

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter describes the social, economic, and environmental effects of the alternatives and identifies their adverse effects, if any. Where adverse effects are identified, the chapter describes measures to minimize or mitigate them.

This chapter is divided into several sections and sub-sections as follows:

- Section 6.1: Introduction;
- Section 6.2: Social Considerations;
- Section 6.3: Environmental Considerations;
- Section 6.4: Environmental Considerations;
 - Section 6.4.1: Historic and Cultural Resources;
 - Section 6.4.2: Parklands and Recreational Resources;
 - Section 6.4.3: Visual Resources and Aesthetic Considerations;
 - Section 6.4.4: Air Quality;
 - Section 6.4.5: Energy and Climate Change;
 - Section 6.4.6: Noise;
 - Section 6.4.7: Water Resources;
 - Section 6.4.8: General Ecology and Wildlife Resources;
 - Section 6.4.9: Asbestos
 - Section 6.4.10: Hazardous Wastes and Contaminated Materials;
 - Section 6.4.11: Scenic Byways;
 - Section 6.4.12: Farmlands;
- Section 6.5: Short-term Uses of the Environment versus Long-term Productivity;
- Section 6.6: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources; and
- Section 6.7: Unavoidable Adverse Effects that Cannot Be Avoided or Adequately Mitigated.

SECTION 6.1

INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATION

The I-81 Viaduct Project would require approvals by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for modifications to the interstate highway system as well as potential Federal funding for its construction. These approvals require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This Project is classified as a NEPA Class I project in accordance with 23 CFR 771. NEPA Class I projects require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine the likely impact that project alternatives would have on the environment. FHWA is the Lead Federal Agency and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is the Joint Lead Agency for this Project.

The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires that State and local governmental agencies in New York evaluate significant environmental impacts that would result from their discretionary actions, and identify measures to mitigate adverse impacts to the maximum extent practicable. NYSDOT is serving as the SEQRA lead agency for this Project. NYSDOT's regulations for implementing SEQRA are provided in 17 NYCRR Part 15. In accordance with NYSDOT's SEQRA regulations, the Project is classified as a "non-Type II" action, indicating that its potential for environmental impacts should be evaluated under SEQRA. In accordance with 17 NYCRR Part 15, given that a Federal EIS is being prepared, NYSDOT and other New York State agencies undertaking a discretionary action for this Project have no obligation to prepare a separate EIS under SEQRA. NYSDOT will give full consideration to the Federal Final EIS and will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD) in accordance with Section 15.9 of 17 NYCRR Part 15.

6.1.2 COORDINATION WITH AGENCIES

For projects subject to NEPA and/or SEQRA, a lead agency (or agencies) is designated to ensure that a comprehensive environmental review process is conducted properly and in accordance with all applicable environmental regulations.

FHWA and NYSDOT have identified and invited Federal and State agencies to participate in the environmental review process by serving as Cooperating Agencies. According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR § 1508.5), Cooperating Agency means any Federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A state or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on a reservation, a Federally recognized Native American tribe, may also serve as a Cooperating Agency. The following agencies were invited to serve as Cooperating Agencies for this Project:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation – State Historic Preservation Office.

FHWA and NYSDOT have been coordinating with the Cooperating Agencies throughout this Project. The first Cooperating Agency meeting was held in October 2013. In May 2014, FHWA and NYSDOT commenced monthly conference calls with the Cooperating Agencies, and these calls have continued and will continue throughout the EIS process. During the monthly calls, NYSDOT updates the agencies on the progress with alternatives development and environmental analyses, recent and forthcoming outreach activities, and the overall project schedule. Agencies are asked for input and given an opportunity to ask questions of the project team.

Participating Agencies are Federal, State, or local agencies with an interest in the Project. For the I-81 Viaduct Project, certain transportation companies were invited as Participating Agencies since they have assets in the Project Area that could be affected by project elements. In accordance with Federal transportation legislation, Cooperating Agencies are also Participating Agencies. The following agencies were invited to serve as Participating Agencies for this Project in addition to the Cooperating Agencies identified above:

- Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC)
- CNY Centro, Inc.¹
- New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway¹
- CSX¹
- Onondaga County
- City of Syracuse
- Town of Cicero
- Town of DeWitt
- Town of Salina
- Village of East Syracuse

¹ Non-government entity that was invited as a Participating Agency.

