

# ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL SYRACUSE CONNECTOR ROUTE PROJECT

## Part II Document



## Final Report

June 2016



Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council  
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# **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project**

## **Part II Document**

**Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council**



## **Final Report**

**June 2016**

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# Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project

## *Part II Document*

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# Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project

## Part II Document

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Introduction

This project initially began as part of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTTC) 2011-2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), where the SMTTC agreed to complete the *Erie Canalway Trail - Syracuse Connector Route Project* (Erie Canalway Trail Project) on behalf of the City of Syracuse. The intent of the overall Erie Canalway Trail Project was to re-establish a working group of interested agencies to continue discussions on how and where to locate the Erie Canalway Trail through the City of Syracuse with connections to existing sections of the Erie Canalway Trail in the Towns of Camillus in the west, and DeWitt in the east; and ultimately develop a documented plan for how to close the gap in the Erie Canalway Trail in Onondaga County. Connecting the Erie Canalway Trail across New York State and through our community has been talked about for more than 20 years. This project has provided the opportunity to share ideas and thoughts for completing the trail within our community and provides a foundation for how to close the Syracuse gap in the statewide Erie Canalway Trail.

The Syracuse segment of the Erie Canalway Trail has long been considered one of the most difficult gaps to complete due to the urbanized area it will traverse, along with its associated cost and the need for local champions to spearhead the effort. It is located at the geographic center of the entire trail, serving as a major statewide connection point - completing the gap in the Syracuse portion of the trail would link Syracuse and its surrounding communities to 281 miles of Erie Canalway Trail that are currently open to the public. The Trail brings important economic, public health, tourism, and quality of life benefits to more than 3.7 million New Yorkers living within the 14 counties where the trail is located.<sup>1</sup>

#### Project Organization

The study was separated into two components, Part I and Part II. Part I, completed in June 2013<sup>2</sup> resulted in a suggestion for a short-term on-road, signed Erie Canalway Trail route that could be utilized until a permanent off-road route is developed and put into place. This document, Part II of the Erie Canalway Trail Project, focuses on the development of a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route.

#### Study Area

The study area for the overall *Erie Canalway Trail Project* is the large gap (Syracuse Gap) that exists at the current termini of the Erie Canalway Trail within Onondaga County, between the Erie Canal Park in the Town of Camillus and the Old Erie Canal State Park in the Town of DeWitt, approximately 12–15 miles.

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<sup>1</sup> Canalway Trail Association New York in collaboration with Parks & Trails New York, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2014*, Executive Summary, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The completed Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project Part I Document can be found on the SMTTC website at [http://www.smtcmpo.org/docs/reports/ECT\\_Part1\\_FULLReport\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.smtcmpo.org/docs/reports/ECT_Part1_FULLReport_FINAL.pdf).

### **Public Involvement**

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for this study was created with the purpose of involving the public throughout the planning process, and included a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), Working Group and Stakeholders list. The SAC met several times during the Part II planning process. The Working Group met in December 2013 to share their suggestions for creating a permanent trail route between Camillus and DeWitt and was able to share these ideas on large paper maps of the study area. The final public meeting for the overall project was held in December 2015 to share potential route options and specific points of study with the public. Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting.

### **Development of Potential Routes**

Much of the Part II Erie Canalway Trail project is built on findings and suggestions gleaned during Part I of this project. The SMTC utilized the information gathered during the background research phase of Part I of the project, along with details collected during the inventory of the Syracuse Gap in an effort to develop potential options for routing the permanent Erie Canalway Trail through Onondaga County. Looking back at the existing conditions mapping (from Part I of the project), and using feedback from both Public Meetings, both Working Group Meetings, and several Study Advisory Committee Meetings offered essential input into the development of the potential permanent route options. Feedback received from cyclists (via the SMTC's Bike Corridor Study, as well as from the annual Cycling the Erie Canal event survey - both reviewed during Part I of the project) also offered significant insight into route development.

Due to several variables and unknowns surrounding the completion of an Erie Canalway Trail through Onondaga County - including property ownership, the time table for completing the Onondaga Lake Trail, and the complexity of potentially utilizing Erie Boulevard East as an Erie Canalway Trail route - the SAC determined that offering a few options for an Erie Canalway Trail route through the community was the most prudent course to take at this time.

### **Suggested Permanent Route Options and Points of Study by Section**

This section of the document examines the suggested permanent route options for the "Syracuse gap" in the Erie Canalway Trail, which was organized into three distinct sections: West, Central and East. Within each of these sections, the suggested permanent route options are outlined by number (in no particular order) along with points of study that represent examples of what an Erie Canalway Trail through the local gap could potentially look like.

A table in Section 3.3 of the document summarizes the opportunities and constraints of the route options examined in this study, as well as how each of the route options meets the three primary desired Erie Canalway Trail traits, as determined via public feedback: 1) follow the historic route of the canal; 2) easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services; and 3) off-road to the extent possible in an urban setting.

### **Order of Magnitude Cost Estimates**

Because there are several Erie Canalway Trail routing options along with many options for the type of facility chosen (whether on- or off-road, paved or unpaved, etc.), it is difficult to determine an overall rough cost estimate for closing the Syracuse Gap in the trail through our community. An order of

magnitude chart is included in the document that gives an estimation of costs in terms of low cost (road striping, sidewalks), medium cost (pedestrian signals, stone dust or asphalt trail) and high cost (major road reconstruction) for each potential route option.

### **Champions**

Developing a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route to close the Syracuse gap presents some interesting challenges and opportunities to the community, one of these being the role of “champion”. The SMTC is a transportation planning agency, and does not implement projects. This project will not manifest itself unless additional local and/or state leadership steps forward. The role of champion is discussed in Chapter 4 of this document.

The ideas gleaned through the Town of Dewitt and City of Syracuse’s recent Elevating Erie competition (discussed in Chapter 4), as well as the SMTC’s Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project have helped to start the conversation and process of determining where and how an Erie Canalway Trail can fit into our community; however, additional champions are needed to help close the Syracuse gap in the Erie Canalway Trail. Should funding become available to assist in constructing portions of the Erie Canalway Trail, this document will be in place to serve as a starting point for that work.

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# Erie Canalway Trail – Part II Document

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

This project initially began as part of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) 2011-2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), where the SMTC agreed to complete the *Erie Canalway Trail - Syracuse Connector Route Project* (Erie Canalway Trail Project) on behalf of the City of Syracuse.

The intent of the overall Erie Canalway Trail Project was to re-establish a working group of interested agencies to continue discussions on how and where to locate the Erie Canalway Trail through the City of Syracuse with connections to existing sections of the Erie Canalway Trail in the Towns of Camillus in the west, and DeWitt in the east; and ultimately develop a documented plan for how to close the gap in the Erie Canalway Trail in Onondaga County. The project was separated into two components – Part I, which developed options for creating a short-term on-road signed route to be utilized while Part II of the project was determined: development of a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route that is off-road to the extent possible and desired.

Connecting the Erie Canalway Trail across New York State and through our community has been talked about for more than 20 years. This project has provided the opportunity to share ideas and thoughts for completing the trail within our community and provides a foundation for how to close the Syracuse gap in the statewide Erie Canalway Trail.

### 1.2 What is the Erie Canalway Trail?

"For more than 20 years, state and local governments have been transforming old towpath and abandoned rail corridors into multi-use pathways" to close the gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail<sup>1</sup>. The Erie Canalway Trail across New York State is primarily a recreational, off-road trail, designed as a multi-use or *shared use path*<sup>2</sup> that follows both active and historic segments of the Erie Canal between Buffalo and Albany, NY.

The trail stretches about 360 miles with approximately 78% of the off-road trail complete as

***"Shared use paths*** are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. They may be used by bicyclists, pedestrian, skater, wheelchair users, joggers, and other non-motorized users (for the most part). Most *shared use paths* are designed for two-way travel."

<sup>1</sup> Parks & Trails New York, *Cycling the Erie Canal: A guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail* (PTNY, 2012), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2012, p. 1-4.

of September 2015. Once finished, the Erie Canalway Trail will become the longest, continuous intrastate multi-use trail in the United States and a world-class destination for cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the existing off-road Erie Canalway Trail is stone dust (although some of the newer trail segments have been constructed using asphalt), and mostly level with an average grade of 1%, since it primarily follows canal and rail corridors. (There are a few steeper grades and hills, climbs greater than 400 feet, mostly in the Mohawk River Valley)<sup>4</sup>

Bicycling, walking and cross-country skiing are allowed on all sections of the Erie Canalway Trail. Some segments are suitable for in-line skating, and other uses vary by location.<sup>5</sup> Within the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), snowmobiling is allowed on the existing section of the Old Erie Canal trail from Warners Road in Camillus heading west towards Port Byron. (This trail is constructed of crushed stone.) Snowmobiling, along with horseback riding, is allowed along the Old Erie Canal State Park Trail in DeWitt, heading east toward Rome. (This trail has both paved and crushed stone sections.)

### 1.3 Project Significance

The Syracuse segment of the Erie Canalway Trail has long been considered one of the most difficult gaps to complete due to the urbanized area it will traverse, along with its associated cost and the need for local champions to spearhead the effort. It is also located at the geographic center of the entire trail, serving as a major statewide connection point - completing the gap in the Syracuse portion of the trail would link Syracuse and its surrounding communities to 281 miles of Erie Canalway Trail that are currently open to the public. The Trail brings important economic, public health, tourism, and quality of life benefits to more than 3.7 million New Yorkers living within the 14 counties where the trail is located.<sup>6</sup>

In July 2014, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)<sup>7</sup> published *The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail – An Assessment and User Profile of New York’s Longest Multi-Use Trail*, “in an effort to provide reliable estimates of trail users; measurements of the trail’s economic impact; information on spending, usage patterns, and demographics of trail users; and a template for measuring the

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<sup>3</sup> Canalway Trail Association New York in collaboration with Parks & Trails New York, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2014*, Executive Summary, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cycling the Erie Canal, *About the Erie Canalway Trail*, <http://www.ptny.org/bikecanal/overview.shtml> (April 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Erie Canalway Trail National Heritage Corridor, *Things to Do: Erie Canalway Trail*, 2008, [http://www.eriecanalway.org/explore\\_things-to-do\\_erie-canal-trail.htm](http://www.eriecanalway.org/explore_things-to-do_erie-canal-trail.htm) (April 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Canalway Trail Association New York in collaboration with Parks & Trails New York, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2014*, Executive Summary, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> PTNY is the state’s leading not-for-profit park and trail advocacy organization, has worked with the New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor for more than 15 years to develop and promote the Canalway Trail System.

impacts of future use. Business owners and tourism officials were also surveyed to provide an added dimension to the assessment of economic impacts.”<sup>8</sup>

As shown in the graphic below, overall (including direct and secondary effects) Erie Canal Trail visitor spending generates approximately \$253 million in sales, 3,400 jobs, \$78 million in labor income, and \$28.5 million in taxes in the Upstate economy each year. The most conservative estimates of new money yield approximately \$55.8 million in new sales effects, the creation of approximately 731 jobs, and \$16.7 million in labor income within the local economy.<sup>9</sup> Annual traffic volume estimates on the Erie Canalway Trail are around 1.6 million per year, with the highest number of visits closest to the large urban population centers of Buffalo, Rochester and Albany (more than 200,000 visits per year).<sup>10</sup>



Erie Canalway Trail Visitor Spending and Total Impact as determined by PTNY (graphic from *The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail – An Assessment and User Profile of New York’s Longest Multi-Use Trail*, Paul A. Scipione, PhD. for PTNY, July 2014, p. 3.).

<sup>8</sup> *The Economic Impact of the Erie Canalway Trail – An Assessment and User Profile of New York’s Longest Multi-Use Trail*, Paul A. Scipione, PhD. for PTNY, July 2014, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pg. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pg. 2.



The Canalway Trail can neither realize its full potential as an internationally known tourism destination nor offer maximum economic and quality of life benefits to the more than 200 communities along its length until it is finished from Buffalo to Albany as a continuous off-road trail.<sup>11</sup> Closing the gap between the towns of Camillus and DeWitt would complete another 14 to 15 miles of the overall Erie Canalway Trail, a project with substantial support from the local community.

During the development of the SMTC's 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), four transportation projects were recognized as being major, regionally significant projects:

- The I-81 Viaduct Project
- Enhanced transit system
- Expanded regional trail network
- Inland port facility.

There has been substantial public debate and discussion around the first three of these regionally-significant projects, and the LRTP recognizes that there is broad public support for advancement of these projects. The expanded regional trail network project focuses on progressing projects identified in

existing plans, such as the Onondaga Lake Trail, Onondaga Creekwalk, and the Erie Canalway Trail, as well as connecting these trails. Expanding the regional trail network is considered a “low-hanging” fruit – the easiest to accomplish while improving the quality of life for those that live in the region by offering non-motorized commuting options as well as recreational opportunity. The cost of bicycle, pedestrian and trail amenities is relatively small (especially compared to the other regional projects noted above). Linking suburban communities and city neighborhoods to our regional trail network will expand options for walking, bicycling, and non-motorized commuting options, and strengthen the overall network.<sup>12</sup> Closing the local gap in the Erie Canalway Trail would also help to achieve several LRTP goals and supporting objectives, including “provide more trails to connect destinations”, “increase the percentage of commute trips made by bicycling or walking”, “reduce VMT in the region”, to name a few.

#### **What is a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)?**

The LRTP is a federally required document of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (SMTC is a MPO) that guides transportation planning and investment over a period of at least 20 years. The LRTP describes the existing land use patterns, economic conditions, demographics, and transportation system conditions in the planning area; identifies future transportation system needs; and sets goals and objectives for future transportation planning and investment. A financial plan must be included in the LRTP, illustrating how the MPO intends to carry out the policies or projects identified in the LRTP with the resources that are reasonably expected to be available over the life of the plan. The SMTC's 2050 LRTP can be reviewed on the SMTC's web site (<http://www.smtcmpo.org/LRTP2050/>).

<sup>11</sup> Canalway Trail Association New York in collaboration with Parks & Trails New York, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2014*, Executive Summary, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, *2050 Long Range Transportation Plan – Moving Towards a Greater Syracuse*, September 2015, p. 24; 103-105.



The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board's (CNYRPDB) VisionCNY Regional Sustainability Plan for Central New York<sup>13</sup> also specifically calls out completing the Erie Canalway Trail as well as the Onondaga Lake Trail (with connections to the Onondaga Creekwalk). The plan also calls for the continued development of "complete streets" that encourage walking and bicycling within the region.

In August 2011, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed New York State's "Complete Streets" law (S5411A-2011). This law requires transportation projects undertaken, overseen, or funded by the NYSDOT to consider the needs of various users, including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and citizens of all ages and abilities (including children, the elderly, and the disabled). Although the law requires projects funded with state or federal funds to comply, it does not provide any additional funding for designing or incorporating complete street design features into a project. Currently, there is no national Complete Streets policy and locally funded projects are exempt from this law in New York State. However, both the Town of DeWitt<sup>14</sup>, and City of Syracuse (through their City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2040) also have Complete Streets policies in place.

Closing the gap in the Canalway Trail system in Central New York can help the region to reach its goals of reducing reliance on automobile travel and expanding the regional trail network. The New York State Canal Corporation, along with partners such as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Parks & Trails New York, and other state agencies and local municipalities are also working to complete the trail across the state.

The Erie Canal has great name recognition in this country because of its iconic standing in American history. Many canal communities offer easy access to their downtown business districts for trail users because they are on or close to the canal and the adjacent trail. Bicycle tourists are part of the new "cargo" on the Erie Canal. The Erie Canalway Trail has the ingredients needed to become a truly world-class bicycle tourism destination, once again connecting canal communities to each other and the world. It already is delivering significant numbers of bicycle tourists (as well as other user types - walkers, inline skaters, etc.) to the doorstep of various communities across the state, and its presence alone can boost local businesses.

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<sup>13</sup> Like the SMTC, the CNYRPDB is a regional planning body. Its VisionCNY Plan examines energy use, infrastructure, land use, environmental conditions, economic development, and waste management practices across a five-county region, including Onondaga County. The plan proposes sustainability goals, targets and strategies for the region and describes the benefits that can accrue to residents and municipalities by implementing these strategies. In the area of transportation, VisionCNY emphasizes the importance of bus rapid transit and transit-oriented development, and building complete streets.

<sup>14</sup> The Town of DeWitt's Complete Streets Policy was adopted in July 2015 (<http://ecode360.com/documents/DE0337/public/197655608.pdf#search=complete%20streets%20complete%20streets%20complete%20streets%20complete%20street%20streets%20street>)

## 1.4 Project Organization

The study was organized into two separate components, Part I and Part II.

### PART I (SHORT-TERM ROUTE)

Part I, completed in June 2013<sup>15</sup> examined the existing unsigned, on-road Erie Canalway Trail routes noted on the Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) web site, the route included in the guide *Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail*, and the route utilized each July for the Cycle the Erie Canal (CTEC) Bike Tour. Part I of this project included the examination of these routes to determine if alternate roads and/or improvements could be made, such as incorporating roadways with existing bike infrastructure (bike lanes), minimal traffic, etc. The study resulted in a suggestion for a short-term on-road, signed Erie Canalway Trail route that could be utilized until a permanent off-road route is developed and put into place. Also included in the Part I document is a table containing suggested bike treatments, pedestrian options and road owners for the preferred route.

Since the completion of Part I of this project, the SMTC assisted the City of Syracuse with a signage locating plan for posting Erie Canalway Trail trailblazers through Syracuse. The City received trailblazers from the Canal Corporation which were posted in late 2015 along the City portion of the Erie Canalway Trail on-road route. The SMTC has begun working with the Town of DeWitt to get a temporary on-road route signed in that community, and will be reaching out to the Village of Solvay and Town of Camillus to do the same.

### PART II (PERMANENT ROUTE)

This document, Part II of the overall *Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project* (Erie Canalway Trail Project), focuses on developing a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route between the current western terminus of the Canalway Trail in the Town of Camillus and eastern terminus in the Town of DeWitt. The intent of the permanent route is to work towards developing a route that is off-road, to the extent possible and desired, as the Erie Canalway Trail across NYS is intended as an off-road, relatively flat route.



Erie Canalway Trail trailblazer and bike route sign on Water St, installed by the City of Syracuse, Fall 2015



<sup>15</sup> The completed Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project Part I Document can be found on the SMTC website at [http://www.smtcmpo.org/docs/reports/ECT\\_Part1\\_FULLReport\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.smtcmpo.org/docs/reports/ECT_Part1_FULLReport_FINAL.pdf).

However, recognizing that the Syracuse area is one of the more urban sections of the Erie Canalway Trail across the state, there is a need to create safe on-road and/or separated bicycle facilities as part of the overall trail.

Development of the long-term off-road route is primarily organized into three sections – West, Middle, and East (representing the Camillus connection in the west, the City of Syracuse gap in the middle, and the DeWitt connection in the east).

This document focuses on Part II of the Erie Canalway Trail Project, serving as an addendum to the Part I document.

## **1.5 Study Area**

The study area for the overall *Erie Canalway Trail Project* is the large gap (Syracuse Gap) that exists at the current termini of the Erie Canalway Trail within Onondaga County, between the Erie Canal Park in the Town of Camillus and the Old Erie Canal State Park in the Town of DeWitt, approximately 12–15 miles. The Syracuse Gap lies at the geographic center of the statewide Erie Canalway Trail. The area being examined for the future Erie Canalway Trail in Onondaga County essentially cuts through the middle-upper portion of the City of Syracuse and also includes examination of the historic route of the Erie Canal.

## **1.6 Erie Canalway Trail Users**

In an effort to develop the most appropriate routing plan for the Erie Canalway Trail through the SMTCC MPA, the identification of a target group of potential users of the Syracuse Gap trail was deemed important. For the purposes of the overall intent of the project (i.e., Part II, the permanent route), the target group included people of all ages and abilities, ranging from a wide variety of bicyclists (commuter, recreational, families with children on bikes) to a wide variety of pedestrians (including wheelchair users, parents pushing children in strollers, joggers).

## 2.0 Public Involvement

It is the SMTC's intention to promote the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to leverage renewed local interest in the Erie Canalway Trail and develop an implementation plan for how and where to locate the Erie Canalway Trail between its current termini in the Towns of Camillus and DeWitt. In an effort to do so, the SMTC, with input from the Study Advisory Committee, developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP), which served both Part I and Part II of this project. The intent of the PIP (found in Appendix A) is to:

- (1) Create public awareness of the study's goals, objectives, and process, as well as to publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the study; and
- (2) Involve the public throughout the planning process.

The formation of three types of groups to assist the SMTC was important in the study effort: a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), project Working Groups (WG), and a general Stakeholders group.

### 2.1 Study Advisory Committee

Formed to provide technical and procedural guidance, the SAC, through Part II of the project, has consisted of representatives from the following agencies and governmental entities:

- CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CenterState CEO)
- Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA/Centro)
- New York State (NYS)
  - Department of Transportation (DOT)
  - Canal Corporation (CC)
  - Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT)
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)
- City of Syracuse
  - City Planning Division
  - Department of Public Works (DPW)
  - Department of Engineering
- Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (CNYRPDB)
- Town of Camillus
- Town of Geddes
- Town of DeWitt
- Village of Solvay
- Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)
- Honeywell.

In addition to providing technical guidance, the SAC provided feedback on the materials to be presented at the public meeting held in December 2015 for Part II of the project. The SAC has provided input and comments on multiple potential routes for the permanent routing of the trail, on the points of study (essentially mini-studies of specific locations along potential trail routes showing what a given portion of the trail could look like. These are discussed in detail in Section 3.0), and provided review and comments on this Part II document. The SMTC met with the SAC several times during the Part II planning process.

## 2.2 Public Meetings

The final public meeting for the *Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route* project was held on December 3, 2015, at the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST) in Syracuse. During the presentation portion of the meeting, the SMTC provided an introduction to the Erie Canalway Trail project, an overview of the completed Part I portion of the project, and an overview of the Part II suggested trail route options and Points of Study, followed by a question and answer period.



Public meeting attendees reviewing Erie Canalway Trail display boards, 12/3/15

The SMTC also shared twelve display boards depicting the routing options for the Canalway Trail along with several exhibits showing what specific locations along the trail could look like under possible alternatives.

Following the question and answer session of the meeting, the public used sticky notes to share their thoughts and comments on the suggested routes and Points of Study display boards. SMTC staff was available to answer questions about the display boards and overall project.

Approximately 40 people attended this public meeting. Meeting minutes can be found in Appendix A.

## 2.3 Working Groups

The SMTC held one Working Group meeting for Part II of the Erie Canalway Trail project on December 9, 2013, to obtain additional insight into the routing a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route through Onondaga County. The Working Group consisted of volunteers from the July 2012 kick-off public meeting, as well as participants solicited through the informal online Erie Canalway

Survey completed during Part I of the project, and attendees from the first Working Group meeting held in November 2012 as part of the Part I process.

The eleven Working Group members that attended the December 2013 meeting had suggestions for creating a permanent trail route between Camillus and DeWitt, and were able share these ideas on large paper maps of the study area. Their input provided valuable insight into the selection and refinement of potential routes for developing a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route. The SAC was invited to participate in each Working Group meeting as desired.

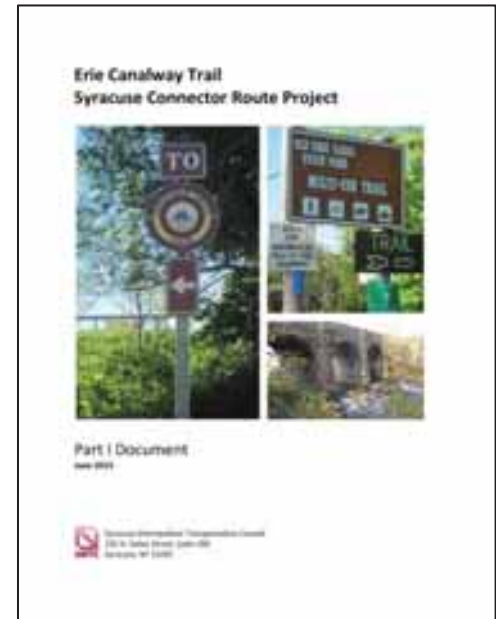
## **2.4 Stakeholders**

The SMTC created a Stakeholders list (a broader group of interested individuals with interest in the study area) for the *Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route* project. Attendees from the first public meeting (held in July 2012) were added to the Stakeholders list, as were Working Group attendees (from both the 2012 and 2013 meetings), and were sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, notified of all public and working group meetings, and encouraged to provide feedback and comment regarding the overall trail project. Additional stakeholders were also added following the December 3, 2015, public meeting.



### 3.0 Analysis

Much of the Part II Erie Canalway Trail project is built on findings and suggestions gleaned during Part I of this project. The SMTC utilized the information gathered during the background research phase of Part I of the project, along with details collected during the inventory of the Syracuse Gap in an effort to develop potential options for routing the permanent Erie Canalway Trail through Onondaga County. Looking back at the existing conditions mapping (from Part I of the project), and using feedback from both Public Meetings, both Working Group Meetings, and several Study Advisory Committee Meetings offered essential input into the development of the potential permanent route options. Feedback received from cyclists (via the SMTC's Bike Corridor Study, as well as from the annual Cycling the Erie Canal event survey - both reviewed during Part I of the project) also offered significant insight into route development.



The Part I Erie Canalway Trail document was completed in June 2013. Part I can be viewed at [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org).

#### 3.1 Development of Potential Routes

Development of the potential permanent routes began at the very first public meeting, held July 26, 2012, when attendees were given large maps and asked to draw their ideal route(s) for the Erie Canalway Trail through Syracuse, connecting to the Towns of Camillus and DeWitt. Several route suggestions with thoughts and comments were summarized into a series of maps (see Map 3-1: West, Central, East, and South sections). The on-road route ideas shown on the maps were then further examined in Part I of the project. For Part II of the project, all of the route suggestions from the July 2012 public meeting were carried forward for review during the December 9, 2013, Working Group meeting.

