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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Public Invited to Get Involved/Participate in Rating County Roads for Bicycle Suitability Map**

**SYRACUSE, N.Y.** - The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) needs your help!

In its preparation of a Bicycle Suitability Map for Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse, the SMTC is inviting the community to get involved by participating in rating selected road segments based on their suitability for individuals traveling by bicycle. "What better way can we obtain a fair assessment of the current general conditions for cycling than from those individuals who ride the roads and possess a cyclist's point of view," said SMTC spokesperson Wayne Westervelt.

The SMTC is currently rating the existing conditions of selected roads based on their suitability for individuals traveling by bicycle, primarily commuter cyclists. The SMTC, the transportation planning organization for the Greater Syracuse Area, has already received citizen support in its rating of the City of Syracuse roads, and is now seeking assistance from volunteers to rate the rest of Onondaga County.

What would volunteers be asked to do? Volunteer cyclists are being asked to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, such as posted speed limits; if shoulder stripes exist on the stretch of road being rated; if available space is favorable for riding; if sewer/drainage grates are present; if steep hills are present; the cyclists' general level (feeling) of comfort/safety on a given stretch of road; and any other additional comment that the cyclist feels is worth noting.

Through the data gathering efforts of volunteer cyclists and the information provided by local agencies, the SMTC will develop a bicycle suitability map. This map will rate the streets on the existing road

network as being ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, etc. for commuter bicycling. This process **will not** result in the designation of particular bicycle routes, but will enable the general public to determine which roads are currently the most suitable for their bicycle travels. In addition, the map will enable the SMTC to recognize and visualize the current status of cycling throughout Onondaga County.

“By looking at the resulting map, will we be able to determine where the ‘holes’ exist in the current system and where to focus future efforts,” said Danielle Zebley, Project Manager of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan – a two-year effort being conducted by the SMTC. “The Bicycle Suitability Map will serve as a first step and starting point towards accomplishing the goal of a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment for our area.”

**Interested in volunteering? Contact SMTC’s Danielle Zebley today!** Phone:(315) 422-5716 or e-mail at [dzebley@smtcmpo.org](mailto:dzebley@smtcmpo.org). Additional information will be provided and a meeting will be scheduled at which the volunteering and rating process will be further explained.

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