Keeping an up-to-date inventory of local roads:

The Local Highway Inventory

A listing of the 96,000 miles of public roadways owned or maintained by local governments (cities, towns, villages) and counties in New York State
Local Highway Inventory

Serves as input to the annual certified public road mileage and the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS)

Used as input to Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding distribution formulas

Review and update the process each year at annual NYSDOT Workshop, defining Main Office/Region roles

Print listings for all 1500+ municipalities and counties (approximately 8000 pages)

Distribute to NYSDOT Regions for mailing to all municipalities and counties
Local Roads GIS Project

- FHWA requirement (and internal interest) to build all public roads in GIS
- Some private roads also – esp. for bridges
- Essentially became an “audit” of locally reported roadways
- Also had to build non-state, non-local
- Required rules to ensure consistency
Local Roads GIS Project

- Local roads GIS project started in 2013
- Reviewed every single Non-FA road
- Held about two dozen outreach meetings around the state
- Questions and “doubts” expressed yielded better definition of the requirements
- Led to development of a Local Highway Inventory Manual, posted on Internet
Public Road

- A road or street owned and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel
- Accessible to the general public except during scheduled periods for maintenance or special events, extreme weather, or emergency conditions
- Open to the general public for use without physical barriers, prohibitive signage, or regulation other than size, weight, or registration class restrictions
- Easily passable using a standard four-wheel passenger car
Ineligible Roadways

- Private roads
- Paper streets
- Closed or abandoned roads
- Restricted public roads
- (“Closed at Dusk” or “No Trespassing” etc.)
- Roadways providing access exclusively to employee-restricted or time-restricted municipal facilities (offices, municipal garages, transfer stations, landfills, water towers, etc.)

“Private” roads

Maintained by municipality for utility access, but not a “public road”

This is a common situation on waterfront properties.
Public - “Private” Roads

• Public owned does not equal “public road”
• Roads typically not “open to the public”*
  - park roads
  - cemetery roads
  - driveways such as at
    - town offices
    - town garages
    - landfills/brush landfills
    - transfer stations

* without restriction

Public Road?

The “road” from the east/west highway at the bottom to the house and barns at the top was submitted as a public road.
Public Road?

- No break in double yellow line
- No Stop Sign or other control device
- No street sign
- Mailbox present
- Anyone can use their driveway?

Number of Lanes

CHIPS program driven also by number of lanes

- Lanes Excluded from the LHI
  - Truck Climbing Lanes
  - Toll Collection Lanes
  - Parking Lanes
  - Acceleration/Deceleration Lanes
  - Weaving Lanes
  - Turning Lanes
  - Continuous Center Turn Lanes
  - Bicycle Lanes
Resolutions

• Required to:
  • Accept new roads
  • Add old roads not in inventory
  • Accept more than minor length changes
  • Abandon a roadway
  • Transfer a roadway
• Roads must exist and currently be open to the public (except for limited construction periods)

Resolutions

• Must include local governing body (Town Board) acceptance of all legal, maintenance & repair responsibility for the roadway
• Must include an indication that the resolution has been voted upon and passed
• Must mention each road specifically (may do so in an official attachment to the resolution)
Resolutions

RESOLUTION # ___ Ratification of various existing roads in the Town of ______ was offered by Council Member ______ at the regular monthly meeting of the ______ Town Board held on ________ . WHEREAS, Highway Superintendent ______ recently attended a meeting with state officials from DOT and CHIPS, and WHEREAS, the state employees sat at a computer and used Google Earth to determine the length of the roads throughout the state and, WHEREAS these representatives presented their finding of the length of various roads in the Town of ______ and other ______ municipalities in adjoining counties at this meeting, and WHEREAS, the ______ Highway Superintendent disagrees strongly with some of the length designated by the state, and of the roads they officially list as town roads, now therefore be it RESOLVED, that the Town of ______ does hereby ratify and reiterate that the following are now and have in the past been town roads and does designate their lengths as follows:

- Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but perhaps an official resolution shouldn’t be used to air these

Roads by Use

- Highways by Use – Highway Law Sec., 189
- Streets by Prescription – Village Law, Sec. 626

- Originally passed in the 1930’s, presumably to formalize the longstanding use of “paths” as roadways by the general public
- Also need a resolution
- Perhaps overused to “acquire” roadways
Abandoned Roads

Discontinued/abandoned roads removed by resolution or by NYSDOT if deemed restricted or abandoned
Other Details

• LHI Manual provides guidance on
  • How lengths are measured CL to CL
  • Measuring around cul-de-sacs
  • Handling roundabouts (an intersection)
  • Dealing with shared boundary roads
  • Elevation changes

Elevation Changes

• Extensive discussion during GIS outreach mtgs
• Measured to 0.01 mile precision, negligible impact due to elevation changes
• Two dimensional measurements used for LHI
A Legal Document?

The Local Highway Inventory is a listing of roads in response to a requirement under State Highway Law for the purpose of implementing CHIPS. While it does imply ownership (or maintenance responsibility) of a road by a particular jurisdiction, the LHI is not a survey, title or other legal rights document.

---But the listings are often requested.

Summary

- Developing an accurate local roadway inventory is a lot more than just asking for a listing the roads
- Having clearly defined guidelines is a substantial plus
- Posting those guidelines where all have access helps even more