from the Mohawk River north to include the I-90 Exit 31 interchange and access to I-790.



Way finding and information signage at the NYS Thruway gateway in the North Region

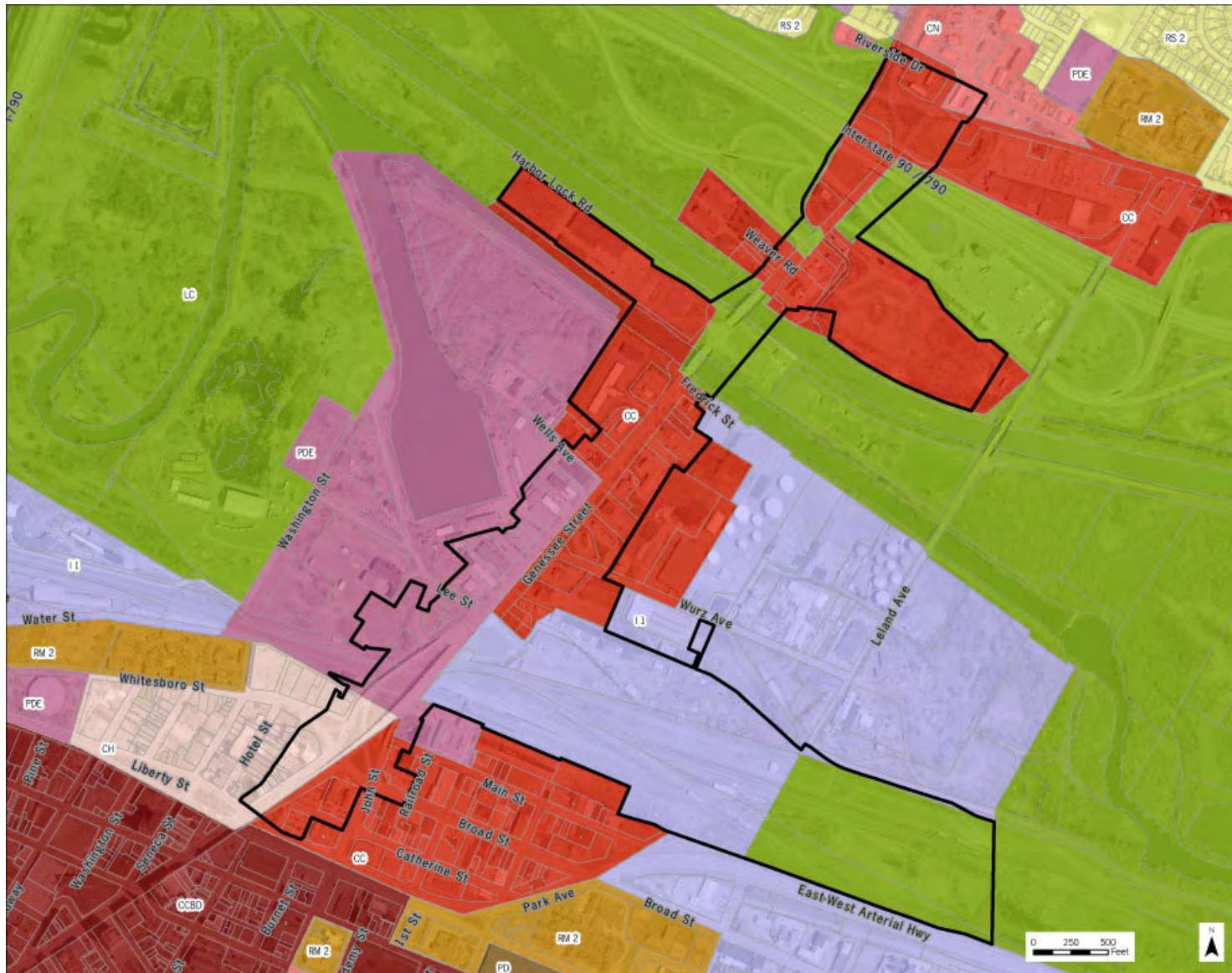


North Region gateway to the North Genesee Street Corridor.

2.3 EXISTING ZONING

The map on the following page shows the current zoning in the project area. As seen in the map, the North Genesee Street Corridor is comprised of only 6 of the City's 19 zoning classifications. The majority of the land is zoned Community Commercial. This zoning classification comprises 15.3 acres of land, or roughly 45% of all zoned parcels in the North Genesee Street Corridor. An additional 6.9 acres of land, or roughly 20% of all parcels are zoned Highway Commercial. These two zoning designations can be attributed to the proximity to the New York State Thruway, and the demand for various auto-dependent uses located along this corridor.

Existing Zoning, North Genesee Street Corridor: 2007 (Source: City of Utica)		
Zoning	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Neighborhood Commercial	0.9	2.65%
Highway Commercial	6.9	20.35%
Land Conservation	3.8	11.21%
Community Commercial	15.3	45.13%
Planned Development Extraordinary	2.1	6.19%
Light Industrial	4.9	14.45%
TOTAL	33.9	100.00%



EXISTING ZONING

Genesee Street
Corridor Study
March 2006

KEY

- PROPOSED STUDY AREA
- PARCEL BOUNDARY
- EXISTING ZONING
- LAND CONSERVATION
- CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- OFFICE - APARTMENT
- OFFICE - PROFESSIONAL/RESIDENTIAL
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT EXTRAORDINARY
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRIAL
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT RESIDENTIAL
- SINGLE FAMILY - LOW DENSITY
- SINGLE FAMILY - MEDIUM DENSITY
- TWO FAMILY - LOW DENSITY
- MULTIFAMILY - LOW DENSITY
- MULTIFAMILY - HIGH DENSITY

PROJECT # 2005-05098.10P
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NEW YORK

2.4 EXISTING LAND USE AND REGULATIONS

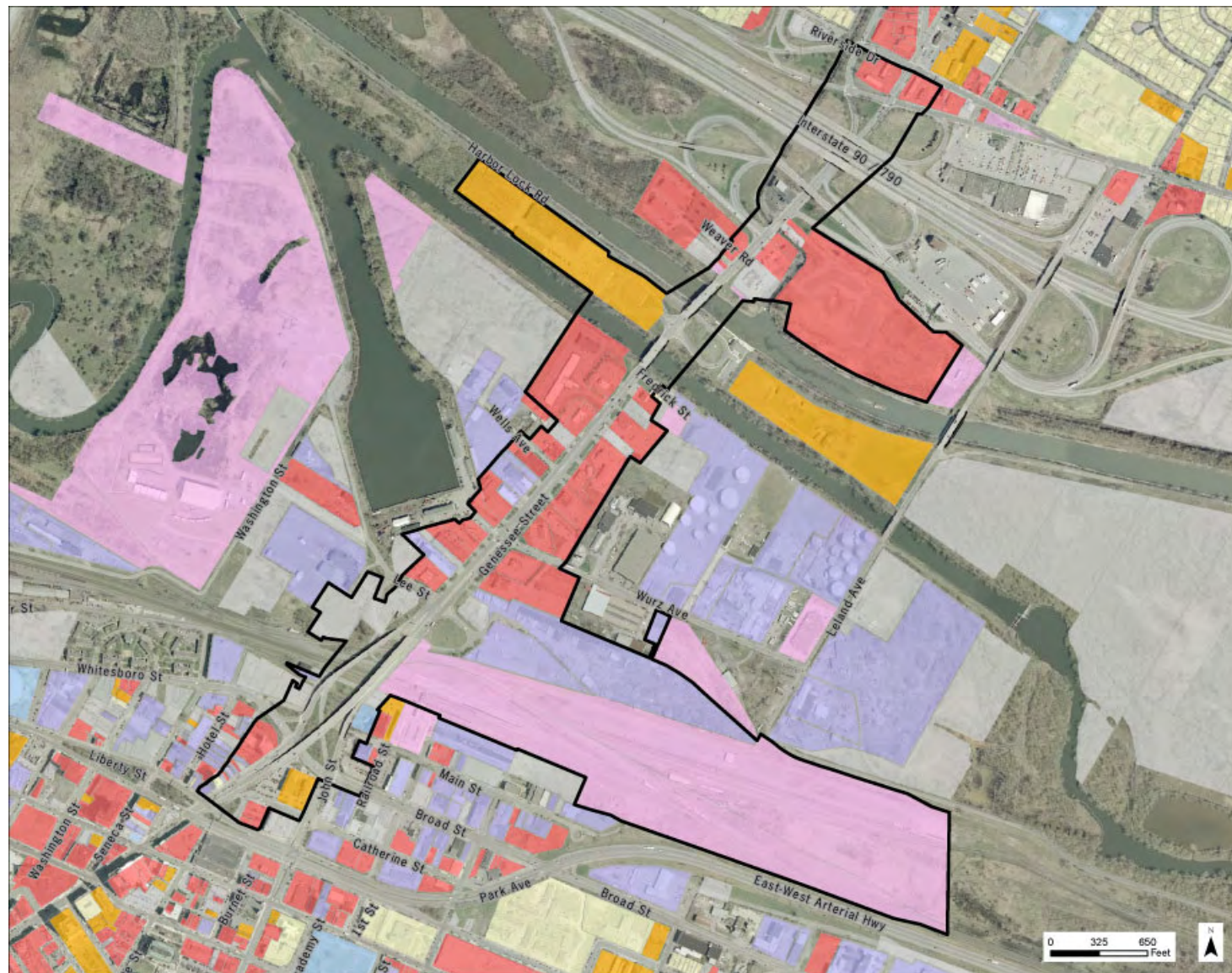
A typical mix of land uses has developed within the North Genesee Street corridor over the years. Most of the community commercial use takes place between Frederick Street and Lee Street. The rest of the commercial uses are spread out along the corridor.

