

Taft Road/Northern Blvd. Study

FINAL REPORT



Report Prepared by:

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Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study

Final Report

May 2001

SMTC 2000-2001 Unified Planning Work Program Task 5B,i

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 is solely responsible for its content.

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Taft and Northern Boulevard Study

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study is a transportation study examining the interrelationship of traffic, zoning and land use along the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors of the Towns of DeWitt and Cicero. This study was requested by the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) to survey zoning, land use and transportation issues in these corridors in response to specific traffic and development concerns expressed by an elected official.

A specific concern was expressed regarding commercial development on Eastman Road in the Town of Cicero and its impacts upon the transportation network in general and the Northern Boulevard and Taft Road corridors in particular. A recycling plant opened on Eastman Road which had created a potential for a large amount of truck traffic entering or crossing Northern Boulevard (a four lane divided highway with periodic medians for turning or crossing).

Although the plant stayed open only briefly, the concern remained over similar development and the need to ensure adequate review by the proper government agencies. The facility did not have direct access upon a state or county highway, thereby the project was not reviewed consistent with Section 239-f of the New York State General Municipal Law, the statutory basis for review in Onondaga County.

This study is a response to the above noted concerns and addresses both existing and potential commercial and industrial development in the study area as well as impacts on the transportation infrastructure.

Study Area Boundaries

The study area, shown in Figure 1, encompasses the northeast corner of the Town of DeWitt and the southwest corner of the Town of Cicero bounded by State Route 298 on the south, I-481 on the east, Island Road on the north, and I-81 on the west. The study area is primarily within county legislative district 3 and a portion of district 5. Although consideration is taken of development and potential development in the entire study area, the main focus of the study is the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors.

A portion of the study area includes property that is reserved for aviation purposes and therefore was not evaluated due to its restricted use. Approximately 25 percent of the study area to the west of Northern Boulevard and south of Taft Road is occupied by property belonging to the City of Syracuse Hancock International Airport and the 174th Tactical Fighter Wing of the New York Air National Guard. Significant portions of that property are used for runways and taxiways and are unavailable for development.

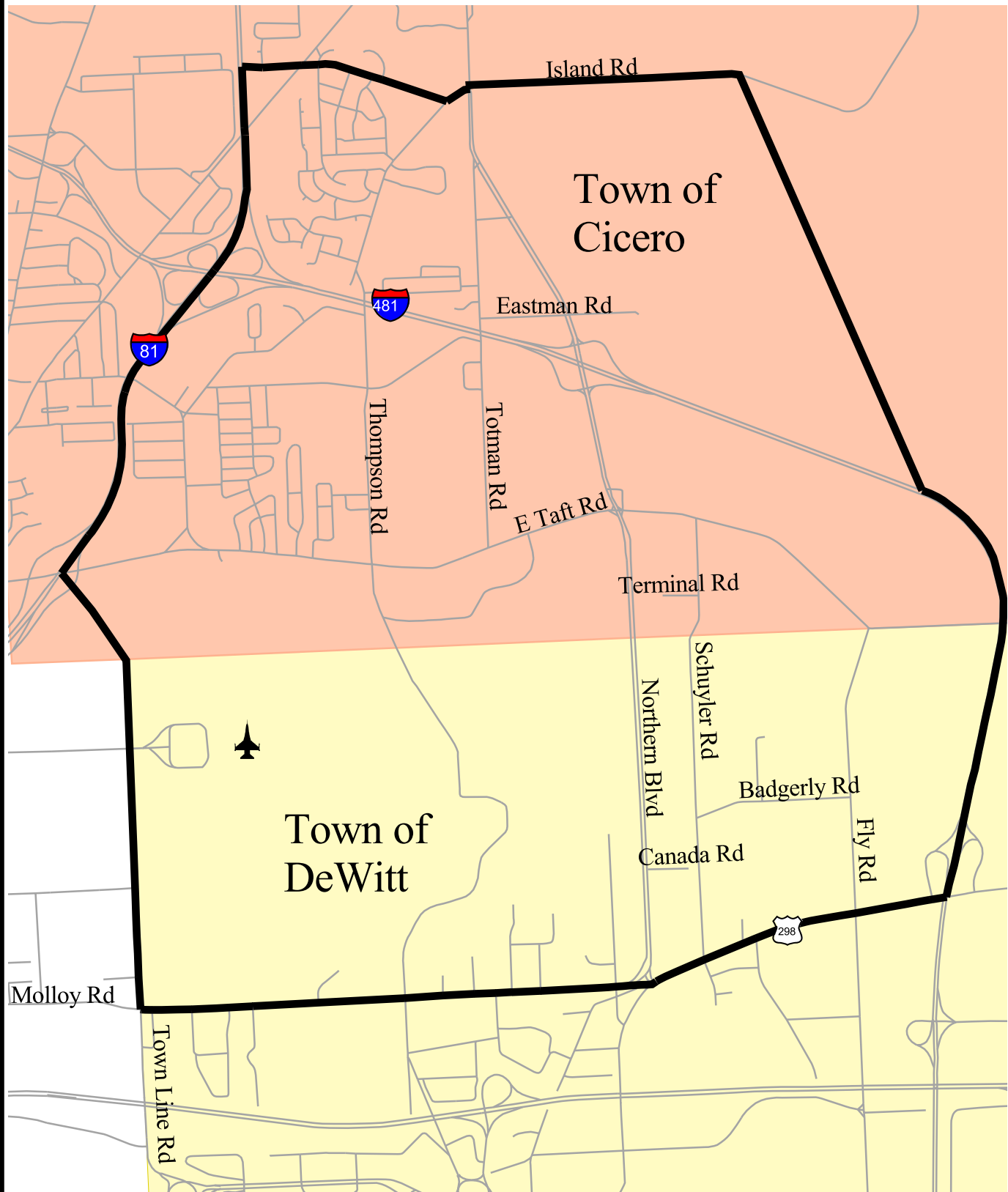
1.2 Goals and Objectives

The provide direction for the study, the following goals were developed:

- Determine any deficiencies in the current transportation network,
- Determine what deficiencies in the transportation network, if any, will be present with further development in the study area,
- Develop recommendations and evaluate possible solutions to the determined deficiencies in the highway network, if any.

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.
- Assess current conditions with respect to the transportation network (including a capacity, infrastructure, and accident analysis) serving the study area and existing development.
- Assess possible future impacts on the transportation network resulting from build out of allowable or anticipated uses on sites that are now vacant.
- Develop and evaluate alternatives and solutions for addressing problematic issues and transportation infrastructure.
- Present findings in a document for further consideration by the appropriate agencies.



Study Area




Taft Rd. & Northern Blvd. Study

Figure 1



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-  Study Area Roads
-  Town of Cicero
-  Town of DeWitt

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1.3 Study Process/Public Involvement

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) of the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study is intended to identify and set out to:

- 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;
- Involve the public throughout the planning process.

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, will meet 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, interest and location within the study area) was developed by the SMTC. The stakeholders will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, and will be notified of all SAC and public meetings.

The Study Advisory Committee formed to provide guidance and review of the progress of this study consisted of representatives of the following agencies:

- Onondaga County Legislature
- Onondaga County Department of Transportation
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
- New York State Department of Transportation (Planning & Program Management)

The following organizations are represented as stakeholders:

- Metropolitan Development Association
- O'Brien & Gere Development
- New England Motor Freight
- Federal Express
- Goodyear Commercial Truck Tire
- INCE Motor Freight
- Syracuse Research Corporation

A meeting of the Study Advisory Committee was held on May 22, 2000 to develop and approve the goals and objectives for the study. The Public Involvement Plan was also reviewed and approved at this time. The complete Public Involvement Plan is included in Appendix A.

The study process included the following defined tasks:

TASK 1 Problem Statement, Study Goal(s) and Objectives

This task included the development of a problem statement and study goal(s), as well as the supporting objectives that define the purpose and direction of the study effort. The problem statement defined the problem(s), or the reason(s) why the study is being done. The goal(s) should establish the overall intent and purpose of the study, while the objectives should identify specific actions and results expected, e.g., public involvement efforts, work products, time frames, and/or milestones anticipated, etc.

The goals and objectives were identified at the beginning of this study with the assistance of the SAC.

TASK 2 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

A study-specific Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed and implemented for the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study.

The PIP included the formation of a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) and a list of interested stakeholders.

It is anticipated that 3 SAC meetings will be held throughout the study.

TASK 3 Study Boundary/Limits

This task established the study area boundary or project limits.

TASK 4 Data Collection and Analysis

A variety of data are needed to complete the analysis phase of this study. The anticipated needs are indicated below:

- Existing land use
- Current zoning
- Proposed development
- Planned highway construction
- Recent traffic volumes
- Pedestrian and bicycle counts

- Forecasted traffic volumes based on allowable build out of land use
- Accident data
- General circulation patterns
- Commercial traffic patterns and issues

TASK 5 Establish Existing Conditions

This task summarized all of the data collected and analyzed to determine existing conditions in the corridor. The traffic analysis software HCS was used to evaluate the existing level of service.