- Village of North Syracuse

In addition to the agencies and entities listed above, the Onondaga Nation is providing support and consultation on the Project. The Onondaga Nation accepted status as both a Participating Agency and as a Consulting Party, the latter for the review of the Project pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. FHWA and NYSDOT have invited the Onondaga Nation to participate in stakeholder and Section 106 meetings for the Project, and they have communicated one-on-one with the Onondaga Nation on several occasions. This outreach will continue throughout project development, as needed.

A meeting with the Participating Agencies was held on June 4, 2014. NYSDOT presented the project overview and development of alternatives as well as the schedule for public outreach activities that occurred later that month. NYSDOT also participates in regular coordination meetings with representatives of SMTC, Centro, Onondaga County, and the City of Syracuse.

6.1.3 ANTICIPATED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Table 6.1-1 identifies the permits and approvals that are anticipated for this Project.

**Table 6.1-1
Potential Permits and Approvals**

Permit or Approval	Approving Agency	Regulatory Authority
Interstate Highway Deletion*	Federal Highway Administration	23 CFR 658.11
Interstate Highway Designation*	Federal Highway Administration	23 CFR 103(c)(4)(B)
Interstate Access Modification	Federal Highway Administration	23 USC 109 and 111, 23 C.F.R. 625.4, and 49 C.F.R. 1.48(b)(1)
Floodplains Determination	Federal Highway Administration	Executive Order 11988 of 1977; USDOT Order 5650-2, "Floodplain Management and Protection," April 23, 1979
Wetlands Finding	Federal Highway Administration	Executive Order 11990 of 1977; USDOT Order 5660.1A, "Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands," August 24, 1978).
Section 4(f) Finding pursuant to Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act	Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the U.S. Department of Interior and the State Historic Preservation Office	49 USC § 303; 23 CFR § 774
Section 7 Consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	16 USC §§ 1531-1544; 50 CFR Part 402
Section 106 Effect Finding pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act	Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Office	16 USC § 470A; 36 CFR Part 800
Section 404 Permit pursuant to the Clean Water Act	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	33 USC §§ 1251-1387 and 33 CFR 320-330
Section 401 Water Quality Certification pursuant to the Clean Water Act	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	33 USC §§ 1251-1387 and 33 CFR 320-330

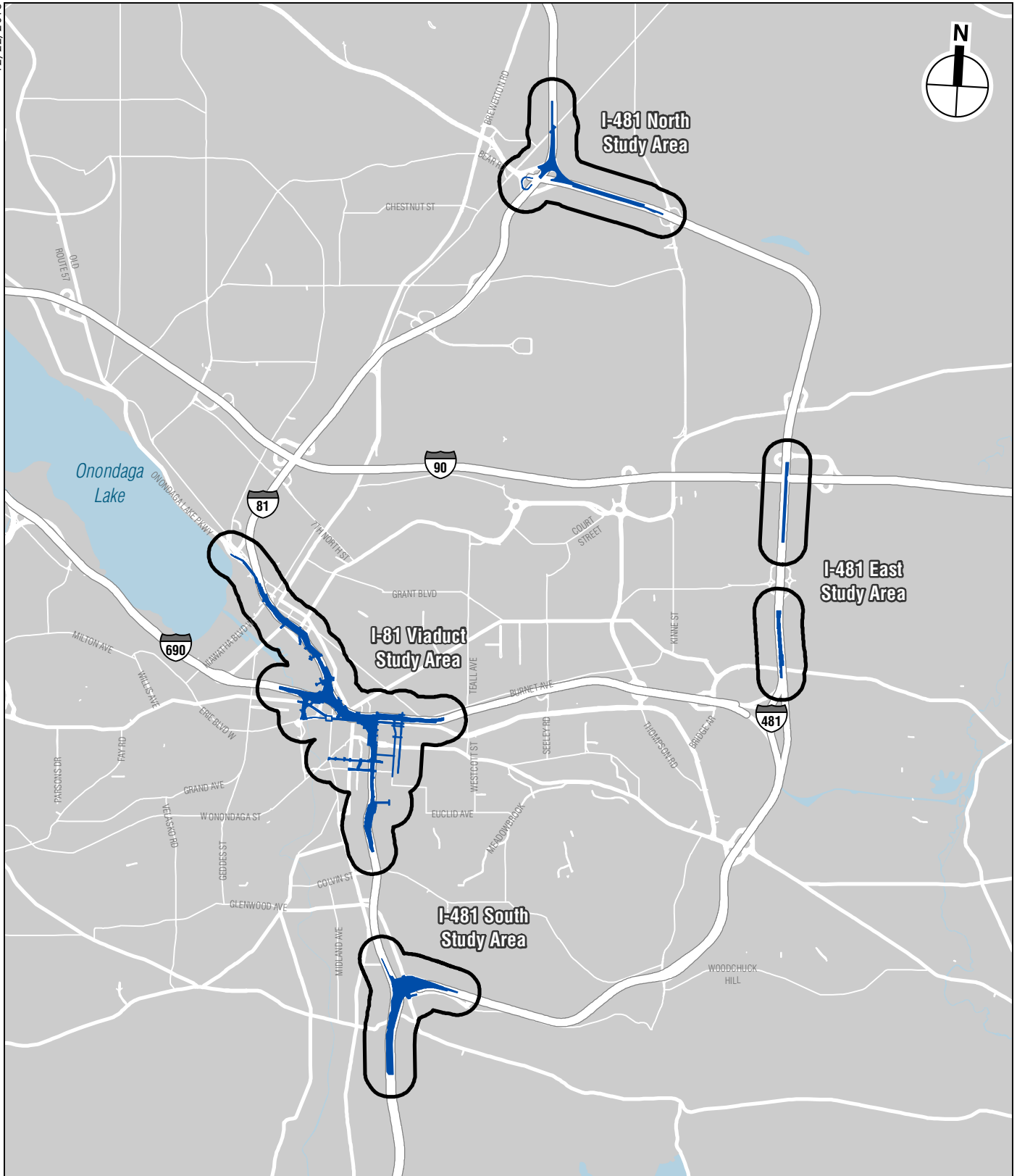
Table 6.1-1, cont'd
Potential Permits and Approvals



