

Main Street Transportation Tools UPWP Task # 5800

Executive Summary

Project Purpose:

The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) provided funding for the *Main Street Transportation Tools Reports* under its Unified Planning Work Program. These reports provide information that specifically examines the impact that Main Street Transportation Tools may have in serving as a catalyst for and/or enhancing revitalization efforts in two communities in the Genesee/Finger Lakes Region.

The two communities examined for these reports were the suburban Village of Spencerport, New York (Monroe County) and the rural Village of Warsaw, New York (Wyoming County). Main Street Transportation Tools was a study that was intended to serve as a foundation for the development of models for revitalization in the region. This revitalization was based on the integration of transportation and design elements and development options. For these reports, transportation refers to the flow of goods and people in and out of an area and design refers to the relationship between people and the built environment. By looking critically at transportation and design, the ability of a community to optimize their collective impact, which for this study was referred to as development, was a further consideration.

The reports review the importance of Main Streets as centers for civic and commercial activity, the role that transportation plays in servicing civic and commercial activity and it outlines model approaches that other communities in the United States have used for studying Main Street, Central Business District, Transportation and Revitalization.

Project Methodology:

In order to make the general application of Main Street Transportation Tools tailor more to the Villages of Spencerport and Warsaw, members of each community participated in interactive sessions as focus groups, in which their opinions were gathered regarding their community's assets and liabilities. Further to this attempt at engaging a cross section of each community's stakeholders, specific information was gathered from additional input sessions in which participants identified where they saw their Main Street as strong or weak, where pedestrian flow was good or bad, where they saw the use of second and third floor space that has first floor retail/commercial inhabitants as effective or ineffective, etc.

Detailed village inventories followed. These inventories were done in several ways. A socio-demographic inventory was done, which looked at the population, gender, age and household size distribution of each community. A physical inventory followed which was done in two ways. The first inventory was on a parcel by parcel basis and the second inventory was on a block by block basis. In order to appropriately frame the physical inventory, the study areas were delineated with community input as areas along the Main Street Corridors and all contiguous areas with high civic and commercial activity.

The parcel inventory was done by extracting parcels in the study area from the 2001 Real Property Service database. Each parcel was examined in terms of their design related

attributes and the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the Genesee Transportation Council worked collaboratively on developing a thorough inventory tool. The result was a parcel level survey that examined approximately 25 items that ranged from the presence of structures on the parcel, the classification of that building's use, to the identification of and the qualification of such items as siding, facades, awnings, signage, banners, etc. This information was tabulated and analyzed.

The block inventory was done to parse the entire study area into more manageable areas for analysis. The blocks were examined in terms of their transportation related attributes and again the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the Genesee Transportation Council worked collaboratively on developing a thorough inventory tool. The outcome of the block level survey was an instrument that examined 22 features which identified and qualified such items as towpaths, gateways, waterways, public transportation and parking. This information was tabulated and analyzed.

The findings of these analyses were itemized, and presented in several draft forms to members of each community's focus groups. As a result of this interactive approach, the community feedback was used to develop the next section in the report which was village recommendations.

Finally, a list of resources that can be utilized by each community was delivered. These resources are on a federal, state, regional and local level.

Analysis Overview:

Upon review of the inventories, there are several findings which are a useful outcome of the analyses process.

According to the physical inventory, which was conducted on a parcel and block level, the villages usually received either an excellent, good or fair rating in their respective portion of the analyses. In very few instances items were classified as poor. As the villages continue to work actively on revitalization efforts, it is very likely that those specific items that received a fair or poor rating will improve to excellent or good.

In the final analysis of the Village of Spencerport and the Village of Warsaw's Main Street, it is important to remember that:

- Village assets far outweigh the liabilities
- In order for a community to successfully proceed with revitalization, village stakeholders must continually be engaged in the process
- It takes several years for a Main Street to decline and it will take several years for it to return to its highest and best use
- There are federal, state, regional and local resources available including but not limited to the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the Genesee Transportation Council

Products:

1. Main Street Transportation Tools Report – Village of Spencerport
2. Main Street Transportation Tools Report – Village of Warsaw