TASK 6 Identify Future Land Use and Development

This task included the identification of current and future land use and zoning issues in the study area.

TASK 7 Identify Transportation Issues

This task included the identification of current and future multimodal transportation issues in the study area.

TASK 8 Develop and Evaluate Alternative Solutions

This task included the analysis of the identified issues to determine causes and effects, and the development and analysis of multimodal alternative solutions.

TASK 9 Prepare Recommendations and Implementation Plan

Following the development and evaluation of alternative solutions, a series of recommendations were developed. The recommendations shall be the result of a collaborative effort involving the SAC, and shall have taken into consideration the input received through the public involvement process.

In addition to the recommended improvements, an implementation strategy shall also be developed. The implementation strategy shall include a methodology for monitoring and re-evaluating the impacts of any improvements that are made.

TASK 10 Study Documentation

The Draft Final report will be submitted to the Planning Committee for review. Following the Planning Committee's endorsement, the Draft Final Report will be submitted to the Policy Committee for their acceptance.

CHAPTER 2 – EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

2.1 Roadways/Truck Route System

Roadways

For maintenance and/or transportation planning purposes, roadways are often classified as jurisdictional or functional. Jurisdictional classification groups roadways by the political jurisdiction that owns or maintains the facility, such as town, village, county or state. Functional classification is the grouping by the basic functions the roadway performs. The classification of roads and streets requires determining the degree to which land access functions should be:

- Emphasized at the cost of efficiency of movement, or
- Discouraged to improve the movement function.

Functional classification was developed for transportation planning purposes and is an important planning tool. There are four functional highway systems for urbanized areas such as the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard study area. These include:

- Principal Arterial: Principal Arterials are intended to serve major activity centers, including high volume corridors and carry a high proportion of total urban area travel even though it constitutes a small proportion of the total road network. Principal arterials carry significant inter-area traffic.
- Minor Arterial: This functional class roadway interconnects with, and augments, the principal arterial system. It accommodates trips of moderate length and a lower level of travel mobility.
- Collectors: These provide land access and traffic circulation within neighborhood and commercial areas and carry traffic from specific destinations to the arterials.
- Local Streets: This classification comprises all streets not in one of the higher classifications noted above. Through traffic is usually discouraged on the local street network.

The functional classification of roads within the study area is shown in Figure 2.

Principal arterials within the study area include I-81, I-481 and Taft Road. Minor arterials include Northern Boulevard, State Route 298 and East Molloy Road. Schuyler Road is a local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of DeWitt and the Town of Cicero.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has jurisdiction of I-81, I-481, and State Route 298, while Taft Road and Northern Boulevard are under the jurisdiction of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT).

Truck Routes

There are no municipally designated truck routes in the study area. Trucks, unlike other modes, are not constrained by waterways, railroad tracks or airport locations. The highway system is so pervasive that virtually every shipping and receiving location is accessible via the highway network. In addition, trucks provide the bridge between pickup and delivery point and the facilities of other modes (such as Hancock International Airport and the CSXT DeWitt Intermodal Facility). Consistent with New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, trucks can use virtually any road unless posted otherwise.

The Northern Boulevard and Schuyler Road corridors contain numerous trucking terminals and package express companies (e.g. Federal Express, United Parcel Service, Emery Worldwide). Because of the commercial nature of the surrounding area, trucks utilize most roads.

2.2 Bicycle/Pedestrian Considerations

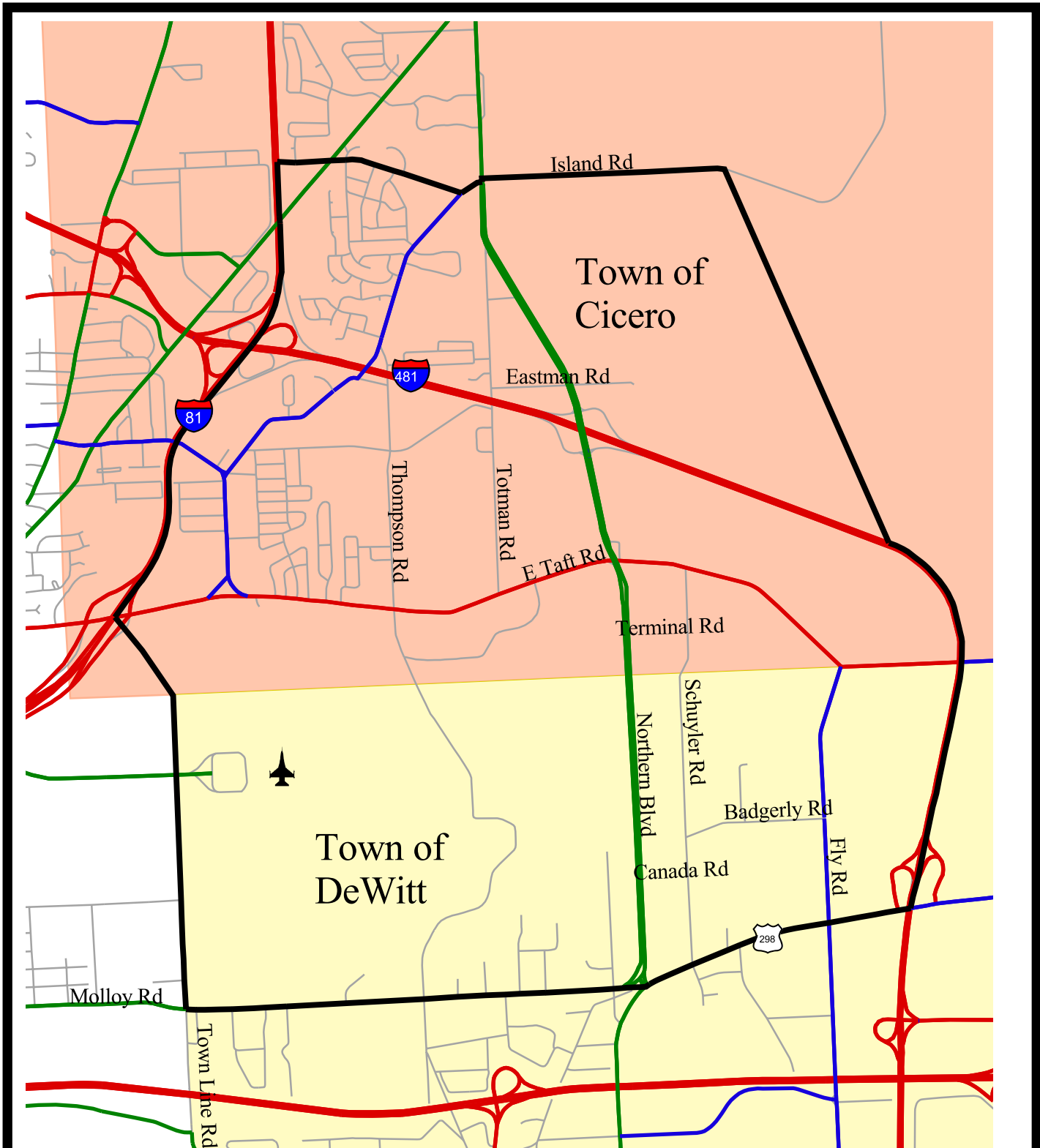
There are no state or county designated bicycle routes or sidewalks in the study area. A small, limited jogging path does exist within the Beacon North business park for tenants within the development.

2.3 Transit

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) operates transit service in the region. There is currently no fixed route transit service within the study area except for the segment within the Syracuse Hancock International Airport. This bus route was established to provide service from Common Center (transfer station within downtown Syracuse), and the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center, to the airport primarily for utilization by airport employees. There are four trips inbound to the City and five trips outbound during the week. Weekend service consists of three inbound and outbound trips.

In response to demographic shifts and changing population dynamics within the Central New York community (city to suburbs), the Board of Directors of the CNYRTA initiated a strategic planning project. The Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP) involved research to determine community transportation needs, deficiencies in the current system, opportunities to coordinate services with other agencies, long term funding and implementation. A report outlining service and coordination recommendations was completed in May 1999. Although ReMAP has a regional perspective, one potential service that was evaluated may have an impact on a corridor within this study area.









To develop this service, the CNYRTA is in the preliminary stages of working with the Onondaga County Department of Social Services, which has received a Welfare-to-Work Grant, to provide a circulator bus to businesses in the Carrier Circle area. One of those industries expressing interest in the service and may become a participant is United



Functional Classification

Taft Rd. & Northern Blvd. Study

Figure 2

-  Study Area
-  Functional Classification
-  Collector
-  Minor Arterial
-  Principal Arterial
-  Local Roads
-  Town of DeWitt
-  Town of Cicero



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Parcel Service on Northern Boulevard. As the Grant in the preliminary development stage, further details are unavailable at the time of this report.