Permit or Approval	Approving Agency	Regulatory Authority
Environmental Justice Compliance	Federal Highway Administration	Executive Order 12898 of 1994, 59 CFR Part 7629, February 16, 1994; 1997 USDOT Order 5610.2[a], May 2, 2012; FHWA Order 6640.23A, June 14, 2012
State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (ECL Article 3, Title 3; Article 15; Article 17, Titles 3, 5, 7, and 8; Article 21; Article 70, Title 1; Article 71, Title 19; 6 NYCRR Part 750).
Individual or Programmatic Protection of Waters / Freshwater Wetlands Permit	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	NYSDEC/NYS DOT Memorandum of Understanding Regarding ECL Articles 15 and 24 (February 19, 1997); ECL Article 15, Title 5; 6 NYCRR Part 608; ECL Article 24; 6 NYCRR 663
Consistency with Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act	New York State Department of Transportation	ECL § 6-0101 et seq.
Note: * Community Grid Alternative only.		

6.1.4 PROJECT AREA AND STUDY AREAS

This assessment of social, economic, and environmental considerations in this Draft EIS considers the following four study areas: I-81 Viaduct Study Area, I-481 North Study Area, I-481 South Study Area, and I-481 East Study Area (see **Figure 6.1-1**). The study areas were established because the Project has the potential to result in temporary (construction) or permanent (operation) effects within these locations. Collectively, the four study areas are referred to as the “Project Area.” The limits of these study areas are defined below.

- **I-81 Viaduct Study Area.** The I-81 Viaduct Study Area is located mostly within the City of Syracuse, with a small area north of the city in the Town of Salina. The study area extends north to south along the location of existing I-81 from approximately the City of Syracuse/Town of Salina border to approximately East Colvin Street, and west to east along the location of I-690 from approximately North Geddes Street to Teall Avenue.
- **I-481 South Study Area.** The I-481 South Study Area is located around the I-481 South interchange with I-81. The majority of the I-481 South Study Area is located in the City of Syracuse; however, the easternmost reach is in the Town of Onondaga.
- **I-481 East Study Area.** The I-481 East Study Area includes land within one-quarter mile of the two segments of I-481 where auxiliary lanes would be added, which is roughly between the I-690 and I-90 interchanges in the Town of DeWitt.
- **I-481 North Study Area.** The I-481 North Study Area includes all areas within one-quarter mile of the I-481 northern interchange with I-81 in the Town of Cicero and the Village of North Syracuse.



-  Project Limits
-  Study Areas (1/4-Mile Boundary)

For some topics, a special study area is defined for consistency with regulatory requirements or to capture a larger or smaller area of potential effects for the Project. Each section that follows identifies the study area that was used for the analysis.