##### *Working Group Meeting*

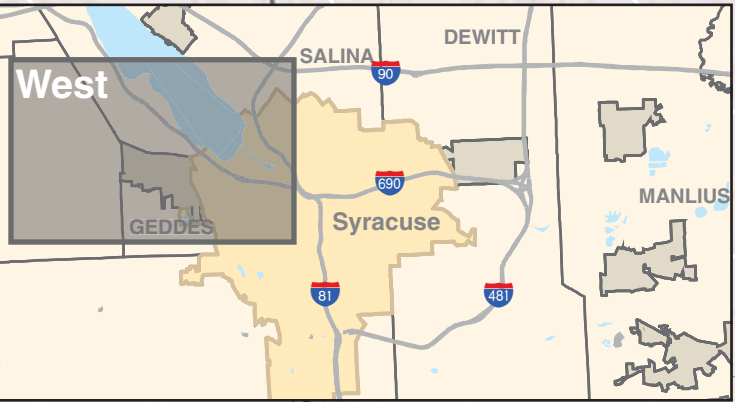
The Working Group met in December 2013 to provide additional insight and suggestions for a permanent route to close the Syracuse Gap in the Erie Canalway Trail. All of the route ideas from the July 2012 public meeting had been mapped via Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and shared on large maps with the Working Group. The short-term on-road route was also available for the Working Group to review.

Working Group participants were given large maps of the Syracuse Gap to draw on. They were asked to keep the following in mind as they developed potential permanent routes:

- The Erie Canalway Trail is primarily off-road across the state, accommodating all types of users
- The Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) survey of trail users during the annual "Cycling the Erie Canal" bike tour across New York State (summarized in the Part I document) found that when

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**Legend**

- Erie Canal Trail
- Unsigned On-Road Erie Canal Trail
- Onondaga Creekwalk
- Onondaga Lake Park Trails (dashed lines indicate trails under construction)
- Bike Lanes, Cycle Tracks, Sharrows
- Rail (Active)
- Rail (Inactive)
- Abandoned; Track Removed
- Historic Route of the Erie Canal (approx. alignment from 19th century map)
- Universities
- Hospitals
- Erie Canal Museum

- Water Features
- Parks
- City of Syracuse
- Villages
- Towns
- 5 Meter Contours

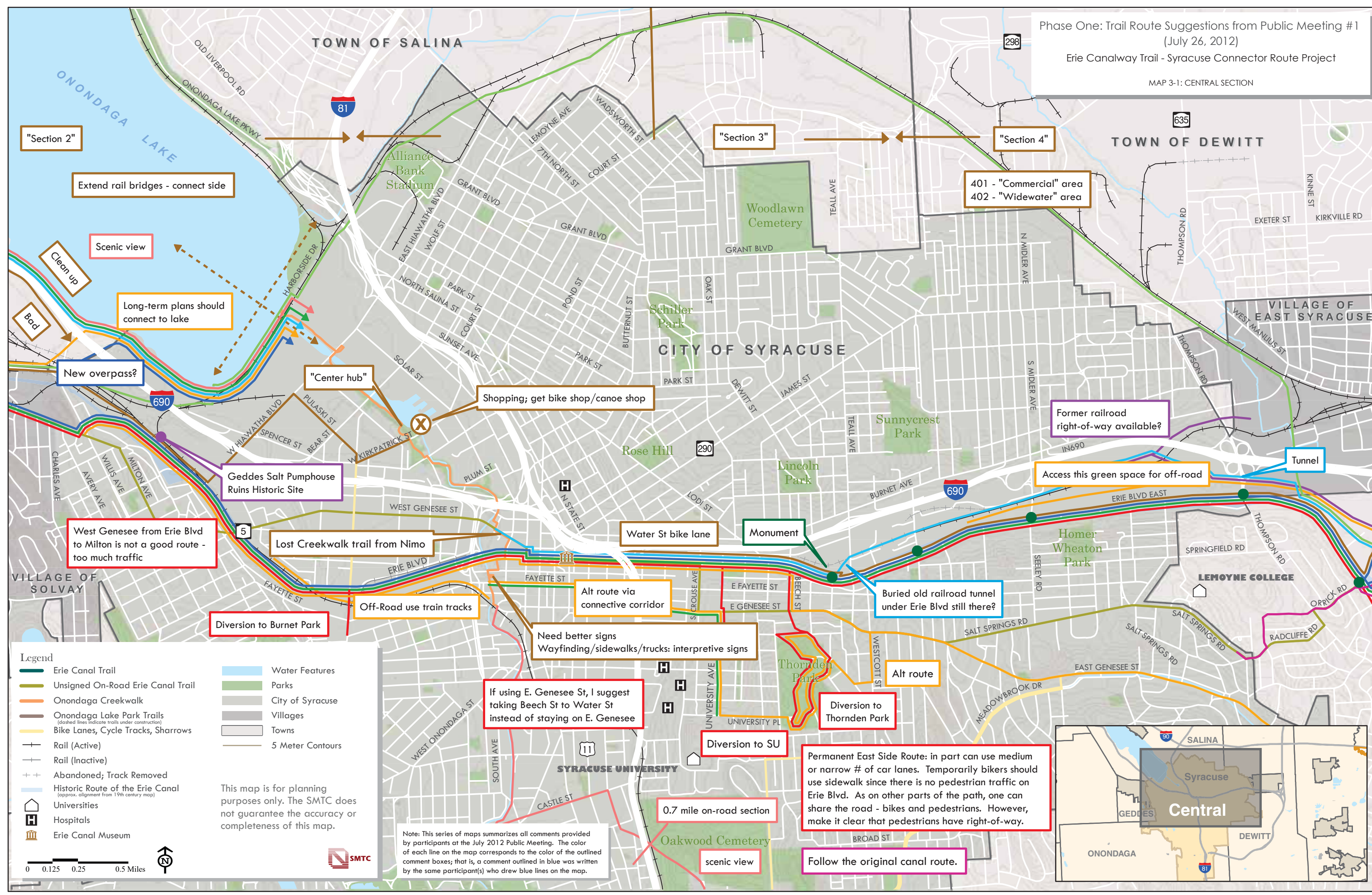
This map is for planning purposes only. The SMTC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map.

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Note: This series of maps summarizes all comments provided by participants at the July 2012 Public Meeting. The color of each line on the map corresponds to the color of the outlined comment boxes; that is, a comment outlined in blue was written by the same participant(s) who drew blue lines on the map.

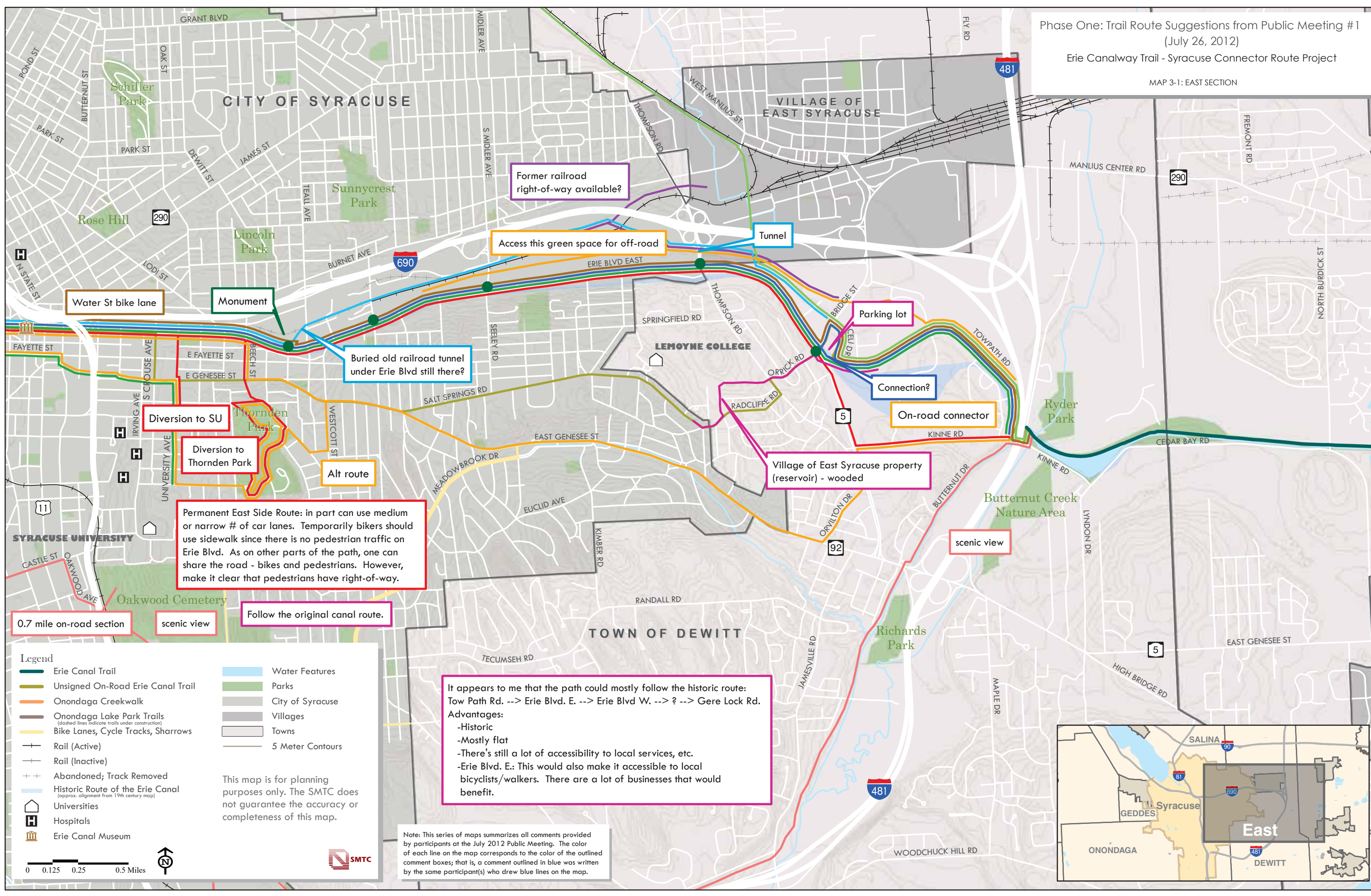
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It appears to me that the path could mostly follow the historic route:  
Tow Path Rd. --> Erie Blvd. E. --> Erie Blvd W. --> ? --> Gere Lock Rd.

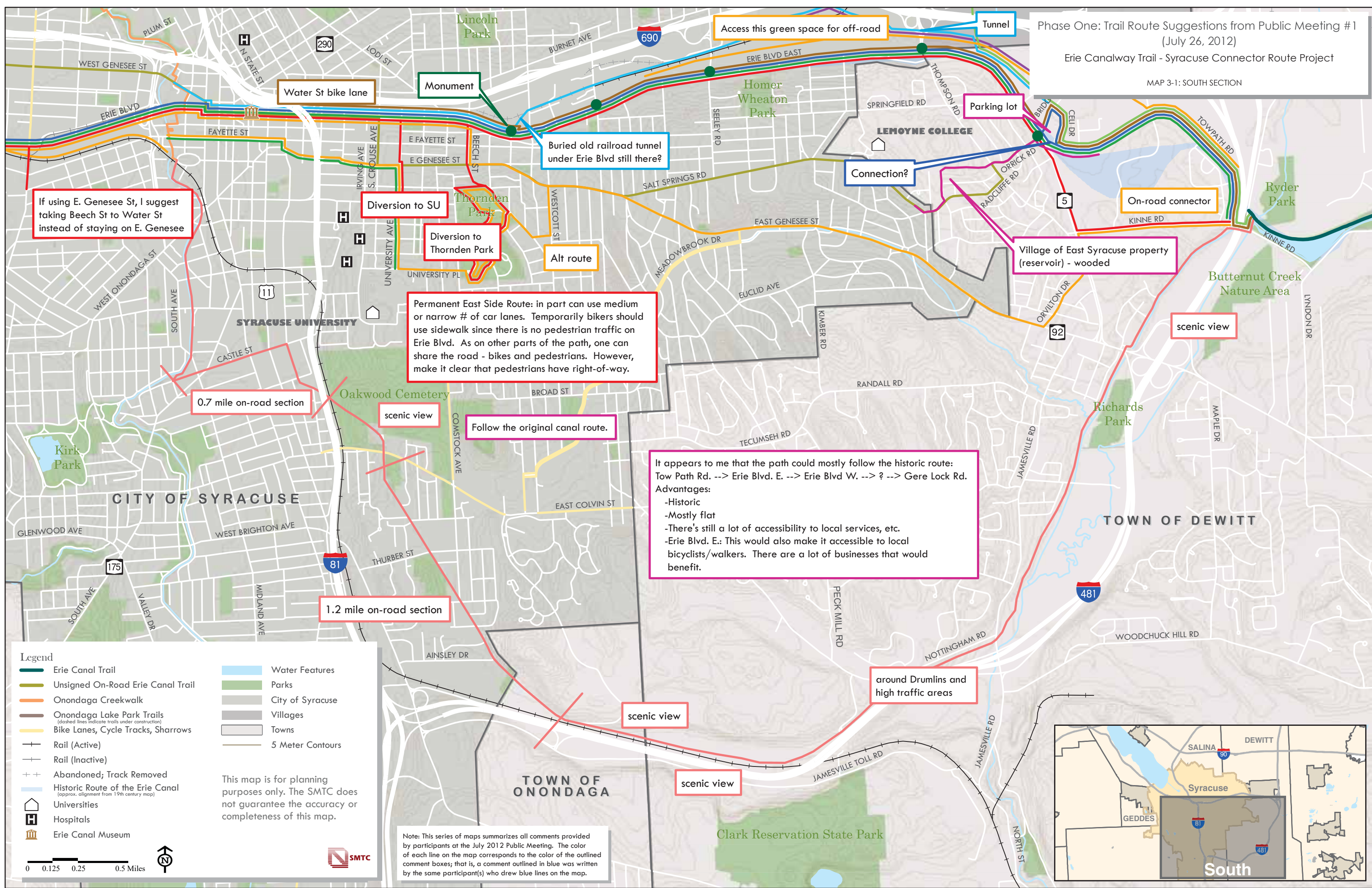
**Advantages:**

- Historic
- Mostly flat
- There's still a lot of accessibility to local services, etc.
- Erie Blvd. E.: This would also make it accessible to local bicyclists/walkers. There are a lot of businesses that would benefit.

Note: This series of maps summarizes all comments provided by participants at the July 2012 Public Meeting. The color of each line on the map corresponds to the color of the outlined comment boxes; that is, a comment outlined in blue was written by the same participant(s) who drew blue lines on the map.

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cyclists reached Syracuse they found the local route to be unsigned, have poor road markings, a lot of traffic, and hills. The positives of coming through Syracuse included the cultural experiences (visiting museums, historic sites, boat rides) and dining.

- During the July 2012 public meeting, as well as on-line through fall 2012, the SMTC conducted a brief survey (summarized in the Part I document), which noted that the majority of respondents would like to see the Erie Canalway Trail be an off-road route; have easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services; and follow the historic route of the canal.
- A permanent Erie Canalway Trail through Syracuse will likely be a more urban experience than some of the rural settings that the trail traverses across the state.
- Connections to existing trails in the community (Onondaga Lake Trail, Onondaga Creekwalk) are important in creating a regional trail network.
- This project has coordinated with other ongoing and/or recently completed projects including the Syracuse Bike Plan and the SMTC Bike Corridor Study
  - SMTC has explored where people commute by vehicle and examined nearby routes for commuting by bike
  - Commuter corridors tend to follow the historic Erie Canal route
  - Working Groups of cyclists shared their thoughts/opinions through these plans.

Given all of the information above, Working Group participants developed various permanent route options for the Erie Canalway Trail between Camillus and DeWitt. To view these route options, see Map 3-2, titled *Phase Two: Suggested Permanent Route Options – December 2013: Working Group Meeting*.

#### *Study Advisory Committee Review*

The SAC met in March 2014 to discuss and review the route options put forth by the Working Group (the SAC was also asked to keep in mind the same parameters shared with the Working Group). Upon reviewing the Working Group suggestions, public feedback on a desired Erie Canalway Trail route (follow the historic route of the canal; easy access to cultural sites, activities, food; and off-road), and considering connections to existing community trails, the SAC refined the route options to develop Map 3-3, the *Phase Two: Suggested Permanent Route Options & Points of Study* map.

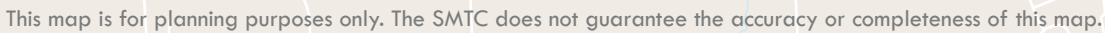
Due to several variables and unknowns surrounding the completion of an Erie Canalway Trail through Onondaga County - including property ownership, the time table for completing the Onondaga Lake Trail, and the complexity of potentially utilizing Erie Boulevard East as an Erie Canalway Trail route - the SAC determined that offering a few options for an Erie Canalway Trail route through the community was the most prudent course to take at this time.

### **3.2 Suggested Permanent Route Options and Points of Study by Section**

This section examines the suggested permanent route options developed through this project for the “Syracuse gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail, from west to east, between the existing Erie Canalway Trail terminus at the Camillus Erie Canal Park (just west of Warners Road) and the eastern terminus at the Old Erie Canal State Park in the Town of DeWitt (just east of Butternut Drive). The gap has been organized

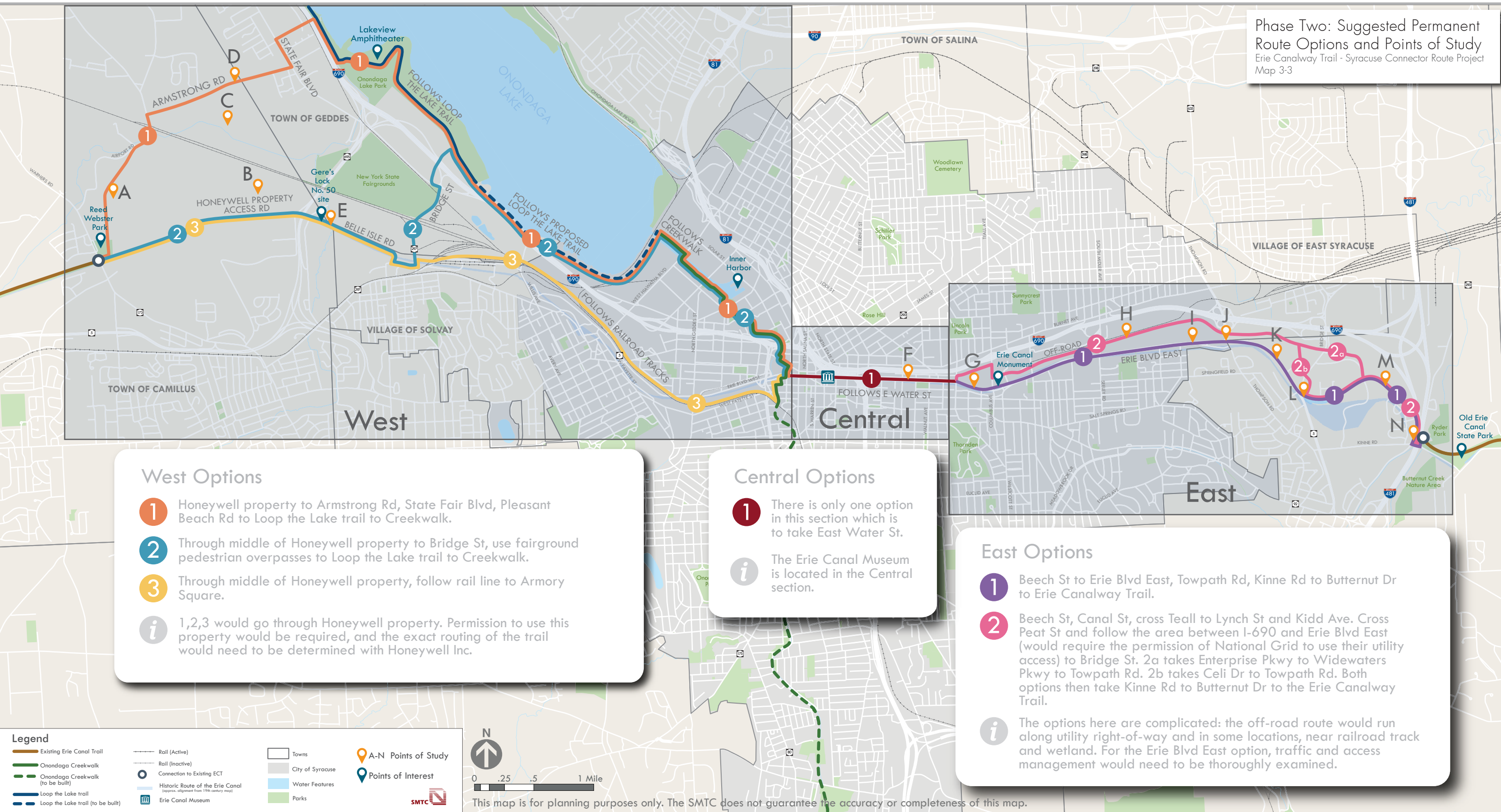
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December 2013: Working Group Meeting  
Erie Canalway Trail - Syracuse Connector Route Project  
Map 3-2



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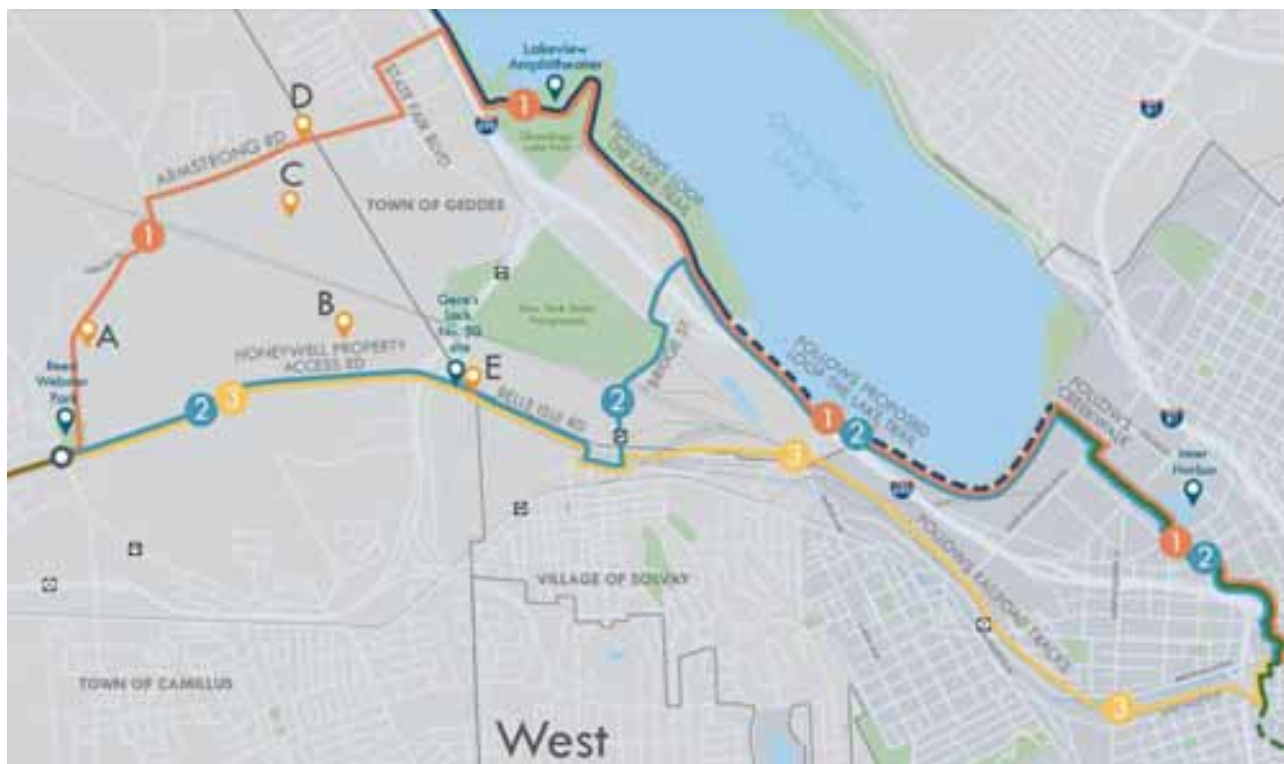


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into three distinct sections: West, Central and East. Within each of these sections, the suggested permanent route options are outlined by number (in no particular order) along with points of study that represent examples of what an Erie Canalway Trail through the local gap could potentially look like. The points of study are labeled with the letters A through N. As noted previously, the sections, suggested permanent route options and points of study are shown on Map 3-3.

### 3.2.1 West Section

This section begins at the current western terminus of the Erie Canalway Trail, the Camillus Erie Canal Park. Three potential route options for the West Section are shown below, and described in detail on the next page. As the trail heads east, all three West Section options end where the Onondaga Creekwalk meets Water Street at Franklin Street.



Map 3-4: West Erie Canalway Trail Section - Potential Permanent Route Options & Points of Study

The suggested permanent route options for the West Section of the Syracuse area gap in the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT) all begin by crossing Warners Road into Reed Webster Park (a public park in the Town of Camillus), and continue as follows along three different potential routes, outlined turn-by-turn on the following pages.

## **West Section Route Options (Eastbound)**

### ***Route Option 1***

- Runs east by northeast through Reed Webster Park
- North through Honeywell owned property via internal access road
- Northeast on Honeywell owned property (parallel to Airport Rd), and exit Honeywell property via gate area just south of rail line
- Take Airport Rd north (crossing above Nine Mile Creek & rail line)
- Right onto Armstrong Road and head east. Follow into the Town of Geddes
- Left onto State Fair Blvd and head north
- Right onto Pleasant Beach Rd, following the road until it ends
- Take the footbridge over I-690 to the Onondaga Lake Park (OLP)/Loop the Lake Trail
- Follow the existing and proposed OLP/Loop the Lake Trail to the Onondaga Creekwalk
- Follow the Onondaga Creekwalk to Water St.