2.4 Rail

There are no rail lines within the study area, although traffic is generated between the United Parcel Service (UPS) facility on Northern Boulevard and the CSXT intermodal facility in DeWitt for truck trailer traffic. The UPS facility in DeWitt is a major distribution and break bulk center servicing Central and Northern New York.

There are approximately six trains per day handled at the CSXT intermodal facility in DeWitt with an average of 200 UPS trailers handled per day in the seasonal peak (September – November) and approximately 150 UPS trailers handled per day in non-peak periods. Pick up and delivery of trailers from the CSXT facility to the Northern Boulevard UPS facility occurs primarily in the morning from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM and evening 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Truck traffic to the CSXT terminal in the peak hours generally travel north on Northern Boulevard to the I-481 interchange. From the interchange they travel south on I-481 to Kirkville Road, thence east to Freemont Road. During the off-peak they usually either use the same route or travel south on Northern Boulevard to State Route 298, thence east to Fly Road to Kirkville Road.



Trailers being unloaded at the CSXT Terminal in DeWitt

CHAPTER 3 – ZONING AND LAND USE

3.1 Zoning

Zoning is a method of districting an area for purposes of regulating use, density of population, coverage of lots and the size of structures. Zoning classification distinguishes between what is and what might be. Zoning within the study area is shown in Figure 3.

The vast majority of the acreage within the study area in the Town of DeWitt is zoned for industrial use with a small segment of business transitional clustered at the intersection of State Route 298 and Schuyler Road.

There is a greater diversity of zoning classification in the Town of Cicero portion of the study area. Property in the Town of Cicero along the Northern Boulevard corridor from the DeWitt Town Line to Taft Road is zoned primarily industrial. North of Taft Road along the corridor, the land is zoned primarily industrial to the east of Northern Boulevard, and commercial along the west side of the corridor to I-481. Zoning classification along Taft Road is a mix of agricultural (usually considered a holding classification until an appropriate use is identified) primarily concentrated on both the east and west portions within the study area, in addition to industrial and general commercial, which is concentrated towards the Northern Boulevard and Hancock Air Park areas. There are no strong provisions within the body of the zoning ordinance to protect or foster the agricultural use of the subject land area and current uses are classified as vacant or residential. There is a concentration of residential zoning west of Thompson Road and north of Taft Road. This includes a segment of the Village of North Syracuse.

3.2 Land Use

Land Use is a term describing the spatial distribution of urban/suburban functions; its residential areas, industrial, commercial and retail business districts; as well as spaces set aside for institutional and leisure-time activities such as parks. It primarily shows how the land and structures are used for urban/suburban purposes at a particular time. In addition to the traffic analysis, an examination of land uses within the study area was undertaken. There is a direct link between land use and transportation, which must be recognized when planning for future growth. The land uses within the study area are shown in Figure 4.

The Taft Road corridor land use consists of a mix of vacant, public service and residential. Land use along Northern Boulevard is primarily a mix of vacant, commercial and industrial. In the study area quadrant northeast of I-481 on Northern Boulevard there are no sewer or water services at this time limiting immediate development. Although speculative at this time, the potential exists for commercial and/or industrial development in this land area should municipal services such as water and sewer become available. The municipality would need to assess any potential transportation and environmental

impacts should a development application be submitted. The following is a summary of the land uses found within the study area.

Residential

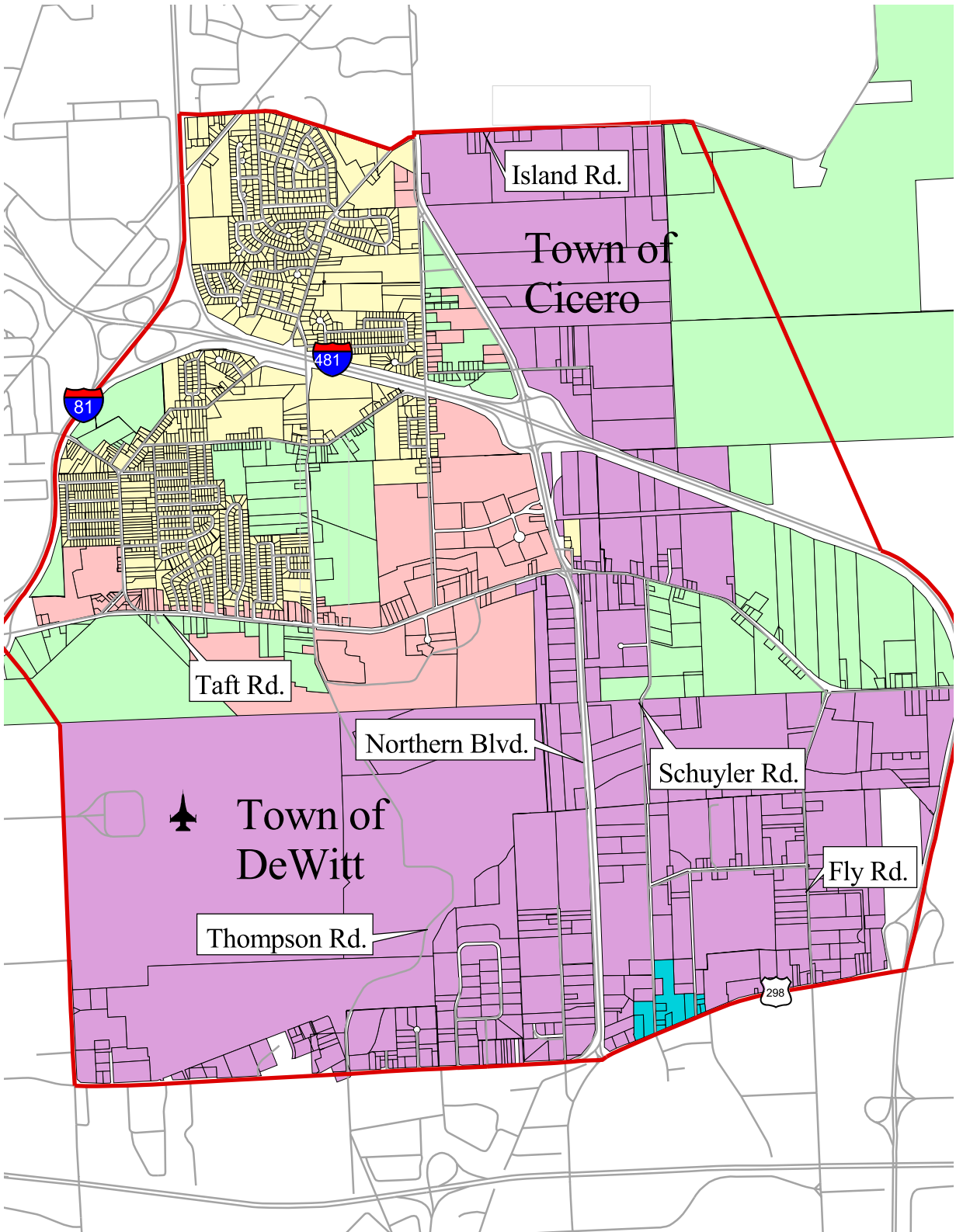
In the Town of DeWitt there are small pockets of older residential single family home development along State Route 298, Fly Road and Molloy Road. The residential development is transitioning over time to commercial and industrial development, which is consistent with the zoning established by the Town of DeWitt, except for the concentration of homes in the Hamlet of Collamer at the intersection of Fly Road and State Route 298. The Town of Cicero segment of the study area contains more residential development, which is concentrated north of Taft Road and east of Thompson Road. Immediately north of Taft Road, west of Thompson Road, the housing consists of older tract housing subdivisions as well as apartment complexes. North of I-481 the subdivisions are newer and are concentrated between Thompson Road and I-81. There are pockets of older single-family homes along Thompson Road and along Taft Road in the eastern segment of the study area.

Industrial/Manufacturing

Industrial development is scattered throughout the study area. There are several parcels along Taft Road and along Northern Boulevard on the west side of the corridor. There are also several small manufacturing sites on Fly Road in DeWitt, along Molloy Road south of the airport property, as well as the classification of Syracuse Hancock International Airport property as industrial. In the Town of Cicero, the largest industrial parcel in the study area is the previously mentioned recycling facility on Eastman Road.

Commercial








Commercial development is concentrated along Molloy Road south of the airport property including bakeries, trucking and distribution companies. The section of acreage between Schuyler Road and Northern Boulevard (north of Route 298 to Taft Road) is also primarily commercial. Primary tenants in this corridor are trucking and distribution firms including United Parcel Service, New England Motor Freight among others. The acreage in the Town of Cicero at the location of the former United State Air Force base (to be converted to Hancock Air Park) is classified as public service land use, but should be changed to commercial and light industrial to reflect the proposed development. There is also commercial development within the nearly complete Beacon North development on Northern Boulevard.



