



Executive Summary

The Exit 26 Land Use and Transportation Study is intended to help further refine the Town of Rotterdam's future land use vision for the corridor study area and to develop the necessary tools to help shape this vision and the associated multi-modal transportation system. Funded through the Capital District Transportation Committee's (CDTC) Linkage Program, this study was submitted to CDTC because of the potential for future growth within the corridor and the implications that this growth could have on land use and transportation infrastructure in the area.

In an area like this with growing development pressure and land uses ranging from agricultural to residential and heavy industrial, a well-defined corridor-level land use plan is necessary to ensure appropriate development and infrastructure is provided in the future. This plan provides the framework for refining and integrating land use and transportation within the corridor. Recommendations have been proposed that should assist in maintaining the quality-of-life in the corridor while providing for future growth and the infrastructure necessary to support it.

Recommendations herein are planning-level only, meaning that some, such as those specifically tied to transportation improvements, safety, and management, will be required to undergo further engineering-level analysis to ensure that the changes implemented are consistent with current engineering principles and guidelines.

- For such a geographically small and constrained study area, it is somewhat notable that there are many different land use types and significant natural and man-made features. These features include the Mohawk River, freight rail lines, floodplain lowlands bordered by steep slopes and hillsides, and I-890. Based on these existing conditions, it was determined that assessing land use from a more micro-level of assessment of obstacles/barriers/opportunities within the context of the corridor-wide analysis and vision, was appropriate. As such, the General Development Areas were formed. These areas were derived using existing conditions, including existing land use, transportation infrastructure and natural features. This analysis resulted in the creation of unique potential development areas and new zoning district boundaries that combined, provide for the corridor vision.
- There are two notable land use changes within the corridor study area. First, the existing Lower Rotterdam Junction area is proposed to be expanded into the immediate surrounding area to create a mixed-use office and residential district in a "village-type" concept. The second notable land use change is the Baan Farm area immediately west of I-890. This area has the greatest access to I-890, would likely require the smallest investment in transportation infrastructure expansion of all potential development sites within the corridor, and is immediately adjacent to NYS Thruway Exit 26. For this reason, the area is proposed to be rezoned into a Planned Business Development District (PBDD). This new district is envisioned to permit several types of uses including agricultural, warehousing, transportation, freight and distribution facilities.

- Two corridor-wide land use recommendations are presented. One provides for a river shoreline buffer which is intended to provide an undisturbed area along the riverbank for natural features to remain and also potentially provide for public access along the riverfront. The second corridor-wide land use recommendation option would create a “Green Ribbon” along the riverfront from the eastern end of the corridor study area to the western end. This area could be used for programmed or un-programmed open space enhancing the riverbank buffer area by extending the acreage left undeveloped adjacent to the Mohawk River.

- The connection between transportation infrastructure and land use within the corridor study area is significant. In any study of this type, the relationship between land use and transportation is considered as a cohesive set of conditions, not as independent elements. For this corridor, the relationship between land use and transportation is undeniable and well understood by residents and those who traverse the corridor regularly. For this reason, significant emphasis was placed on transportation infrastructure and the relationship it has to land use. Proposed transportation recommendations include smaller projects such as increasing signage to large projects such as re-designing the intersection of Lower Gregg Road and Route 5S. The following is just a sample of the many transportation-related recommendations provided in this document:
 - Close the western intersection of Lower Gregg Road at Route 5S and realign the eastern intersection to a 90’ angle with Route 5S.
 - Narrow the curb-cut of Old Crawford Road at Route 5S and move the road intersection west to improve the sight-line onto Route 5S.
 - Provide crossing improvements for the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Crossing over Route 5S.
 - Replace/fix the existing deteriorating railroad crossing on Route 5S.
 - Add a 5’ concrete sidewalk and 5’ grass strip to both sides of Route 5S between Mabie Lane and the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail.
 - Place a weave-pattern of bollards, or similar element, just outside the right-of-way of Route 5S on both approaches of the trail crossing over Route 5S.
 - Work with NYSDOT to ensure vegetation is cleared from clear sight triangles on a regular basis.

This plan provides an outline to enhance and further integrate land use and transportation within the corridor. To assist in implementation, a matrix detailing the proposed improvements, order-of-magnitude cost estimates, and the general implementation timeframe has been provided. Further study and design is required for many of the recommended elements. Progress will be dependent on the priority given to the needs outlined in this plan and the availability of funds to complete them. In addition, implementation will require the Town and its residents to continually discuss the options, work with private stakeholders, Schenectady County, CDTC and NYSDOT, and keep this plan in the forefront of work being undertaken throughout the Town of Rotterdam.