Route Option 1 is approximately 9.8 miles in length. The Loop the Lake Trail accounts for about 4.5 miles of this route, and the Onondaga Creekwalk accounts for about 2.0 miles of the route. The majority (80%) of this route is off-road, but would use approximately 2.0 miles of on-road facilities.

### ***Route Option 2***

- Runs east by northeast through Reed Webster Park
- Continues east by northeast, then east through Honeywell owned property via internal access road to gate on Gere Lock Rd
- Runs south of and parallel to Gere Lock Rd/Belle Isle Rd along a filled in section of the old Erie Canal, where several remnants of the Gere's Lock No. 50 site are intact
- Connects to Mathews Ave and then to Bridge St (Rt 297)
- Head north on Bridge Street (expected to undergo construction in the near future to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians) to the State Fair footbridges
- Cross the footbridges to the OLP/Loop the Lake Trail
- Follow the existing and proposed OLP/Loop the Lake Trail to the Onondaga Creekwalk
- Follow the Onondaga Creekwalk to Water St.

Route Option 2 is approximately 8.1 miles in length. Nearly 88% of this route is off-road, with 1-mile on-road using Mathews Avenue and Bridge Street. Bridge Street is expected to undergo a major transformation in the near future, making room for bicycle and pedestrian traffic which would connect Erie Canalway Trail users to and through the New York State Fairgrounds to the Onondaga Lake Trail. Both the Loop the Lake Trail and Onondaga Creekwalk account for about 2.0 miles each of this route.

### ***Route Option 3***

- Runs east by northeast through Reed Webster Park
- Continues east by northeast, then east through Honeywell owned property via internal access road to gate on Gere Lock Rd
- Runs south of and parallel to Gere Lock Rd/Belle Isle Rd along a filled in section of the old Erie Canal, where several remnants of the Gere's Lock No. 50 site are intact
- Connects to Mathews Ave and then to Bridge St (Rt 297)
- Cross Bridge Street and head east following rail lines



- Continue to follow rail lines east, southeast, and east again until reaching Onondaga Creekwalk in Armory Square
- Follow the Onondaga Creekwalk north to Water St.

Route Option 3 is approximately 6.9 miles in length. This option uses just under a half mile of the Onondaga Creekwalk, and does not utilize the Onondaga Lake Trail. Approximately 95% of this route is off-road, with half of the entire route running alongside the railroad tracks from Bridge Street in Solway to Armory Square in Syracuse.

### *Trail Connections*

All three of the potential West Section route options rely on connections to already existing and proposed major trail assets in the community – the Onondaga “Loop the Lake” Trail and the Onondaga Creekwalk (Creekwalk). Route Options 1 and 2 connect to the “Loop the Lake” Trail, which will eventually connect to the Creekwalk. Route Option 3 connects to the Onondaga Creekwalk in Armory Square.

The most recent section of the Onondaga Lake Trail opened in May 2014, adding 2.5 miles of trail, and extending the trail from Onondaga Lake Park on the east side to the trailhead near the New York State Fairgrounds. Onondaga County has begun to examine options for connecting the next portion of this trail from the New York State Fairgrounds trailhead to the Onondaga Creekwalk. The Onondaga Creekwalk currently runs from Onondaga Lake to Armory Square, and an extension south of Kirk Park is in the preliminary design phase with construction anticipated for 2018. Phase Three of the project, which is only a concept at this time, would extend the Creekwalk to the southern border of the City at Dorwin Avenue.



Northern terminus of Onondaga Creekwalk at Onondaga Lake

Connecting the Erie Canalway Trail to the area’s existing, planned and proposed trails would strengthen the community’s trail network and provide non-motorized commuting options as well as recreational opportunities and connections to the statewide Erie Canalway Trail.

Route Options 1 and 2 also pass the Syracuse Inner Harbor, a former state Barge Canal terminal, connected to the overall Erie Canal system.

### *Honeywell Property*

All three route options detailed above rely on the use of Honeywell property. Should Honeywell property be utilized, the route does not have to follow one of these 3 options. Honeywell would have a

say/stake in where a potential Erie Canalway Trail would/could run through their property. Another potential route (not shown in this study) could follow Nine Mile Creek.

### **West Section Points of Study A, B, C, D, and E (Eastbound)**

Five points of study were examined within the West Section of the “Syracuse Gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail. The ideas and/or concepts depicted at these points of study represent examples of what could potentially be accomplished at that particular point along the Erie Canalway Trail. In the West Section four of the five points of study show what an off-road Erie Canalway Trail could look like.

Across the state, the off-road Erie Canalway Trail is typically 10 feet wide. However, something to consider is that the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), recommends wider (11-14 feet) pathways in locations that are anticipated to serve a higher percentage of pedestrians and bicyclists.<sup>16</sup>

The sections, suggested permanent route options and points of study are shown on Map 3-3.

### ***Locations A, B, C: Honeywell property points of study***

Three of the West Section points of study (Locations A, B, and C) are located on Honeywell property.

As of the writing of this document, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (collectively known as the Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustee Council) have been conducting a Natural Resource Damage Assessment at Onondaga Lake in Syracuse, New York in cooperation with Honeywell. They are in the process of identifying potential projects to restore, replace or compensate for injuries to and lost use of natural resources caused by hazardous substances released in and around Onondaga Lake. As part of this process, the trustees are evaluating potential projects, including one involving the extension of the Erie Canalway Trail through Honeywell property east of the current trail interruption at Warners Road; however, no decision has been made at this point (routing of the Erie Canalway Trail through this property would require permission, and/or easements from Honeywell).

Point of Study C is not located on Route Options 1, 2, or 3 through Honeywell property, however, this location was examined in further detail due to its relationship with Nine Mile Creek. If a trail is developed within Honeywell property, there may be an opportunity to connect the trail to Nine Mile Creek via the Honeywell-owned bridge that crosses the creek.

Should the Erie Canalway Trail end up traversing Honeywell property, a 10-14 foot *shared use path*<sup>17</sup> is suggested.

The only on-road Point of Study in the West Section is Armstrong Road (Location D), a single-lane road, approximately 1.3 miles that connects Airport Road in Camillus to State Fair Boulevard in Geddes.

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<sup>16</sup> American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2012, p.5-3.

<sup>17</sup> See definition on page 1.

Location E, Gere's Lock No. 50 is also owned by Honeywell, but is currently maintained by volunteers of the Camillus Erie Canal Park. This location is part of the old Erie Canal and has a rich history. Many portions of the canal wall are still intact here.

The following section examines the West Section Points of Study (A through E) in more detail.

# 1 A - Honeywell Property

## West side – Wastedbed 14 Area

The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) and Honeywell have partnered to create a sustainable Shrub Willow Farm on Honeywell property (in the area of Wastedbed 14) in the Town of Camillus. The shrub willows provide an effective vegetative cover as well as an improved habitat for wildlife. These plants can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions ("Shrub Willow Farm." *Onondaga Lake Cleanup*. Honeywell, n.d. Web. 24 Sept 2015).

Existing



The current condition of the site shows abundant shrub willows on top of the hill on the west side of Honeywell property.

Proposed



This suggestion would add a 10-14 foot shared use path along the shrub willow area. Trees could be planted to add to the enclosure of the space. This path could link to the north or west boundary of Reed Webster Park in Camillus, tying users into the Erie Canalway Trail which picks up on the west side of Warners Road, across the street from Reed Webster Park.

# 2 3 B - Honeywell Property

## South of CSX railroad tracks – Wastebed 12 Area

The photos below were taken in the area of Wastebed 12, located south of the CSX rail line. Grasses, shrubs, trees and other greenery are thriving here.

Existing



The current condition of this site, located in the middle of Honeywell property, shows abundant greenery as well as a stone and gravel access road.

Proposed



In keeping with the natural surroundings, this suggestion would transform the access road to a 10-14 foot shared use path. Trees could be planted to add to the enclosure of the space. This path could link to the eastern Honeywell entrance gate on Gere Lock Road.



# C - Honeywell Property

West side of Honeywell property near Nine Mile Creek

Point of Study C is not located on Route Options 1, 2, or 3 through Honeywell property, however, this location was examined in further detail due to its relationship with Nine Mile Creek. Nine Mile Creek runs through the northern portion of Honeywell property in the Towns of Camillus and Geddes. One of the access roads traversing Honeywell property crosses the creek and then runs parallel to it. If a trail is developed within Honeywell property, there may be an opportunity to connect the trail to Nine Mile Creek via the Honeywell-owned bridge. Following along this access road could also serve as another route option for Erie Canalway Trail through Honeywell Property (this option was not examined through this study).

Existing



The current condition of this location shows ample trees along an access road through Honeywell property. The bridge, owned by Honeywell, crosses Nine Mile Creek.

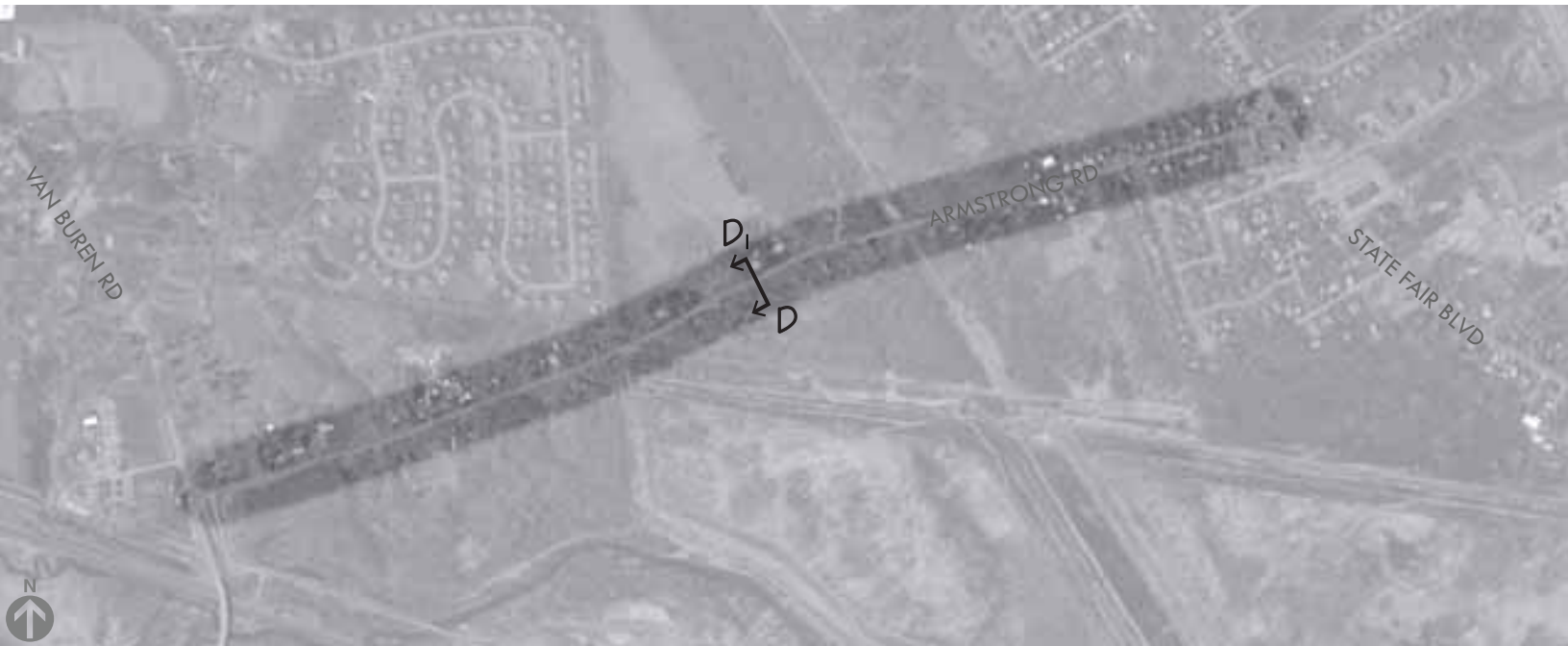
Proposed



This suggestion would transform the access road to a 10-14 foot shared use path over Nine Mile Creek. If pursued as another route options, this route could link to the area near Geddes Brook / Pumphouse Road, and tie users into the New York State Fairgrounds via State Fair Boulevard.

# 1 D - Armstrong Rd.

Between Van Buren Road and State Fair Boulevard



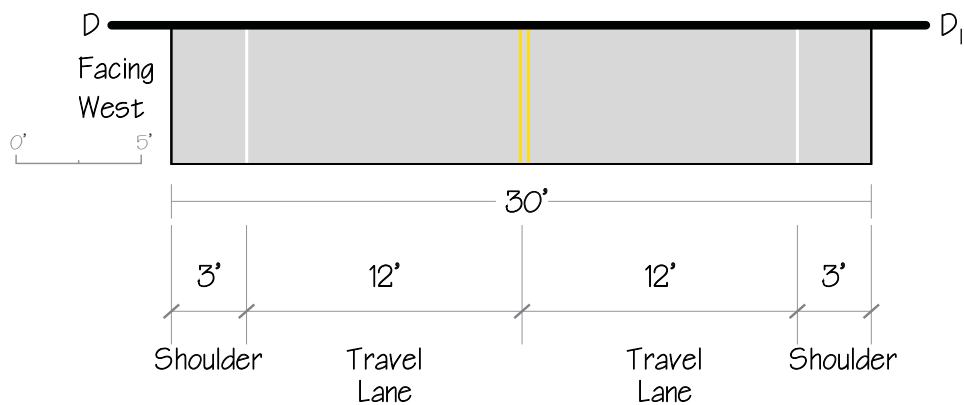
## Current Condition

**Segment D: Single-lane urban collector**

**Uncurbed**

**30' total shoulder-to-shoulder width**

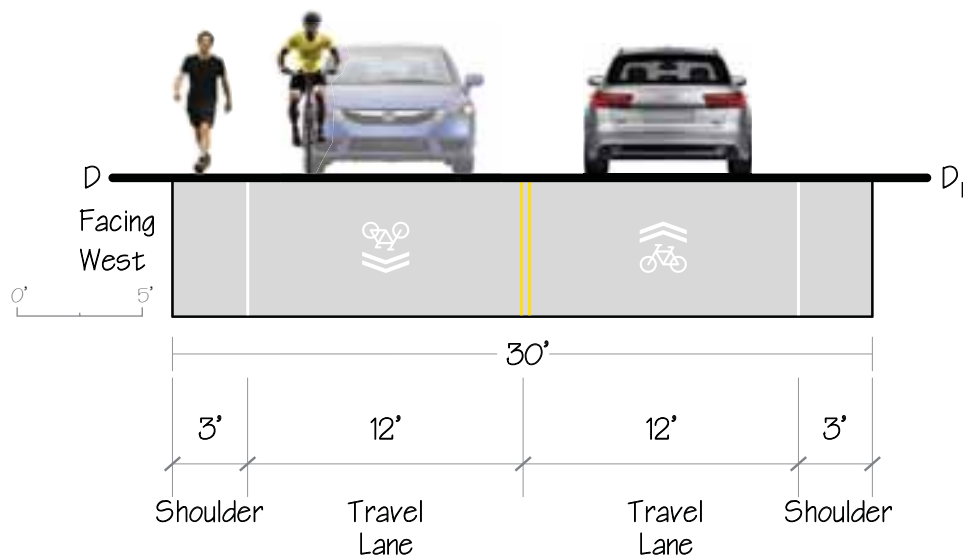
**50' Right of way**





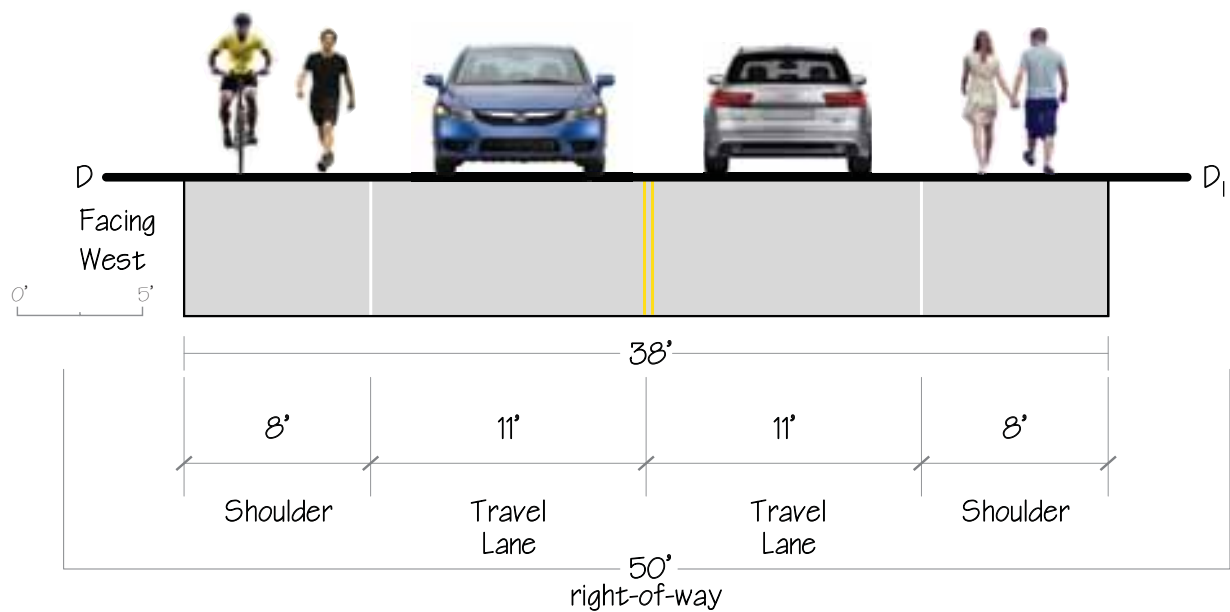
# Option 1

This option includes sharrows to accommodate bicycles on Armstrong Road without changing lane widths. Bicycles and vehicles would have to share the road. Pedestrians would be accommodated via existing shoulders (which doesn't give them much room).



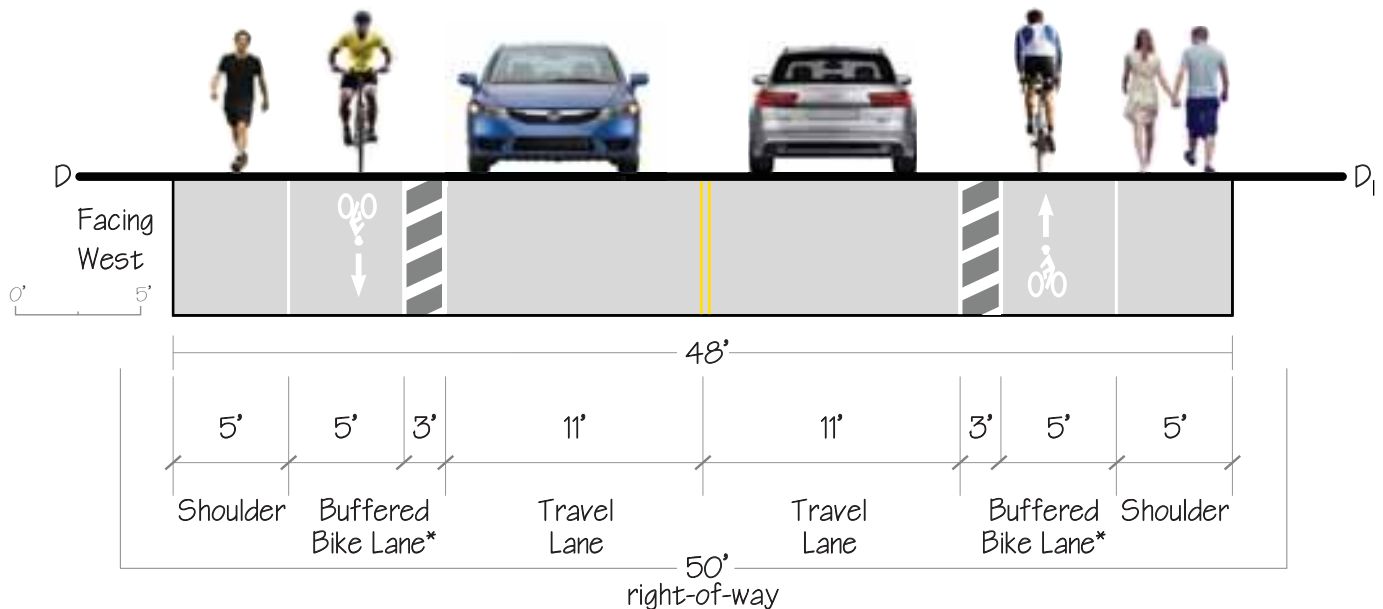
# Option 2

This option reduces travel lane widths to 11 feet. An 8' shoulder replaces the 3' shoulder via existing right-of-way width. Bicycles and pedestrians would share the shoulder.



## Option 3

This option reduces travel lane widths and implements 5' bike lanes with a 3' buffer.\* Larger shoulders are installed in the existing right-of-way to accommodate pedestrians.



\* "Buffered bike lanes are conventional bicycle lanes paired with a designated buffer space separating the bicycle lane from the adjacent motor vehicle travel land and/or parking lane. A buffered bike lane is allowed as per MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) guidelines for buffered preferential lanes (section 3D-01)." (National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide, 2011, p. 19).

"The recommended buffer space is at least 1.5 feet to 2 feet wide and preferably marked with white diagonal cross hatching or chevron markings. The MUTCD requires that a buffer space wider than 4 feet be marked with chevrons (or diagonal cross hatching), while the NACTO notes chevrons or diagonal cross hatching for a buffer space of 3 feet or wider." (National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 766: Recommended Bicycle Lane Widths for Various Roadway Characteristics, Transportation Research Board, 2014, p.55).

"Buffers should be at least 2 feet wide because it is impractical to mark a zone narrower than that." "The buffer shall be marked with 2 solid white lines with diagonal hatching if 3 feet in width or wider." (NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, 2011, p. 24-25.)

# 2 3 E - Gere's Lock No. 50

Along Gere Lock / Belle Isle Road

A filled-in section of the old Erie Canal runs parallel to Gere Lock Road/Belle Isle Road in the Town of Camillus and Village of Solvay. This piece of property is owned by Honeywell and maintained by volunteers of the Camillus Erie Canal Park. This stretch of property includes Gere's Lock No. 50, a lock along the Erie Canal system. This section offers a chance to highlight an historically-significant stop along the Erie Canalway Trail.

Existing



The current condition of this location shows a cleared path along remnants of the old Erie Canal through the Gere's Lock No. 50 site.

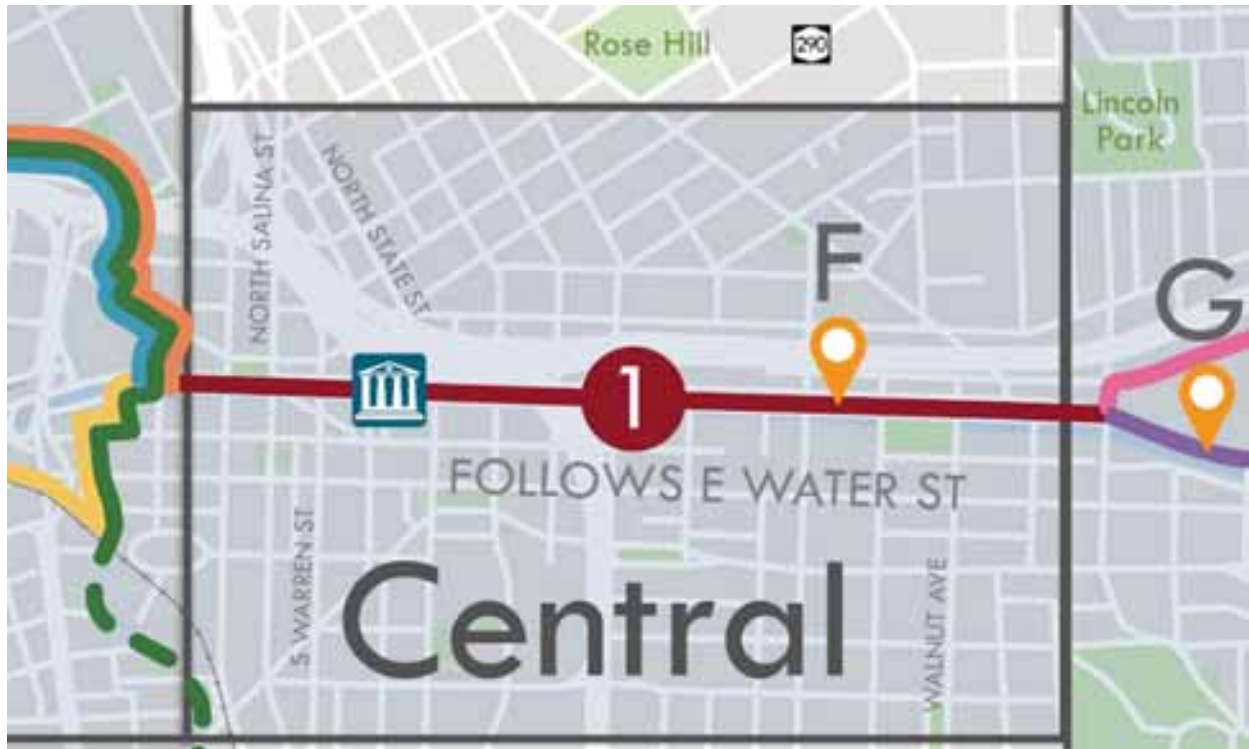
Proposed



This suggestion would transform the existing path to a 10-14 foot shared use path, allowing trail users view of the significant Erie Canal remnants located here. This path could link to Mathews Avenue and then to Bridge Street in the Village of Solvay. Bridge Street is expected to undergo a major transformation in the near future, making room for bicycle and pedestrian traffic which would allow trail users access to and through the New York State Fairgrounds to the Onondaga Lake Trail.

### 3.2.2 Central Section

The Central section picks up where the West section leaves off -- where Onondaga Creekwalk meets Water Street at Franklin Street. There is only one Central section option, which follows Water Street east to its terminus at S Beech Street. This route is 1.4 miles in length and is entirely on-road.