Zoning

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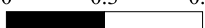
Figure 3

-  Study Area
-  Roads
- Zoning
 -  Agricultural
 -  Business Transitional
 -  General Commercial
 -  Industrial
 -  Residential



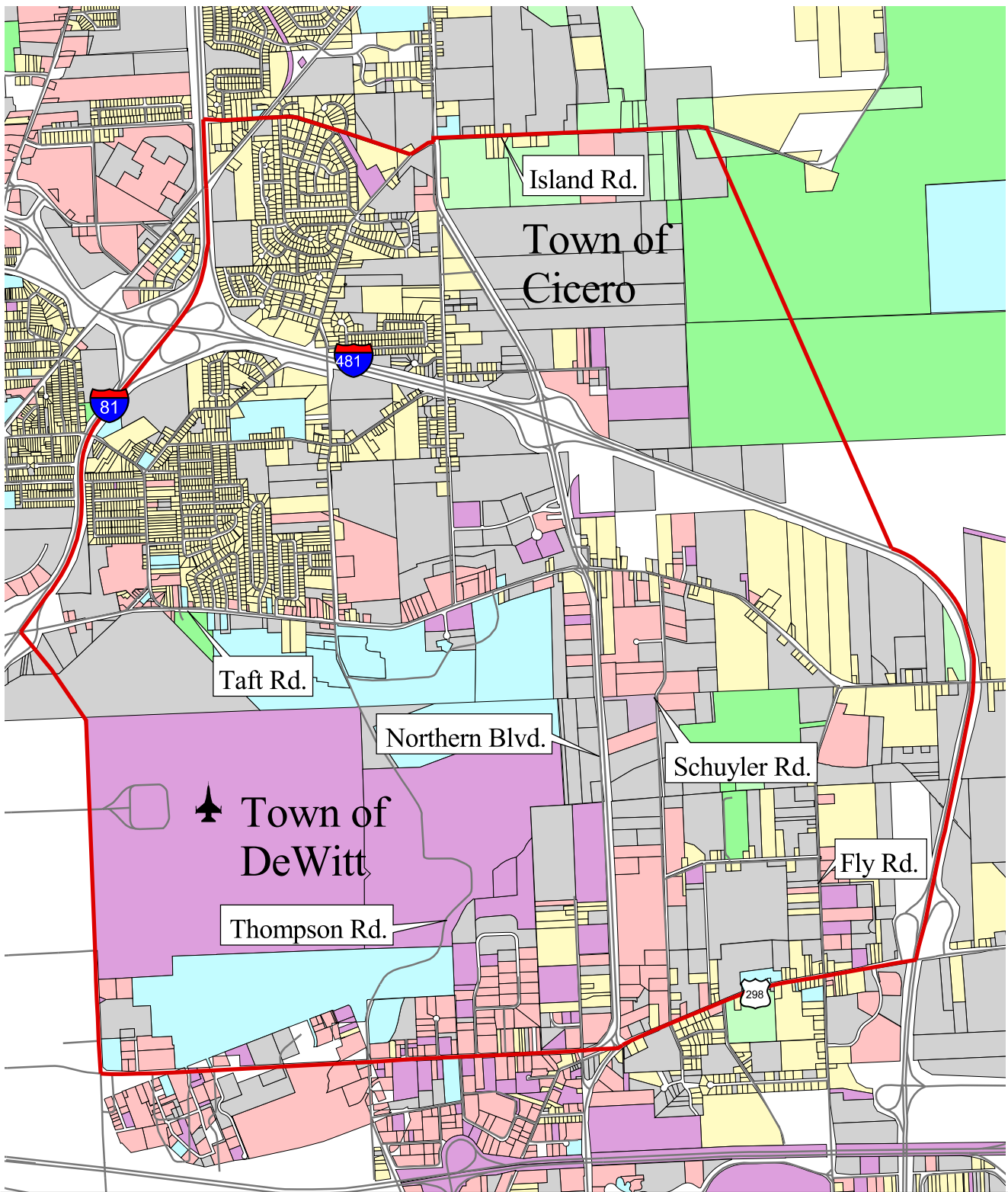
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








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Land Use

Taft Rd. & Northern Blvd. Study

Figure 4

-  Study Area
-  Roads
- Land Use
-  Residential
-  Vacant
-  Public Service
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Mining
-  Agricultural
-  Parks
-  Water



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3.3 Development

In the study area there are three primary developments that are either in the planning or construction stages that could impact the transportation network in the short and long term. These are Beacon North (a development managed by O'Brien and Geere) that is located at Taft Road and Northern Boulevard, the Hancock Air Park (managed by the Metropolitan Development Association) located west of Northern Boulevard on Taft Road and the proposed Woodbine Industrial Park north of State Route 298 between Fly Road and Schuyler Road. In addition to these known development plans there are currently several large parcels of agricultural and vacant land to the northeast of Northern Boulevard, south of Island Road in the Town of Cicero. In this study area quadrant there are currently no municipal services such as sewer or water (but are within the county sanitary district) limiting immediate development. The potential exists for commercial and/or industrial development in this land area should municipal services become available. Such development would impact the transportation network addressed by this study by placing additional capacity stresses on the network.



Entrance to Beacon North at Northern Boulevard

Beacon North

Beacon North consists of approximately 133 acres of new commercial development and is approximately 90 percent completed with several small parcels still vacant. The parcels are primarily commercial in nature with several office buildings. Primary tenants include Keebler (combined office and distribution facility), Federal Express, Emery Worldwide, Syracuse Research Corporation, Telergy and Swift Trucking. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation recently announced that they would be relocating their combined repair service facility in Beacon North, closing smaller, older facilities throughout the county. Existing parcels and ownership are shown in Appendix B.

There are two access points to Beacon North. The main entrance is off Northern Boulevard with a traffic signal and a “jug-handle” northbound to allow traffic to cross Northern Boulevard at the signal. This was primarily developed to enhance truck traffic movements into and out of the development and is the primary access point for the development. The second entry is at Totman Road, a local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of Cicero. Totman Road connects with Taft Road on the south and with Northern Boulevard on the north.

According to O’Brien and Geere, the developer of Beacon North, a traffic study completed in the late 1980’s projected a more intense development with office buildings and higher traffic levels than have resulted with the current commercial development.



Beacon North/Northern Boulevard South “jug-handle” looking north on Northern Boulevard



Entrance to Hancock Air Park from Taft Road

Hancock Air Park

The Hancock Air Park consists of 133 acres of previously developed land at the former Hancock Air Force Base located in the Town of Cicero. Zoning is currently general commercial and office. The proposed development would involve demolition of the existing facilities, then improving the site to attract construction of office buildings and warehouses. Proposed development for Hancock Air Park is shown in Appendix C.

Main access to the Air Park is via the signalized intersection of Taft Road and Thompson Road. Thompson Road north of Taft Road is a rural local road under the jurisdiction of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT), while south of Taft Road it is a rural local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of Cicero.

A consultant has completed a traffic impact study for this development in conjunction with the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA).¹ The current development plan for this site assumes that of the 133 acres, 50 acres would be devoted to general office use and 70 acres to warehousing usage. The remaining 13 acres are not considered usable at this time due to the fact that these parcels are restricted from development by the

¹ Traffic Impact Study, Hancock Airpark, C&S Engineers, Inc, Syracuse, NY, September 2000

proximity of adjacent airport operations. The developer has assumed, for the purposes of the traffic analysis that land use within the property would consist of general office space with approximately 750 employees and warehouse capacity of approximately 610,000 square feet. The traffic study projected that 750 trips would be generated in the PM Peak Hour and 700 trips in the AM Peak Hour at full build-out.

The MDA traffic study also proposes a new break in access at Taft Road by two local roads within the property. These two roads include Dover Road, to provide access west of Thompson Road, and Stewart Drive to provide access east of the Thompson Road intersection.

The above assumptions depend upon the real estate market and the ability of the developer to clear the site and improve services. The MDA has indicated that there is a substantial lead-time to realize the full development of the property due to the current existing conditions including dilapidated buildings as well as antiquated and under-sized infrastructure. The MDA is undertaking demolition and site improvements this year and anticipate improved shovel-ready sites by 2002.