The form of the commercial/retail development varies along the corridor. There are several typical suburban strip-mall type developments with large parking areas in front of single-story retail structures. Also, there are a few single parcel small-scale retail developments scattered along the corridor with individual points of access. These forms of development are typically auto oriented lacking architectural continuity with unappealing aesthetic results.

The various land use classifications (based on assessment data) are summarized on the following map and table. The table indicates that the three largest categories of use are Commercial, Vacant, and Industrial, which when combined, total over 47 acres of land, or 59% of the Corridor.

Existing Land Use, North Genesee Street Corridor: 2007			
(Source: City of Utica)			
Land Use Classification	Number of Parcels	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Agricultural	0	0.0	0.00%
Residential	4	0.12	0.15%
Vacant Land	22	8.66	10.83%
Commercial	35	31.01	38.79%
Recreation and Entertainment	1	0.53	0.67%
Community Services	2	2.13	2.66%
Industrial	15	7.85	9.82%
Public Services	4	6.24	7.81%
Wild, Forested, Conservation Land and Public Parks	0	0.0	0.00%
No data	33	23.4	29.27%
TOTAL	116	79.95	100.00

It is important to note that the total acreage for the existing land use within the Corridor differs from the total acreage for the existing zoning in the aforementioned section. This is due to the fact that calculations for zoning include roadways and other rights of way. When measuring existing land uses, those public places are excluded.



EXISTING LAND USE

Genesee Street
Corridor Study
March 2006

KEY

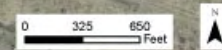
- PROPOSED STUDY AREA
- LAND USE CLASSIFICATION
- NO DATA
- AGRICULTURAL
- COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY SERVICES
- FORESTED/CONSERVATION
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC SERVICES
- RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT
- RESIDENTIAL
- VACANT

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2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Environmental resources, such as waterways and wetlands, can be important natural amenities that, if protected, can add value to a community. At the same time, development in or around them can prove to be more expensive, limited by regulation or limited by natural constraints to development.

2.5.1 WATERWAYS

The two primary waterways in the City of Utica are the Mohawk River and the Erie Barge Canal. Other local waterway assets include:

Erie Canal System Utica Terminal – Travelers on the Erie Canal can tie up to their boats to the wall at the Utica Terminal

Historic Erie Canal Marina – located at 16 Harbor Lock Road, the marina is located near the North Genesee Street bridge. Amenities include a 180-foot pier head wall docking, 100-foot small craft docking, a plaza on the canal, a fueling island, and parking lot.

Utica Marsh – the Utica Marsh is a 213-acre wetland area bounded by the Erie Canal and the Barge Canal. Located to the north of the Mohawk River, the marsh is a potential tourist attraction that features unique wildlife, vegetation and natural beauty.

2.5.2 FLOODPLAINS

Most floodplains are found in low areas adjacent to rivers, creeks, lakes and oceans and are prone to periodic flooding. This natural process restores soil fertility, recharges groundwater supplies and creates unique and recognizable floodplains.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated 100-year flood zones. This designation does not mean that flooding will occur only once a century. Instead it means that, in any given year, there is a one-in-one hundred chance of flooding. Flooding often occurs more or less often depending on weather conditions and upstream development changes to the river and along its banks.

According to FEMA issues flood maps for Oneida County, the northern portion of N. Genesee Street (those properties located north of the

Conrail Railroad) are classified as A5 (an area within the 100 year flood). The balance of North Genesee Street has been designated a Zone C (an area of minimal flooding).

2.5.3 WETLANDS

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. These water-laden lowlands are a breeding ground for vegetation, fish and wildlife. They also provide invaluable services to people in the form of water-cleaning filtration and flood control. Areas designated as wetlands may include bogs, swamps, marshes, wet meadows, flood plains and hydric (waterlogged) soils.

Federal policy regarding wetlands is that there shall be no net loss. Under the most recent federal rules, which took effect in the fall of 2000, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates any disturbance of 1/10 of an acre or more of wetlands. Under the current Nationwide Permit #39, any disturbance of wetlands and waters of the United States between 0 – 1/10 of an acre will require post – construction notification. If the disturbance is between 1/10 and ½ of an acre, an individual Army Corps Permit is required, along with an Individual 401 Water Quality Certification from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

New York State, through the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) generally regulates all wetlands that are 12.4 acres or more. The 200-acre Utica Marsh, which is located near the study area, has been designated as a NYS DEC Wildlife Management Area and contains both Class I and Class II wetlands.

Federally regulated wetlands may also exist, but are not mapped. Identification and delineation occurs on a site-by-site basis during preparation for development of a site.

Section 3 Inventory and Analysis

Section 3

Looking at the patterns, trends and projections for demographic characteristics is important in understanding how the North Genesee Street Corridor will evolve in the future. This description of Utica's Socioeconomic Conditions will explain the response to changes in the City and the study area with regards to demographic changes. Section 2.0 describes existing Socioeconomic Conditions with regards to population characteristics such as growth, decline, and age, educational attainment and median household income.

3.1 HISTORY

Previously a small village, Utica was a place to stop for settlers heading west. When the Erie Canal was constructed and reached Utica, by 1825, the area began to grow at a rapid pace, and eventually developed into a city by 1832. Expansion of the railroad system and additional canals furthered the growth of the city. As a result of its success, several distinguished institutions opened, such as the Utica Psychiatric Center (formerly the New York State Lunatic Asylum), the first in the state, and Utica College.

After the turn of the century, Utica had grown significantly, owing to the manufacturing industry. By 1925, Utica had 75 churches, 45 schools, two newspapers, as well as libraries and parks – all the amenities of a vibrant city. In addition, the city had become home to a large Italian-American, Irish, and Polish populations.

After the Second World War, Utica, like many northeast industrial cities, began its steady decline. As the textile industries began to relocate south, new industries such as traditional manufacturing moved in. General Electric, Univac, Utica Drop Forge and Toll all opened in Utica, while retail and wholesale business fed off of their presence. Unfortunately, these major employers followed the pattern of the textile industries, closing their doors in the city and opening new factories in the southern states.