Map 3-5: Central Erie Canalway Trail Section - Potential Permanent Route Option & Point of Study

As noted above, there is only one suggested permanent route option for the Central section of the Syracuse area gap in the ECT: Water Street. Water Street runs parallel to Erie Boulevard, but does not experience the volume of traffic that Erie Boulevard does. In addition, Water Street between Franklin Street and State Street currently has a combination of bike lanes and sharrows to accommodate cyclists, as well as sidewalks along both sides of the street.



Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on Water Street, Syracuse, NY (facing east)



Between State Street and Beech Street, Water Street has bike lanes (though the paint is worn in many locations, and the pavement needs resurfacing in some locations) and a sidewalk on at least one side of the street; however, sidewalks between State Street and McBride Street are sporadic. Water



Bike path between Beech St and Erie Blvd East (image from Google maps)

Street used to extend to Erie Boulevard, but now ends at Beech Street. The “old” portion of Water Street between Beech Street and Erie Boulevard East is now a separated bike path (see photo, above).

Water Street also passes by the official museum of the Erie Canal, the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse (see photos below), which is housed in the only remaining weighlock building in America<sup>18</sup>. Having the Erie Canalway Trail pass this museum is a high priority of the SAC and community in general.



Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, NY



Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, NY

### *Trail Connections*

At its western end, Water Street connects directly to the Onondaga Creekwalk at Franklin Street in downtown Syracuse. At Water Street’s eastern terminus, it connects with the separated bike path located between Beech Street and Erie Boulevard East.

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<sup>18</sup> “The Erie Canal Museum. The Official Museum of the Erie Canal,” Erie Canal Museum, 2016, 20 Jan. 2016 <<http://www.eriecanalmuseum.org>>.

### *I-81 Viaduct Project*

The NYSDOT has undertaken the I-81 Viaduct Project<sup>19</sup> to address the structural and highway design needs of the elevated portion of I-81 in downtown Syracuse, which is nearing the end of its useful life. A series of alternatives are being examined as part of the project, which could potentially require changes and/or upgrades to the street grid near Water Street. If an alternative is chosen that affects Water Street, it is important to take advantage of any opportunities to enhance the Erie Canalway Trail within this Central Section (and maybe heading into the East section as well). Improving the bicycle and pedestrian facilities and amenities along Water Street would help meet the goals of both the Erie Canalway Trail connection and the I-81 Viaduct Project.

The following section drawing examines the Central Section Point of Study (Location F) on Water Street in more detail.

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<sup>19</sup> The Scoping Report for the I-81 Viaduct project was released in April 2015. More information can be found at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities>.

# 1 F - Water Street

Between Crouse and University Avenues



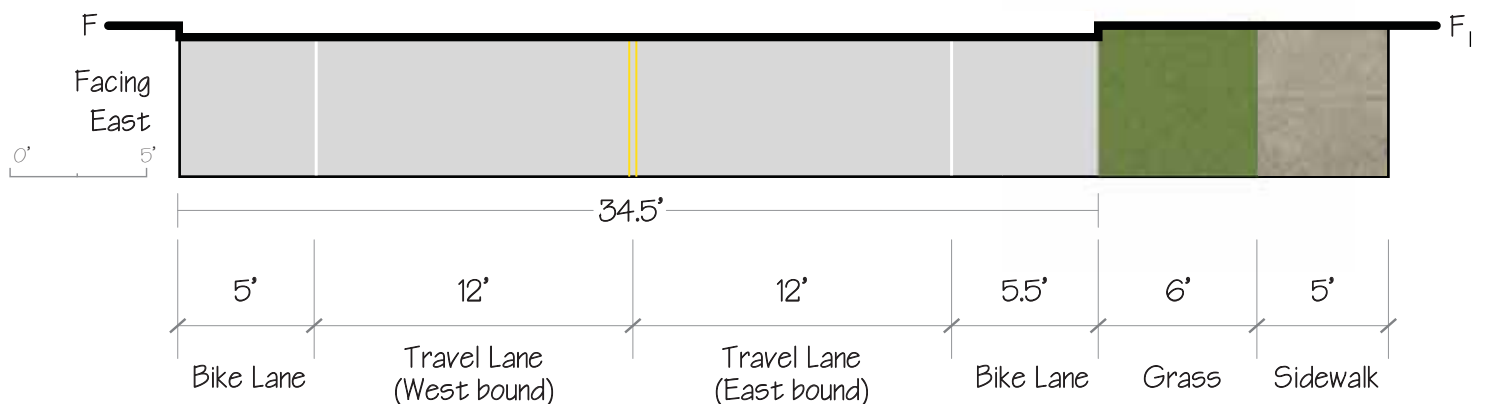
## Current Condition

**Segment F: Single-lane local road**

**Curbed**

**34.5' total shoulder-to-shoulder width**

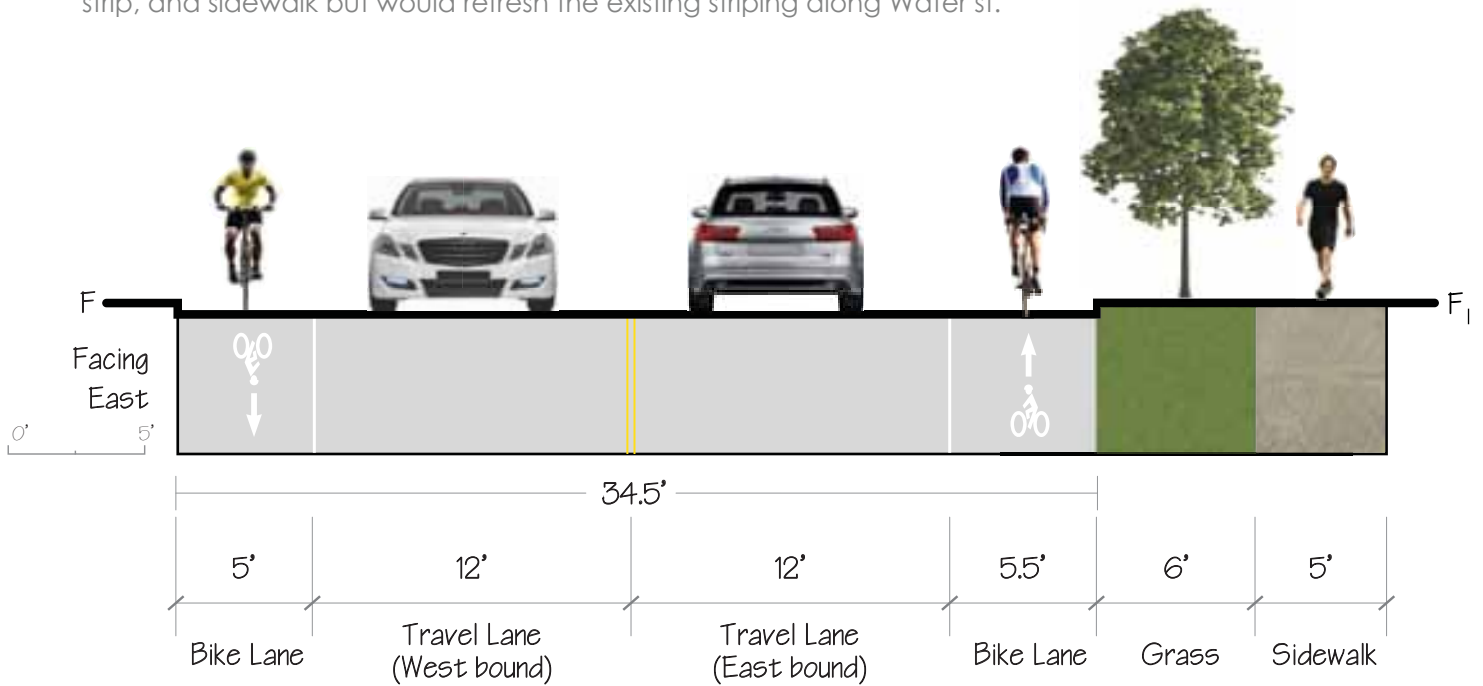
**Speed limit is 30 mph**





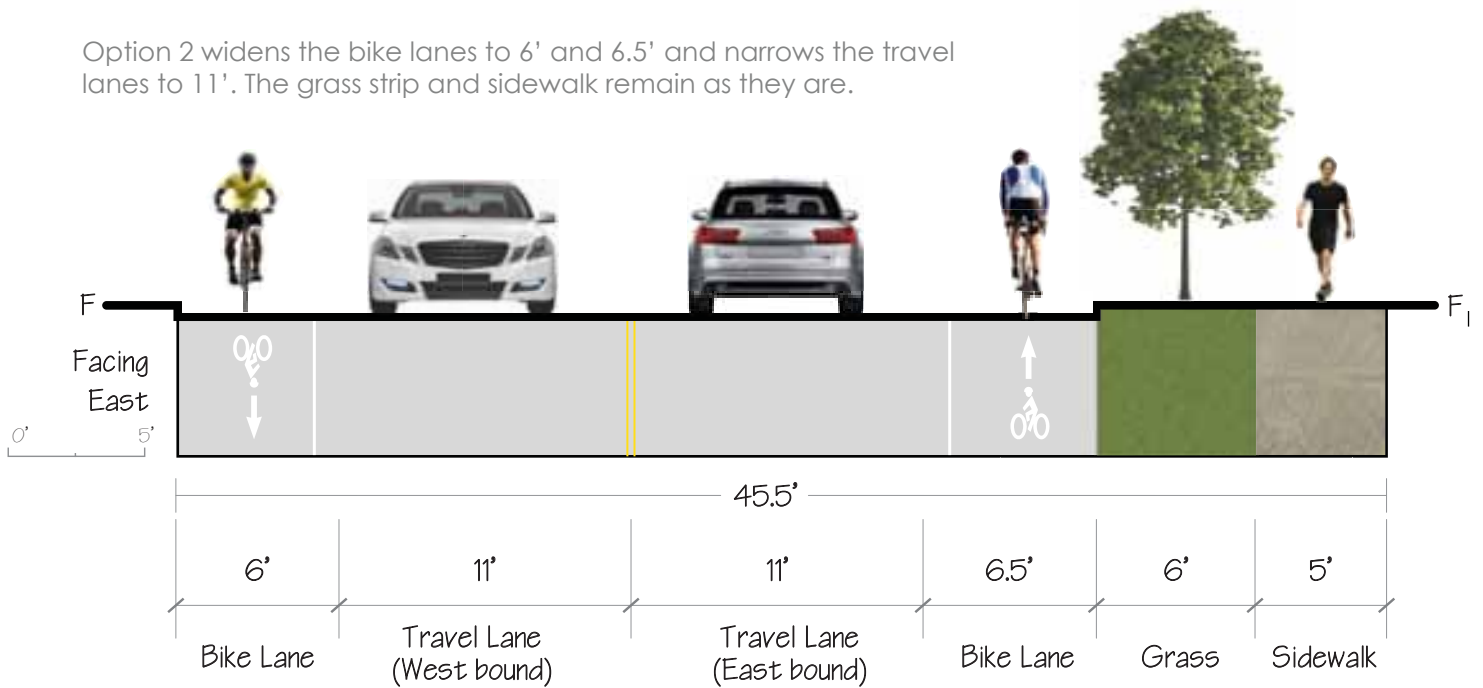
## Option 1

Option 1 involves maintaining the existing bike lanes, travel lanes, grass strip, and sidewalk but would refresh the existing striping along Water st.



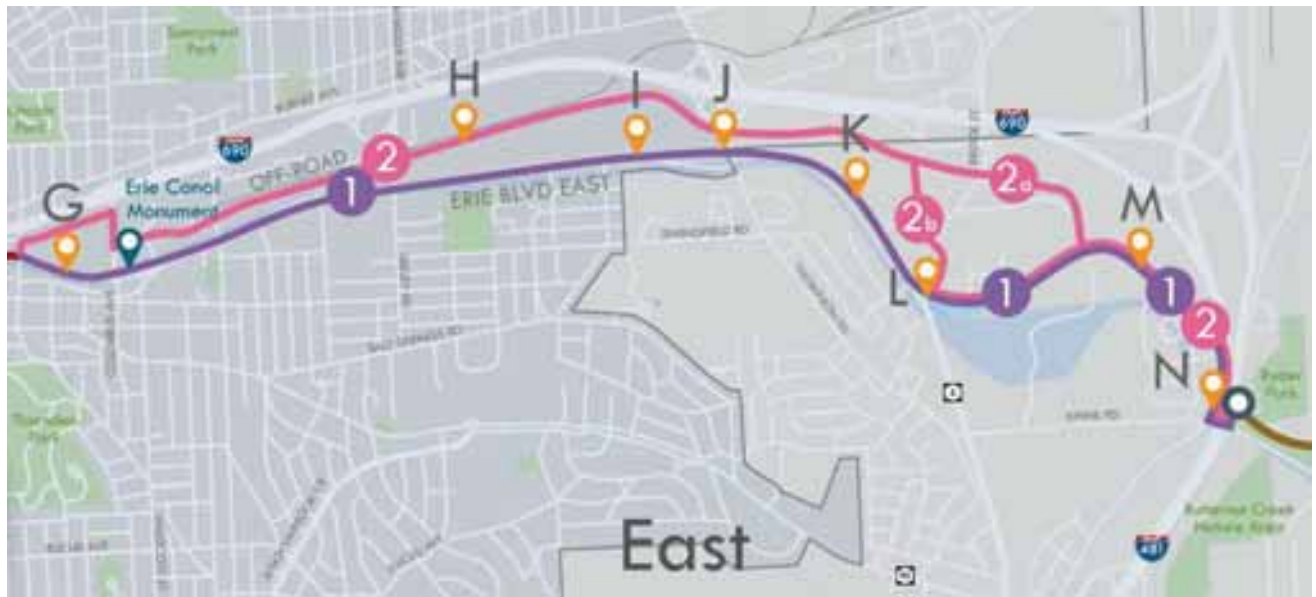
## Option 2

Option 2 widens the bike lanes to 6' and 6.5' and narrows the travel lanes to 11'. The grass strip and sidewalk remain as they are.



### 3.2.3 East Section

This section begins at the intersection of Water Street and South Beech Street in Syracuse. Two potential route options for the East Section are shown below and described in detail further down. As the trail heads east, both options for the East Section connect to the existing eastern terminus of the Erie Canalway Trail in DeWitt at the Old Erie Canal State Park, just east of Butternut Drive.



Map 3-6: East Erie Canalway Trail Section - Potential Permanent Route Options & Points of Study

The suggested permanent route options for the East Section of the Syracuse area gap in the Erie Canalway Trail begin at South Beech Street in Syracuse, and continue as follows along two different potential routes:

#### East Section Route Options (Eastbound)

##### Route Option 1

- At Beech St, continue east on Erie Blvd East from the City into Town of DeWitt (via center median shared-use path or bike lanes/sharrows with sidewalks for pedestrians, or similar combination) until reaching Bridge St. This route passes by the Erie Canal monument at Teall Ave
- From Erie Blvd East, connect to Celi Dr/Towpath Rd, by providing a connection where Towpath reaches the intersection of Erie Blvd East/Bridge St
- Continue east on Towpath Rd to Kinne Rd
- Turn east onto Kinne Rd



Erie Canal monument at Erie Blvd East/Teall Ave

- Head N on Butternut (or east about 0.2 miles on Kinne Rd) to connect to the Old Erie Canal State Park in DeWitt.

Route Option 1 is approximately 4.8 miles long. About 3.1 miles of this route is on Erie Boulevard East. The entire route is on-road, with the exception of a connector between the intersection of Erie Boulevard East with Bridge Street and the Celi Drive/Towpath Road intersection.

Concerns with Route Option 1 primarily involve the potential for conflicts between motorists and bicyclists as well as motorists and pedestrians. These are discussed further within the East Section Points of Study portion of the report.

### ***Route Option 2***

- Follow Beech St north to Canal St
- Turn south onto Teall Ave
- Head east onto Lynch St
- Follow Lynch St, connecting it to Kidd Ave
- Cross Peat St and follow National Grid (NG) right-of-way (ROW)
- Cross Midler Ave south of Simon Dr (or at the intersection with Simon Dr and then follow sidewalk to just south of railroad tracks)
- Follow NG ROW between Midler Ave & Thompson Rd. The ROW is located between railroad tracks and wet terrain
- Cross Thompson Rd at intersection with Erie Blvd and/or construct pedestrian/bicycle bridge to cross Thompson Rd
- Continue behind businesses on Erie Blvd along NG ROW to Bridge St
- From Bridge Street follow Route Option 2a or Route Option 2b.



Erie Canal monument plaque at Erie Blvd East/Teall Ave



View of National Grid ROW (located south of railroad tracks) from Simon Dr, Syracuse

### ***Route Option 2a***

- Cross Bridge St at Enterprise Pkwy
- Follow Enterprise Pkwy to Widewaters Pkwy (would need to connect existing gap in Enterprise Pkwy for trail users; would also need to connect Enterprise Pkwy to Widewaters Pkwy).
- Take Widewaters Pkwy south to Towpath Rd
- Follow Towpath Rd southeast onto Kinne Rd
- Take the Kinne Rd bridge east over I-481 to Butternut Dr
- Head north on Butternut Dr (or east on Kinne Rd) to connect to the Old Erie Canal State Park in the Town of DeWitt.



Existing gap in Enterprise Pkwy, DeWitt



Existing gap between Enterprise Pkwy and Widewaters Pkwy, DeWitt

#### *Route Option 2b*

- Cross Bridge St at Celi Dr
- Follow Celi Dr to Towpath Rd
- Head east on Towpath Rd
- Follow Towpath Rd until it ends at Kinne Rd
- Take the Kinne Rd bridge east over I-481 to Butternut Dr
- Head north on Butternut Dr (or east on Kinne) to connect to the Old Erie Canal State Park in the Town of DeWitt.

Between Beech Street and Bridge Street, Route Option 2 is approximately 3.5 miles in length. The off-road stretch, from Peat St to Bridge St is about 2.7 miles long. Sub-options 2a and 2b are primarily on-road.

Sub-option 2a is about 1.5 miles long between Bridge Street and the existing Erie Canalway Trail in DeWitt (by way of Enterprise Pkwy), making Route 2 with sub-option 2a five miles in length. Using Route Option 2a, 54% of the potential trail in the East Section is off-road.

Sub-option 2b is approximately 2 miles long between Bridge Street and the existing Erie Canalway Trail in DeWitt (by way of Celi Dr), making Route 2 with sub-option 2b 5.5 miles in length. Using Route Option 2b, 49% of the potential trail in the East Section is off-road.

One of the concerns with Route Option 2 is that the off-road section between I-690 and Erie Boulevard East runs on land owned by National Grid. This option would require permission as well as various agreements with National Grid to use their utility access. See the *National Grid property* section for more details.



The off-road section would also run adjacent to existing active railroad tracks as well as wetlands and brownfield areas in the City of Syracuse. New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) brownfields, remediation sites and wetlands, along with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) wetlands are shown on the following map.



Map 3-7: Locations of Brownfields, Wetlands and Remediation Sites along the East Section Route Options (Eastbound)

In addition, along Route 2 crossing the road near major interstate interchanges (where Erie Boulevard East meets Midler Avenue, Thompson Road and Bridge Street) poses challenges as well. These concerns would need to be examined in further detail if Route Option 2 is pursued.

### *Trail Connections*

Between Widewaters Parkway and Kinne Road, Towpath Road in the Town of DeWitt has a large shoulder and is marked with a “Town of DeWitt Trail System” sign. Both of the potential trail route options for the East Section connect to this existing marked wide shoulder.

### *National Grid property*

Route Option 2 suggests the use of National Grid right-of-way for a 2.7 mile section of off-road Erie Canalway Trail. Developing a shared use path here would require permission from and coordination with National Grid, including confirmation that any proposed trail design would align with their requirements. An agreement and/or easement would likely be necessary between National Grid and the trail overseer (whether this is the Canal Corporation and/or the trail “champion”) in order to use National Grid utility ROW for recreational trail use.



Existing wide shoulder for pedestrians/bicyclists on Towpath Rd between Widewaters Pkwy and Kinne Rd, Dewitt

This is not unheard of, as other areas of the Erie Canalway Trail traverse National Grid ROW. An example of this can be found in Lockport, New York, where the Canal Corporation has a licensed agreement with National Grid to construct and use the trail on National Grid property. The section of Erie Canalway Trail on National Grid property was constructed in 2015. In Lockport, the Canal Corporation owns the property adjacent to National Grid ROW and has therefore taken on the maintenance responsibilities in this particular location. In some communities the Canal Corporation will develop an agreement with the municipality or community where the trail is, noting that the community is responsible for maintenance/upkeep of the trail.

### **East Section Points of Study G, H, I, J, K, L, M, and N (Eastbound)**

Nine points of study were examined within the East Section of the “Syracuse Gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail. The ideas and/or concepts depicted at these points of study represent examples of what could potentially be accomplished at or along that particular point along the Erie Canalway Trail.

The sections, suggested permanent route options and points of study are shown on Map 3-3. All but one of the Points of Study in this section are on-road.

### *Erie Boulevard East*

Locations G, I, J, K and L are on Erie Boulevard East. Location G examines a point along Erie Boulevard East in the City between Beech and Cherry Streets where there is no median. There is however, a center turn lane. The curb-to-curb width here is 58 feet. Locations I and K examine points along Erie Boulevard that have medians. Location I has a green or vegetated median, and the specific point that was studied

is located between Smith Street and Thompson Road within the City of Syracuse. However, with the exception of the intersections, the green median runs between Cherry Street in the east and Thompson Road and is located entirely within the City of Syracuse. The width of the green median varies, but at Location I it is 60 feet. Location K has an asphalt median and the specific point that was studied is located between Thompson Road and Bridge Street. With the exception of the intersections and a few other locations, the asphalt median primarily runs between Thompson Road and East Genesee Street in the Town of DeWitt. The width of the asphalt median at Location K is 30 feet. Locations J and L examine two intersections along Erie Boulevard East, Thompson Road and Bridge Street, respectively. Both Points of Study show the general existing roadway geometry as well as future concepts which look at reducing lane widths and providing accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Please note that reduction in the number of travel lanes (completing a Road Diet) along segments and at intersections of Erie Boulevard East was not examined as part of this study. However, looking at Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance and the number of vehicles traveling along the corridor, reducing the number of lanes on Erie Boulevard East at the outset appears to be feasible:

According to the FHWA Road Diet Informational Guide, “the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) provides a good first approximation on whether or not to consider a road diet conversion.”<sup>20</sup>

There are approximately 22,000 vehicles per day (vpd) traveling Erie Boulevard East (this includes traffic traveling east and west) between Thompson Road and Bridge Street<sup>21</sup>. This means that approximately 11,000 vpd are using three travel lanes heading east, and 11,000 vpd are using three travel lanes heading west. Using the FHWA guidance material, eastbound and westbound Erie Boulevard East may be good candidates for a Road Diet as they have ADTs under 20,000 vpd.<sup>22</sup> Looking solely at this number, reducing the number of lanes from three to two in each direction appears to be feasible. However, a complete traffic analysis, including an examination of peak hour traffic, turning movement volumes, signal spacing, etc. would need to be conducted to determine if this is possible. Another consideration regarding lane reduction is that the

### **Road Diets**

“The FHWA advises that roadways with ADT of 20,000 vpd or less may be good candidates for a Road Diet and should be evaluated for feasibility. Road Diet projects have been completed on roadways with relatively high traffic volumes in urban areas or near large cities with satisfactory results.”

([http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets/info\\_guide/ch3.cfm#s335](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/info_guide/ch3.cfm#s335))

<sup>20</sup> Federal Highway Administration, *Road Diet Informational Guide - Road Diet Feasibility Determination: Section 3.3.5 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)*, page last modified Nov 24, 2014, <[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets/info\\_guide/ch3.cfm#s335](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/info_guide/ch3.cfm#s335)>, Jan 14, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Using traffic counts obtained from a NYSDOT continuous count station on Erie Boulevard (located between Thompson Road and Bridge Street), NYSDOT RC Station 330139, ADT on 1/1/2015: 20,764; ADT on 2/1/15: 20,787; ADT on 3/1/15: 21,502; ADT on 4/1/15: 21,409.

<sup>22</sup> Federal Highway Administration, *Road Diet Informational Guide - Road Diet Feasibility Determination: Section 3.3.5 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)*, page last modified Nov 24, 2014, <[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets/info\\_guide/ch3.cfm#s335](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/info_guide/ch3.cfm#s335)>, Jan 14, 2016.

New York State DOT relies on Erie Boulevard as an alternate route when I-690 is not functioning (due to maintenance and/or traffic incidents).

There are also access management issues to take into consideration when looking at making multimodal improvements along Erie Boulevard East. There are several locations along the boulevard with wide swaths of open driveway. This is especially important to consider in the options within the Points of Study that suggest adding bike lanes. However, if ingress/egress points are consolidated, and speeds reduced, bike lanes could potentially work along Erie Boulevard East with the appropriate facilities, markings, etc. In several instances along the corridor, the access



One long curb cut in front of several businesses on Erie Boulevard East, heading east

management issues are exacerbated by sidewalks that have been covered by asphalt and are no longer identifiable. Adding and/or improving sidewalks along the entire corridor, along with appropriate and ADA-compliant pedestrian crossings, curb ramps, etc., would make Erie Boulevard much more accessible and pleasant for pedestrians.

Many of the options examined along Erie Boulevard East would need to be considered as part of a “re-imagined” Erie Boulevard – one that is different than what exists today -- a boulevard with fewer lanes, more pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and improved access and crossings, etc. These types of improvements could have ancillary benefits to surrounding land uses, and help to connect adjacent residential neighborhoods. Looking at the Erie Boulevard East Points of Study that follow, it is important to note that a complete traffic analysis would be needed to implement any of the options. It is also likely that NYSDOT right-of-way would be needed to implement many of the options shown.

### *Off-Road*

Location H further examines the off-road portion of Route Option 2 and shows a perspective of a potential trail location off of Bridge Street in DeWitt.