Former military housing and utilities on Hancock Air Park site

Woodbine Development

The proposed 107-acre Woodbine Development is a recent proposal, which is still in the early preliminary scoping stage. This site consists of several large parcels north of State Route 298 between Schuyler and Fly Roads and bordered on the north by Badgley Road. It assumes the extension of Canada Drive (a dead-end road entering the parcel from Schuyler Road) to Fly Road. Initial information has the project developing in four phases. Phase 1, as proposed, would consist of approximately 21,600 square feet of warehousing and office space, and 80,000 square feet of office space. Phase 2 would have 520,000 square feet of warehousing and office space. Phase 3 would consist of 100,000 square feet of office development. Phase 4 would have approximately 60,000 square feet of warehousing, some light industrial and a professional building.

The number of truck bays in Phase 2 (approximately 250) indicates the probability of a significant impact on the traffic patterns of the surrounding roads and intersections. Although Taft Road and Northern Boulevard may not be impacted to the degree Schuyler Road, Fly Road and State Route 298 could be (depending upon the truck routing and operations of the tenants), clearly this development will have a major impact on the area. A traffic study will be completed prior to approval of the development by the appropriate agencies.

Northern Boulevard

Major development adjacent to Northern Boulevard from I-481 south to State Route 298 is not anticipated in the near future as much of the property on this segment west of the roadway is being acquired by the City of Syracuse for airport runway expansion. Conversely, parcels to the east of the roadway are in Federal Aviation Administration “clear zones” required in the flight paths near runways.

The primary existing businesses in this area are trucking related terminals with some office development near the intersection of Northern Boulevard and State Route 298. One potential site for major development is within the Town of Cicero in the northeast quadrant of the study area bounded by Northern Boulevard on the west, Island Road on the north, Cicero Swamp on the east and I-481 on the south. As noted above, potential exists for commercial and/or industrial development on these parcels should municipal services such as water and sewer become available. Assessing any potential transportation and environmental impacts would be a necessity should a development application be submitted.

Taft Road

Development along Taft Road in the study area east of Northern Boulevard is dominated by existing residential development patterns and vacant land, which is currently zoned industrial and agricultural. West of Northern Boulevard there has been some commercial development north of Taft Road and to a limited extent south of Taft Road in the vicinity of Thompson Road. South of Taft Road the bulk of available property for development is in the Hancock Air Park development.

CHAPTER 4 – TRAFFIC DATA

4.1 Existing Conditions

Data Collection/Traffic Analysis

To quantify existing conditions of the study area roadways, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) personnel provided the pertinent information. This information included:

- Manual turning counts
- Traffic counts from automated traffic recorders
- Accident information
- Signal phasing/timing plans
- Speed limits

In addition, a consultant to the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) completed manual turning movement counts at 5 intersections in the study area.

The NYSDOT and the OCDOT provided year 2000 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes at various locations within the study area. The AADT volumes have been factored to take seasonal fluctuations in traffic into consideration.

Automatic traffic counts were provided for the following road segments:

- Taft Road, between Northern Boulevard and Thompson Road
- Island Road, 1000 feet east of Northern Boulevard
- Northern Boulevard
 - 1100 feet north of State Route 298 (northbound count only)
 - 1600 feet north of the I-481 exit ramp (southbound count only)
 - Between State Route 298 and the United Parcel Service (UPS) driveway (bi-directional)
 - Between Taft Road and the UPS driveway (bi-directional)
- I-481 Ramps at Northern Boulevard
 - Northbound on/off ramps
 - Southbound on/off ramps

The complete AM and PM turning movement counts as well as the AADT volumes for the corridor study area are included in Appendix E.

Roadway Segments

The major road segments in the study area and their operating characteristics are as follows:

Taft Road

Taft Road is an east-west arterial under the jurisdiction of the OCDOT. Taft Road consists of two lanes in each direction with an auxiliary center turn lane to accommodate both eastbound and westbound left turns at the intersection with Thompson Road. The posted speed limit for Taft Road in this segment of the study area is 40 miles per hour (mph) west of the Thompson Road intersection, and 50 mph east of the intersection.

Northern Boulevard

Northern Boulevard is a north-south arterial under the jurisdiction of the OCDOT. It is a four-lane divided highway from State Route 298 to its connection to Totman Road just south of Thompson/Island Road. From Totman Road to Thompson/Island Road it is a four-lane road with no median.



Northern Boulevard looking north from opposite the UPS Driveway

The posted speed limit for Northern Boulevard is 55 mph from State Route 298 to a point just north of Eastman Road where it is reduced to 45 mph. There are four signalized intersections along this stretch of road; State Route 298, Taft Road, Beacon North, and I-481. The intersection with I-481 consists of a full interchange with appropriate ramps. There are also three unsignalized intersections including the UPS driveway, Eastman Road and Totman Road.

State Route 298

State Route 298 is a two-lane east-west minor arterial, with a posted speed limit of 40 mph. It carries significant commuter traffic from Northern Boulevard and I-481 to the Carrier Circle/Thompson Road area. There are several intersections within the study area at Northern Boulevard, Schuyler Road, Fly Road and I-481. The intersection with I-481 consists of a full interchange with appropriate ramps. State Route 298 is not only impacted by significant commuter traffic, but provides access for Brittonfield Business Park and the industrial/commercial development on Fly Road. The proposed Woodbine Development would also have impacts on this segment of roadway.

Molloy Road

Molloy Road is a two-lane minor arterial under jurisdiction of the OCDOT. Connecting with Northern Boulevard and State Route 298 on the west, it intersects with Thompson Road, Townline Road and State Route 11. The posted speed limit is 40 mph. This road primarily serves commercial development south of the airport property as well as the New York Air National Guard base.

Schuyler Road

Schuyler Road is a local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of DeWitt and the Town of Cicero. It runs parallel to Northern Boulevard and provides access to several trucking firms with frontage on Northern Boulevard, but access via Schuyler Road. It is a two-lane road with a posted speed of 40 mph. Due to the nature of the development on Schuyler Road, truck traffic dominates. Schuyler Road intersects with State Route 298 on the south and with Taft Road on the north, both at unsignalized intersections. There are three additional unsignalized intersections along Schuyler Road. One is at Terminal Road (which serves as access to several trucking companies), Badgley Road, and Canada Drive (which dead-ends east of Schuyler Road). Schuyler Road is envisioned as the primary access for the Woodbine Development if Canada Drive is not extended to Fly Road. Due to the close proximity of the Schuyler Road/State Route 298 intersection with the Northern Boulevard/State Route 298 intersection, further review may be required if increased truck and traffic flows are projected in conjunction with the proposed development.

Fly Road

Fly Road between Taft Road and State Route 298 is located in the Town of DeWitt. It is a two-lane road under the jurisdiction of the OCDOT, and has three intersections. Two of the intersections are unsignalized including Badgley Road and Taft Road. The intersection with State Route 298 is signalized. The speed limit along this section of road is 40 mph. Fly Road serves commercial development between Taft Road and State Route 298.

If Canada Drive is extended from Schuyler Road to Fly Road in conjunction with the Woodbine Development there may be additional impacts on Fly Road requiring further study and review especially in relation to significant right of way constraints at the Fly Road and State Route 298 intersection.

Thompson Road

Thompson Road is a north-south rural local road under the jurisdiction of the OCDOT north of its intersection with Taft Road. The road is a two-lane roadway with an auxiliary northbound right-turn lane. It intersects Taft Road creating a four-way intersection, and has a posted speed limit of 35 mph. Thompson Road south of Taft Road is a rural local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of Cicero, which dead ends at the airport property line.

Intersections

There are two major signalized intersections within the study area that are the primary focus of the study due to their location within the corridors of interest. These include the State Route 298 and Northern Boulevard intersection and the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard intersection. These intersections and Level of Service (LOS) analyses are covered under the LOS section of the report.

The other intersections, both signalized and unsignalized, are discussed as minor due to the lack of side friction at the current time. In the future they may be reexamined as part of a traffic signal warrant study.

Minor Signalized Intersections

Fly Road at State Route 298

Fly Road and State Route 298 is a signalized intersection with all movements occurring from single lanes. Fly Road is under the jurisdiction of the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) while State Route 298 is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The signal is under NYSDOT control. There are significant right of way constraints at the Fly Road and

State Route 298 intersection (including residential and commercial development) restricting major improvements to the intersection at this time.



State Route 298 at Fly Road looking west

Unsignalized Intersections

Northern Boulevard and Eastman Road

Eastman Road is a two lane local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of Cicero that crosses Northern Boulevard utilizing a median and stop signs for control of traffic on Eastman Road. All movements are from single lanes.



Eastman Road at Northern Boulevard looking west

Schuyler Road at State Route 298 and Taft Road

Schuyler Road, a local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of DeWitt and the Town of Cicero, runs parallel to Northern Boulevard and provides access to several trucking firms with frontage on Northern Boulevard, but access via Schuyler Road. Due to the nature of the development on Schuyler Road, truck traffic dominates. Schuyler Road intersects with State Route 298 on the south and with Taft Road on the north. Both intersections are controlled by stop signs for traffic on Schuyler Road. All movements are made from single lanes.

