

Executive Summary

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City of Geneva

Lakefront / Downtown Connectivity Study



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City of Geneva Lakefront/Downtown Connectivity Study

Acknowledgements

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In the fall of 2009, the City of Geneva commissioned a multi-disciplinary consultant team, led by Ingalls Planning & Design, to study ways to improve connectivity between the downtown and the lakefront. The study, entitled City of Geneva Lakefront/Downtown Connectivity Study, includes an extensive inventory and analysis, opportunity assessment, recommendations, and funding opportunities. It was completed in the summer of 2010.

Study Purpose & Guiding Principles:

Sense of Place

“is something that some geographic places have and some do not. It is often defined as those characteristics that make a place special or unique, as well as those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging.”

Unknown

The purpose of the City of Geneva Lakefront/Downtown Connectivity Study was to explore safe and effective alternatives to facilitate movement of pedestrians and cyclists across and along New York State Routes 5&20 within the study area, thus reconnecting Geneva’s lakefront to its downtown.

This study employed several guiding principles tailored to the unique challenges of reconnecting the downtown and the lakefront. These guiding principles are:

- Enhance the overall pedestrian experience by creating a safer, more inviting, and less intimidating public realm
- Develop a stronger physically and psychologically sense of connection between the downtown and the lakefront
- Improve the sense-of-place and arrival for all users
- Maintain the functionality of 5&20 as a significant regional transportation corridor

A Steering Committee of local and regional stakeholders was formed to lead the study and provide feedback and guidance with respect to developing feasible concepts for improving connectivity between the downtown and the lakefront. The committee guided the planning process, facilitated a Community Open House, and acted as liaisons to the broader Community.

Study Area:

The study area stretches along State Routes 5&20. The southern limit is the South Main Street/NYS 14 overpass and its northern limit is 1,000 feet north of the Routes 5&20 intersection with Lake Street. The edges of the study area are 150 feet east and west from the centerline of Routes 5&20.

Community Engagement:

The Steering Committee and the Consulting Team held a two and one-half hour community workshop on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at the Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center at 105a Seneca Street. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input regarding several opportunities identified by the Consultant Team and the Steering Committee and to listen and discuss issues and ideas identified by community members. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop. Attendees shared valuable opinions and insights regarding pedestrian and bicycle circulation and connectivity within and around the study. Key points made at the workshop include:

- A desire to make crossing 5&20 feel safer and more comfortable.
- Balance the needs of all transportation users by making 5&20 more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- General support for narrowing the pavement on 5&20 (e.g. road diet).
- General support for a roundabout at Elizabeth Blackwell Street and possibly one north of the study area near the entrance to the Seneca Lake State Park.

In addition to the workshop a community open house was held June 10, 2010 to solicit feedback from local stakeholders on draft recommendations.



Members of the Consultant Team discuss issues and opportunities with citizens at the workshop.

Recommendations:



The wayfinding program should include both downtown and lakefront destinations and include a variety of signs and kiosks. Consideration should be given to the needs of all users including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians from the time they reach Geneva to the time they leave.

General Improvements

Recommendations in the General Improvements category typically apply to the entire study area. Most are ongoing and are relatively low cost.

- A. Improve the Pedestrian Experience on Lake Street and Elizabeth Blackwell Street.
- B. Develop a Wayfinding System that Integrates the Downtown and the Lakefront.
- C. Better utilize the underpass.
- D. Incorporate public art and other focal points into the landscape.
- E. Modify traffic signal timing and phasing, if possible for pedestrians.

Planning & Regulatory Provisions

The planning and zoning recommendations below are based on recommendations contained in the City Master Plan, the existing zoning code requirements, input from the Steering Committee, and feedback provided at the two public meetings held as part of this project. In order to ensure that new and in-fill development improves the connectivity across Routes 5 & 20 and along the waterfront, it is recommended that the City consider incorporating some or all of the following recommendations into their existing planning and regulatory framework.

- F. Revise transportation goal statement for the Master Plan.
- G. Improve the Lakefront Planned Unit Development Zoning District.
- H. Consider the zoning code changes below in order to foster the objectives of this study.
 - Bike Parking
 - Shared Parking

Recommendations:

Enhancements to New York State Routes 5&20

Enhancing Routes 5&20 could significantly improve pedestrian friendliness and connectivity between the lakefront and the downtown. These improvements could take place without changing the existing curb lines and could make for a quality grant application for the federally funded Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP).

- I. Install a roundabout at the Elizabeth Blackwell Street intersection.
- J. Replace existing lighting with decorative poles and fixtures.
- K. Enhance crosswalks at intersections.
- L. Remove right turn lanes.
- M. Install a sidewalk and landscaping along the west side of Routes 5&20.
- N. Develop a landscaped center median on 5&20.

Road Diet

“is a treatment given to an urban roadway in which the number of lanes is reduced, and the freed space converted to parking, bike lanes, landscaping, walkways, or medians. Road Diets are implemented to provide additional pavement and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, reduce speeding, and to make room for parking.”

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Reconfiguration of New York State Routes 5&20

Reducing the number of travel lanes and the overall curb-to-curb width on 5&20 would likely calm traffic and make crossing the roadway more comfortable for pedestrians. However, it would be an expensive reconstruction project that would require coordination with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- O. Implement a “Road Diet” for Routes 5&20.
- P. Develop multi-use trail connections.
- Q. Evaluate and install roundabout near entrance to Seneca Lake State Park.
- R. Consider a pedestrian bridge over 5/20 between Castle Street and Elizabeth Blackwell Street.
- S. Consider potential locations for passenger rail depots.

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The image to the right shows the existing view on SR 5&20 looking north toward the Castle Street intersection. The illustration below depicts the proposed landscape median.



The image to the right shows the existing view from the Castle Street intersection looking southeast. Removing the right turn lane and reallocating the space to the pedestrian realm will reduce the crossing distance by more than 12'. As depicted below, enhanced crosswalks, street trees, and other streetscape improvements will help to create a pedestrian friendly environment.



Implementation & Funding:

Planning level cost estimates are provided in the report for each recommendation. In order to successfully implement the recommendations the City should pursue outside funding assistance from various Federal and State sources. If the City is successful in obtaining grant funds for the Route 5&20 corridor, it can greatly reduce the number of local dollars necessary to construct the proposed improvements. A complete list of potential funding sources, their annual deadline, and the amount of funding available is contained in the report. A review of these sources indicates that two programs are most applicable to this project.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a staged, multi-year program of projects that identifies the timing and funding of all highway, bridge, transit, intelligent transportation system, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation projects scheduled for implementation in the region during the next five years using federal transportation funds.

This region's TIP is developed cooperatively by GTC and the New York State Department of Transportation Region 4 (NYSDOT-4). GTC and NYSDOT conduct a complete update of the TIP every two years. Every project proposed in the TIP is also listed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

The TEP provides federal funding for non-traditional transportation projects such as bicycle, pedestrian, and trail facilities; historic preservation; landscaping; streetscaping; and other scenic beautification projects. Eligible projects must fall into one or more of twelve specific categories. In addition, the projects must have a relationship with the surface transportation system and must be available for public access and use.

It is anticipated that the TEP or a similar type program will be authorized by Congress. The City should keep abreast of the status of the program and, based on available funding and support, consider recommendations from this study best suited for an application.