### *Towpath Road*

Towpath Road in the Town of DeWitt was part of the old Erie Canal. As noted previously, a section of Towpath Road with wide shoulders on the south side of the road is currently considered part of the trail system in DeWitt. The options shown for this road examine the possibility of reallocating the pavement so that this paved path/trail exists on both sides of Towpath Road.



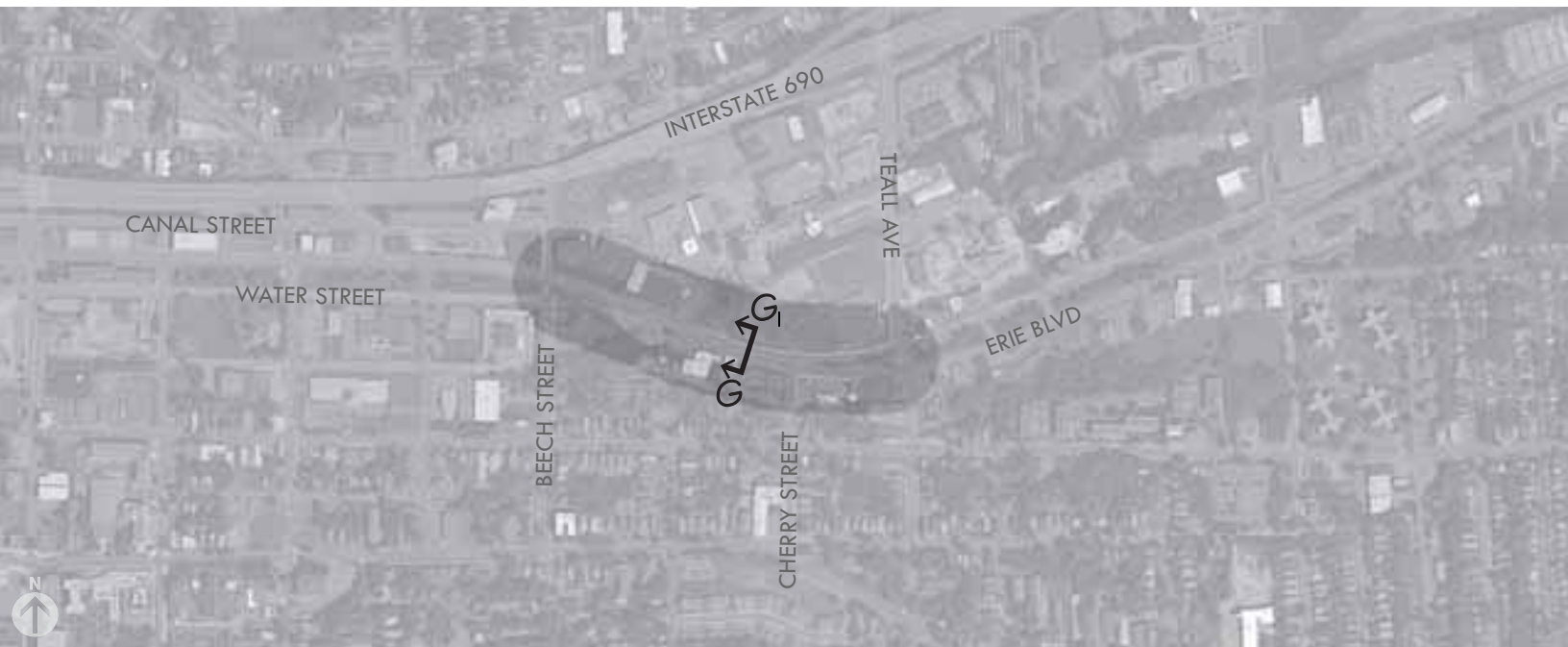
### *Bridge over I-481*

The final Point of Study examines options for an Erie Canalway Trail section on the Kinne Road bridge that crosses I-481. Options include reallocating the existing striping to reduce the width of the travel lanes along with options for adding a pedestrian/bicycle bridge.

The following section examines the East Section Points of Study (G through N) in more detail.

# 1 G - Erie Blvd. East

Between Beech and Cherry Streets



## Current Condition

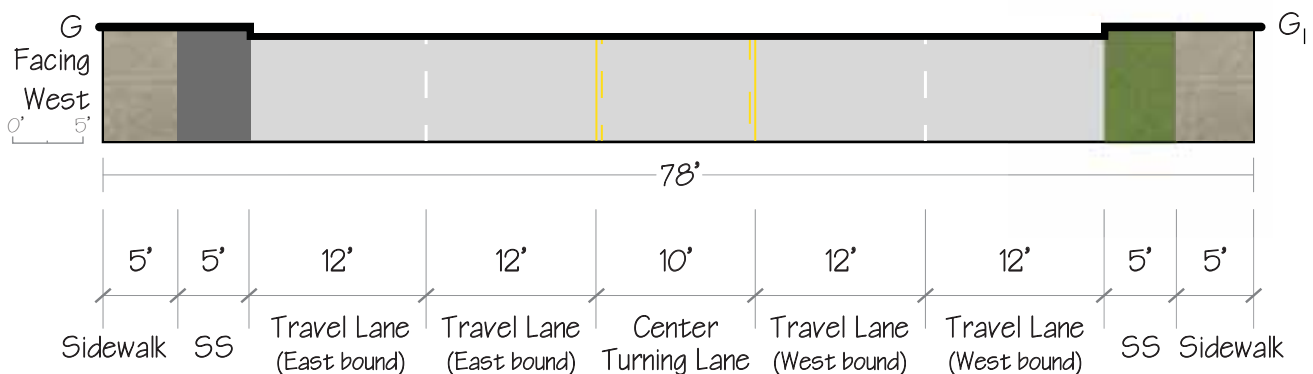
### Segment G: Center turn lane

58' total curb-to-curb width

4 travel lanes

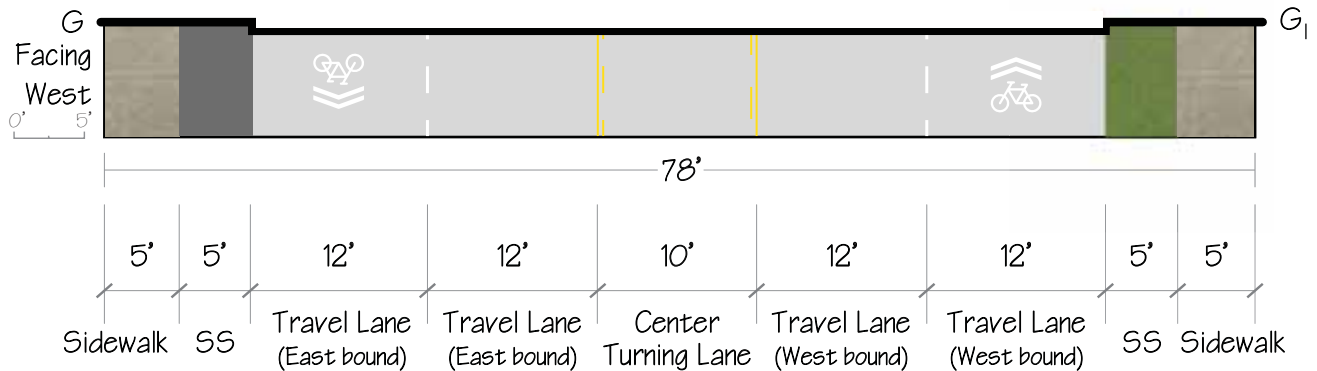
Snow storage (SS)/grass strip and sidewalk on both sides

Speed limit is 30 mph in this section



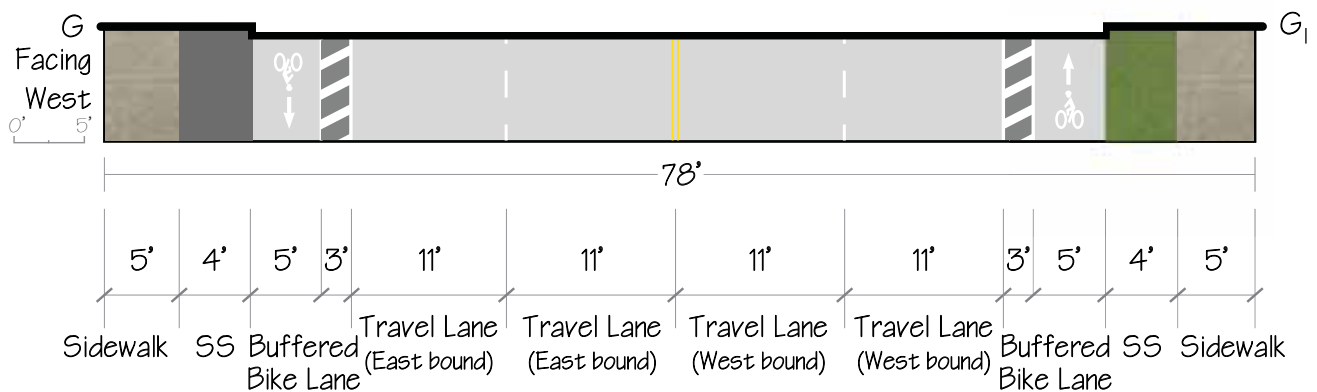
## Option 1

This option includes sharrows to accommodate bicycles in this portion of the boulevard without changing lane widths. Bicyclists would ride in the outside lane but have to share the road with vehicles. Pedestrians would be accommodated via existing sidewalks on both sides of the road.



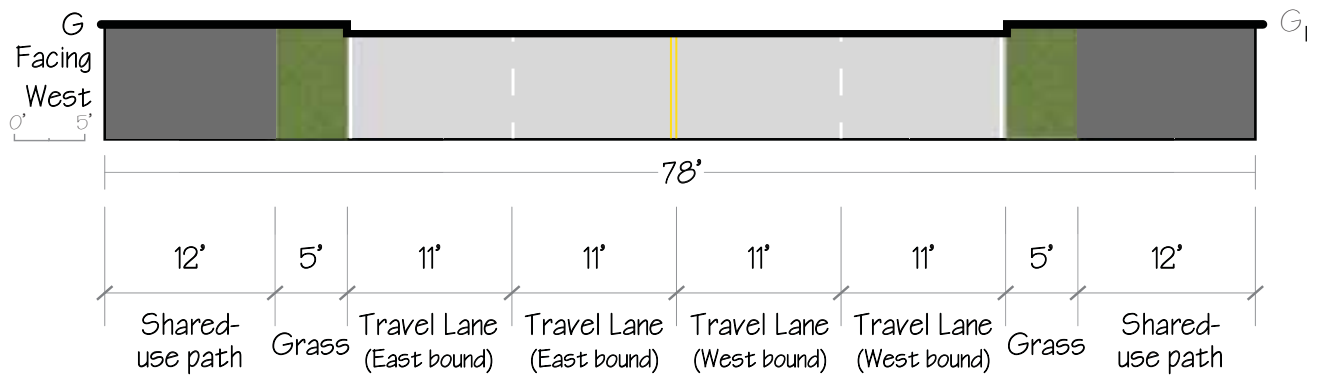
## Option 2

Option 2 involves removing the center-turn lane and reducing the travel lanes to 11 feet. This allows room for two 5' bike lanes with 3' buffers (see point of interest D, option 3 for definition of buffered bike lanes). Pedestrians are accommodated via existing sidewalks.



## Option 3

This option reduces all travel lane widths to 11'. The existing 5' snow storage/grass strip remains, and a 12' wide shared-use path is added to both sides of the boulevard. The 11' travel lanes would help to slow traffic. The shared-use path in this urban section of the Erie Canalway Trail would likely be asphalt.





# 2 H – Off Road Route

Between Erie Blvd East & I-690 (Between Midler Ave & Thompson Rd)



Map 3-8: Portion of off-road Route Option 2 between Midler Avenue and Thompson Road

The entire off road route suggestion (Route Option 2) for the Erie Canalway Trail between Erie Boulevard East and I-690 runs from Peat Street to Bridge Street within National Grid owned property, (which would require permission from and an agreement with National Grid). The aerial above shows the portion of this route flanked by Midler Avenue and Thompson Road.

This route also runs next to an active rail line, as well as brownfields, remediation sites and wetlands (see Map 3-7). Crossing Midler Avenue, Thompson Road and Bridge Street (further in the east) also present significant challenges to this route.

The notion of “closing the gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail in Central New York has been discussed for several years. Various documents completed in the past, along with a “Friends of the Canalway Trail” (FOCT) group formed several years ago, provide a supportive background to the *Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route* project, and are summarized in the Part I Document (June 2013).

One of the permanent route options put forth in the *Canalway Trail Gap Segment Assessment Report, Syracuse Metropolitan Area, Onondaga County,*



Looking east at National Grid property from Midler Ave

New York (November 1998), and supported at that time, involved the use of Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (now National Grid) right-of-way (ROW). This route continues to be an option, but has received less support in recent years, with surveyed public preferring to follow the original route of the Erie Canal – today’s Erie Boulevard East.

According to Onondaga County Tax Maps accessed on-line, nearly all of the property that would be needed for Route Option 2 is owned by Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation

and the current land use is listed as “Electric Transmission Improv”. The width of National Grid property along the Route 2 option is approximately 60 feet.



Looking east at National Grid property from the Hampton Inn & Suites access road/bridge

The off-road portion of Route 2 ends at the parking lot of Planet Fitness on Bridge Street in DeWitt, shown in Map 3-9. At the back of this parking lot is a National Grid access road/path (marked with a star in Map 3-9). The following page shows the existing access to National Grid property along with an example of what the location could look like if a shared use path were to be established here.



Map 3-9: Terminus of potential off-road Route Option 2 at a National Grid Access Point (at rear of Planet Fitness parking lot).

## Existing



The current condition of this location shows a seasonally maintained access road onto National Grid property that can be seen from the parking lot of Planet Fitness (Bridge Street, DeWitt). From this vantage point, the property shows tall grasses, shrubs, trees and other greenery.

## Proposed



This suggestion would transform the access road to a 10-14 foot shared use path. Heading west, the Erie Canalway Trail would continue along National Grid right-of-way until reaching Teall Avenue. Heading east, the trail would continue on National Grid right-of-way between Erie Boulevard and I-690 to Bridge Street.



# 1 I - Erie Blvd. East

Between Smith Street and Thompson Road



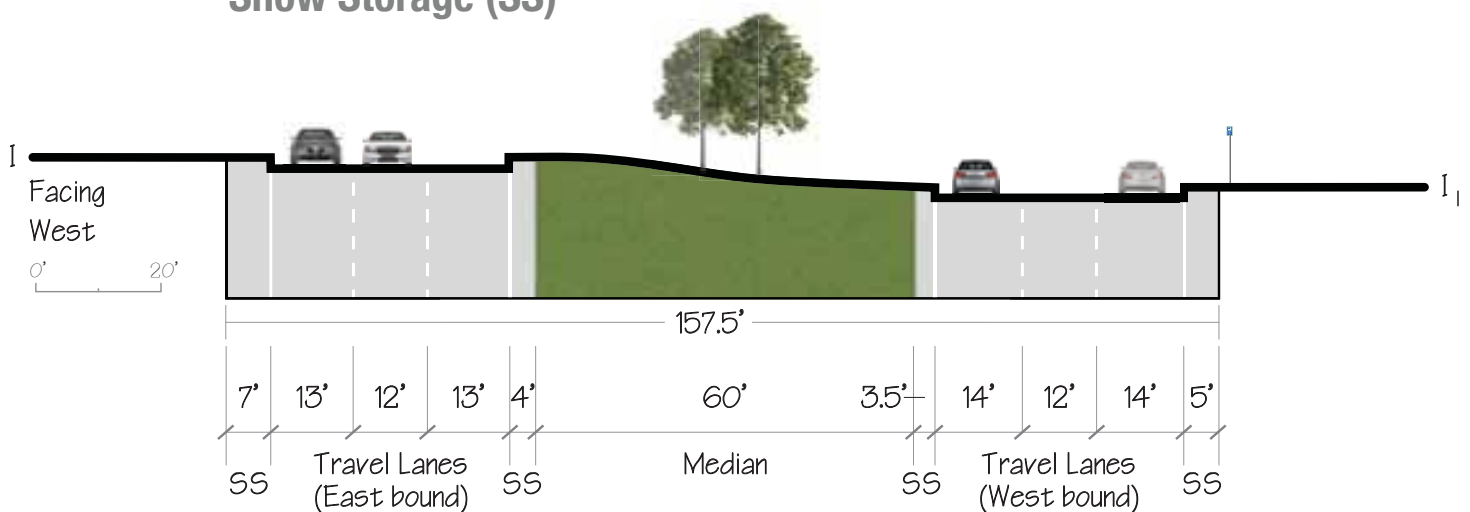
## Current Condition

### Segment I: Median with vegetation

145.5' total curb-to-curb width

6 travel lanes and center median

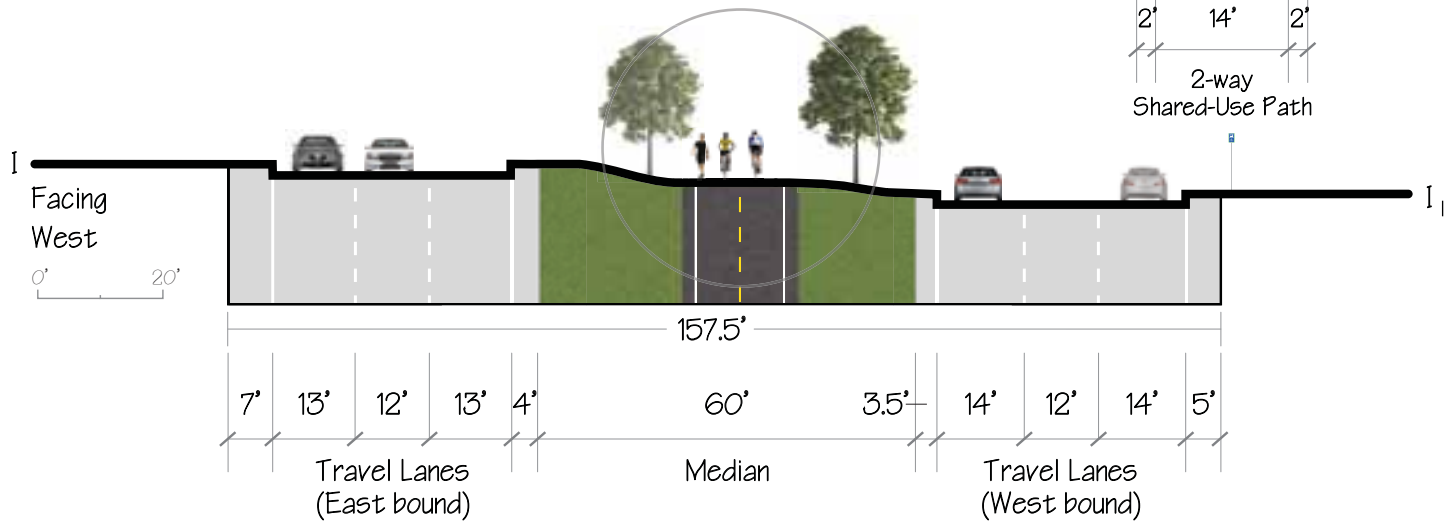
Snow Storage (SS)





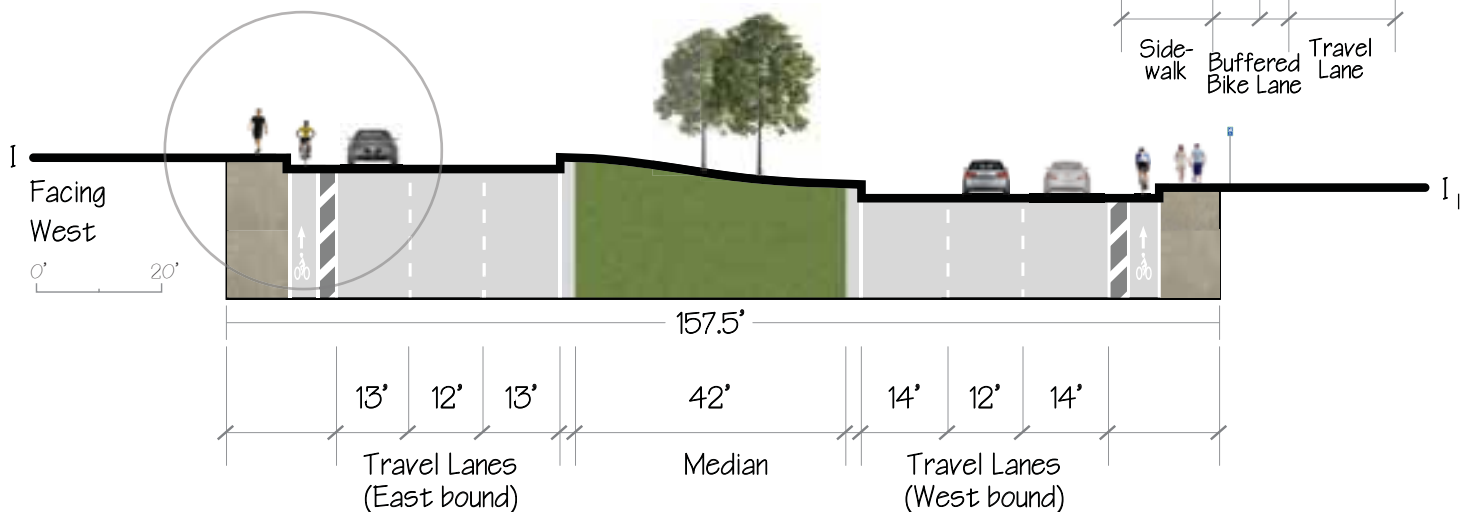
## Option 1

Option 1 shows a two-way shared-use path within the center median. The existing green median is 60'. The shared-use path would occupy 18' of the median, with 14' for the path itself and two 2' shoulders. Concerns with this option include how to design the path at/through intersections so that path users can cross safely.



## Option 2

Option 2 shows a bike lane and buffer (see point of study D, option 3 for definition of buffered bike lanes) added to the corridor, along with an extension to the existing sidewalk and/or snow storage area. Concerns with this option include vehicles crossing bike lanes while making right hand turns into driveways along the corridor.



# 1 J – Erie Blvd East / Thompson Road Intersection



Erie Blvd East/Thompson Rd, looking north onto Thompson Rd.

The intersection of Erie Boulevard East and Thompson Road was also examined as a point of study within the East Section of the “Syracuse gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail. This intersection is of particular interest as Thompson Road has long been considered one of the more difficult intersections to navigate as a bicyclist or pedestrian due to the number of existing traffic lanes.

Existing lane widths and the current general intersection geometry are shown in the existing conditions plan view diagram, shown on the following page. The proposed intersection concept diagram follows, showing what the intersection of Erie Boulevard East/Thompson Road could look like if certain bicycle and pedestrian facilities were to be added. Some of the suggested conceptual changes include the following:

- Adding bike lanes and bike boxes (currently considered experimental, requiring FHWA approval).
- Adding ADA compliant pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, median cut-through islands).



Erie Blvd East/Thompson Rd, looking north

- Reduction of lane widths and corner radii.
- Raising and increasing center medians to at least 6 feet wide.

If the suggestions shown on the proposed intersection concept were to be implemented, a complete traffic analysis would be required, as roadway geometry and signal timings would be affected. An examination of the potential for lane reductions along segments of Erie Boulevard East as well at the intersections should be completed as part of any traffic analysis. Also, New York State owned right-of-way would likely be necessary to implement some of the suggested changes.



Erie Blvd East/Thompson Rd, looking east

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J

Erie Boulevard East/Thompson Road  
Existing Conditions  
Erie Canalway Trail-Syracuse Connector Route Project






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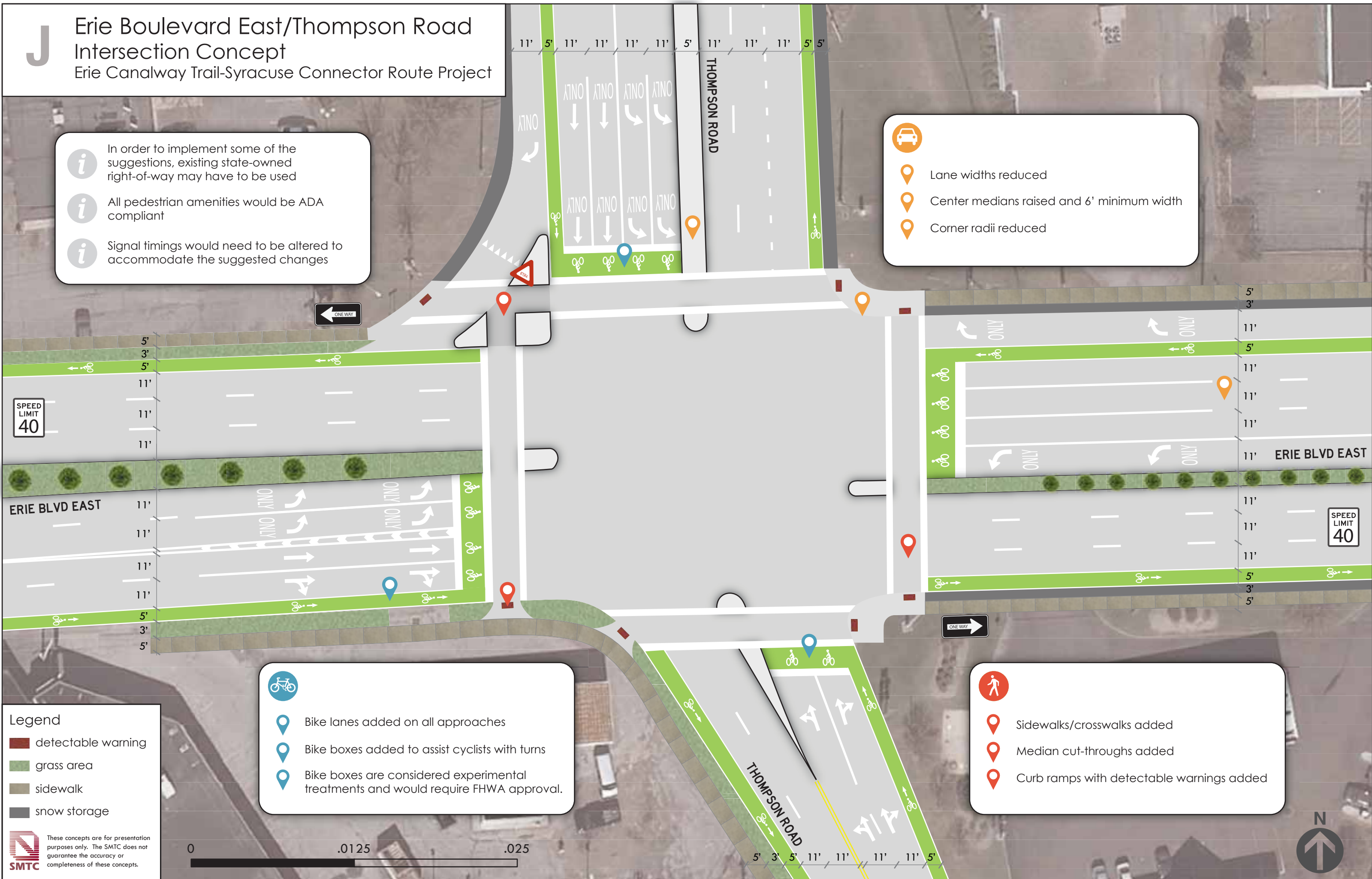
J

# Erie Boulevard East/Thompson Road Intersection Concept

Erie Canalway Trail-Syracuse Connector Route Project


- i* In order to implement some of the suggestions, existing state-owned right-of-way may have to be used
- i* All pedestrian amenities would be ADA compliant
- i* Signal timings would need to be altered to accommodate the suggested changes




-  Lane widths reduced
-  Center medians raised and 6' minimum width
-  Corner radii reduced






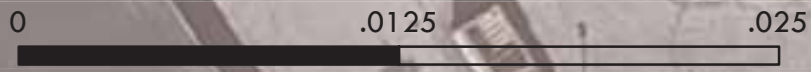
**Legend**

-  detectable warning
-  grass area
-  sidewalk
-  snow storage

 These concepts are for presentation purposes only. The SMTC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of these concepts.