Fly Road at Badgley Road and Taft Road

Fly Road between Taft Road and State Route 298 is located in the Town of DeWitt. Fly Road at Taft Road is a three-legged intersection with stop sign control for traffic northbound on Fly Road. All movements are made from single lanes.

Fly Road and Badgley Road is a three-legged intersection with stop control for traffic on Badgley Road. All movements are made from single lanes.

Thompson Road

Thompson Road is a north-south rural local road under the jurisdiction of the OCDOT north of its intersection with Taft Road. The road is a two-lane roadway. It intersects Taft Road creating a four-way intersection, and has a posted speed limit of 35 mph. Thompson Road south of Taft Road is a rural local road under the jurisdiction of the Town of Cicero, which dead ends at the airport property line.

Level of Service

In order to determine the current operating conditions for the study area intersections, Level of Service (LOS) analyses were performed in accordance with the 1997 Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report 209 using the Highway Capacity Software (HCS) for the appropriate analyses. In addition to the LOS, the HCS software calculates a Volume over Capacity (V/C) Ratio for roadway capacity.

The Level of Service for an intersection is defined as a qualitative and quantitative measure of the operational characteristics of the traffic stream and the perception of the users of the facility. The LOS for signalized intersections is defined in terms of delay per vehicle in seconds per vehicle. Delay is a measure of driver discomfort, frustration, fuel consumption and lost travel time. The LOS is indicated by a letter grade A through F.

The following summarizes the ranges of delay for each LOS for signalized intersections.

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Delay per Vehicle</u>
A – Little or No Delay	<10 sec.
B – Minor, Short Delay	10.1 to 20 sec.
C – Average Delays	20.1 to 35 sec.
D – Long, but Acceptable Delays	35.1 to 55 sec.
E – Long, Approaching Unacceptable Delays	55.1 to 80 sec.
F – Long, Unacceptable Delays	>80 sec.

A capacity analysis was performed on each of the previously mentioned intersections. Level of Service “A” represents free flow with individual vehicles unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. In general, LOS “D” is considered to be the minimally acceptable level of service. LOS “E” indicates that traffic flow is operating at the maximum capacity of the transportation system, while LOS “F” generally indicates a breakdown in the flow of traffic.

Although local standards may vary, LOS “C” is widely regarded as a desirable design objective.

A HCS analysis was done on the following major signalized intersections as being the primary focus of the study:

- Taft Road/Northern Boulevard
- Northern Boulevard/State Route 298

The remaining intersections that had turning movement counts collected were not analyzed due to the secondary nature of the intersections and the focus on the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors.

Major Signalized Intersections

Taft Road and Northern Boulevard

The intersection of Taft Road and Northern Boulevard consists of a four-way signalized intersection. Taft Road has two through lanes in each direction with a left turn lane on both the eastbound and westbound approaches. Right turns are accommodated by channelized slip ramps. Northern Boulevard has two through lanes in each direction with left turn lanes on both the northbound and southbound approaches. Right turns are accommodated by channelized slip ramps. Level of Service analysis shows this intersection functioning at an overall LOS “D”. The LOS for individual intersection approaches are summarized in Table 4.1.



Northern Boulevard at Taft Road looking north

**Table 4.1
Taft Road/Northern Boulevard Intersection LOS**

Approach	Peak Hour	Approach LOS
Eastbound	AM	D
Westbound	AM	C
Northbound	AM	B
Southbound	AM	D
Eastbound	PM	D
Westbound	PM	C
Northbound	PM	D
Southbound	PM	B

Source: SMTC

Northern Boulevard and State Route 298

The intersection of Northern Boulevard and State Route 298 is a “T” intersection. The southbound approach has a channelized ramp to Molloy Road, a single ramp for right turns to State Route 298 and a left turn lane. The eastbound approach on State Route 298 has a single left turn lane (onto Northern Boulevard), and a through lane. The westbound approach on State Route 298 has a combined through and right turn lane.

Level of Service analysis shows this intersection failing due to the high number of vehicles (greater than 800 vehicles turning from a single lane) making left turns from the State Route 298 eastbound approach to Northern Boulevard in the PM Peak hour. This produced a Volume over Capacity (V/C) Ratio of 1.7. Because of the failure of the State Route 298 approach, the software was unable to derive an overall PM Peak Hour LOS for the intersection. The LOS for individual intersection approaches is summarized in Table 4.2.



State Route 298 at Northern Boulevard looking east

Table 4.2
NYS Route 298/Northern Boulevard Intersection LOS

Approach	Peak Hour	Approach LOS
Eastbound	AM	B
Westbound	AM	D
Southbound	AM	C
Eastbound	PM	See Note
Westbound	PM	B
Southbound	PM	D

Source: SMTC

Note: An approach LOS for the eastbound traffic in the PM Peak was not obtainable due to the high volumes of eastbound left turn traffic. This caused the approach to fail.

4.2 Trucking Operations

The Northern Boulevard and Taft Road corridor segments in the study area are home to numerous trucking and distribution firms such as United Parcel Service (UPS), Federal Express, Emery Worldwide, Yellow Freight, Swift and New England Motor Freight, to name just a few. There are no municipally designated truck routes in the study area, although State Route 298 and Northern Boulevard are designated Access Roads allowing for operation of 53 foot trailers. Because of the preponderance of trucking terminals in this area, Schuyler Road also sees primarily truck traffic. Significant truck traffic can impact the operation of road segments and particularly intersections.

UPS operates regular daily trips to the CSXT intermodal facility in DeWitt and the Syracuse Hancock International Airport. The UPS facility on Northern Boulevard is a major distribution and break bulk center servicing Central and Northern New York. An average of 200 UPS trailers are handled per day to and from the rail yard in the seasonal peak (September – November) with approximately 150 UPS trailers handled per day in non-peak periods. Pick up and delivery of trailers from the CSXT facility to the Northern Boulevard UPS facility occurs primarily in the morning from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM and evening 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. UPS trips to the airport occur throughout the day. This traffic is in addition to its feeder runs across the region and state from this facility. Although UPS is a major operator in this area, terminal and delivery operations also contribute significantly to the traffic volumes in the area.



United Parcel Service Regional Distribution Center on Northern Boulevard

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) provided traffic counts for both Taft Road and Northern Boulevard with classification of vehicles. Vehicle classification counts differentiate between cars, buses and trucks. The classifications were developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and include the following:

- F3: 2 axle single unit (e.g.: pick-up truck)
- F4: 2 axle single unit (e.g.: bus)
- F5: 2 axle single unit truck (e.g.: mail delivery van)
- F6: 3 axle single unit truck (e.g.: coke truck)
- F7: 4 or more axle single unit truck (e.g.: single unit box truck)
- F8: 4 or less axle vehicles, one unit is a truck (e.g.: small tractor trailer)
- F9: 5 axle double unit vehicles, one unit is a truck (e.g.: tractor trailer)
- F10: 6 or more axle double unit vehicles, one unit is a truck (e.g.: tractor trailer)
- F11: 5 or less axle multi-unit trucks (e.g.: tractor trailer)
- F12: 6 axle multi-unit trucks (e.g.: tractor trailer)
- F13: 7 or more axle multi-unit trucks (e.g.: tractor trailer)

The F6-F13 classification includes heavy trucks. F9-F13 includes large tractor trailers. A summary of truck volumes is shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3
Heavy Vehicle Counts**

Road Segment	AADT	Trucks Class F3-F13	Heavy Trucks Class F6-F13	Tractor Trailers Class F8-F13
Taft Road Between Northern Blvd. and Thompson Road	14,094	4,025	559	487
Northern Blvd. Between Taft Road and UPS Driveway	17,070	5,309	694	552
Northern Blvd. Between State Route 298 and UPS Driveway	17,871	5,874	985	783

Source: NYSDOT

4.3 Accident Data

An accident analysis for the study area included the following signalized intersections:

- Taft Road and Northern Boulevard
- Taft Road and Thompson Road
- State Route 298 /Molloy Road and Northern Boulevard

The following unsignalized intersections were also examined:

- Eastman Road and Northern Boulevard
- Northern Boulevard and Island Road/Thompson Road

Using the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Centralized Local Accident Surveillance System (CLASS), locations within the study area with ten or more accidents during the last three years of available data were identified. The analysis revealed two signalized intersections and no unsignalized intersections that met that criterion.

A request was made through the NYSDOT to obtain actual Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Police Accident Reports at the two intersections for the most recent three-year period available. Consequently, Police Accident Reports were received and evaluated for the period of January 1996 through December 1998.

Taft Road and Northern Boulevard

In the period from 1993 to 1995, 66 accidents were reported at the intersection of Taft Road and Northern Boulevard. Of these 66, 20 involved injuries. From 1996 to 1998 there were an additional 40 accidents resulting in 18 injuries. The intersection currently is experiencing a number of safety related concerns including rear end collisions. A project is currently being advanced by the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) to resolve the safety issues identified. The safety project is discussed later in this section.