As the surrounding region grew during the mid-1900s, Utica was continuing to lose population, jobs, and tax dollars. The urban fabric of the city was declining rapidly, leaving the pedestrian as an afterthought and the automobile as the driver for redevelopment.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Demographic and socioeconomic conditions within the North Genesee Street Corridor were compared to the City of Utica and Oneida County. This allows for insight as to how the Corridor and the surrounding neighborhood compares to the City, and County as a whole. The variations in these conditions allows for the formation of strategies that are appropriate for the North Genesee Street Corridor.

For the purpose of this analysis, all demographic and socioeconomic conditions illustrated in the North Genesee Street Corridor are based upon the data available from the census tracts that both comprise and surround the boundary of the Corridor. These census tracts include 201, 203, 210, 216.01 and 216.02, and are located between the New York State Thruway, passing though the Corridor into downtown Utica. The surrounding neighborhoods located within these Census Tracts serve as a major source of support to future initiatives within the North Genesee Street Corridor.

3.2.1 POPULATION TRENDS

Population trends allows for insight on the demographic makeup of the community, the potential labor pool, the nature of the market that will support the local economy, and those that will use the community's resources.

As seen in the following table, both the City of Utica and Oneida County experienced a sharp drop in population over the 1990s. This is likely attributed to the out-migration patterns due to the closing of the Griffiss Air Force Base. On the contrary, the North Genesee Street Corridor saw a 10.7% increase in population between 1990 and 2000. This indicates the likelihood of the attractiveness of the corridor, whether it is through affordable housing, the character of the neighborhood, or the proximity to major thoroughfares, services, or places of employment.

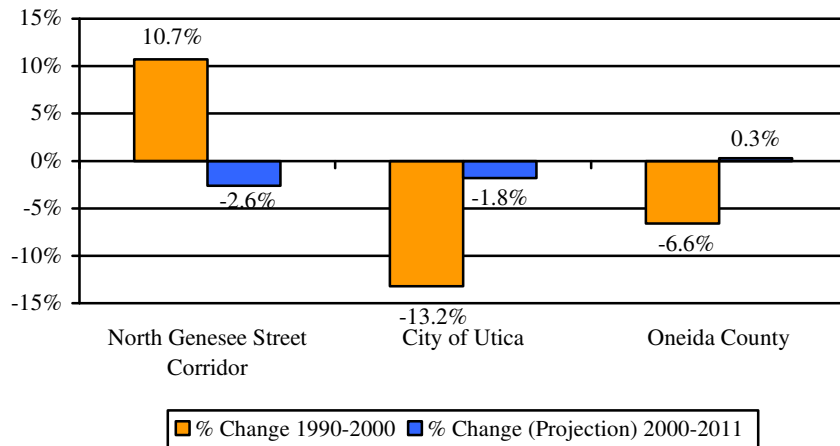
Although the corridor witnessed considerable growth over the 1990s, it is projected to decrease in population between 2000 and 2011. This is reflective of the population loss anticipated throughout the City of Utica over the same time. Although the population loss is projected to slow from the severe loss seen over the 1990s, Utica is projected to experience an additional 1.8% loss in population between 2000 and 2011. On the other hand, Oneida County is projected to reverse the population decline

into a slight increase, indicating the desire for residents to live outside of the City limits.

The declining population will continue to have drastic affects on the economy of the area. In turn, this will have detrimental affects on the community’s well being and its ability to sustain itself. Utica will need to generate new residents in order to maintain its community character. The City is taking a proactive step in addressing these concerns through the revitalization of the North Genesee Street Corridor. This is a vital step in continuing the revitalization of the City. The Corridor plan will create a gateway that will establish a rejuvenated first impression with the hope of restoring Utica’s continued population loss.

Population Trends: 1990 – 2011			
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)			
	North Genesee Street Corridor	City of Utica	Oneida County
1990	10,875	68,637	250,836
2000	12,038	60,651	235,469
2006	11,446	57,564	235,276
2011	11,730	59,580	236,202
% Change 1990 – 2000	10.7%	-13.2%	-6.6%
% Change (Projected) 2000 – 2011	-2.6%	-1.8%	0.3%

Change in Population: 1990 - 2011
 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)



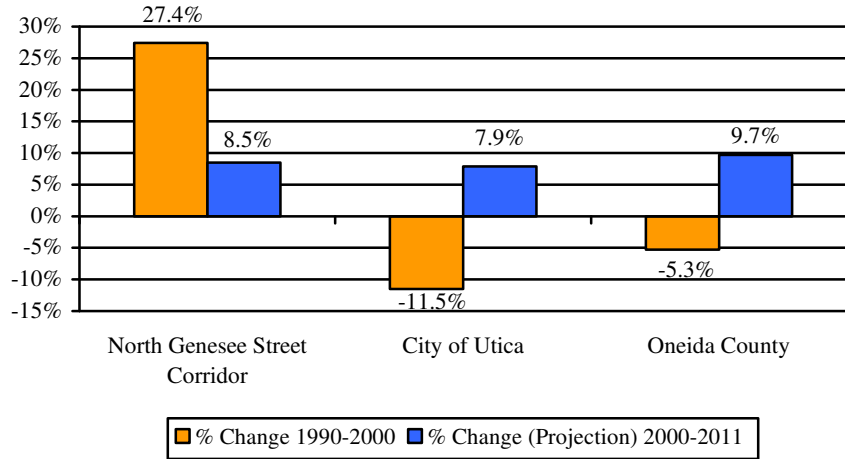
3.2.2 HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Reflective of the population increase, the North Genesee Street Corridor has experienced an increase in the number of households between 1990 and 2000. However, the increase in the number of households is two and a half times the population increase. This indicates there has been a shift toward smaller household sizes. On the other hand, and reflective of the population loss, the City of Utica and Oneida County both saw a decrease in the number of households over the 1990s. This trend is projected to reverse into positive growth among each study area in terms of the number of households. The North Genesee Street Corridor is forecasted to experience an 8.5% increase in the number of households, while the number of households in the City of Utica and Oneida County are projected to increase by 7.9% and 9.7%, respectively. This is reflective of the continued shift toward smaller households, throughout both Utica and Oneida County, through 2011.

Household Trends: 1990 – 2011			
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)			
	North Genesee Street Corridor	City of Utica	Oneida County
1990	4,390	28,358	95,562
2000	5,595	25,100	90,496
2006	5,760	25,627	97,035
2011	6,068	27,092	99,311
% Change 1990 – 2000	27.4%	-11.5%	-5.3%
% Change (Projected) 2000 – 2011	8.5%	7.9%	9.7%

Change in Number of Households: 1990 - 2011

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)



3.2.3 AGE COHORT PROFILE

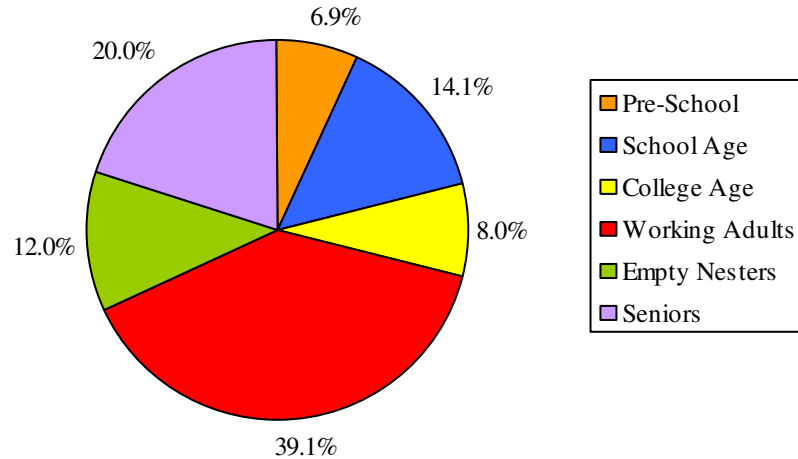
The population can be broken down into cohorts or groups, by age. An analysis of these age cohorts is an important component in determining the demographic profile of the geographic divisions under study. Following typical age cohort profiles, Baby Boomers are those born from 1946 to 1964. Those that belong to Generation X were born from 1965 to 1976, while the Generation Y or Echo Boomers were born from 1977 to 1994. As the decade moves on, these age cohorts mature and take on the characteristics of older generations, therefore changing the population trends and needs over time. As a result of these population adjustments, age cohorts help determine the types of development that a community may need to adapt to future change.

