

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Winter 2019



Buckley Road, North Syracuse



Work Set to Begin on the New Unified Planning Work Program

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) Policy Committee met and adopted the 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) on December 11, 2018. The UPWP document is intended to provide a mechanism for the coordination of transportation planning efforts by local, state and regional agencies through the SMTC. The UPWP incorporates into one document all transportation planning activities in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area that will be conducted from April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the New York State Governor, the SMTC is responsible for carrying out the continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the area.

A graphic for the UPWP 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program. It features a white background with a red circular graphic on the left side containing the SMTC logo. The text reads: "UPWP 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program" in large, bold, black letters, followed by "Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council" in smaller, red letters. Below the text is a collage of four images: a yellow excavator at a construction site, a white bus and a white van in a parking lot, a road with a guardrail, and a road with a guardrail and a fence.

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Armory Square, Syracuse

The 2019-2020 UPWP contains several carryover projects from the 2018-2019 program year. As a result, the SMTC did not solicit for new projects for the 2019-2020 program. However, the new program contains a line item for on-call assistance to the City of Syracuse, including assistance with the ReZone Syracuse Generic Environmental Impact Statement; the CNY Recreational Heritage Trail Bike Corridor; and the 2019 New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's (NYSAMPO) conference planning.

Carryover projects from the last program year include:

- Armory Square Mobility Plan;
- South Geddes and West Fayette Complete Streets;
- RTC/Market Area Access Study;
- Safety Assessment and Analysis for Onondaga County and City of Syracuse facilities;
- Erie Boulevard Transit Mobility Enhancements;
- US Route 11 Corridor Study;
- City of Syracuse and Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) Traffic Counts; and
- Congestion Management Process Update.

Staff continues to provide support to municipalities under the Local Comprehensive Plan Assistance block. Additionally, work is progressing on our Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update.

As we have done in the past, the SMTC continues to participate in the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) I-81 project. Staff attends meetings for various NYSDOT I-81 associated committees and provides Travel Demand Modeling assistance as needed. Staff continues to work on the federally required tasks as directed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The 2019-2020 UPWP is available for viewing at the SMTC offices, 126 N. Salina Street, Syracuse; at the main branch of the Onondaga County Public Library, The Galleries, 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse; or on the SMTC website – www.smtcmpo.org.

Directions is a publication of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). Formed in 1966 as a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, the SMTC serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Syracuse metropolitan area, and provides a forum for cooperative decision making in developing transportation plans and programs. Its committees are comprised of elected and appointed officials, representing local, state, and federal governments or agencies (member agencies) having an interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming.

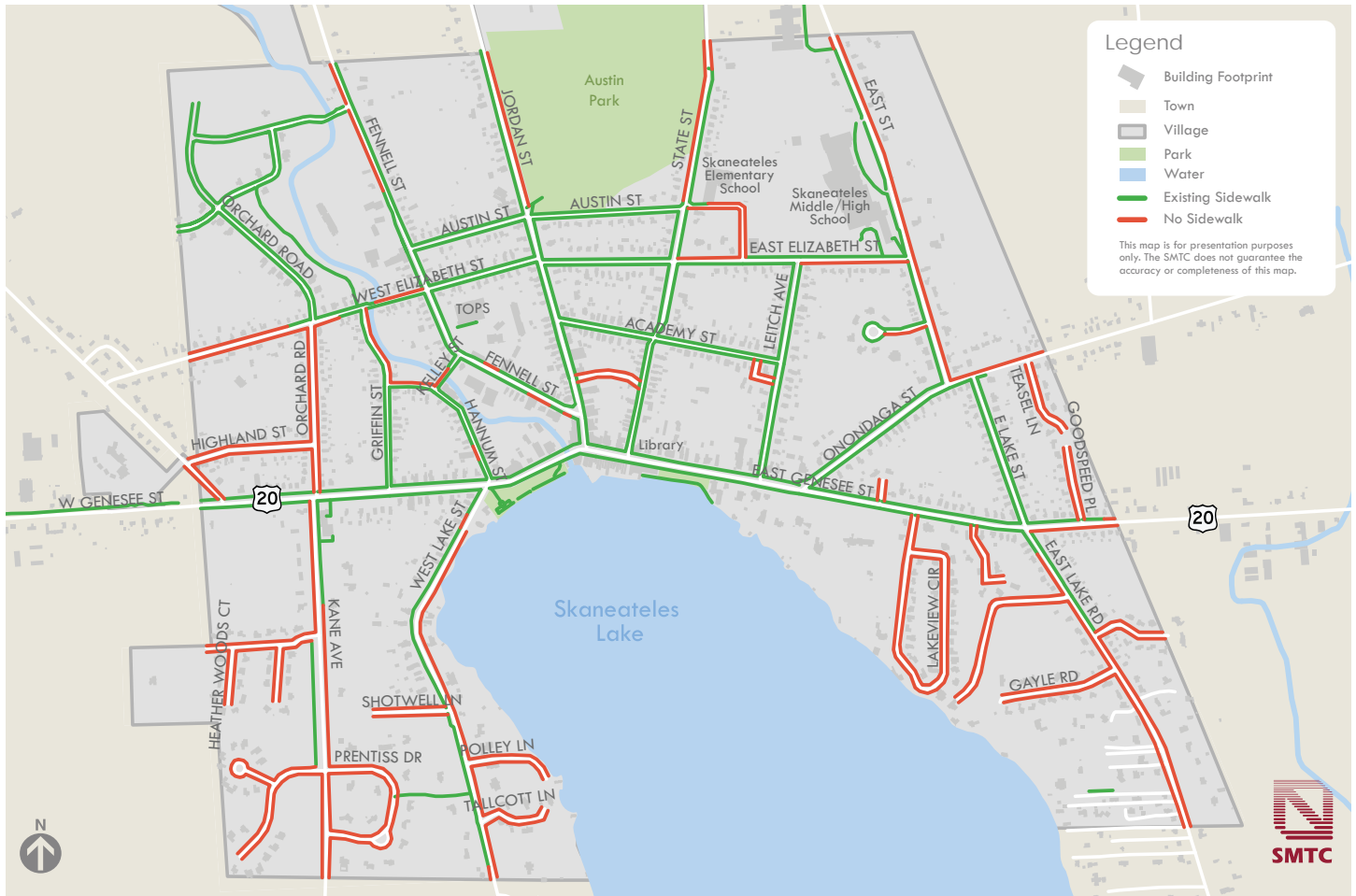
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Skaneateles Sidewalk Assessment Finalized