-  Bike lanes added on all approaches
-  Bike boxes added to assist cyclists with turns
-  Bike boxes are considered experimental treatments and would require FHWA approval.

-  Sidewalks/crosswalks added
-  Median cut-throughs added
-  Curb ramps with detectable warnings added



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# 1 K - Erie Blvd. East

Between Thompson Road and Bridge Street



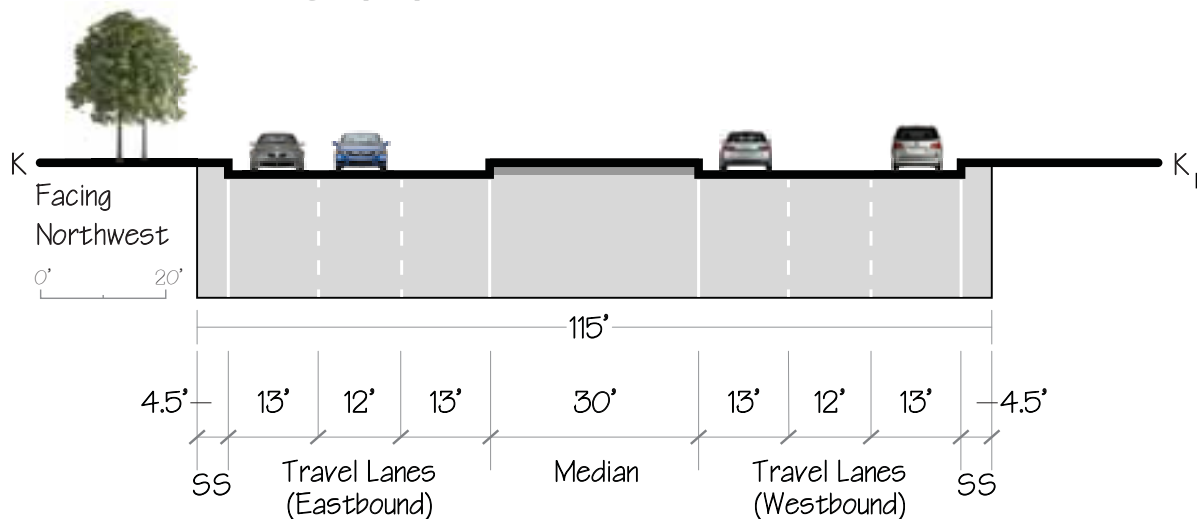
## Current Condition

### Segment K: Median with asphalt

106' total curb-to-curb width

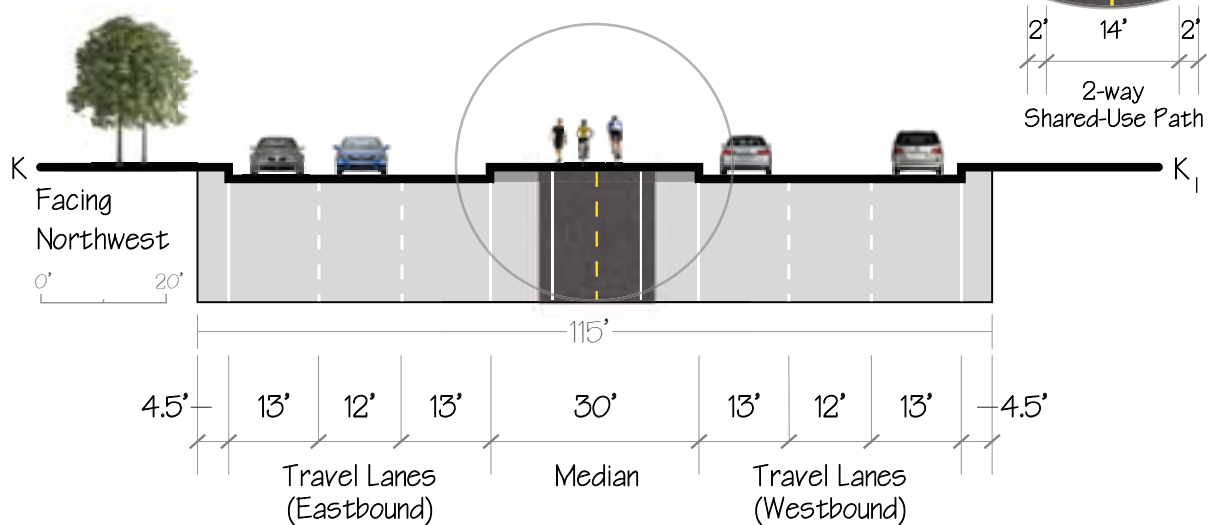
6 travel lanes and center median

Snow Storage (SS)



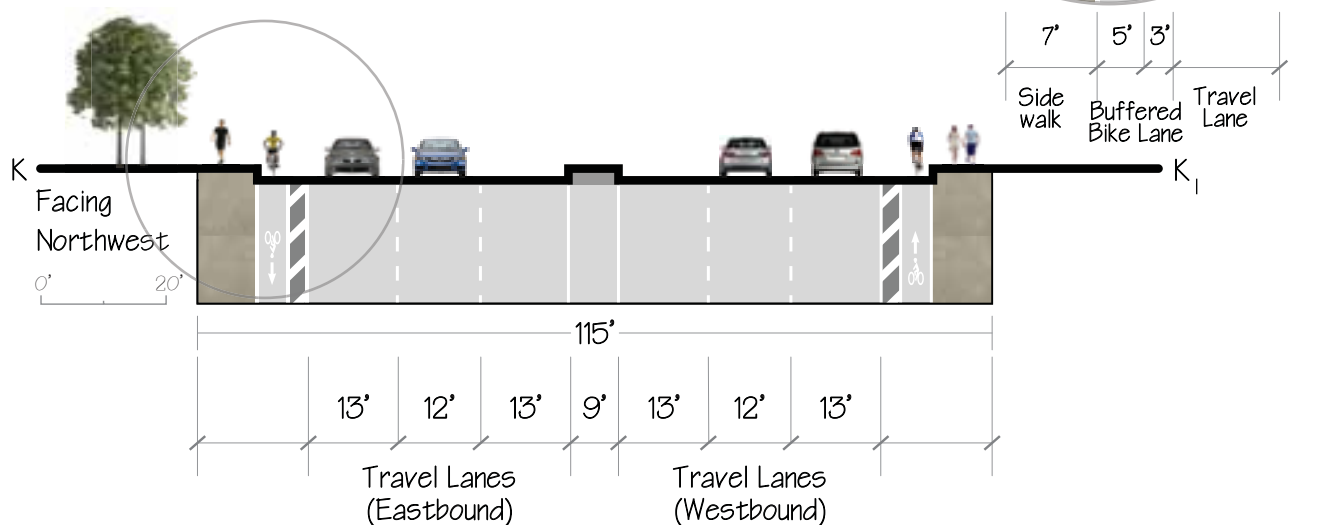
## Option 1

This option shows a two-way shared-use path within the center of the median. The existing asphalt median is 30'. The shared-use path would occupy 18' of the median, with 14' for the path itself and two 2' shoulders. Concerns with this option include how to design the path at/through intersections so that path users can cross safely.



## Option 2

Option 2 implements bike lanes with a 3' buffer (see point of study D, option 3 for definition of buffered bike lanes). Sidewalks would be extended to 7'. The raised median is reduced to 9' in this option. Concerns with this option include vehicles crossing bike lanes while making right hand turns into driveways along the corridor.



# 1 L – Erie Blvd East / Bridge St Intersection

The intersection of Erie Boulevard East and Bridge Street was also examined as a point of study within the East Section of the “Syracuse gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail. This intersection is of particular interest as Towpath Road, the old towpath that ran along the length of the Erie Canal, almost reaches the intersection of Erie Blvd East/Bridge Street here (see top photo, below), a critical connection point should the permanent Erie Canalway Trail route eventually run along Erie Boulevard. A remnant of the canal, the old canal widewaters is also located just east of the intersection along Towpath Road (see bottom photo, below).



Looking towards the Erie Boulevard East / Bridge Street intersection from Celi Drive.



Old canal widewaters along Towpath Road in DeWitt.

Existing lane widths and the current general intersection geometry are shown in the existing conditions plan view diagram, shown on the following page. The proposed intersection concept diagram follows, showing what the intersection of Erie Boulevard East/Bridge Street could look like if certain bicycle and pedestrian facilities were to be added. Some of the suggested conceptual changes include the following:

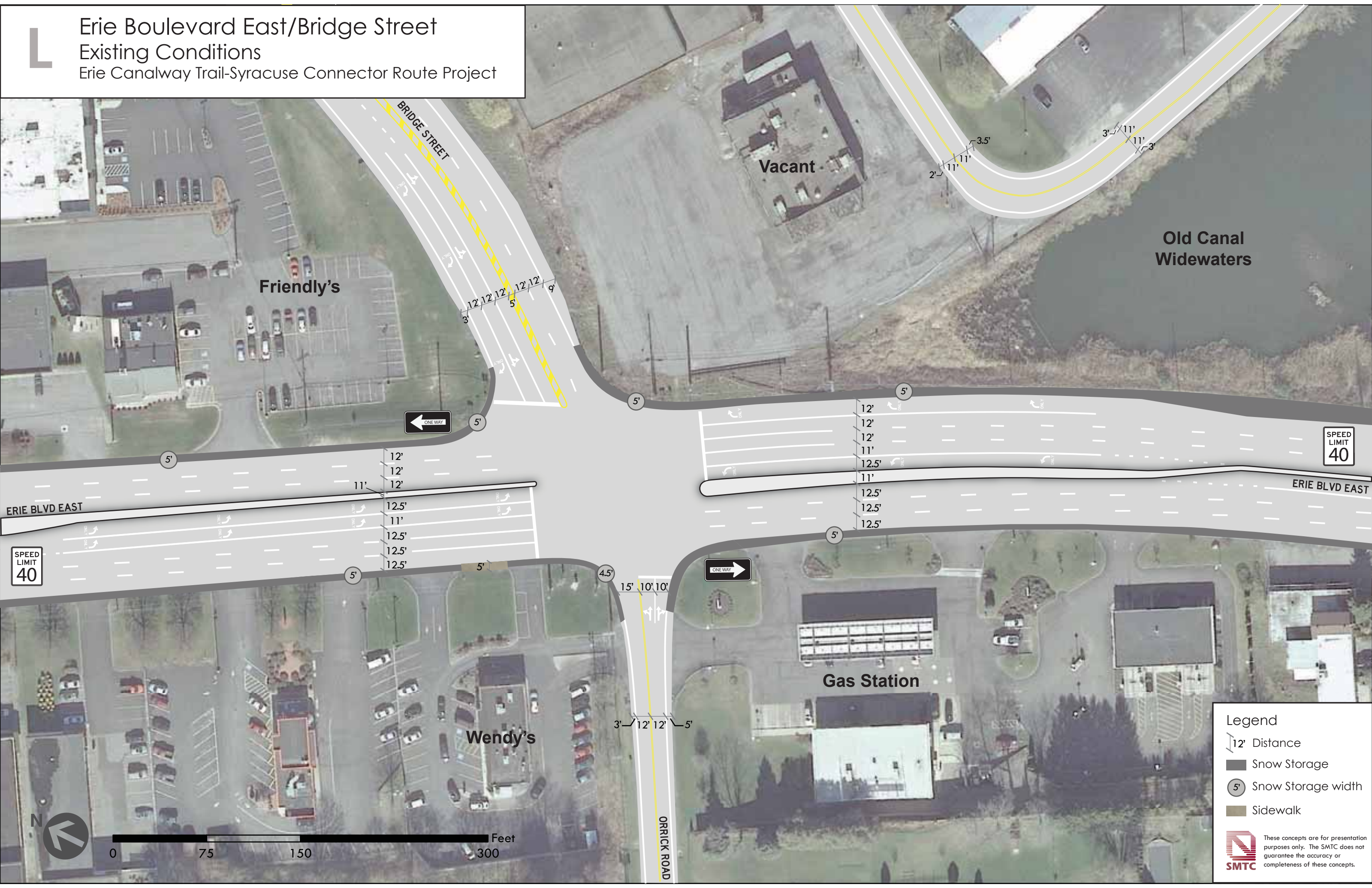
- Adding bike lanes and bike boxes (currently considered experimental, requiring FHWA approval); and ADA compliant pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, median cut-through islands).
- Reconfiguration of the ingress/egress at Wendy's restaurant, removing the eastern most driveway on their property. This would need owner buy-in or could be considered if/when the property is redeveloped.
- Reconfiguring the roadway and adding stop signs where Celi Drive and Towpath Road intersect, and adding a sidewalk to connect the Celi Drive/Towpath Road intersection to the Erie Blvd East/Bridge St intersection.
- Adding a two-way cycle track to connect the intersection of Erie Blvd East/Bridge Street to Celi Drive. This is a safer option for cyclists making a left turn from Erie Boulevard onto Bridge Street. Eastbound cyclists would make the left turn as expected by oncoming traffic, and follow the cycle track to Celi Drive. Westbound cyclists would use the cycle track to reach the Erie Blvd East/Bridge Street intersection, dismount their bicycle and use the crosswalk to reach the desired bicycle facility.

If the suggestions shown on the proposed intersection concept were to be implemented, a complete traffic analysis would be required, as roadway geometry and signal timings would be affected. An examination of the potential for lane reductions along segments of Erie Boulevard East as well at the intersections should be completed as part of any traffic analysis. Also, New York State owned right-of-way would likely be necessary to implement some of the suggested changes.





Erie Boulevard East/Bridge Street  
Existing Conditions  
Erie Canalway Trail-Syracuse Connector Route Project



Legend

- 12' Distance
- Snow Storage
- 5' Snow Storage width
- Sidewalk

These concepts are for presentation purposes only. The SMTC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of these concepts.

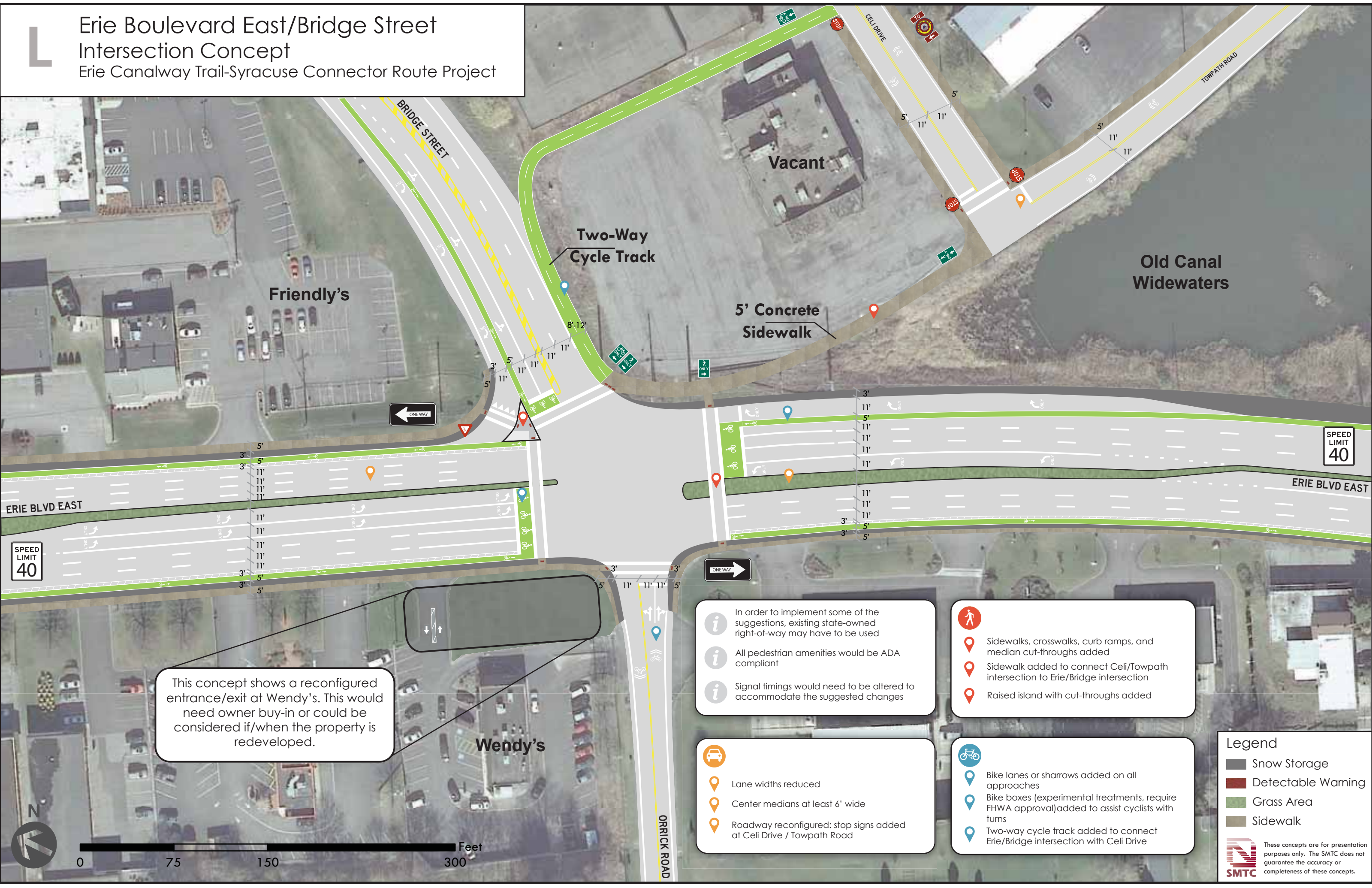
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# Erie Boulevard East/Bridge Street Intersection Concept

Erie Canalway Trail-Syracuse Connector Route Project



This concept shows a reconfigured entrance/exit at Wendy's. This would need owner buy-in or could be considered if/when the property is redeveloped.

- In order to implement some of the suggestions, existing state-owned right-of-way may have to be used
- All pedestrian amenities would be ADA compliant
- Signal timings would need to be altered to accommodate the suggested changes

- Lane widths reduced
- Center medians at least 6' wide
- Roadway reconfigured: stop signs added at Celi Drive / Towpath Road

- Sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, and median cut-throughs added
- Sidewalk added to connect Celi/Towpath intersection to Erie/Bridge intersection
- Raised island with cut-throughs added

- Bike lanes or sharrows added on all approaches
- Bike boxes (experimental treatments, require FHWA approval) added to assist cyclists with turns
- Two-way cycle track added to connect Erie/Bridge intersection with Celi Drive

**Legend**

- Snow Storage
- Detectable Warning
- Grass Area
- Sidewalk

These concepts are for presentation purposes only. The SMTC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of these concepts.

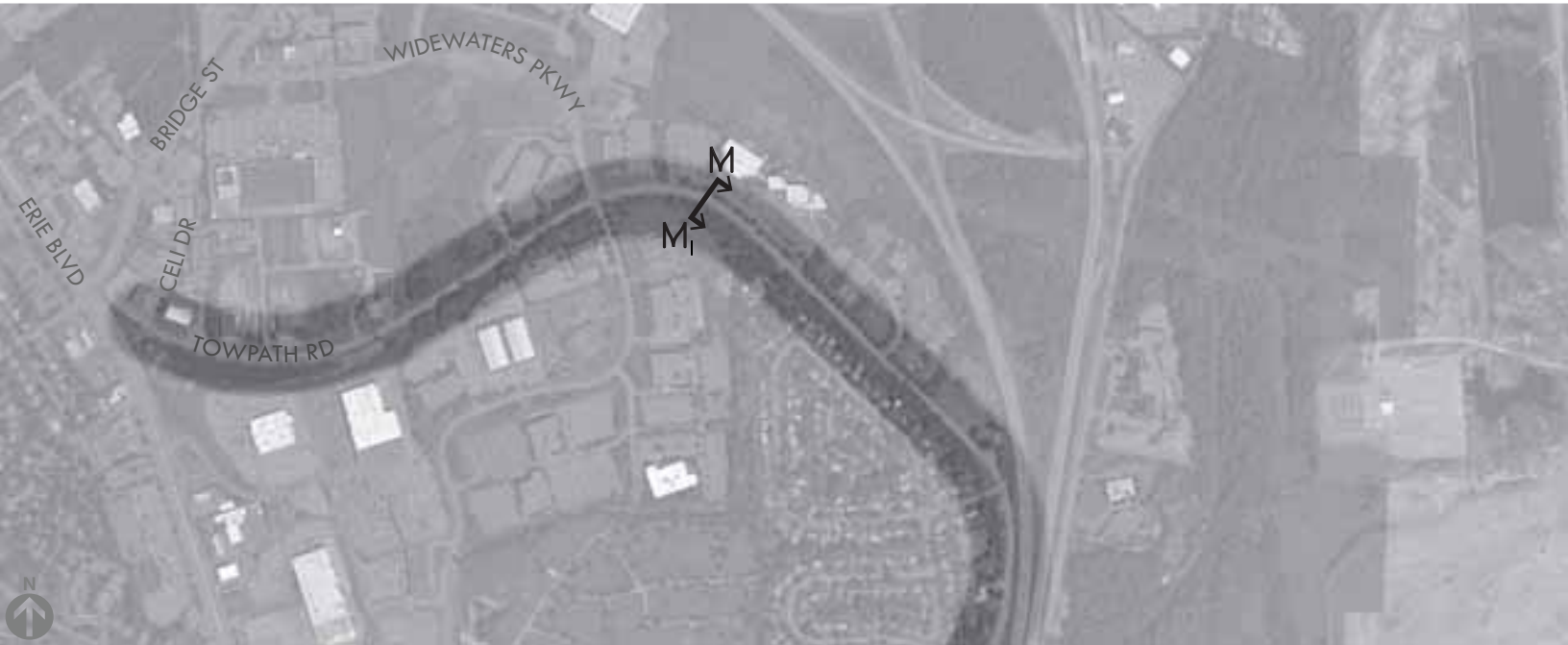


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# 1 2 M - Towpath Road

Between Widewaters Parkway and Kinne Road



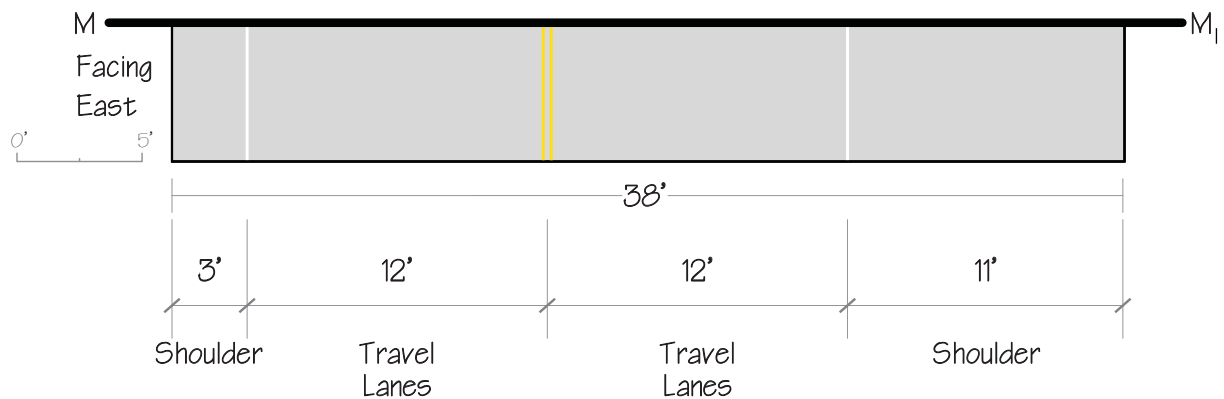
## Current Condition

**Segment M: Single-lane local road**

**Uncurbed**

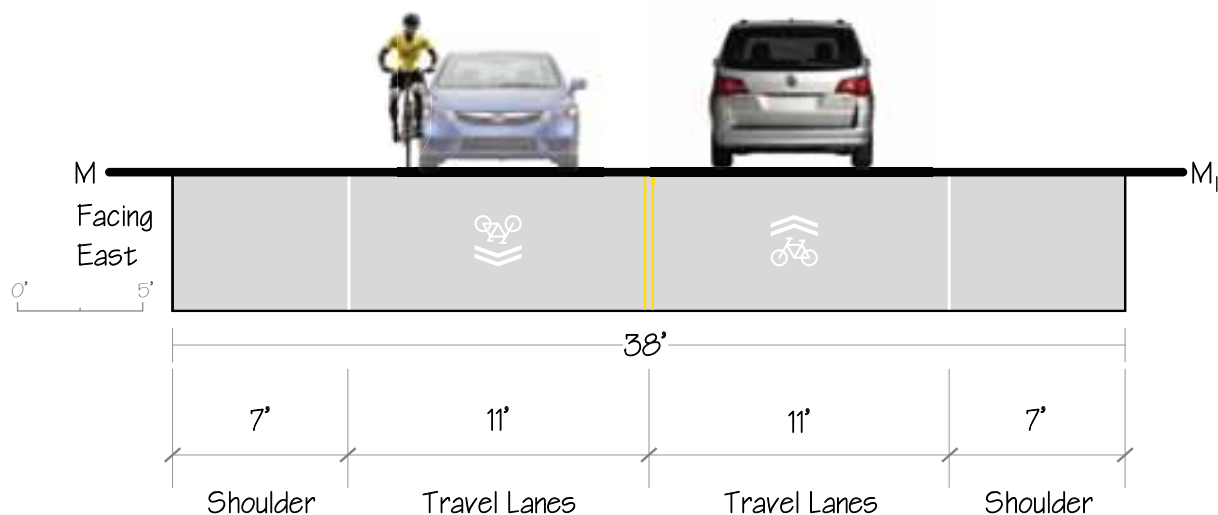
**38' total shoulder-to-shoulder width**

