

Routes 5&20 Corridor Study Meeting Minutes

Agricultural Community Discussion Group June 5th, 2003

Attendees:

Maria Rudzinski, Facilitator
Philip White
Douglas Clark
Beverly Clark

Beverly Gillette
Hal Lusk
Edwin O. Blodgett
John Linholm

Goals for Corridor

- Communities to make a decision if they want agriculture to be an important part of the corridor.

Vision for Corridor

- Agriculture is economically viable.
- Private landowners can have sensible development options for their property.

Existing problems/problem areas

- Farmers may have \$1+million in capital and operational costs that yield a \$35,000 annual income.
- There are many national and international forces at work that are negatively impacting the viability of agriculture.
- The uncertainty over what kind of development will occur in the corridor makes it difficult for farmers to decide if they should make the substantial investment required to upgrade facilities. This is particularly true for dairy and other animal operations which, even with proper environmental management, will generate odors or disturbances that residential neighbors not used to living in an agricultural area will find offensive.
- Farmers along the corridor have the advantage of easy access to trucking services which is essential to their viability. As more and more distribution becomes centralized it is getting harder for farmers who are not on main highways or other good roads to get trucking services for deliveries as well as shipment of product. Some trucking companies are refusing to serve farms where good access is not available.

- Development of frontage lots is very detrimental to agriculture. It also ruins the scenic qualities of the corridor.
- Many of the localities along the corridor have zoning laws that require large lot sizes which “chews up” more farmland than is necessary. These large minimum lot size requirements are probably responsible for more needless conversion of farmland than anything else. Farmland owners should be able to cluster development in order to minimize impacts on agriculture.
- Selling off lots may be necessary for financial reasons for farmland owners; it has the unintended consequences of making the balance of the farmland less valuable for sale as farmland.
- Encouraging use of the corridor for bicycling can create safety issues with farm equipment that uses the shoulders.
- The corridor has many stretches that have wide shoulders that is needed for moving heavy slow-moving equipment. However this is not uniform along the corridor. This plan should set as a priority the continued maintenance of those shoulders and improvement of inadequate shoulders (widening/reinforcing) when NYS DOT does scheduled maintenance.
- There should be some way --- through signage--- that motorists are made aware that they are in an agricultural district where slow-moving vehicles are to be expected.