- Completed at the request of the village
- Reviewed existing sidewalks and noted missing segments
- Examined physical characteristics restricting future sidewalks



The Skaneateles Sidewalk Assessment was started in spring 2018 and completed in the fall of 2018. It was a technical analysis for the Village of Skaneateles who was looking to expand their existing sidewalk infrastructure. As a planning level analysis, there was no public outreach. The SMTC looked at where there were existing sidewalks and then mapped out the locations where there were not current sidewalks. The SMTC reviewed the physical characteristics that would restrict future sidewalks such as trees, slope, telephone poles, and structures. Each segment of missing sidewalk was then ranked by how difficult the physical characteristic would be to install. The final synopsis was

a map showing all the segments by difficulty and then a chart that gave in-depth information about the segments themselves. This analysis was an informational piece that was presented at both Planning and Policy Committee meetings and will hopefully help aid the Village of Skaneateles in expanding their sidewalk infrastructure in the future!

The final report can be found on the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org. For further information please contact Kevan Busa at kbusa@smtcmpo.org or 315.422.5716.



Florence Ave Analysis Completed

- Identifies opportunities for improved east-west bike/ped access
- Uses guidelines from the NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan
- Recommends bringing sidewalks up to current ADA standards

The SMTC recently completed a technical analysis for the City of Syracuse that identifies opportunities to improve east-west pedestrian and bicycle access along Florence Avenue and over Onondaga Creek in the North Valley neighborhood. This assessment was completed under the agency's general "Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Task" as a small planning level technical analysis with no public outreach.