For purposes of this study, age cohort profiles will be examined based on the following classifications:

- > Pre – School: Less than 6 years old
- > School Age: 6 to 17 years old
- > College Age: 18 to 24 years old
- > Working Adults: 25 to 54 years old
- > Empty Nesters: 55 to 64 years old
- > Seniors: 65+ years old

Age Cohort Profile, North Genesee Street Corridor: 2006

(Source: EASI Demographics)



An age cohort analysis indicates that the North Genesee Street Corridor has a relatively older population, when compared to the City of Utica and Oneida County. On the whole, the population within the North Genesee Street Corridor is roughly four and a half years younger than that of the City of Utica, and three years younger than that of Oneida County. The Corridor has a smaller percentage of pre-school and school-aged children when compared to both the City of Utica and Oneida County. This may be indicative of fewer younger families moving into the area due to school district performance, traffic patterns, safety issues or a lack of recreational facilities or services near the Corridor. There are also fewer college-aged persons residing in the North Genesee Street Corridor than in the City of Utica and Oneida County. The relatively low number of persons of this age cohort indicates that this area of Utica may not be attractive for younger persons. This demonstrates a possible need for cultural and recreational opportunities, entertainment, or employment opportunities that target this younger generation.

Approximately 32% of the Corridor’s population are 55 years and older. This percentage of empty nesters and seniors is greater than the percentage of these cohorts in both the City of Utica and Oneida County, at 17.7% and 26.2% respectively. With the progression in aging of the population, a greater demand for basic senior services, medical care and affordable senior housing may be needed within or in close proximity to North Genesee Street.

Age Cohort Profile: 2006 (Source: EASI Demographics)			
	North Genesee Street Corridor	City of Utica	Oneida County
Pre – School	790	4,776	16,750
% of Total	6.9%	8.3%	7.1%
School Age	1,609	9,186	39,926
% of Total	14.1%	16.0%	17.0%
College Age	911	6,089	21,419
% of Total	8.0%	10.6%	9.1%
Working Adults	4,477	21,570	95,475
% of Total	39.1%	37.5%	40.6%
Empty Nesters	1,375	5,292	24,027
% of Total	12.0%	9.2%	10.2%
Seniors	2,284	10,651	37,679
% of Total	20.0%	18.5%	16.0%
Median Age	41.7	37.1	38.5

3.2.4 HOUSING

The estimated number of housing units has increased by 35.4% within the North Genesee Street Corridor between 1990 and 2006. On the contrary, the City of Utica has experienced a 6.5% decrease, and Oneida County experienced a moderate 6.3% increase in the number of housing units over the 1990s. The substantial growth seen within the North Genesee Street Corridor emphasizes the region's desirability and strategic location along several major thoroughfares.

The housing vacancy rates seen throughout the North Genesee Street Corridor in 1990, 2000 and 2006, have been consistently lower than those of the City of Utica and Oneida County. This smaller vacancy rate is indicative of a tighter housing market in this part of Utica, and reinforces the desirability of the Corridor.

Indicative of many smaller urban areas, roughly half of all occupied housing units in the Corridor are occupied by renters. There has not been significant change in housing tenure in either the City of Utica or Oneida County; however, homeownership has declined by over 16% between 1990 and 2006 in the North Genesee Street Corridor.

Housing Tenure: 1990 – 2006			
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)			
	North Genesee Street Corridor	City of Utica	Oneida County
1990			
Total Units	4,665	31,127	101,251
Occupied	94.1%	91.1%	91.4%
Vacant	5.9%	8.9%	8.6%
Owner-Occupied	68.4%	48.9%	65.2%
Renter-Occupied	31.6%	51.1%	34.8%
2000			
Total Units	6,257	29,186	102,803
Occupied	89.4%	86.0%	88.0%
Vacant	10.6%	14.0%	12.0%
Owner-Occupied	51.8%	48.8%	67.2%
Renter-Occupied	48.2%	51.2%	32.8%
2006			
Total Units	6,315	29,155	107,658
Occupied	91.2%	87.9%	90.1%
Vacant	8.8%	12.1%	9.9%
Owner-Occupied	52.0%	49.7%	68.6%
Renter-Occupied	48.0%	50.3%	31.4%

However, there has been a substantial increase in the number of multi-family units. Over 1,100 units have been constructed or converted since 1990, comprising 45.7% of all units in 2006. While the number of mobile homes, trailers and other forms of housing has decreased by over 90% since 1990, there has only been a negligible increase in the percentage of townhomes and condominiums near the Corridor.

This shift in housing type has resulted in roughly the same number of single-family homes, as there are multi-family units in the North Genesee Street Corridor. This remains true despite decreasing household sizes and an aging population. Single-family homes place a larger strain on schools and transportation. According to findings by the Institute for Transportation for Engineers², single-family housing typically generates an average of 9.57 auto trips per weekday, while multi-family units are likely to generate an average of 6.72 auto trips per weekday.

² Trip Generation, Institute for Transportation and Engineers,

Housing Type, North Genesee Street Corridor: 1990 – 2006								
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)								
	Single-Family Homes		Townhome/ Condominiums		Multi-Family Units (2+ units)		Mobile Homes, Trailers or Other	
	Number of units	% of Total units	Number of units	% of Total units	Number of units	% of Total units	Number of units	% of Total units
1990	2,725	58.4%	141	3.0%	1,526	32.7%	273	5.9%
2000	2,973	47.8%	193	3.1%	3,030	48.7%	24	0.4%
2006	2,916	50.6%	187	3.2%	2,632	45.7%	25	0.4%

3.2.5 INCOME

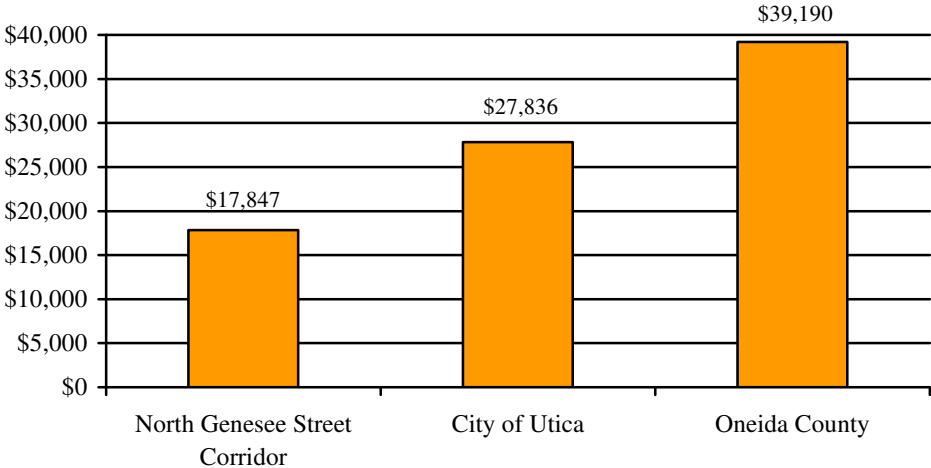
As of 2006, the North Genesee Street Corridor had a median household income of \$17,847. This is significantly lower than that of the entire City of Utica and Oneida County, with median household income levels of \$27,836 and \$39,190 respectively. However, it is important to note that the median household incomes within the North Genesee Street Corridor ranged from \$11,918 in Census Tract 210 to \$44,420 in Census Tract 216.02. Therefore, while the median household income of \$17,847 is indicative of the Corridor as a whole, a wide income gap is present in this part of Utica.