Taft Road and Thompson Road

In the period from 1996 to 1998 this intersection had a total of 17 accidents that resulted in 9 injuries and 8 with property damage only. The OCDOT has recently completed an improvement to this intersection to address previously noted safety concerns. This project is discussed later in this section.

Northern Boulevard and Eastman Road

During the three year period from 1996 to 1998 one accident was reported for this intersection. According to the accident report, the vehicle in question was traveling west on Eastman Road and stopped at the stop sign at Northern Boulevard. The vehicle then proceeded to cross Northern Boulevard and was struck broadside by a vehicle traveling in the left lane of northbound Northern Boulevard. This accident resulted in the only fatality in this report.

Taft Road and Fly Road

In the June 2000 Accident Surveillance Program Final Report produced by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTTC) Fly Road at East Taft Road was examined. The intersection of Fly Road and Taft Road consists of a three-legged intersection with stop sign control for traffic northbound on Fly Road. All approaches have a single lane from which all movements are made. From January 1995 to July 1998, six accidents occurred at the intersection. According to the report this resulted in an accident rate of 0.81 accidents per million entering vehicles (MEV). The statewide average for this type of intersection is 0.20 accidents per MEV. Recommendations were beyond the scope of this study. With the proposed development of the Hancock Air Park and the Woodbine Development, this intersection may require further examination in traffic studies being prepared for the developments.

State Route 298 and Fly Road

The June 2000 Accident Surveillance Program Final Report, produced by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTTC) indicated this segment of Fly Road at State Route 298 experienced 3.49 accidents per million entering vehicles (MEV). This is higher than the statewide average of 2.09 MEV for this type of roadway. Recommendations were beyond the scope of work of this study.

An accident collision summary is shown in Table 4.4 and an accident severity distribution by intersection is shown in Table 4.5. The accident data is shown in Appendix F.

Table 4.4
Accident Collision Summary by Intersection
1996 – 1998

Accident Type	Taft Road/ Northern Blvd.	Taft Road/ Thompson Road	Northern Blvd./ Eastman Road	Total
Right Angle	8	3	1	12
Rear End	21	7		28
Head On				
Side Swipe	3			3
Left Turn	6	6		12
Right Turn				
Pedestrian				
Bicycle				
Fixed Object	1			1
Backing	1	1		2
Unable to Determine				
<i>Total</i>	40	17	1	58

Source: NYSDOT/SMTC

Table 4.5
Accident Severity Distribution by Intersection
1996 - 1998

Accident Type	Taft Road/ Northern Blvd.	Taft Road/ Thompson Road	Northern Blvd./ Eastman Road	Total
Property Damage Only	22	8		30
Injury	18	9		27
Fatality			1	1
<i>Total</i>	40	17	1	58

Source: NYSDOT/SMTC

4.4 Current Projects

Taft Road at Northern Boulevard

The OCDOT currently has a safety project that includes the intersection of Taft Road and Northern Boulevard to address the safety issues. Preliminary Design for this project (Taft Settlement Road at Northern Boulevard) started in 1997 and will let for construction in the summer of 2001. The project will improve the alignment of the intersection and upgrade the traffic signals to alleviate the safety situation. Additional lanes will also be provided at the intersection to accommodate a 20 year design year. The intersection currently is experiencing a number of safety related concerns including rear end collisions and this project is expected to address the correctable accident pattern.

Currently Taft Road from Northern Boulevard to Fly Road is suffering from distressed pavement, narrow shoulders and inadequate roadside drainage, which are impacting traffic capacity and safety. The project limits include the intersection with Northern Boulevard and proceeds easterly along Taft Road one mile to a point 0.2 miles west of the Fly Road intersection. Plans for the intersection include the installation of a dedicated left turn lane, one through lane and a shared through/right turn lane on Taft Road eastbound and westbound. The project also plans for the installation of a dedicated left turn lane and two dedicated through lanes with a shared through/right turn lane on Northern Boulevard northbound and southbound.

Taft Road at Thompson Road

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation recently completed a project for the reconstruction of Thompson Road, in the Town of Cicero, from Taft Road to Northern Boulevard, including the intersection of Taft Road and Thompson Road. The project included adding dedicated left turn lanes on Taft Road at the intersection with Thompson Road. A new traffic signal was installed as part of the project providing protected left turn movements on Taft Road. The project began in the Spring of 1996 and was completed late Fall 1997. Currently there is not enough data to analyze the results of the improvements.

CHAPTER 5 – TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE ISSUES

Specific land use and transportation issues were raised at the start of this study. These issues provided guidance in determining the type of data collected and areas to focus on. These included:

- Concern over truck traffic crossing medians on Northern Boulevard,
- Development that would have unforeseen impacts on the transportation network with a focus on large trucks,
- Status of development in the Town of Cicero and Town of DeWitt within the vicinity of Taft Road and Northern Boulevard.

During the course of the study the above issues were refined and additional issues were identified. These included:

- State Route 298 at Northern Boulevard intersection,
- State Route 298 at Schuyler Road intersection,
- Schuyler Road at Taft Road intersection,
- Fly Road intersections,
- Woodbine Development proposal,
- Other possible parcels available for future development.

These issues are further discussed below and are divided into Transportation and Land Use issues.

5.1 Transportation Issues

Truck Traffic Crossing Medians

Northern Boulevard is a four lane divided highway from the intersection with State Route 298 to the intersection with Thompson/Island Road. Although there are few curb cuts along this road there are several median crossings to allow traffic to cross through lanes to access some of the trucking and distribution terminals along Northern Boulevard. In some cases this has created a hazard, due to the short length of the median, when long tractor-trailers attempt u-turns or to block traffic lanes as they attempt to make left turns out of terminals.

The OCDOT has attempted to address this issue with the building of several truck left-turn lanes or "jug-handles" along Northern Boulevard to reduce and eliminate hazards. One is located just north of the intersection with State Route 298, which provides access from the southbound lanes of Northern Boulevard to the northbound side of the corridor. A second is located at Beacon North, and is controlled by a traffic signal at the intersection, and a third has been recently completed at the intersection with Thompson/Island Road, which is controlled by stop signs. In addition, the OCDOT has established signs at all the medians banning truck turns.



Sign banning truck turns in median on Northern Boulevard

Eastman Road Recycling Facility

An expressed concern at the start of this study was that development had occurred that had potential significant impacts on the road network without appropriate review under New York State General Municipal Law 239-f, although the road in question was not under county or state jurisdiction. A specific issue was a recycling facility located on Eastman Road that intersects Northern Boulevard. Potential existed for significant truck traffic to be generated crossing the divided highway with no traffic signal.



Former recycling facility off Eastman Road in the Town of Cicero

The recycling facility closed shortly after opening and the potential impact of the truck traffic did not materialize. In response to concern though, the OCDOT established the median signs preventing left turns, as mentioned above. All westbound truck traffic exiting Eastman Road must turn right onto Northern Boulevard and proceed in a northerly direction. Southbound traffic would then use the “jug-handle” constructed at Thompson Road/Island Road.

State Route 298 at Northern Boulevard

The intersection analysis completed for this study showed that this intersection failed during the PM Peak hour due to the number of vehicles turning left onto Northern Boulevard. This intersection may need to be analyzed in relation to the potential development of Woodbine to the east of the intersection with Northern Boulevard on State Route 298. With the possibility of increased truck traffic there may be a negative impact on the intersection.

State Route 298 at Schuyler Road

As Schuyler Road is a major access for several of the trucking terminals on Northern Boulevard as well as for those on Schuyler Road itself, the intersection of these two routes may become more important as the area is developed. The intersection at Schuyler

Road to State Route 298 is controlled by stop sign for traffic on Schuyler Road. Right turns by tractor-trailers from Schuyler Road to State Route 298 are difficult due to the turning radius. With the potential for increased traffic due to the extension of Canada Drive (currently a dead-end road from Schuyler Road) into the Woodbine Development, as well as the busy nature of State Route 298, improvements to this intersection may require further evaluation.

Schuyler Road at Taft Road

This intersection may be impacted by the development of Woodbine as cited above for Schuyler Road and State Route 298. Traffic exiting north on Schuyler Road to Taft Road may experience difficulties turning left on Taft Road due to the two-lane nature of both roads at this intersection and limited radius for trucks.

Fly Road

Fly Road is a two-lane road that intersects with both State Route 298 and Taft Road. The intersection of Fly Road and State Route 298 is controlled by a traffic signal while the intersection of Fly Road and Taft Road is controlled by a stop sign for traffic on Fly Road. With the potential development at Woodbine a traffic analysis should be completed to ascertain impacts of increased commercial traffic.

