

Recommended Functional Classification Change for NY 29 and NY 67 in Saratoga County

Background

Roadway functional classification is the process by which local, state, and nation's street and highway network is ranked according to the role it plays in the overall system. It determines how travel is "directed" on the roadway system by defining the part that each road plays in serving travel needs in a region. It is a hierarchal system that helps ensure a comprehensive system that provides logical connectivity and continuity.

All roadways are functionally classified using a common nomenclature to provide a consistently defined roadway network across the country. These classifications are determined by individual state departments of transportation in cooperation with metropolitan planning organizations, such as CDTC, and other local officials, based on criteria established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA ultimately approves the classifications.

Typically, functional classification is reviewed following the decennial census and approval of revised urban area boundaries, but changes can be considered at other times as well. Several functional classification changes have been proposed since the 2000 census, some have been approved and others denied. A comprehensive review of the regional functional classification will be undertaken as part of updating New Visions later this year, but will not be completed until 2014 or later.

NYSDOT's Request

In a letter to the New York State Department of Transportation dated September 5, 2012, FHWA requested that NYSDOT undertake a quick scan to identify new National Highway System (NHS) candidates in response to MAP-21 requirements. Using information generated through a previous statewide planning effort, and after some discussion with FHWA and CDTC staff, NYSDOT identified NY 29 and NY 67 in Saratoga County as the two facilities that best met MAP-21 requirements at this time. NYSDOT has requested that the functional classification of portions of these two highways be upgraded from minor arterial to principal arterial. As principal arterials, both would be added to the National Highway System in accordance with provisions of MAP-21.

The **eastern portion of NY 29** was identified because it provides similar service to the portion of NY 29 west of the Northway, which is already designated as a NHS facility. NY 29 serves important inter-regional and interstate truck traffic. It services a very large geographic area along the US 4 and NY 40 corridors, providing the only NHS facility in the area. The nearest east-west NHS route in the area is NY 7, some 25 miles to the south.

Route 67 provides a direct connection from the City of Amsterdam to the Village of Ballston Spa and City of Saratoga Springs. While serving as a commuter route, it also directly connects I-90 at Exit 27 to I-87 at Exit 12, avoiding the heavily traveled Exit 24 interchange of the Thruway. It serves both regional and interstate freight movement. Route 67 would become the only east-west NHS facility on the east side of the Northway, with NY 7 to the south the only other NHS facility in the area.

Map 1 shows the location of the proposed change.

Planning Committee Action

At its May 1, 2013 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended that the Policy Board approve NYSDOT's request. Members agreed with the request because the criteria for naming principal arterials are met, and that NHS designation would increase funding opportunities for these important facilities in Saratoga County. Since this process began, NYSDOT has been informed that the New York FHWA division office would be supportive of the proposed functional classification changes if a formal resolution supporting the change is adopted by CDTC.