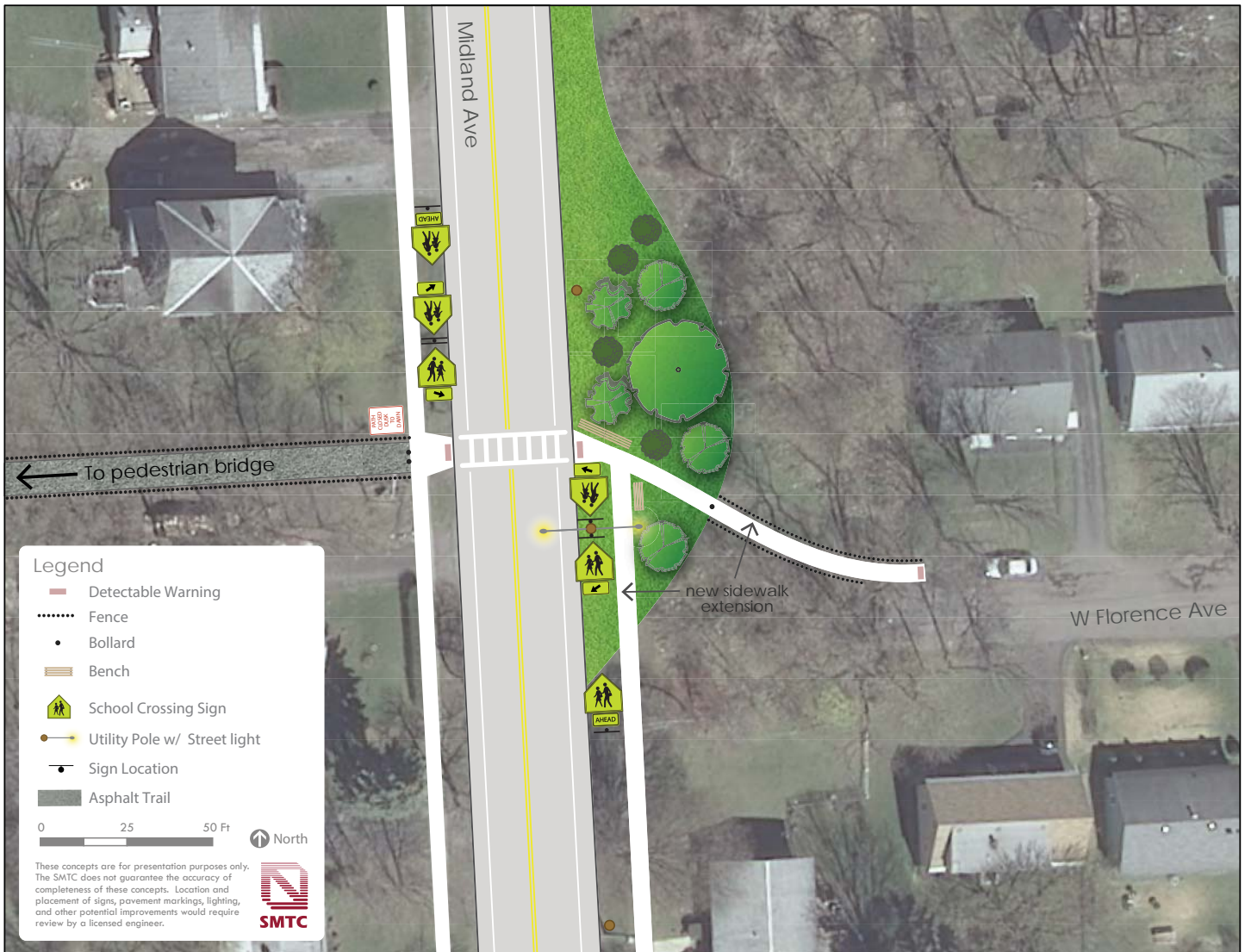
The area along the Florence Avenue corridor examined for this analysis connects apartments, the Van Duyn Elementary School, and travels over Onondaga Creek by way of a pedestrian bridge to link to Valley Plaza and senior housing.

The intersections included in the study area that were examined for potential pedestrian crossing improvements/treatments, included:

- Mains Avenue/Maxwell Avenue (unsignalized);
- Maxwell Avenue/Valley Drive/Fish Avenue (signalized);
- Fish Avenue/Loomis Avenue (unsignalized);
- Midland Avenue/West Florence Avenue/path (unsignalized/mid-block);
- West Florence Avenue/South Salina Street/East Florence Avenue (unsignalized);
- East Florence Avenue/Stevens Avenue (unsignalized); and
- East Florence Avenue/Springbrook Avenue (unsignalized).

The SMTC used guidelines set forth in the New York State Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) for crosswalk treatments to determine which type of treatments would be applicable at these major crossings. Although PSAP monies are specifically for use at locations with existing pedestrian infrastructure, the SMTC is recommending similar treatments for some locations that do not currently have pedestrian crossings. Recommendations for the majority of crossings in the study area centered on adding crosswalks where needed and bringing existing facilities, primarily curb ramps, into ADA compliance.

The major road segments included in the analysis area that were examined for potential pedestrian improvements/treatments, included Maxwell, Fish, West Florence, and East Florence Avenues. These road segments are residential in nature, with primarily "partially accessible" or "not accessible" ADA sidewalk compliance ratings. These road segments also lead to nearby Van Duyn Elementary School. Through observation, the majority of traffic on these residential streets is either school related or neighborhood residents. Because of this, should the City decide to improve the sidewalks in the study area, it is recommended that segments closest to the school be improved first (i.e. Fish Avenue, Maxwell Avenue, West Florence Avenue). Recommendations relative to street segments primarily include bringing sidewalks up to current ADA standards and into compliance with City codes (sidewalk material should be concrete, not asphalt).



