



KAREN FELDMAN
Acting Chair

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Terry Martino, Executive Director

FROM: Richard Weber, Deputy Director - Planning

DATE: May 8, 2019

RE: Proposed Final Master Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan for State Highway Travel Corridors in the Adirondack Park

Staff have completed review of the Final Master Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan for State Highway Travel Corridors in the Adirondack Park (TCUMP) dated May 2019 and believe it to be in conformance with the guidelines and criteria of the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP).

Background

The APSLMP provides guidelines for management and use of travel corridors “to achieve and maintain a park-like atmosphere on state lands within the travel corridor...” The APSLMP further states that “the importance of the major travel corridors and the principal segments of the local highway network to the integrity of the Park cannot be overemphasized. The lands adjacent to these highways are the most visible to the traveling public and frequently determine the image and entire atmosphere of the Park for many visitors.”

In December 2009, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) signed a memorandum of understanding concerning the development of travel corridor unit management plans pursuant to the APSLMP.

According to the MOU, the three agencies recognized that the APSLMP requires the development of TCUMPs and that the DEC prepare such plans. It was further acknowledged the DEC has the primary responsibility for the final approval of such plans in consultation with the APA as per the APA Act. Finally, due to the DOT’s functions, duties and special expertise, it was agreed the DOT would accept primary responsibility for the development of TCUMPs on behalf of the DEC and in consultation with the DEC and APA.

The comprehensive planning effort over the span of ten years led by the DOT in consultation with the DEC and APA, has resulted in the development of the Master Travel Corridor Management Plan intended to guide the development of individual travel corridor unit management plans for each of the state highway corridors in the Adirondack Park.

Review of the Master Travel Corridor Plan

The DOT and the DEC were co-lead agencies for purposes of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and for development of a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) for the TCUMP. Public comment was received on the Draft TCUMP and GEIS from September 13 to November 27, 2017, and the review period also included three public hearings in Ray Brook, Old Forge, and Warrensburg.

The DOT provided a summary of the public comments received and prepared responses and revisions as part of the Final Draft TCUMP and GEIS dated, June 2018. At the Agency's July 2018 meeting, the Agency Board authorized staff to seek public comment related to the conformance of the Final Draft with the APSLMP.

Four letters were received during the Agency's public comment period. In general, three letters strongly supported the work of the DOT for the development of the TCUMP. A fourth letter urged greater opportunities for commercial signage on the Northway to assist the visibility of businesses within a reasonable distance of the interstate highway.

Of the letters in support of the TCUMP, additional comments were provided on various aspects of the Plan and GEIS, including: support for reviewing individual travel corridor plans under SEQRA as Supplemental EISs; increased public input for prioritizing the order and timing of individual travel corridor plans with emphasis on the Route 73 corridor; opportunities for sizing parking areas in relation to an adjoining state land unit's capacity to withstand use; and, attention to the concerns of road salt, invasive species, sign clutter, habitat connectivity and scenic vistas.

Agency staff have reviewed the public comments and believe the Final GEIS fulfills the requirements of SEQRA, and the Final Master TCUMP, as proposed, provides the necessary planning tools to address the issues identified in the comments and conforms with the general guidelines and criteria of the APSLMP.

REW:mp