**Speed limit is 40 mph**



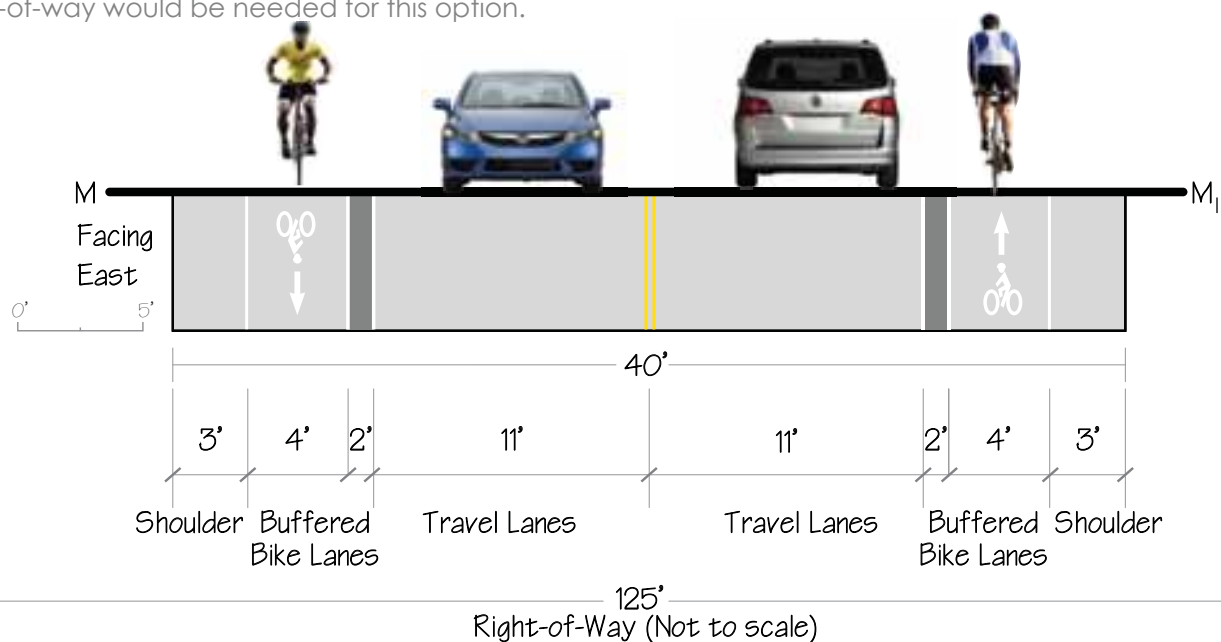
## Option 1

This option includes reducing travel lane widths to 11 feet. Sharrows would be added to accommodate bicyclists. The existing shoulders would be re-allocated so that they are 7' on each side of the road. Pedestrians would be accommodated via these shoulders. Reduce speed limit to 35 mph.



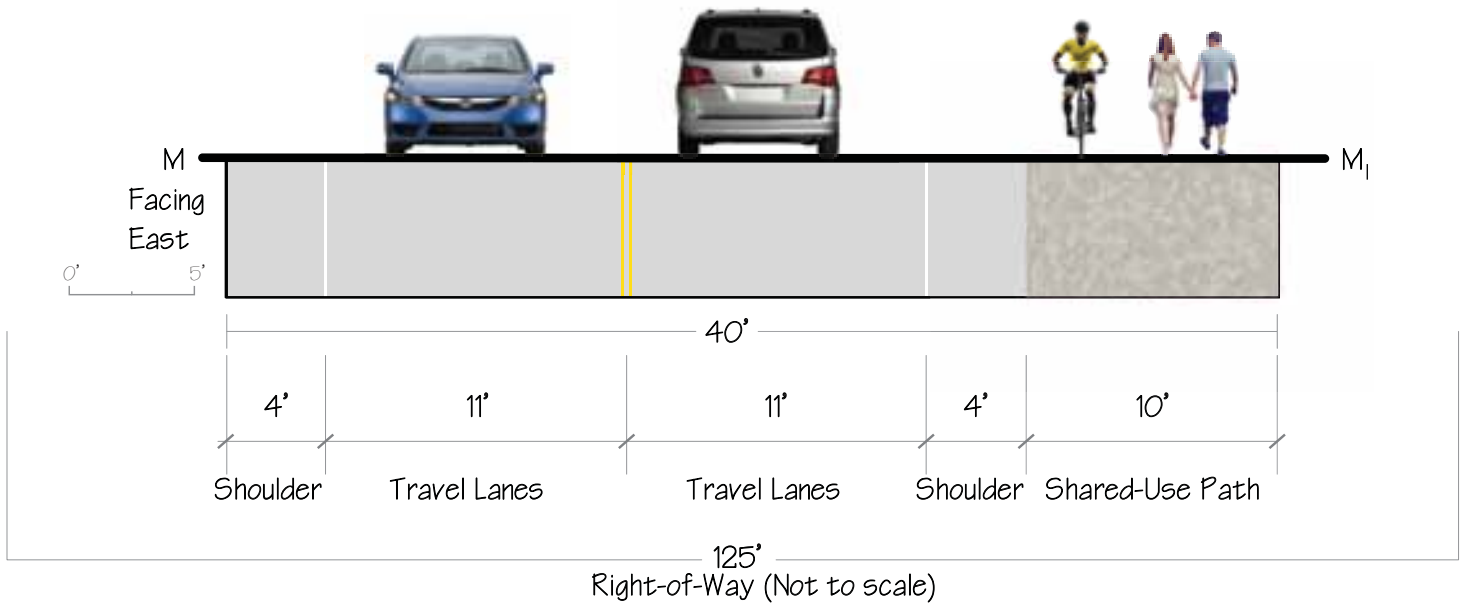
## Option 2

This option reduces travel lanes to 11' and adds 4' bike lanes with 2' buffers (see point of study D, option 3 for definition of buffered bike lanes). Pedestrians would be accommodated via 3' shoulders. The State of New York owns the right-of-way along Tow Path Rd., which averages about 125 feet. Two feet of this right-of-way would be needed for this option.



## Option 3

This option reduces travel lanes to 11' and includes 4' shoulders, and a 10' shared-use path on the south side of TowPath Rd (currently the side with the 11' shoulder). The State of New York owns the right-of-way along Towpath Rd, which averages about 125'. Two feet of this right-of-way would be needed for this option.



# 1 2 N - Kinne Rd. Bridge

Over Interstate 481



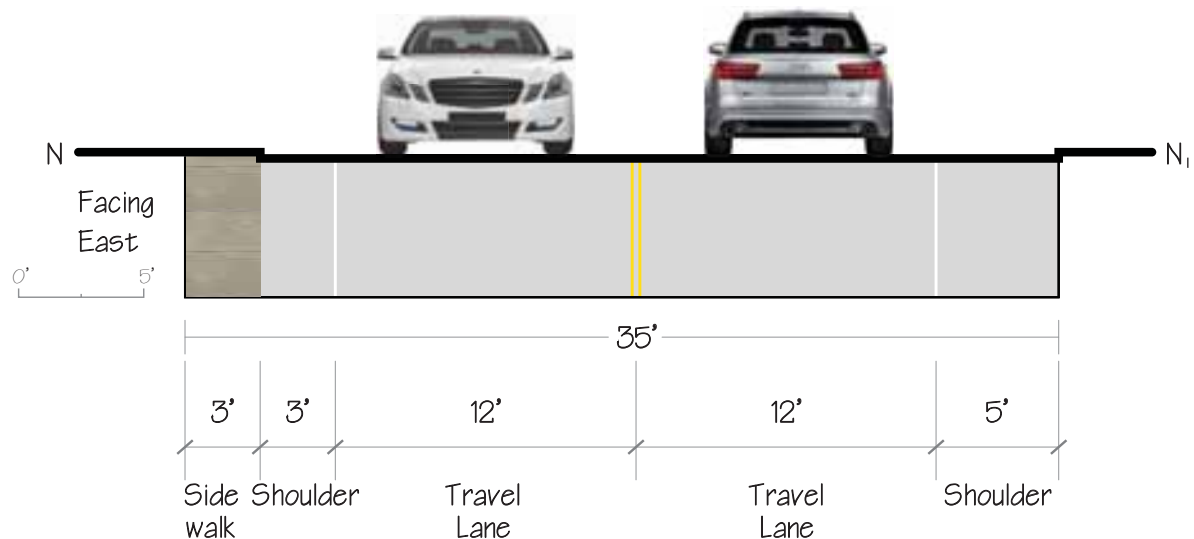
## Current Condition

**Segment N:** NYSDOT owned bridge over I-481

32' curb to curb width

2 travel lanes

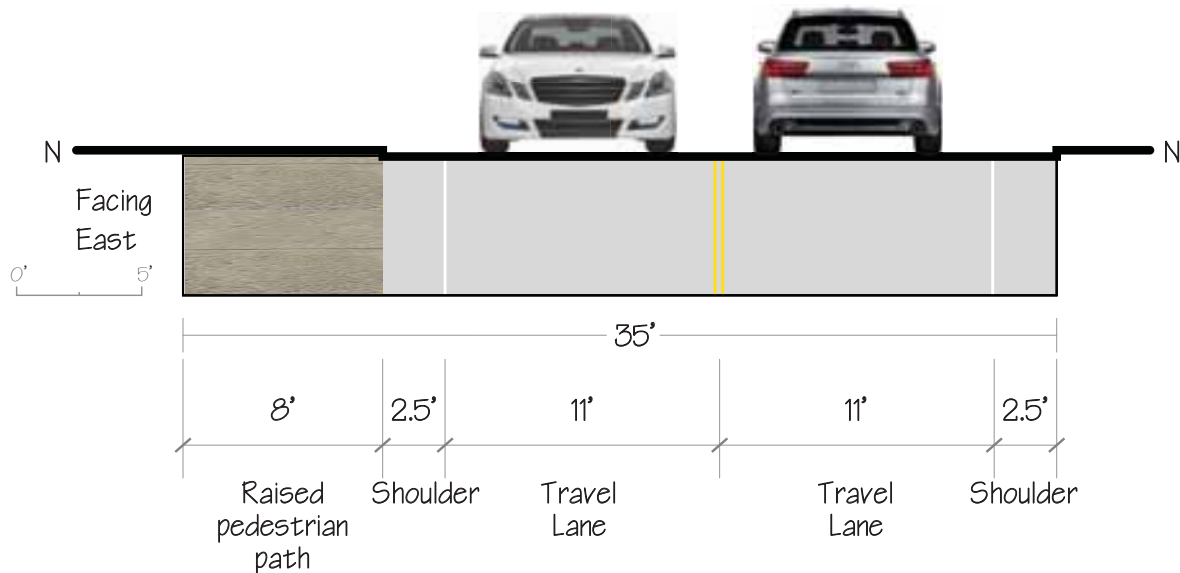
Stop signed controlled, 30 mph speed limit





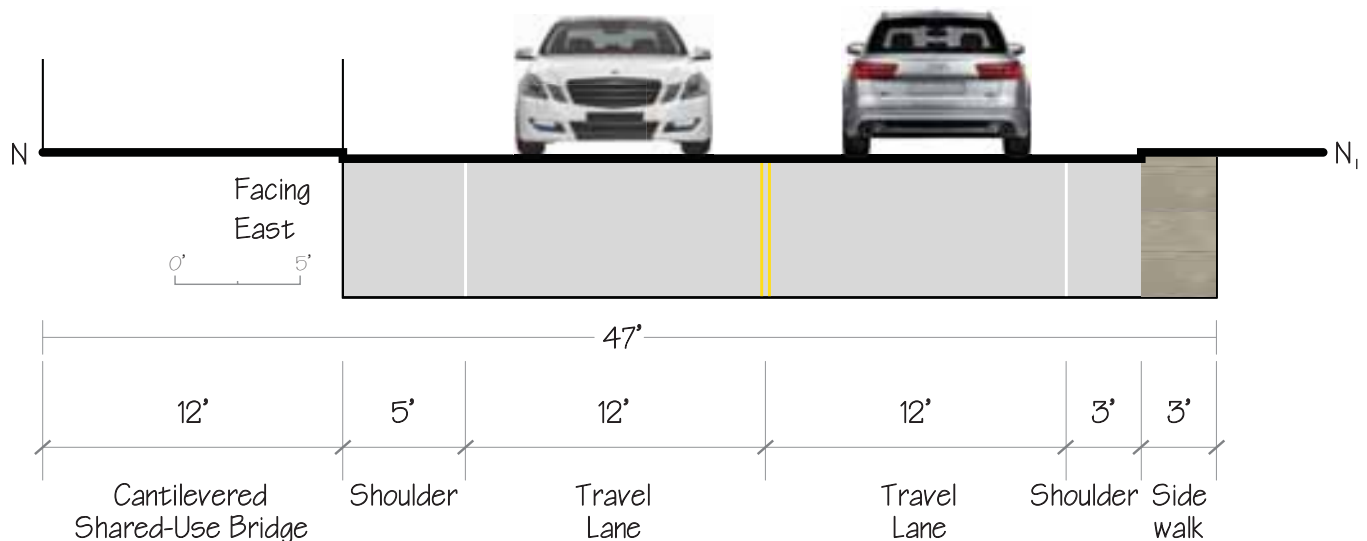
## Option 1

Option 1 reconfigures the existing travel ways. Under this option the travel lane width would reduce to 11'. A raised 8' pedestrian path would be placed on the north side of the bridge. Bicyclists would be required to dismount their bicycles and walk across the bridge. The road shoulders would be 2.5'.



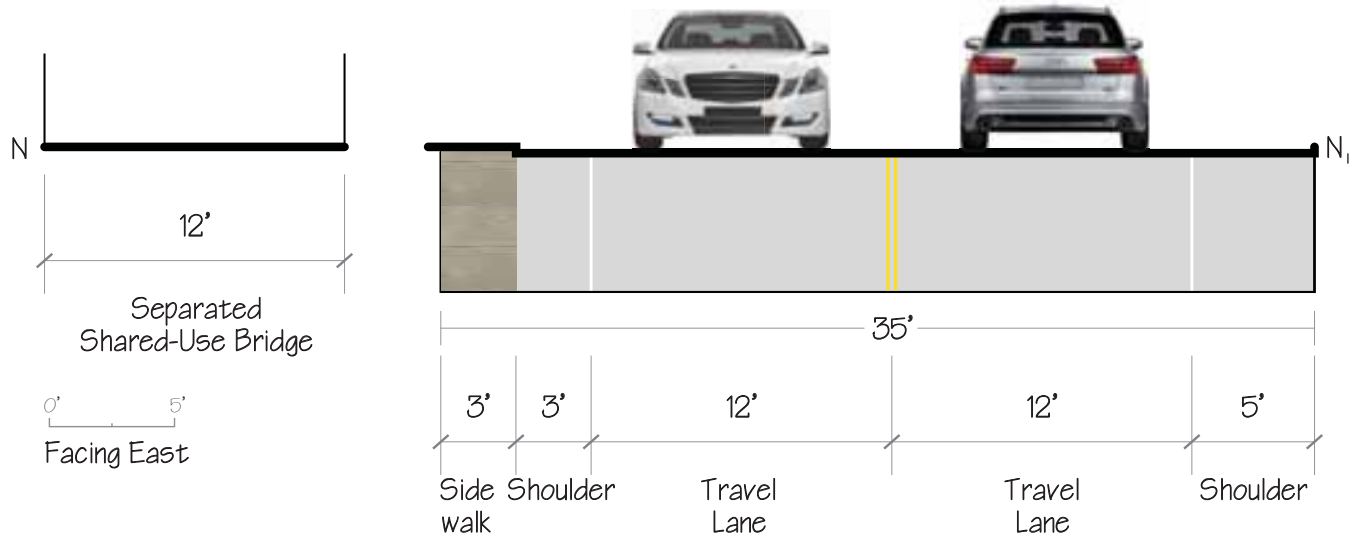
## Option 2

Option 2 would provide safe, separated access for pedestrians and bicyclists by adding a cantilevered shared-use bridge to the existing bridge, essentially a bridge built out sideways from the current bridge. A 12' wide cantilevered bridge could be added to the southside of the Kinne Road bridge over I-481. The bridge would accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Appropriate railings would be added. The intersections of Kinne Road/Butternut Drive North and Kinne Road/Tow Path Road would be improved to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.



## Option 3

Option 3 involves building a completely separate shared-use bridge for Erie Canalway Trail users. The bridge would span I-481 to the south of the existing bridge. Intersection improvements would be needed at Kinne Road/Butternut Drive North and Kinne Road/Tow Path Road to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.



### **3.3 Suggested Permanent Route Options – Summaries by Section**

Section 3.2 of this document outlined the suggested permanent route options (organized into three distinct sections: West, Central and East) for the “Syracuse gap” in the Erie Canalway Trail between Camillus and DeWitt. The table on the following pages summarizes the opportunities and constraints of the routes option examined in this study, as well as how each of the route options meets the three primary desired Erie Canalway Trail traits, as determined via public feedback: 1) follow the historic route of the canal; 2) easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services; and 3) off-road to the extent possible in an urban setting (see Section 2.1 for more information).

<b>ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL – SYRACUSE GAP</b> <b>DESIRED TRAITS</b> <b>OPPORTUNITIES &amp; CONSTRAINTS</b>						
Trail Section	Route Option	DESIRED TRAITS			OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS	
		Follows historic route of canal	Easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services	Off road	Opportunities	Constraints
West	1	No	Partially	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially on private property – could potentially partner with Honeywell</li> <li>Connects to Onondaga Lake Trail, Lakeview Amphitheater, and eventually the Onondaga Creekwalk and Inner Harbor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially on private property (Honeywell)</li> <li>Piece of route is on-road</li> <li>Crossing State Fair Boulevard</li> <li>Pedestrian bridge over I-690 would need upgrades</li> </ul>
West	2	Yes	Partially	Mostly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially on private property – could potentially partner with Honeywell</li> <li>Brings trail along Gere's Lock No. 50 site, which holds several canal remnants</li> <li>Connects with Bridge Street (this location is undergoing construction of a pedestrian promenade which will include bike facilities)</li> <li>Connects to NYS Fairgrounds, Onondaga Lake Trail, Lakeview Amphitheater, and eventually the Onondaga Creekwalk and Inner Harbor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially on private property (Honeywell)</li> <li>Pedestrian bridges from NYS Fairgrounds over I-690 may need upgrades for bicycle traffic</li> </ul>
West	3	Yes	Partially	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily on private property – could potentially partner with Honeywell and Finger Lakes Railway</li> <li>Brings trail along Gere's Lock No. 50 site, which holds several canal remnants</li> <li>Connects trail to Onondaga Creekwalk in Armory Square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily on private property (Honeywell and Finger Lakes Railway)</li> <li>There is not a lot of physical space available for a trail along portions of the rail line (tight fit; trail next to moving trains)</li> </ul>



		DESIRED TRAITS		OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS	
Trail Section	Route Option	Follows historic route of canal	Easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services	Off road	
Central	1	Yes	Yes	No	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows historic route of Erie Canal</li> <li>Opportunity for additional upgrades as part of I-81 Viaduct Project</li> <li>Low traffic city-owned street</li> <li>Connects to Onondaga Creekwalk (which will eventually connect to the Onondaga Lake Trail)</li> <li>Erie Canal Museum on this route</li> <li>Brings trail users into urban setting for food, services, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On road</li> </ul>
East	1	Yes	Yes	Yes (if median is used); No for bikes (if bike lanes are used)	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows historic route of Erie Canal.</li> <li>There is a lot of existing pedestrian and bicycle traffic that could be removed from the street if a trail, sidewalks and/or bike lanes are added</li> <li>Potential for road diet</li> <li>Opportunity to run trail down wide medians</li> <li>The Erie Canal Monument (near Teall Avenue) is on this route</li> <li>The Town of DeWitt/City of Syracuse Elevating Erie competition explores several ideas for improving bicycle and pedestrian access along Erie Boulevard</li> </ul> <p><b>Constraints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erie Boulevard is 3-lanes in each direction and heavily traveled with 20,000 – 24,000 vehicles daily</li> <li>Erie Boulevard is used as an alternative to I-690</li> <li>Intersections currently have 8-10 lanes of traffic</li> <li>Access management issues (large swaths of open driveways)</li> <li>Depending on options chosen, trail could be on road</li> </ul>

		DESIRED TRAITS			OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS	
Trail Section	Route Option	Follows historic route of canal	Easy access to cultural sites, activities, food and services	Off road	Opportunities	Constraints
East	2	Partially (along Towpath Road)	Partially	Mostly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large section of trail would be off-road</li> <li>Partially on private property – could potentially partner with National Grid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trail users will be viewing I-690 and the back of Erie Blvd businesses (could be difficult to access businesses from trail)</li> <li>Primarily on private property (National Grid)</li> <li>Runs in close proximity to railroad tracks</li> <li>Runs along NYSDEC and USFWS wetlands, brownfields, and remediation areas</li> <li>Crossing major roadways will be challenging (Midler Ave, Thompson Rd, Bridge St)</li> <li>Existing pedestrian and bicycle traffic will still be traveling on Erie Blvd to reach businesses</li> </ul>

## **4.0 Feedback, Costs, Champions and Closing**

### **4.1 Public Feedback**

The Erie Canalway Trail suggested permanent route options and points of study (Section 3.2) were shared during a public meeting held on December 3, 2015, at the Museum of Science and Technology in Syracuse. A large map depicting the permanent route options and locations of the points of study greeted meeting attendees as they entered the meeting room. Attendees were also given a hard copy of the map to carry with them as they reviewed eleven boards displaying the points of study, which illustrated what specific locations along the trail could look like under possible alternatives. The SMTC gave a presentation outlining the Erie Canalway Trail Project process as well as the suggested trail route options and points of study, followed by a question and answer period. The public was also given the opportunity to share their thoughts and comments on the suggested routes and Points of Study display boards. SMTC staff was available to answer questions about the display boards and overall project.

Approximately 40 people attended this final public meeting for the Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project. The meeting attendees supported the notion of closing the Syracuse Gap in the Erie Canalway Trail. The comments received on the potential permanent routes focused on the West section, and primarily supported either Route Option 1 (Reed Webster Park, north through Honeywell property, Armstrong Road to State Fair Boulevard to Pleasant Beach Rd to the Loop the Lake trail and Creekwalk) or Route Option 2 (Reed Webster Park, east through the middle of Honeywell property to Bridge Street, use NYS Fairgrounds pedestrian overpasses to Loop the Lake Trail and Creekwalk). A few attendees acknowledged the importance to connecting to already-existing trails and entertainment opportunities (Onondaga Lake Trail, Creekwalk, Lakeview Amphitheater) as well as the proposed business district in the Inner Harbor.

Public comments primarily centered on the details shown within the points of study, which depending on the option(s) chosen, would require further engineering analysis. Interesting to note, is that comments received from seasoned bicyclists tended to favor the on-road Erie Canalway Trail options, while more recreational bicyclists and trail go-ers preferred facilities that were separate from traffic.

The points of study receiving the majority of comments were those on Erie Boulevard East. One attendee noted “For the Erie Boulevard options, I’d love to see NYSDOT look at running a trail along the median the whole length of Erie Boulevard in order to avoid having to deal with conflicts between cars, bikes and pedestrians at the driveways. It would be a beautiful green space use and add to the character of the city and the town of DeWitt.” Another attendee felt that bike lanes were great for Erie Boulevard “with enhanced greenspace/eco-corridor down the center. A bike trail on the sides of Erie Blvd provides easy entry/exit” and noted that “separation can be enhanced to be safer.”

Attendees that commented on the Towpath Road point of study preferred the option of adding a shared-use path as opposed to having wide shoulders for pedestrians with sharrows or bike lanes to accommodate bicyclists. For the Kinne Road Bridge point of study, commenters preferred the options that included a separated shared-use bridge for crossing I-481.

The question and answer period, as well as the comments received on each of the concepts presented at the December 3, 2015, public meeting are catalogued in Appendix A.

## 4.2 Planning Level Cost Estimates

Developing accurate cost estimates for closing the Syracuse Gap in the Erie Canalway Trail is difficult, as there are several options for routing the trail, and several factors that would need to be considered: is the trail on-road, or off-road? If off-road, will the trail be stone dust or asphalt? Does the trail require property acquisition or easements? Are new/additional traffic signals needed to accommodate a trail in certain locations? How many new ADA-compliant curb ramps and street crossings are needed? Is curbing required?, etc.