5.2 Land Use Issues

This study has examined land use patterns and zoning in the study area and has found that there is potential for development that may adversely impact the highway network if fully developed. The three known developments that will have an impact are Beacon North (which is almost complete), Hancock Air Park, and the Woodbine Development.

Beacon North

A traffic study completed in the 1980's for Beacon North showed more substantial office space build-out and greater traffic generation. Actual development, while generating more truck traffic, has created limited single occupant vehicle trips due to the commercial versus office nature of the development. As this development is nearly complete, further traffic impacts are not expected to be significant.

Hancock Air Park

Hancock Air Park has developed a draft traffic plan, which has been reviewed by the OCDOT. The developer has indicated that the lead-time for full build-out may be a decade or more. The existing infrastructure on the old Air Force Base must be demolished; utilities placed underground, and environmental conditions assessed. Comments provided by the OCDOT have indicated that traffic from the full build-out of the development will have an adverse impact on the operation of the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard intersection and have requested the developer to address mitigation as the project advances.

Woodbine Development

Woodbine Development is in the preliminary planning stages and has potential for significant impact on the study area due to increased commercial traffic. A traffic study will need to be completed prior to approval of the development.

Other Land Parcels

In the Town of Cicero there are several large parcels of vacant and agricultural land that could be developed. These properties, if developed as industrial or commercial consistent with the area zoning, could have significant future impacts on the Northern Boulevard corridor and the intersection with Taft Road. These impacts are unknown at the time of this study, as no development has been proposed. One can speculate, however, that a development similar (or larger) in nature to Beacon North or Woodbine could occur if public utilities are provided and the property is developed. Any future development proposals should be reviewed with traffic impacts as a major consideration and with truck traffic generation as a specific element.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS

The Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study is a transportation study examining the interrelationship of traffic, zoning and land use along the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors of the Towns of DeWitt and Cicero. This study was requested by the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) to survey zoning, land use and transportation issues in these corridors in response to specific traffic and development concerns expressed by an elected official.

Specific issues included:

- Truck traffic crossing medians on Northern Boulevard,
- Development having unforeseen impacts on the transportation network,
- Status of large development projects in both the Town of Cicero and Town of DeWitt that would have impacts on the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors.

The OCDOT has already addressed certain safety issues in the study area by:

- Developing the “No Turn” signage on Northern Boulevard,
- Creating "jug-handles" as u-turn facilities to safely allow large trucks to access both sides of Northern Boulevard particularly the Beacon North development, and
- Initiating the project for improving the intersection of Taft Road and Northern Boulevard (also enhancing mobility).

6.1 Recommendations

Recommendations for further consideration include:

- The Town Planning Commissions should assess the potential impacts of the proposed developments and provide recommendations to their respective legislative bodies pursuant to zoning amendments and associated land use policies. This should include the potential development of large parcels currently vacant, such as those on the northeast quadrant of the study area on Northern Boulevard in Cicero.
- As large commercial parcels are planned or proposed in the Town of DeWitt and Town of Cicero, the town planning officials should reexamine their Master Plans to consider impacts of increased traffic, particularly trucks, on key intersections and road segments. These reviews should be conducted in coordination with the OCDOT, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Syracuse/Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA).

- A comprehensive review of traffic generation for the proposed Woodbine Development should be conducted taking into account the potential impacts on I-481, Fly Road, Schuyler Road, Taft Road, Northern Boulevard and State Route 298 as well as all the included intersections and interchanges.
- The OCDOT should monitor effectiveness of the "no u-turn" signs and, if found ineffective, consider closing some or all of the median crossings to improve safety.
- The OCDOT should monitor the accident rate at Taft Road and Northern Boulevard to gauge the effectiveness of the current safety improvement project at this intersection.
- As requested by the OCDOT, the developer of the Hancock Air Park should develop a plan indicating when and how to provide mitigation at the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard intersection to prevent deterioration of the Level of Service.
- Based on the results of this study, the SOCPA will provide increased scrutiny of this area under General Municipal Law 239 review, which will consider traffic impacts on state and county facilities of land use decisions. This would address the concern of the recycling facility previously mentioned.
- The NYSDOT should explore the need for a double left turn lane on State Route 298 eastbound at Northern Boulevard to eliminate delays, congestion and improve the LOS for this approach to the intersection.

Existing, planned and potential development has, and will have, impacts on the operation and condition of the transportation infrastructure in the study area. As this development materializes, mechanisms need to be in place to anticipate and address issues related to those impacts, especially as it pertains to truck traffic. With appropriate planning and review by the affected agencies, development can occur with minimal negative impacts on the transportation infrastructure.

This report concludes the Special Technical Assistance review of concerns expressed about traffic and development in the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard corridors.

APPENDIX A

Public Involvement Plan

**Taft Road
and
Northern Boulevard Study
(*Special Technical Assistance*)**

Public Involvement Plan

SMTC Unified Planning Work Program Task -- 5B (i)

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 **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study**, to develop alternatives, and to evaluate the alternatives on the basis of collaboratively identified criteria.

II. Goals

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) of the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard 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, will meet 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. A letter, inviting key individuals/representatives to participate on the SAC, was sent out in June 2000.

In addition to this formal committee, a list of interested “stakeholders” (individuals with significant relations, interest and location within the study area) will be maintained by the SMTC. The stakeholders will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, and will be notified of all SAC and public meetings.

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

IV. Public Meeting and Miscellaneous Public Involvement/Comment

The SMTC will be holding one (1) public involvement meeting/workshop, to be held at the tail end of the study. This public meeting, likely to be held in Fall 2000, will summarize the study’s purpose, goals and objectives, study area, existing conditions, relative transportation and mobility issues, current and future land use and development scenarios, and miscellaneous data analysis. The meeting will also involve the discussion of alternative solutions, recommendations, and an implementation plan (developed and evaluated through the public and SAC process). This meeting will allow the public to make comment prior to the SMTC staff preparing and submitting the draft final report of the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study** to the SMTC Planning and Policy Committees for their acceptance.

In lieu of additional public meetings held throughout the earlier stages of the study, the SMTC will be initiating and conducting a variety of public involvement activities:

Direct Outreach: The SMTC staff will be scheduling direct meetings with businesses, trucking firms, land owners, etc., located within the study area to discuss existing conditions, transportation issues, general circulation patterns, current and future land use and development scenarios, as well as obtain opinions on the study’s proposed alternatives. This face-to-face communication will allow the SMTC to obtain immediate feedback from a direct source on a number of study-specific conditions and issues, and develop ongoing relationships throughout the course of the study.

Study Updates: The SMTC will be distributing a one-page update that will serve to keep the SAC, stakeholders, and the interested public informed during specific stages of the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study**. Having the appearance of a project newsletter, these study updates will focus on relevant topics during the (1) existing conditions phase; (2) transportation issues phase; and (3) alternative solutions phase. Such an update will educate, inform and encourage feedback and public comment, as well as publicize future study-specific meetings to be held.

Material Distribution at Locations Within Study Area: 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. Taft Road Post-Office, gas stations, convenience stores, key intersections, etc.). This information may include one or more of the following: Study Update, meeting notice/flyer, comment card, and a pre-addressed survey on a particular study issue. If possible, an origin and destination survey will be conducted in conjunction with this information dissemination.

All citizens (especially those who are not able to attend the public meeting or participate in direct meetings 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 **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study** may be on the agenda as a discussion item.

V. Press Releases/Media Coverage

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 (at the discretion of the SAC), the SMTC will also send additional news releases, or take the initiative to prompt media coverage on pertinent developments pertaining to the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study**.

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 the SMTC and/or specific issues and questions regarding the Taft Road and Northern Boulevard 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 more than 1,300 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. Coverage of the **Taft Road**

and Northern Boulevard Study will be considered for inclusion in future issues of DIRECTIONS. 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 **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard 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 meeting and the study in general. Such a request is imperative in order to get the affected “grassroots community” involved. By helping to distribute study updates, flyers/announcements, and speaking to the members of the community about the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study**, the SAC and stakeholders will serve to further promote public involvement in areas (and to individuals) that were not reached through the standard outreach.

Meeting notices will also be posted at libraries, local stores, shopping centers, and/or businesses.

Approved documents (i.e. the draft final report and accepted final report) will be available for review at the SMTC offices, and 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.

VIII. Conclusion

It is important for the SMTC to understand public attitudes and values in the early stages of the **Taft Road and Northern Boulevard Study**, as well as solicit input from affected citizens, businesses 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 evaluating commercial growth and the impact of increased trucking on the area, such involvement is paramount.

APPENDIX B

Beacon North Development

APPENDIX C

Hancock Airpark Development

APPENDIX D

Highway Capacity Software Analysis

APPENDIX E

Traffic Counts

APPENDIX F

Accident Data

APPENDIX G
Correspondence