It is interesting to note that the median household incomes have fell from \$23,677 to \$17,847 between 1990 and 2006 in the North Genesee Street Corridor. Median household incomes seem to be increasing within Census Tracts 216.01 and 216.02, while they seem to be decreasing in Census Tracts 201, 203 and 210. This indicates that the income gap between the lower income households and the higher income households has significantly widened since 1990. This has the potential to pose several major social and economic issues in the Corridor.

At first glance, it appears that median household incomes have increased between 1990 and 2006 in the City of Utica and Oneida County. However, when adjusting for inflation over the two and a half decades, it is clear that this is not the case. In fact, when adjusting for inflation, the per capita incomes have actually decreased in both study areas. When the prices of other goods have been on the rise, most notably housing and fuel costs, median household income should follow suit. The fact that the median household income levels have not increased relative to the price of other goods indicates that as a whole, residents of the City of

Utica and Oneida County have less disposable income than they did six and even 16 years ago.

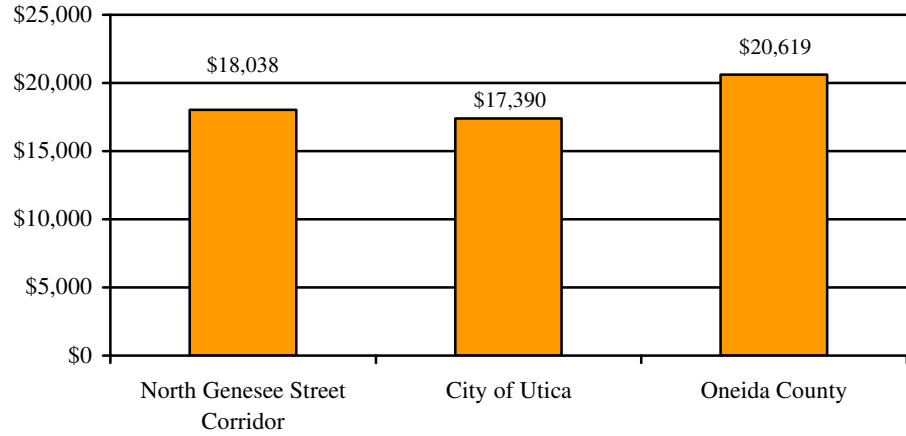
Median Household Income: 2006
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)



The Corridor’s 2006 per capita income is estimated at \$18,038, while the per capita incomes for the City of Utica and Oneida County are \$17,390 and \$20,619 respectively. Unlike what was seen with the median household incomes in the North Genesee Street Corridor, the per capita incomes have actually increased relative to inflation, from \$10,216 in 1990 to \$18,038 in 2006. This is reflective of the individuals with higher incomes moving into the area, and thus the widening income gap that has been seen in the Corridor since 1990.

Per Capita Income: 2006

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)



Household Income Characteristics: 1990 – 2006

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; EASI Demographics)

	North Genesee Street Corridor			City of Utica			Oneida County		
	1990	2000	2006	1990	2000	2006	1990	2000	2006
Median Household Income	\$23,677	\$18,804	\$17,847	\$19,950	\$24,916	\$27,836	\$26,710	\$35,909	\$39,190
Average Household Income	N/A	\$37,247	\$35,906	N/A	\$36,175	\$39,062	N/A	\$45,823	\$49,993
Per Capita Income	\$10,216	\$16,615	\$18,038	\$10,726	\$15,248	\$17,390	\$12,227	\$18,516	\$20,619
Individuals below Poverty Level	1,175	2,456	N/A	14,308	14,154	N/A	28,203	28,764	N/A
% to Total Population	10.8%	20.4%	N/A	20.8%	23.3%	N/A	12.0%	12.2%	N/A

While median household income and per capita income help depict the financial state of a neighborhood, the poverty levels are what actually determine whether or not there is economic hardship or need. Poverty is measured by federal thresholds and the income that is associated with these thresholds. The official definition uses 48 thresholds that take into account family size, ranging from one to nine people, and the presence and number of family members under 18 years old. Seen as a major

discrepancy, poverty thresholds are not adjusted for regional, state, or local variation in the cost of living.

As of 2000, the poverty threshold ranged from \$7,990 for one person over 65 years old to \$37,076 for a family of nine people or more with one related child under 18 years old. Each additional person over 18 years old added to the family unit increases the poverty threshold by approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000, however, each related child under 18 years old decreases the threshold by a slight amount³.

For the purpose of this analysis, the individuals that are below the poverty level pertain to those people who do not generate enough income to reach these aforementioned thresholds. As of 2000, over 2,400 persons, or 20.4% of the North Genesee Street Corridor's population is considered to be at or below this poverty level. This is slightly lower than the percentage of the City of Utica's population below the poverty level, yet significantly greater than the percentage of Oneida County's population below poverty. Often a decline in population, which the City of Utica has experienced over the past decade, corresponds with the endurance of the economy. As seen in Section 1.1, the City's population has declined by over 13% between 1990 and 2000. Therefore, it is not surprising that both the City and the Corridor have a relatively high poverty rate.

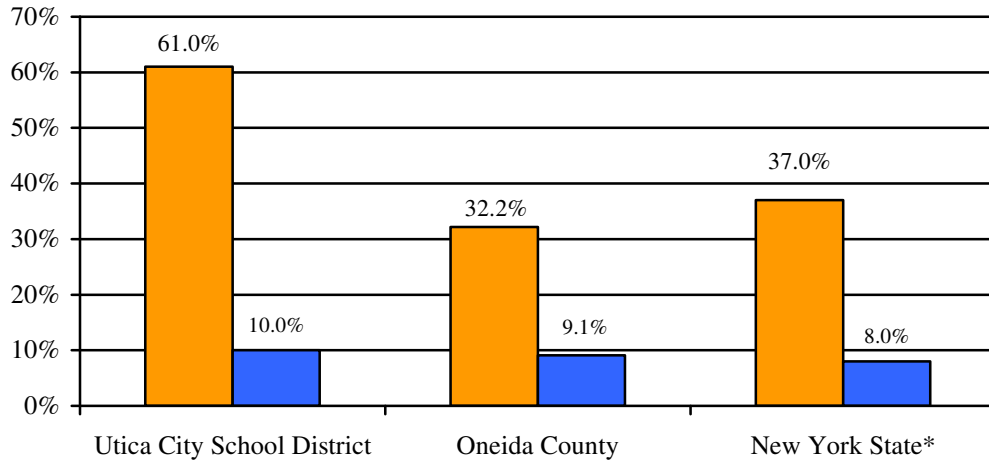
Another indicator of poverty is found in the percentage of children eligible for free or reduced – price lunch through the public school system. The school district determines eligibility for such programs based on household income and household size. Students that are eligible for free lunch are from families that are below the poverty level, and students that are eligible for reduced-price lunch are from families that are above poverty level, yet are nonetheless deemed low-income⁴. As seen in the accompanying chart, 5,515 students, or 61% of all students in the Utica City School Districts are eligible for free lunch. This compares to 32.3% of students in Oneida County and 37% of students in other Upstate New York communities. The significantly greater percentage of students in eligible for free lunch reinforces the lower household

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

⁴ For the 2006-2007 school year, New York State thresholds for free lunch range from an annual household income of \$12,740 for a single-person household to \$43,680 for an eight-person household. Thresholds for reduced-price lunch range from an annual household income of \$18,130 for a single-person household to \$62,160 for an eight-person household. Each additional family member increases the threshold by \$4,420.

incomes, higher poverty rates, and the overall economic hardships seen within the City.

**Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:
2005 - 2006 Academic Year**
(Source: New York State Education Department)



* Data does not include New York City data

3.2.6 WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The North Genesee Street Corridor is particularly attractive because of its location along the New York State Thruway (I-90) and easy access to hundreds of thousands of customers. The Thruway also makes the project area attractive for manufacturing and warehouse distribution, industries that rely on trucking for components and product distribution. This major thoroughfare also provides fairly easy access to Albany, Buffalo, Montreal, and New York City, as well as the local Utica market. In spite of these corridor attributes, industrial and warehouse development in the Corridor has been slow to this point. Manufacturing continues to play a significant role elsewhere in the greater Utica-Rome area.

