

## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

This report serves as the **Draft Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DR/DEIS)** for the Williamsville Toll Barrier Improvement Project in Erie and Genesee Counties, New York. This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines in the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Project Development Manual and the NYSDOT Environmental Procedure Manual for projects that must satisfy the requirements of the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** of 1969, the **State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)** of 1988, and the **Eminent Domain Procedure Law** of 1977. The project is classified as a Type I project under NEPA and a Type I (EIS) project under SEQRA. The New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA), as lead agency under the SEQRA, prepared this DR/DEIS. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as lead agency under the NEPA, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) reviewed the DR/DEIS.

The following agencies are also participating as “cooperating agencies”, due to their expertise and/or permitting authority:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Greater Buffalo-Niagara Transportation Council
- Genesee Transportation Council
- New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

A Draft Scoping Document was prepared and issued for public and agency comment on February 25, 2000. A public scoping meeting was held on March 9, 2000. Substantive public and agency comments received during an associated formal comment period were incorporated into a Final Scoping Document, which was issued on July 21, 2000. The Scoping Document identified alternatives to be considered as part of the DR/DEIS. Subsequent to the issuance of the Scoping Document, preparation of the DR/DEIS was initiated.

The DR/DEIS will be distributed to federal, state, and local agencies, as well as interested organizations, groups, and individuals who have expressed special project concerns, for review and comment. It will be available for public review at the Federal Highway Administration Office in Albany, and at the New York State Thruway Authority Buffalo Division Office in Buffalo, located at 455 Cayuga Road, Suite 800, Cheektowaga, New York 14225. The report will also be available for review at the following locations:

Alden, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 3311 Wende Road
Alden, New York	Alden Ewell Free Library, 13280 Broadway
Amherst, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 5533 Main Street
Cheektowaga, New York	Town Clerk, 3301 Broadway
Cheektowaga, New York	North Branch Public Library, 735 Maryvale Drive

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Clarence, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 1 Town Place
Clarence, New York	Clarence Public Library, 3 Town Place
Lancaster, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 21 Central Avenue, NY
Lancaster, New York	Lancaster Public Library, 5466 Broadway
Lancaster, New York	Depew Branch Public Library, 321 Columbia Avenue
Newstead, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 5 Clarence Center Road
Newstead, New York	Newstead Public Library, 33 Main Street
Pembroke, New York	Town Clerk's Office, 1145 Main Road
Pembroke, New York	Corfu Free Library, 7 Maple Avenue
Williamsville, New York	Williamsville Public Library, 5571 Main Street

In addition to issuance of the report, a combined Corridor/Design Public Hearing or Hearings will be held to obtain formal comment on the project, and on the DR/DEIS. The hearing(s) will be held as follows:

**“Dates and Locations to be Determined”**

If more than one hearing is held, they will all be similar in nature, and will be held to facilitate the number of people expected to attend. At least 30 days prior to the meeting(s), a notice will be published in area newspapers, and notices will be mailed to potentially affected property owners. Comments will be received and recorded at the meeting(s). Written comments will be received for at least ten days after the close of public hearings.

Comments received on the DR/DEIS, both in writing and verbally at the public hearings, will be thoroughly evaluated. Responses will be prepared for comments received, and revisions to the DR/DEIS will be made as necessary. A report entitled **Final Design Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FDR/FEIS)** will be prepared, which will address all substantive comments from the public hearing and DR/DEIS review. The FDR/FEIS will then be issued for review and comment. Any substantive comments received on the FDR/FEIS will be addressed in a NEPA Record of Decision issued by the FHWA. The NYSTA will issue a findings statement in accordance with the SEQRA. If a build alternative is selected, the project may proceed through detailed design and construction, pending the availability of adequate funding.

Copies of this report and additional information may be obtained from:

Mr. Thomas Gemmiti, P.E.  
Director, Office of Design  
New York State Thruway Authority  
200 Southern Boulevard  
Albany, NY 12201  
Phone: (518) 436-2930

Mr. Robert E. Arnold  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street  
Albany, NY 12207

In all correspondence, please identify the Project as:  
PIN 5528.28, Williamsville Toll Barrier Improvement Project  
NYSTA Contract No. D212607