Proposed pedestrian accommodations across Midland Avenue

School officials indicated that the trail behind Van Duyn Elementary School that leads to Onondaga Creek is used by students to get to/from school. SMTC recommends widening the trail and pedestrian bridge, setting the concrete bollards at the western trailhead further apart to accommodate wheelchair and stroller users, thinning the trees/brush along the trail for better visibility, and adding trail signage. The SMTC also recommends that the City pursue funds for trail and pedestrian bridge improvements during the Phase III planning/construction of the Onondaga Creekwalk.

As far as bicycle-related recommendations are concerned, a neighborhood greenway is the recommended treatment in the Syracuse Bike Plan for

implementation along Florence Avenue (between Valley Drive and South Salina Street). This is a low traffic volume east-west corridor in the Valley, and offers a connection across Onondaga Creek, as well as a route to Van Duyn Elementary School. The SMTC supports this recommendation and encourages the City of Syracuse to implement this treatment. In addition, due to the residential nature of the roads in the study area, share the road signage is suggested along this east-west corridor.

The final technical analysis for this project can be found on the SMTC website, www.smtcmppo.org.



An Overview of the Church Street Municipal Lot Assessment

- Addendum to Church Street Access Study
- Village looking to establish a municipal lot
- Analysis assessed short- and long-term traffic impact

The Village of North Syracuse is extending the 100 block of Church Street to South Bay Road to improve delivery truck access and promote mixed-use investment. The Village decided that connecting to South Bay Road was its best option following the completion of SMTC's Church Street Access Study in 2016. Now, the Village wishes to consolidate several parking lots into a municipal lot with primary access via Church Street. The Village has pitched this idea to the property owners and received support to investigate it as a potential option. Establishing a municipal lot would increase the number of parking spaces, beautify the area, improve snow plowing/maintenance operations, and enhance traffic flow and safety along Route 11 by reducing unnecessary driveways. However, redirecting additional traffic to Church Street could increase delay at an already busy intersection. As such, the Village requested that the SMTC assess potential short- and long-term traffic impacts and share findings with the Village and the property owners.

The SMTC conducted a brief assessment and summarized findings in a technical memorandum to serve as an addendum to the 2016 Access Study. The assessment found that Route 11 is anticipated to operate satisfactorily now and 20 years in the future, but drivers on Church Street would likely experience excessive delay. Drivers turning left from Church Street onto Route 11 could experience 2 minutes of delay in the morning and three minutes of delay in the evening. These results reflect a worst-case-scenario of what could happen if

Church Street redevelops as an extension of the Village's central business district in 20 years. Assuming only half of the anticipated traffic occurs, which may be a more reasonable outcome, the anticipated increase in delay would be much more tolerable during the busiest time in the morning and in the evening.

The Village has a unique opportunity to promote investment and revitalization consistent with its vision for the future. Should the Village and the property owners decide to establish the municipal lot, the Village could monitor operations at the Route 11/Church Street intersection and restrict westbound left turns in the future if delays become unreasonable. If this were to occur, the Village should also add a southbound right-turn movement at Church Street/South Bay Road. The study found that eliminating a westbound left-turn (at Route 11/Church Street) and adding a southbound right-turn (at Church Street/South Bay Road) would greatly improve traffic operations and reduce delay to satisfactory levels.

The technical assessment is available at www.smtcmpo.org, and it can be reviewed at the Northern Onondaga Public Library (NOPL) or the SMTC office. Questions may be directed to Michael Alexander, malexander@smtcmpo.org or 315.422.5716.



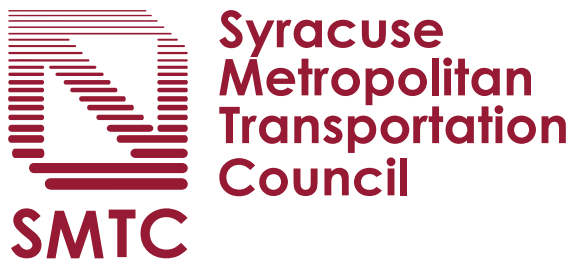
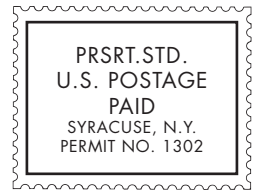
Church Street looking east to planned extension to South Bay Road

Church Street Roadway Extension Project Update

The 100 block of Church Street currently exists as a dead-end road without a cul-de-sac. Lacking a second point of access, the 100 block restricts a delivery truck's ability to safely turn around. The Village believes that improving truck mobility will promote new development consistent with their vision to redevelop the block as an extension of the central business district.

As mentioned in the article, the SMTTC completed an access study in 2016 that reviewed options to extend the road. Since the study's completion, the Village has secured a grant to extend Church Street to South Bay Road. Initial steps to advance the project are underway. The Village has acquired and recently demolished one structure adjacent to South Bay Road to allow for roadway construction, which is anticipated for summer 2019.

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