The presence of the medical manufacturing giant, ConMed, is a major factor in the City of Utica’s strong position as a producer of medical equipment and supplies. The company’s 500,000 square foot facility and worldwide headquarters is located on French Road, approximately 5 miles from the North Genesee Street Corridor. Direct access to the

facility from the New York State Thruway is available using the North South Arterial Highway (also known as Routes 8, 12 and 5), which bypasses the North Genesee Street Corridor.

As of 2005, the leading industry in terms of the number of establishments is Retail Trade. Approximately 14,584 employees, in 1,058 establishments work within the Retail Trade industry in the Utica – Rome, NY MSA. The leading industry in terms of the number of employees is Health Care and Social Assistance. Almost 20,000 employees work among 676 establishments in the region.

NAICS Industry Employment and Wages, Utica – Rome, NY, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): 2005 (Source: New York State Department of Labor)					
Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Annual Employment	Employment as a % of Total	Total Annual Wages	Average Annual Wages
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	48	364	0.3%	\$7,595,197	\$20,866
Mining	17	168	0.1%	\$6,831,223	\$40,662
Construction	578	3,301	2.6%	\$120,583,008	\$36,529
Manufacturing	342	13,582	10.8%	\$502,722,846	\$37,014
Wholesale Trade	273	3,654	2.9%	\$139,372,954	\$38,143
Retail Trade	1,058	14,584	11.6%	\$298,814,078	\$20,489
Transportation and Warehousing	145	3,791	3.0%	\$119,984,613	\$31,650
Information	97	3,191	2.5%	\$111,461,984	\$34,930
Finance and Insurance	390	6,966	5.5%	\$283,165,187	\$40,650
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	235	1,000	0.8%	\$22,937,106	\$22,937
Professional and Technical Services	481	3,543	2.8%	\$155,753,466	\$43,961
Management of Companies and Enterprises	27	815	0.6%	\$51,840,125	\$63,608
Administrative and Waste Services	207	4,637	3.7%	\$108,051,765	\$23,302
Educational Services	43	1,975	1.6%	\$44,416,918	\$22,490
Health Care and Social Assistance	676	19,980	15.8%	\$556,707,246	\$27,863
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	124	1,206	1.0%	\$15,822,577	\$13,120
Accommodation and Food Services	626	8,116	6.4%	\$95,207,194	\$11,731
Other Services	690	3,849	3.1%	\$71,735,001	\$18,637
Total, All Government	324	30,854	24.5%	\$1,150,767,479	\$37,297
Unclassified	160	158	0.1%	\$2,941,351	\$18,616
Total, All Industries	6,545	126,075	100.0%	\$3,891,287,950	\$30,865

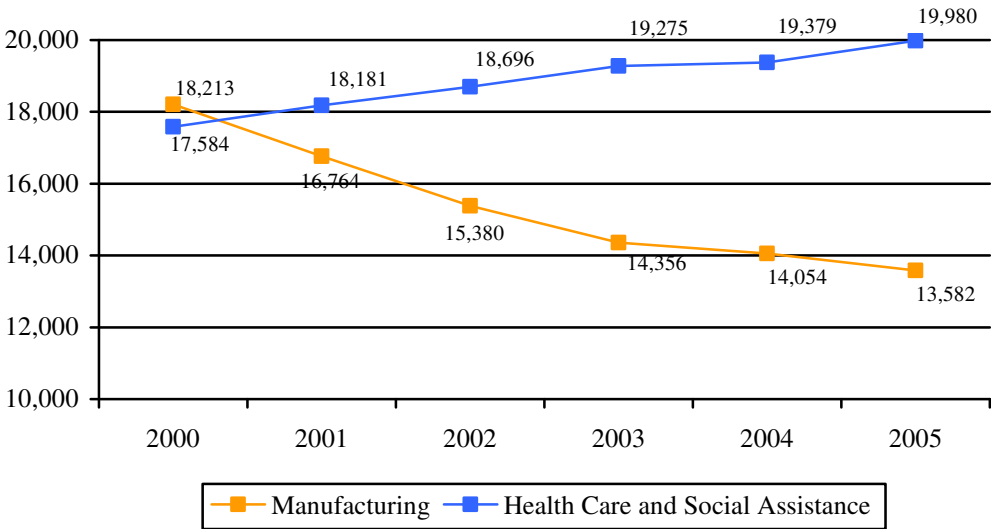
However, according to a recent report by Working Solutions, a workforce development center serving Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties, the manufacturing industry experienced a 0.8% loss over for the 12-month period ending October 2005, while educational and health services increased by 0.7%.⁵ The trend away from manufacturing

⁵ Change in private sector jobs since October 2004. <http://www.working-solutions.org/RecentLaborMarkDev.htm>

towards health services is corroborated by findings reported by the New York State Department of Labor. Looking more closely at the available data, as demonstrated in the chart below, employment in the field of education has remained relatively unchanged over the four year period between 2000 and 2004, while health services has increased substantially during the same period.

Employment Trends, Utica - Rome, NY, MSA: 2000-2005

(Source: New York State Department of Labor)



Following closely behind the Health Care sector is the retail industry, which accounts for 11.6% of all jobs in the Utica-Rome MSA. Another significant employer in the area is Zogby International, recognized globally as a leader in market research and public opinion polling. Zogby’s main office is based on 901 Broad Street in Utica, less than a mile from the North Genesee Street Corridor.

Section 4 Vision Statement and Goals

Section 4

4.1 VISION STATEMENT

Some communities dream about what they could be, but never muster the resources or will to move toward that dream. Others act – but without a vision – and find themselves dissatisfied with the results. The key to these predicaments is the union of vision and action. If the course of this effort, the following vision for North Genesee Street’s future was developed. The vision statement was compiled from information provided by citizens during a public workshop and a visioning exercise completed by members of the Advisory Committee.

The North Genesee Street corridor is envisioned as:

- > A fully-integrated multimodal network that safely and efficiently transports people, goods and services
- > An attractive and accessible place to conduct business
- > A welcoming gateway into the City of Utica
- > A vital connector between the New York State Thruway, Mohawk River, and downtown Utica.

4.2 GOALS

To achieve the vision set forth by the community, multiple goals were established to guide decision-making. The goals address a variety of issues that were identified through the preparation of an inventory and analysis, a public workshop, and the experience and knowledge of the Advisory Committee.

To implement the City’s vision, the following goals are set forth.

Safety

Goal: Support safe bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the North Genesee Street corridor.

Visual Character

Goal: Enhance the visual character and identity of the North Genesee Street corridor.

Gateway

Goal: Create a sense of arrival into the City of Utica.

Pedestrian Amenities

Goal: To make walking and bicycling along the North Genesee Street corridor comfortable and convenient.

Way finding and Information Signage

Goal: To establish an informational and way finding system of signage that contributes to the overall appearance and consistency of the corridor.

Section 5 Recommendations

Section 5

5.1 OVERVIEW

This section of the study provides recommendations for the North Genesee Street corridor. The intent in offering these recommendations is to provide the City with an array of options to address the issues and concerns that were identified during the public participation portion of the planning process.

Recommendations are provided in the following six categories: Land Use, Access Management, Corridor Design, Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation, and Gateway and Way finding Signage.

5.2 LAND USE

The North Genesee Street corridor can be divided into three regions: Northern, Central, and Southern. The Northern Region of the corridor serves as the gateway or the “front door” to Utica, connecting the New York State Thruway with the City’s downtown.

