

Chapter 1 Introduction

The Highway Data Services Bureau is responsible for collecting and reporting highway data in New York State. The authority for the bureau to take traffic counts on public highways throughout New York State is provided by the:

Laws of New York State

Book 24 (Highway Law)

Part I

Article II (Commissioner of Transportation)

Section 10 (General powers and duties of the Commissioner relating to highways)

Paragraph 13 - (“The commissioner of transportation shall :...)

Compile statistics relating to the public highways throughout the state, and collect such information in regards thereto as he shall deem expedient.”

This work is undertaken in cooperation with the United States Department of Transportation, local governments and other New York State departments and agencies. The United States Department of Transportation provides financial assistance for this activity. The NYSDOT Traffic Monitoring System complies with AASHTO Guidelines for Traffic Data Program (1992), FHWA Traffic Monitoring Guide (2013), and United State Code 23 CFR 500 B whose purpose is to “set forth requirements for development, establishment, implementation, and continued operation of a traffic monitoring system for highways and public transportation facilities and equipment (TMS) in each state.”

Questions, comments and suggestions, contact:

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Traffic data is available on the Highway Data Services Bureau’s web page:

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/technical-services/highway-data-services>

Chapter 2 Traffic Data Collection Program Overview

The New York State Department of Transportation collects, summarizes and interprets information on the traffic traveling the State's highway system. The data is used to assess transportation needs and system performance as well as to develop highway planning and programming recommendations. Traffic data is also important for route planning and in the design of highway projects. Other government agencies and private businesses also employ this information.

To collect this information, the Department operates two traffic monitoring systems:

1. A Statewide Traffic Monitoring System currently consisting of 177 permanent continuous count stations that collect volume, speed, vehicle classification and weigh-in-motion data 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. These sites are located throughout the State to monitor overall traffic trends. Information from these counters is used to determine traffic growth and tendencies as well as develop pavement design input, seasonal adjustment factors used in determining estimates of annual average daily traffic (AADT) and directional design hour volumes (DDHV).
2. A portable traffic counter program, also known as short counts, is comprised of inventory counts taken on the Federal and State highway systems, along with county and town roads. Special counts, including ramp, approach and turning movement counts, are taken for specific State projects. In total, approximately 12,000 counts of 2-7 days duration are taken annually. The State Touring Route System alone is divided into approximately 8,200 traffic control sections. As part of the inventory count program, each section is generally counted once every 3 years. The annual inventory program consists of 3,000+ counts obtained on the State Touring Route System and another 9,000+ counts taken for other purposes such as sampling of off system Federal Aid eligible and non-Federal Aid eligible local facilities, county roads, off system bridge counts, at-grade railroad crossing counts, and other samples to support the Federal Highway Performance Monitoring System. Results are used to determine Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and to develop growth factors for estimating current year counts from known prior year counts.

Vehicle classification counts obtained at approximately 35% of the count locations are used to develop axle adjustment factors. Most of the vehicle classification counts assign vehicles to one of the thirteen vehicle type categories established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In some cases length based classification data may be collected, however the data is not used in the development of axle adjustment factors. Axle adjustment factors are computed for each highway functional classification category in each NYSDOT Region. Limited speed data is also collected during vehicle classification counts.