Traveling south along the corridor towards the downtown, the Central Region of the corridor becomes a busy auto-oriented commercial corridor. As it exists today, the corridor has a mixture of single story national franchises, businesses, local restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and small-scale office buildings. This four-lane roadway has a steady flow of traffic, with no designated bike lanes. Sidewalks on either side of North Genesee Street have been installed with thin vegetative strips between the sidewalk and the roadway. Although sidewalks are present, this particular area is not a welcoming pedestrian experience mostly due to the high traffic volume, and the buildings setbacks allowing for parking in front of commercial establishments.

The Southern Region provides a transition from this auto-oriented character into the historic pedestrian-oriented downtown and provides an important gateway into the downtown commercial core.

To create a welcoming atmosphere that is safe for vehicle, bike and pedestrian traffic on North Genesee Street, it is recommended that design policies be established for site organization, site design and public spaces.

Recommendation:

- > Develop design policies to address design issues regarding the development and/or redevelopment of properties located along the North Genesee Street corridor:

5.1.1 DESIGN POLICY PRINCIPLES

Why Design Policies

Typical development, working within existing zoning regulations, often times does not result in an attractive, safe and functional built environment. Zoning regulations address building uses and area and density development. Businesses requiring significant on-site parking or outdoor display space compete for visibility by using dominant signage, site lighting and other means of attracting attention. Uncontrolled vehicle access to parking lots creates conflicts with pedestrians visiting local retail and commercial establishments. Increasingly, communities are recognizing that the general sameness in appearance of corporate chain commercial and retail buildings are destroying their local distinctive character.

Design policies are intended to enhance a community's zoning regulations. They are not a substitute for the zoning regulations, but rather complement the zoning regulations to create the desired appearance and character of an area. Design policies establish a level of quality that sets a precedent for future development, serve to enhance the value of property, and protect the investment of landowners and developers.

What Design Policies Address

Design policies are introduced into a community as a measure to achieve a degree of consistency of development that results in a pedestrian friendly, safer and usually visually cohesive corridor. Often, the net result is a more vibrant commercial and retail district. Design policies are often drafted by communities to ensure more attention to the design than is typical in current development. Various aspects address the character and quality of the built environment, such as where the building and parking are located on the property, the means of providing pedestrian access to the site, and the character of building design.

How Design Policies Work

Design policies provide the basis to developers when preparing their development plans and applications, and subsequently, to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals with plan review and approval. Design policies provide design and development principles, which help both the local community and developers: the community benefits from a consistent, coherent and functional commercial corridor; the developer benefits from a predictable and standard approval process.

5.2.2 LEVELS OF DESIGN REVIEW

Site Organization Review

The site organization review process uses site design principles outlined in the design policies to address issues relating to both building and parking location. Other issues addressed in this process include vehicle access and pedestrian circulation to and from the proposed building.

Site Design Review

The site design review process addresses issues generally relating to the aesthetics of the site and proposed development impacts on nearby properties, such as the impacts of commercial development abutting residential parcels. Generally, landscaping principles define this review process, but building signage is also addressed here.

Appropriate landscaping plays an important role in the visual character of site development. For instance, parking lots can be a visual blight if not appropriately shielded. However, landscaping with trees and shrubbery can help to reduce the visual impacts as buffers as well as enhance vehicle and pedestrian circulation. As a component of the site design review process, landscaping should be addressed to be certain that the appropriate standards are being achieved.

Public Places Review

The streetscape zone includes that area that is publicly owned but has a direct relation to the building. For instance, public sidewalks can be used for the display of retail goods as a way to entice shoppers into the store or a restaurant may provide sidewalk-dining opportunities. Both of these circumstances require special considerations for safe and efficient pedestrian circulation.

5.2.3 RECOMMENDED DESIGN POLICIES

Site Organization

> *Public Off Street Parking*

Off street parking should include landscaped buffers between the sidewalk and parking areas. This buffer should include trees and shrubbery. The use of a low landscaping fence should also be encouraged. Planting medians should be included within the interior of the parking lot to reduce visual impacts and clarify pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Parking stalls should be consistent with the current City zoning regulations.

On Street Parking

- > On street parking should be permitted on side streets only and should not be permitted along North Genesee Street.

Site Design

> *Screenings and Buffers*

Landscape buffers between residential and commercial/industrial areas should be used to lessen adverse impacts such as noise, fumes, and privacy concerns. Landscape buffers can include a variety of techniques, such as buffer plantings of various heights and widths, berms, and fences. When residential uses are adjacent to highway or commercial uses, they shall be separated by a buffer edge. The buffer edge should include a variety of local plant species, including a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees.

Screening will provide a vertical barrier and should be designed to block visual or noise impact. When unrelated activities are located adjacent to one another, buffers and screening should be used to ensure compatibility between adjacent uses. Parking lots and service areas should be adequately screened with landscaping materials. Landscaping materials should include vegetation and/or natural wood fencing. Additional screening treatments should be required for commercial properties adjacent to residential and institutional parcels. Acceptable screening techniques include combinations of vegetated landscaping, landscaping walls, fencing (excluding chain link), and earth berming.

> *Signage*

The primary façade should include only one (1) sign identifying the tenant. Signage may be distinctive but complementary to the overall architectural character of the façade. Signage should take one of four forms: façade mounted, signage on awnings, perpendicular base façade mounted, and signage incorporated onto windows. The total area of all signage on any façade should not exceed 10 percent of the total area of the façade. Pole-mounted signage should be discouraged; monument signage is preferred.

> *Site Lighting*

All exterior lights should be arranged and installed so that the direct or reflected illumination does not spill into any adjoining residential properties.

Public Spaces

> *Sidewalks*

Convenient and safe pedestrian access to and from commercial and residential development is essential for the well-being of a community. Sidewalks should maintain a 5-foot minimum width and should be separated from automobile traffic to the maximum extent possible. Where the roadway can't accommodate a dedicated bike lane, a 10-foot minimum should be considered.

5.2 ACCESS MANAGEMENT

One of the issues identified during the public participation process was access management. According to the Traffic Impact Study conducted by the Laberge Group, there are over 25 commercial driveways located along the Central Region of North Genesee Street (approximately one-third mile), resulting in a significant number of curb cuts running along both sides of the corridor.

According to the Traffic impact Study, “reducing the number of curb cuts would provide increase pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as vehicular mobility and accident reduction.” The Laberge Group estimates that the total number of curb cuts in the Central Region could be consolidated and reduced to less than 12, cutting the number of conflict points in half.

Recommendation:

- > Reduce curb cuts per parcel to one or less (i.e., shared access)

5.3 CENTER MEDIAN ENHANCEMENTS



Existing Conditions

North Genesee Street is Utica’s commercial drive. During the public participation process, residents and business owners stated that, “it is very difficult to make a left hand turn out of businesses.” Participants also identified that there is a need for a center turn lane to serve as “a waiting area” to safely make a left hand turn.

One of the design options presented by the Laberge Group included a median divided highway. This option would restrict left turns within the Central Region of the corridor, forcing direct access to local businesses to be made through either a right hand turn or via back lot access. Although this option would reduce the number of points of conflict along the corridor, it would also make access to commercial establishments more difficult.



Center Median Enhancement

To ensure that the corridor is still appealing to visitors and commercial patrons, it is recommended that a continuous center turn lane be created, paved with alternative materials (i.e., textured paving, colored concrete, etc.).

Recommendation:

- > Create a continuous center turn lane along the Central Region of North Genesee Street corridor, paved with alternative material

5.5 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

One of the concerns raised by the community was the fact that North Genesee Street, in its current state, is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. Pedestrians walking along North Genesee Street are faced with the issues of a lack of sidewalk connectivity, lack of traffic gaps, and an overall lack of pedestrian amenities. Specifically, sidewalk areas inconsistent in terms of pavement width and condition, there is discontinuity due the large number of curb cuts, and there is inconsistent provision of pedestrian amenities including the pavement striping, LED indications,

audio receptors, pushbuttons, and signage at crossing that were either never initiated, worn or missing.

To enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation, access and safety along the corridor, the following strategies are recommended:



Existing Conditions



Phase I



Phase II



Phase III

Phase I:

Bike Lane

- > Install a dedicated bicycle lane connecting the Southern Region of North Genesee Street to the Northern Region. As noted by the Laberge Group, in areas where pavement width makes these accommodations infeasible, sidewalk widening to a 10-foot width should be considered to separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic.

Sidewalks

- > Upgrade and repair existing sidewalks to provide consistency. The Laberge Group recommends that the pedestrian walking area maintain a 5-foot minimum width and should be separated from vehicular traffic to the maximum extent possible.

Upgrade pedestrian crosswalks

- > Provide safe and attractive crossings at intersections by installing or upgrade pavement striping, LED indications, audio receptors, pushbuttons and signage at pedestrian crosswalks.
- > Provide roadway medians as appropriate to allow for a “safe haven” for pedestrians crossing North Genesee Street.

Lighting

- > Replace existing “cobra-style” lighting with new decorative fixtures that are appropriate for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as for automobiles. A list of recommended lighting fixtures is provided in Appendix F.

Utility Lines

- > Reduce visual clutter by burying overhead utility lines.

Phase II:

Amenities

- > Provide pedestrian amenities such as seating, newspaper racks, trash receptacles, and bike racks within areas of activity along North Genesee Street. A selection of recommended amenities is provided in Appendix F.

Bus Shelters

- > Provide bus shelters to encourage the use of public transit. The City should work with the local Metropolitan Planning organization to select appropriate bus shelters for North Genesee Street.

Phase III:

Street Trees

- > Plant street trees along N. Genesee Street in order to create some continuity along the street, make the corridor more attractive, and provide shade for pedestrians. A list of recommended street trees is provided in Appendix F.

Maintenance

- > Increase maintenance schedule for vegetation (plantings and lawn maintenance) along North Genesee Street.

Litter

- > Promote community partnership to control litter.

5.4 GATEWAY AND WAY FINDING SIGNAGE



Existing conditions at the Thruway Interchange gateway.



Existing gateway signage at entrance to downtown Utica



Recommended Improvements

Gateway Signage

The North Genesee Street corridor serves as the “front door” to the City of Utica. It is the primary connector between downtown Utica and the New York State Thruway and Mohawk River, and should be the welcoming point that draws visitors into the City of Utica.

Recommendations:

- > *Enhanced Entry Feature*
Install “Welcome to the City of Utica” gateway signage at the intersection connecting the New York State Thruway and the North Genesee Street to establish definition for the corridor.
- > Reduce visual clutter by replacing multiple sign poles with one monument sign.

Way Finding Signage

The North Genesee Street corridor is designed primarily for automobiles, but it also accommodates motorcycles, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians. It is important to develop a coordinated communication network that starts with the automobile traveling at 55 miles per hour and gradually, and conveniently, moves the visitor into and around the community. Consequently, it is recommended that a hierarchical communication network be established. The strength of this hierarchy of signs is that it clearly connects the traveler’s transition from a vehicle, to a walking environment, to a visitor experience.

The following is a list of sign types that should be considered:

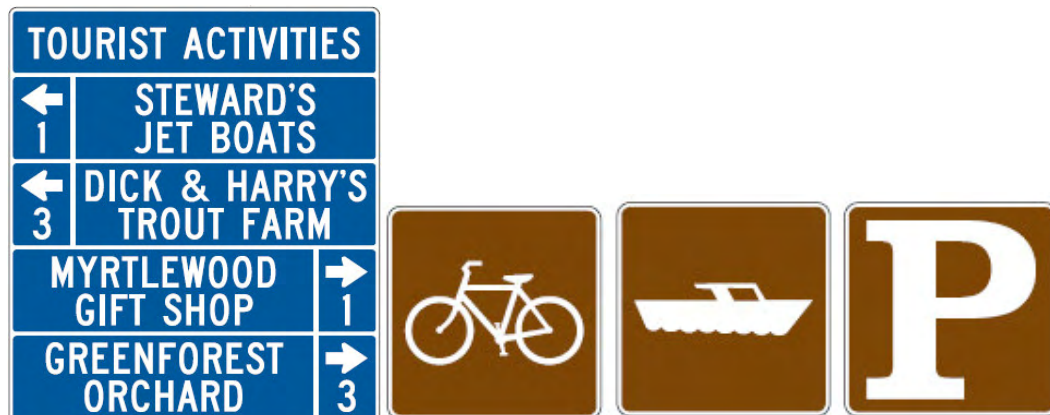
Type of Sign	Description
Gateway	Single-sided signs located at the north and south terminuses of the North Genesee Street corridor.
Hybrid Directional	Single-sided signs with a Community Welcome and panels directing visitors to specific historical, cultural, scenic, natural, recreational and educational points of interest within the corridor.
Automobile Directional	Single or double-sided panels directing visitors to specific points of interest within the corridor.
Parking Directional	Single or double-sided panels identifying public parking areas within the corridor.
Pedestrian Way finding	Single or double-sided panels guiding visitors to points of interest.
Interpretive	Single or double-sided printed graphic panels that interpret the significance of a particular site or event.

Source: Adapted from the NYS Scenic Byways Sign Manual

Recommendations:

> *Way Finding Signage Plan*

Develop a Way Finding Signage Plan for the Central Region of the North Genesee Street corridor. Signage should meet the standards identified in the Manual on Traffic Control Devices (MOTCD), and should include color-coded signage for recreation attractions, retail shopping and parking areas.



Examples of Way-Finding Signage

Section 6 Implementation Matrix

	Recommendation	Implementation Leader(s)	Other Agencies	Immediate*	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
Land Use								
1.1	Develop design policies to address design issues regarding the development and/or redevelopment of properties located along the North Genesee Street corridor.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development		X				
Access Management								
2.1	Reduce the number of curb cuts per parcel to one or less (i.e., shared access).	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development	City of Utica Engineering Department			X		
Center Median Enhancement								
3.1	Install special paving materials to identify turn lanes.	City of Utica Department of Engineering				X		
Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation								
4.1	Provide bike lanes.	City of Utica Department of Engineering	Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS); NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)		X			
4.2	Upgrade and repair existing sidewalks to provide consistency.	City of Utica Department of Public Works			X			
4.3	Provide safe and attractive crossings at intersections by installing or upgrading pavement striping, LED indications, audio receptors, pushbuttons and signage at pedestrian crosswalks.	City of Utica Department of Public Works	New York State Department of Transportation		X			
4.4	Provide roadway medians, as appropriate, to allow for a "safe haven" for pedestrians crossing North Genesee Street.	City of Utica Department of Engineering	Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS)		X			

	Recommendation	Implementation Leader(s)	Other Agencies	Immediate*	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
4.5	Replace existing "cobra-style" lighting with new decorative fixtures.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development; City of Utica Department of Engineering			X			
4.6	Reduce visual clutter by burying overhead utility lines.	City of Utica Department of Public Works	National Grid		X			
4.7	Provide pedestrian amenities such as seating, newspaper racks, trash receptacles, and bike racks within areas of activity along North Genesee Street.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development				X		
4.8	Provide bus shelters to encourage the use of public transit.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development	CENTRO of Oneida; Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS)			X		
4.9	Plant street trees along N. Genesee Street in order to create some continuity along the street, make the corridor more attractive, and provide shade for pedestrians.	City of Utica Parks Department Tree Maintenance Division					X	
4.1	Increase maintenance schedule for vegetation (plantings and lawn maintenance) along North Genesee Street.	City of Utica Parks Department Tree Maintenance Division	NYS Master Gardener Program - Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County				X	
4.11	Promote community partnership to control litter.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development						X
Gateway and Way Finding Signage								
5.1	Install "Welcome to the City of Utica" gateway signage at the intersection connecting the NYS Thruway and North Genesee Street.	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development	NYS Thruway Authority			X		

	Recommendation	Implementation Leader(s)	Other Agencies	Immediate*	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
5.2	Develop a Way Finding Signage Plan	City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development				X		