Noted below are rough cost estimates for constructing paths (trail), bike lanes, sidewalks and pedestrian overpasses. The estimates come from the following document: *Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements – A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners, and the General Public*, dated October 2013. The report was prepared by the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill's Highway Safety Research Center for the Federal Highway Administration and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Active Living Research program. These figures are assumed to include engineering, design, mobilization, and furnish and installation costs, and are based on 2012 dollars<sup>23</sup>. The estimates do not include right-of-way and/or property acquisition. Also included in the tables of cost estimates are the number of sources and observations that went into the estimates shown.

In the UNC document, *paths* are defined as multi-use, often accommodating both pedestrians and bikes. Whether paved or unpaved, the costs noted below are for paths eight feet wide. *Bicycle lanes* are assumed to be five feet wide. It was also noted that separated bikeway (8 feet in width) projects typically cost between \$536,664 and \$4,239,320 per mile depending on site conditions, path width, and materials used. In the cost estimates below, all *sidewalks* are assumed to be five feet in width with a thickness of four inches. *Pedestrian overpasses* and underpasses completely separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and provide safe pedestrian accommodation over often impassable barriers, such as highways, railways, and natural barriers such as rivers<sup>24</sup>. Overpasses and underpasses consist of different types of structures, including bridges and are generally very expensive: Overpasses (excluding bridges) have a range from \$150 to \$250 per square foot or \$1,073,000 to \$5,366,000 per complete installation, depending on site conditions<sup>25</sup>.

The numbers in the following table include only the basic planning level cost estimates for a shared-use paths, bike lanes, sidewalks, and pedestrian overpasses. The estimates do not include costs of

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<sup>23</sup> Max A. Bushell, et al., *Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements – A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners, and the General Public* (Chapel Hill: UNC Highway Safety Research Center), p. 9-10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 21.



additional amenities that would also be necessary to close the Syracuse Gap in the Erie Canalway Trail, including crosswalks, crossing islands, curb ramps, curb extensions, lighting, pavement markings, fencing, signals, signage, and/or street furniture, etc. Maintenance and upkeep costs are also not included.

Cost for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements UNC Highway Safety Research Center							
Infrastructure	Description	Median	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Cost Unit	Number of Sources (Observations)
Path	Multi-Use Trail - Paved	\$261,000	\$481,140	\$64,710	\$4,288,520	Mile	11 (42)
Path	Multi-Use Trail – Unpaved	\$83,870	\$121,390	\$29,520	\$412,720	Mile	3 (7)
Bikeway	Bicycle Lane	\$89,470	\$133,170	\$5,360	\$536,680	Mile	6 (6)
Sidewalk	Concrete Sidewalk	\$27	\$32	\$2.09	\$410	Linear Foot	46 (164)
Sidewalk	Concrete Sidewalk + Curb	\$170	\$150	\$23	\$230	Linear Foot	17 (24)
Overpass/ Underpass	Pedestrian Overpass	N/A	N/A	\$1,073,000	\$5,366,000	Each	5 (5)

A more local source for bicycle and pedestrian cost estimates is the New York State Department of Transportation. To assist applicants with their Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant applications, NYSDOT had developed the Safe Routes to School Quick Estimate tool<sup>26</sup>. This listing provides per unit costs for a variety of bicycle/pedestrian amenities, as shown in the following table.

<sup>26</sup> The NYSDOT SRTS Quick Estimate tool can be found at:  
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/srts/repository/SRTS%20Quick%20Estimate.xls>.

***Selected Cost Estimates from New York State Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Quick Estimates (dated June 2012)***

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unit Price</b>	<b>Cost Breakdown</b>
4-foot wide sidewalk	\$33/LF	Sidewalk: \$23/LF
		Excavation & disposal: \$5/LF
		Subbase Course Type II: \$5/LF
5-foot wide sidewalk	\$39/LF	Sidewalk: \$27/LF
		Excavation & disposal: \$6/LF
		Subbase Course Type II: \$6/LF
10-foot wide multiuse asphalt path	\$74/LF	Includes subgrade preparation, saw cutting and tack coat; doesn't include curbing, grading or turf establishment
ADA Curb Ramp	\$1,250/each	Includes site survey, demolition, saw cutting, excavation, etc.
Crosswalk (ladder bar w/standard striping)	\$770/EA	White epoxy reflectorized pavement symbols: \$.42/LF
		Pavement cleaning and preparation: \$.68/LF
		Assumes 700 LF of striping per crosswalk
Concrete Curbing	\$53/LF	Cast in place concrete curb: \$32/LF
		Cost estimate includes saw cutting, excavation & disposal, embankment in place, subbase, top course and foundation concrete
Raised Crosswalk	\$15,000/EA	
Pedestrian Push Button – Existing Signal	\$2,005/EA	Includes audible signal, conduit, LED signal, demolition, excavation, repairs to asphalt, signal system components, adjustments to utilities and finish work
Pedestrian Push Button – New Signal	\$6,580/EA	Includes items from Existing Signal, as well as signal pole, pullbox and conduit excavation

*Estimates do not include: moving utilities/mailboxes, incidental alteration of drainage structures, driveway aprons, pruning, clearing and grubbing, maintenance and protection of traffic (M&PT) or planting.*

Abbreviations: LF = Linear Foot; EA = Each

Source: New York State Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Quick Estimates

The NYSDOT SRTS numbers shown above are basic planning level cost estimates for a multi-use path and standard pedestrian amenities.

Because there are several Erie Canalway Trail routing options along with many options for the type of facility chosen (whether on- or off-road, paved or unpaved, etc.), it is difficult to determine an overall rough cost estimate for closing the Syracuse Gap in the trail through our community. An order of magnitude chart is shown below, giving an estimation of costs in terms of low cost (road striping, sidewalks), medium cost (pedestrian signals, stone dust or asphalt trail) and high cost (major road reconstruction) for each potential route option.

<b>ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL – SYRACUSE GAP</b> <b>ORDER OF MAGNITUDE COST ESTIMATES</b>			
<b>LEGEND:</b> \$ = low cost solution (striping of bike lanes, installing curb ramps, some sidewalks) \$\$ = medium cost solution (pedestrian signals, significant sidewalks, stone dust or asphalt trail) \$\$\$ = high cost/costly solution (major road reconstruction)			
Trail Section	Route Option	Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate	Notes
West	1	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portion of off-road trail on Honeywell property</li> <li>• On-road upgrades</li> <li>• Upgrades to/replacement of pedestrian bridge over I-690</li> </ul>
	2	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portion of off-road trail on Honeywell property</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridges from NYS Fairgrounds over I-690 may need upgrades for bicycle traffic</li> </ul>
	3	\$\$-\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily on private property (Honeywell and Finger Lakes Railway)</li> <li>• Tight fit next to railroad may require fencing, etc.</li> </ul>
Central	1	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On road</li> <li>• Road striping and small sections of sidewalk</li> </ul>
East	1	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If on-road, need to add bike lanes and move bicyclists and pedestrians through intersections</li> <li>• If off-road, need to alter medians to allow for trail and move bicyclists and pedestrians through intersections</li> </ul>
	2	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would need to address wetlands, brownfields and/or remediation areas</li> <li>• Need to cross major roadways (Midler, Thompson, Bridge)</li> <li>• Primarily on private property (National Grid)</li> <li>• Close proximity to railroad tracks (may require fencing)</li> </ul>

The order of magnitude cost estimates above provide a general starting point once final route options are determined.

### 4.3 Champions

Developing a permanent Erie Canalway Trail route to close the Syracuse gap presents some interesting challenges and opportunities to the community, one of these being the role of “champion”. The SMTC is a transportation planning agency, and does not implement projects. This project will not manifest itself unless local and/or state leadership steps forward (i.e., the city, the county, Canal Corporation, etc.).

At the state level, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) looks forward to being involved in planning for trail completion and enhancement in the Syracuse area. As a statewide promoter of the Erie Canalway Trail, PTNY brings a unique perspective to route planning in the Syracuse area. PTNY provides direct services to current and potential trail users, both through their CycletheErieCanal.com web site designed to

elevate the visibility and reputation of the Erie Canalway Trail as a world-class cycling destination and directly market the trail to the national and international adventure traveler and cycling tourist, and through phone and e-mail conversations where they offer advice on topics ranging from route selection to cycling equipment choices. PTNY's partnerships with the NYS Canal Corporation and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and experience managing the volunteer Trail Ambassador and Adopt-a-Trail programs, and hosting the annual Bicyclists Bring Business event will be useful in bringing these programs in the Syracuse area. PTNY asks to be continued to be consulted and thought of as a "Champion" for all efforts relating to the Erie Canalway Trail and its completion.

Champions are also beginning to emerge at the local level. The Town of DeWitt, City of Syracuse and NYS Department of State jointly launched an Elevating Erie Ideas Competition in fall 2015 to request creative ideas for developing a biodiverse, multi-modal urban transit corridor along Erie Boulevard East, while including a focus on the Erie Canalway Trail. With projects due in December 2015, the design competition drew nearly 65 proposals from local students to experts from around the world. The Elevating Erie Jury reviewed and rated competition submittals in early 2016. An exhibit featuring competition finalists opened at the Erie Canal Museum on May 5, 2016.

Other champions could include private property owners, and the potential opportunity to develop partnerships in an effort to close the gap in the Erie Canalway Trail. Once portions of trail are in place, the potential for partnerships for trail upkeep and maintenance (Adopt-A-Trail programs) will grow – Rotary Clubs, Boy Scout and/or Girl Scout Groups, and volunteers in general are also trail champions. The Camillus Erie Canal Park has a strong volunteer base that secured funding and enabled the restoration of an aqueduct along the Erie Canal there.

#### **4.4 Closing**

The ideas gleaned through Elevating Erie competition, as well as the SMTC's Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project have helped to start the conversation and process of determining where and how an Erie Canalway Trail can fit into our community; however, additional champions are needed to help close the Syracuse gap in the Erie Canalway Trail. Should funding become available to assist in constructing portions of the Erie Canalway Trail, this document will be in place to serve as a starting point for that work.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION APPENDIX**

#### ***Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project*** **Part II Document**

##### **Contents:**

- **Public Involvement Plan**
- **Public meeting summaries**
- **Public comments**



# Erie Canalway Trail

## *Syracuse Connector Route*

### **Public Involvement Plan**

Financial assistance for the preparation of this document was provided, in part, by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations and the New York State Department of Transportation. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is solely responsible for its content.

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## **I. Introduction**

Engaging the public early and often in the planning process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and is required by numerous state and federal laws. Such legislation underscores the need for public involvement, calling on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) such as the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) to provide citizens, affected public agencies, businesses, local government, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs.

While public participation is mandated, it is also practical. No single organization has a monopoly on good ideas – they often germinate through an open exchange of information. It is the SMTC's intention to promote the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define the goals and objectives of the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project - to leverage renewed local interest in the trail and develop an implementation plan for how and where to locate the Erie Canalway trail between its current end points in the Towns of DeWitt and Camillus.

This study has been separated into two components, Part I and Part II, to be worked on simultaneously.

### **PART I (SHORT TERM ROUTE)**

Part I will examine the existing un-signed, on-road Erie Canalway Trail route utilized each July for the Cycling the Erie Canal (CEC) Bike Tour. This route is noted on the Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) web site and included in the guide *Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail*. Part I of this project includes the examination of this route to determine if alternate roads and/or improvements can be made to the current on-road route, such as incorporating roadways with existing bike infrastructure (bike lanes, etc), minimal traffic, etc. The ultimate goal is to develop a short term on-road, signed route that will be utilized until a permanent off-road (to the extent possible) route is developed and put into place. It is anticipated that the Canal Corporation will provide Erie Canalway Trail blazers to the appropriate entities for installation once an improved on-road route is determined.

### **PART II (PERMANENT ROUTE)**

Part II, the permanent Erie Canal Trail route, will examine routing for the Erie Canalway Trail between the current western terminus of the Canalway Trail in the Town of Camillus and eastern terminus in the Town of DeWitt. The intent of the permanent route is to work towards developing a route that is off-road (to the extent possible) as the Erie Canalway Trail across NYS is intended as an off-road, relatively flat route.

Development of the long-term off-road route will be organized into three sections – West, Middle, and East (representing the Camillus connection in the west, the City of

Syracuse gap in the middle, and the DeWitt connection in the east) so that the appropriate entities and agencies can participate in detailed discussions relative to each area. Each section will have its own set of opportunities and constraints.

This project, including public involvement efforts, will complement the SMTC study efforts currently underway as part of the Bike Corridor Study (sponsored by the NYSDOT), as well as the City of Syracuse's Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, currently being developed.

## **II. Goals**

The intent of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project is to:

- (1) Create public awareness of the study's goals, objectives, and process, as well as to publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the study; and
- (2) Involve the public throughout the planning process.

## **III. Formation of Study Advisory Committee, Working Groups, and Stakeholders**

The PIP includes the formation of three types of groups to assist the SMTC in the study effort: a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), project Working Groups (WG), and Stakeholders.

### *Study Advisory Committee*

Selected representatives from the following affected agencies and groups will be invited to participate in this study as SAC members:

- CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
- Central New York Regional Transportation Authority
- New York State Department of Transportation
- Onondaga County Department of Transportation
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
- City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
- City of Syracuse Department of Public Works
- City of Syracuse Department of Engineering
- Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
- Town of Camillus
- Town of Geddes
- Town of DeWitt
- Village of Solvay

- New York State Canal Corporation
- Parks & Trails New York
- Other agencies/entities as appropriate (to be determined at the SAC kickoff meeting)

The SAC will meet regularly with the SMTC to assist in managing the project. The SAC's role will be to advise the SMTC on the technical content of deliverables and to provide needed input and guidance throughout the project.

It is anticipated that a minimum of five SAC meetings will be held throughout the course of the study. Securing a meeting location (facility), announcement of SAC meetings through mail/e-mail, conducting SAC meetings (including preparation of agenda, materials, presentations, etc.), and preparing the minutes from each meeting will be the responsibility of the SMTC.

#### *Working Groups*

A series of Working Groups (WG) will also be established to focus on each of the sections of the long-term off-road Erie Canalway Trail route: West/Middle/East (the Camillus connection in the west, the City of Syracuse gap in the middle, and the Town of DeWitt connection in the east). The WGs will assist in the identification of suggested routes for the off-road trails within their sections (West/Middle/East) as well as reviewing and offering comments on the entire route between Camillus and DeWitt. The SAC will participate in each WG as desired. Additional Working Group representation will also be sought from CSX, National Grid, Honeywell, etc. as well as community groups as appropriate.

The SMTC will meet as necessary with the WGs, and will develop and document minutes for each meeting. It is anticipated that the SMTC will hold a minimum of two WG meetings per section (West/Middle/East) during the course of this study. The WGs will not vote on approval or disapproval of project-related products and documents. The WGs will be further defined with the SAC through the PIP.

#### *Stakeholders*

A stakeholders list (a broader group of interested individuals with significant relations and interest in the study area) will be maintained by the SMTC. The SMTC will attempt to obtain a list of interested parties and will automatically include those individuals on the stakeholders list. Additional stakeholders will be added based on input from the SAC and the community. The stakeholders will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, notified of all public meetings, and encouraged to provide feedback and comment regarding the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project.

The SMTC and project sponsors will determine initial representation on the SAC and Working Groups. The SMTC will actively seek input at its kick-off meeting and

throughout the course of the study regarding additional individuals who could provide valuable input and perspective to this planning activity.

#### **IV. Meetings and Public Comment**

The SMTC will hold public involvement meetings/workshops at specific stages during the study. The SMTC will be responsible for securing a meeting location, issuing press releases, creating meeting materials, mailing meeting fliers, running the meetings, and preparing a summary of each meeting. At least two public meetings are anticipated.

The first public meeting will provide the opportunity to formally present the study to the public, present background information on this project, share an inventory of existing conditions as appropriate, and seek initial feedback from the public regarding Part I and Part II of the Erie Canalway Trail route through Onondaga County. The SAC and WGs will consider citizen input obtained from this meeting.

The second public meeting will take place after potential alternative routes have been developed and analyzed. At this meeting, the public will be invited to provide feedback on the study's alternatives.

Note: All meetings (SAC, WG and public) will be held in a handicapped accessible facility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The SMTC will make every effort to respond to those who need a sign language interpreter, assistive learning system, or any other accommodations to facilitate the public's participation in the transportation planning process.

To further increase its outreach to the public, the SMTC will initiate and conduct a variety of public involvement activities, as appropriate for the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project:

**Material distribution at locations within study area:** If deemed necessary (at the discretion of the SAC and/or other appropriate SMTC committees), the SMTC may distribute miscellaneous study-specific information at sites throughout the study area (e.g. schools, community centers, convenience stores, etc.). This information may include one or more of the following: introductory flier, meeting notice, comment card, and a pre-addressed survey on a particular study issue. It is also the SMTC's intent to work with and encourage other agencies to include this information in their publications or to assist in material distribution.

**Coordination with existing community organizations:** The SMTC will work to coordinate public outreach activities for this study with existing activities of community groups in the study area. The SMTC will seek the assistance of the



Towns of Camillus, DeWitt, Geddes, Village of Solvay and the City of Syracuse to “get the word out” about the study and help publicize public meetings. The SMTC will reach out to these municipalities and other appropriate community groups early in the study process to inform them of the study and opportunities for public input. If requested, SMTC staff will attend existing community meetings to provide a brief overview of the project. Detailed discussion of the analysis and recommendations will be provided at the study-specific public meetings.

All interested individuals (especially those who are not able to attend the public meetings or participate in direct contact with the SMTC staff) are encouraged to submit comments to the SMTC at any time. This message will be publicized and made clear throughout the study’s project schedule, verbally, and on all study material and publications. The public is also welcome to attend any of the publicized SMTC Executive, Planning and Policy Committee meetings in which the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project may be on the agenda as a discussion item.

#### **V. Press Releases/Media Coverage**

The SMTC will issue news releases (announcing the details of all public meetings) to all major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio in advance. If necessary, the SMTC will also send additional news releases, or take the initiative to promote media coverage on pertinent developments pertaining to the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project.

If possible, all media inquiries should be directed to the SMTC staff director or project manager. However, this is not always possible. If you (e.g. SMTC committee members, SAC members, WG members and/or interested stakeholders associated with the study) are interviewed by the media, please limit your comments to your respective agency’s opinion or involvement in the study. As for speaking to the media on specific issues and questions regarding the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project, its progress and development, this is the exclusive responsibility of the SMTC.

#### **VI. SMTC Publications**

The SMTC publishes a newsletter, DIRECTIONS, that offers news about its activities and particular studies. This newsletter is distributed to nearly 1,500 individuals, some of whom include the media; local, state, and federal agencies associated with the SMTC; municipal and elected officials; community agencies and representatives; and a large number of interested citizens. It is anticipated that articles on the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project (e.g. study development issues or the announcement or coverage of a public meeting) will be published in subsequent issues of DIRECTIONS. Should the need arise for the production of a separate newsletter/flier/report to convey a timely study development the SMTC staff is prepared to perform this additional task.

It is also important to note that the mailing list of the SMTC newsletter, DIRECTIONS, will be updated to include all members of the SAC, WGs, stakeholders, and others interested or involved in the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project.

## **VII. Miscellaneous Public Involvement Efforts**

To further its public involvement efforts, the SMTC will be asking SAC, WG members and interested stakeholders to assist them in better notifying citizens and community groups living and/or working in the study area about the public meetings and the study in general. Such a request is imperative in order to get the “grassroots community” involved. By helping to distribute fliers/announcements and speaking to the members of the community about the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project, the SAC, WGs, and interested stakeholders will serve to further promote public involvement in areas (and to individuals) that were not reached through the standard outreach.

Meeting notices and study-specific material previously mentioned may also be posted at libraries, local stores, shopping centers, and/or businesses.

Approved documents, such as the study’s Final Report, may be made available at libraries in the vicinity of the study area. News releases will be produced to announce the availability of such items, as well as invite written comments to be submitted to the SMTC.

The SMTC web site ([www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org)) will also serve as a resource for general information about the SMTC, the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project, and any final approved reports.

If a certain need arises to get public perception/opinion on a particular topic/issue, surveys may be used at one or more of the public meetings.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

It is important for the SMTC to understand public attitudes and values throughout the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route** project, as well as solicit input from affected citizens and community representatives. Through the activities described in this public involvement plan, the SMTC will solicit public input and provide opportunities for the public to develop greater awareness of and active involvement in the project. In a study that has the potential to enhance the quality of life and recreational opportunities for nearby residents and visitors, public involvement is paramount.



## **Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council**

100 Clinton Square  
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100  
Syracuse, New York 13202  
Phone: (315) 422-5716  
Fax: (315) 422-7753  
[www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org)

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL – SYRACUSE CONNECTOR ROUTE PROJECT, PART II**

##### **Public meeting**

December 3, 2015

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Museum of Science and Technology

500 South Franklin Street

##### **SMTC Staff Present:**

- Danielle Krol
- James D’Agostino
- Mario Colone
- Mike Alexander
- Kevan Busa
- Aaron McKeon

Ms. Krol’s discussion began at 5:45 p.m., after people had had time to get seated and review display boards. The display boards provided an overview of the study area, with exhibits showing what a given portion of the trail (e.g., off-road portion through Honeywell’s property) could look like under possible alternatives.

Ms. Krol gave an overview of the project using a PowerPoint presentation. Following her presentation, the floor was opened to questions for roughly 20 minutes.

---

[Answers to questions were provided by Ms. Krol, with additional input from Mr. D’Agostino]

##### **Q: Are the bike boxes shown in some of the display boards legal in New York State?**

A: Bike boxes are considered an experimental treatment that requires special permission from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). However, they are becoming more widely used and it is likely that they’ll be added to the standard toolbox of pavement markings in the future.

##### **Q: Are there any cost estimates for the various options?**

A: Rough estimates are coming. Sections on the western portion of the trail will likely be in the millions of dollars. A very rough estimate would be \$10 to \$20 million. At this point, we are not trying to select an option based on hard costs - it’s more a question of compiling options and noting possibilities and obstacles.

##### **Q: This will require a lot of public education regarding drivers and cyclists. Are you developing partnerships to do this outreach and education?**

A: SMTC currently works with the Onondaga County Safety Advisory Board and is also involved in developing public services announcements related to bicycle and pedestrian safety. The Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee also provides resources that we can help coordinate.

**Q: Have these plans been reviewed by Town Police or the Sheriff's office?**

A: No, these are planning concepts that have not been reviewed for public safety impacts. That kind of review would normally happen later on in the process, as the details of a trail are pinned down – typically during preliminary engineering.

**Q: During construction of something like this, can there be provisions to ensure that workers are hired locally? Would that depend on the funding source?**

A: Figuring out hiring would not be SMTC's role. We won't know about the exact funding source for a while, but there is good news in transportation funding, with the recent approval of a five-year federal transportation bill.

**Q: What would the timeframe be for this project?**

A: It would be premature to even guess at a timeframe. Construction of this trail will depend on the actions of the numerous stakeholders involved, including multiple roadway owners, as well as how other linked projects like the Loop the Lake Trail progress. The key ingredient is still missing and that's an entity to champion the project.

**Q: Who are some possible champions?**

A: Canal Corporation, the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, the Town of DeWitt (for portions) – there's no right answer.

SAM GORDON, TOWN OF DEWITT: There is some forward progress on parts: Honeywell's piece of the trail could move forward independently. The City of Syracuse and the Town of DeWitt are working on the "Elevating Erie" competition. The Loop the Lake trail is progressing on its own timeline and Water Street in the City of Syracuse is already very bike-friendly. The Elevating Erie project will incorporate ideas from this project over the next year.

MS. KROL: Additionally, the World Canal Conference will be held in Syracuse in 2017, providing an excellent opportunity to rally support for this project.

**Q: Some of the trail options come pretty close to CSX rail lines. Have you been in contact with CSX, particularly to discuss the possibility of using their right-of-way?**

A: We have never had a good line of communication with the railroads, so if you know someone, that would be helpful. Also, on the Erie Boulevard East sections that run near the railroad tracks, the trail's proposed route is generally within National Grid's 60-foot (approximately) right-of-way, giving the trail a good wide area to work in.

**Q: As part of the Connective Corridor, there was a bike lane separated from traffic by "floating" parking. This idea was not well received and the City eliminated it. Are there any contingency plans for this trail if it does not work as you intend?**

A: What we've got is very conceptual for now. As was mentioned previously, there might have to be some public education as part of the project.

COMMENT (PETER KING): Some cities have experimented with a "try before you buy" approach to bicycle facilities, using traffic cones to create a temporary bike lane.

**Q: Do you have a working relationship with National Grid on this project?**

A: We have not talked with National Grid at this point. The trail route that would use National Grid's right-of-way has been the less popular option to date.

**COMMENT:** For the Erie Boulevard options, I'd love to see DOT look at running a trail along the median the whole way in order to avoid having to deal with conflicts between cars, bikes and pedestrians at the driveways. It would be a beautiful green space use and add to the character of the city and the town of DeWitt.

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The Q & A portion of the meeting ended at 6:20. Meeting attendees were invited to review the exhibits on display and to write their comments on post-it notes and/or to fill out comment sheets. SMTC staff were also present to answer questions and take comments. Ms. Krol reminded meeting attendees that public comments on this project will be accepted through December 15, 2015.

The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.

*Comments received verbally during the meeting and via post-it notes are attached, along with comments received via comment sheets.*



## Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Project

### Public Meeting

### Board Display Comments

MOST

December 3, 2015

#### Comments received (sticky notes attached to boards):

##### Phase Two: Suggested Permanent Route Options and Points of Study Map

- Options 1 & 2 would benefit the proposed business district in the inner harbor – giving the canal area a Pittsford (Rochester) feel. (post-it placed on Onondaga Lake/Liverpool area)
- Yes it's the canal, but let's show off what we have: Onondaga Lake Amphitheater, Loop Trail – Option 1! (post-it placed on left side of board)
- Nine Mile Creek - ? Include (post-it placed on Honeywell property near Nine Mile Creek)

##### Locations A, B, D: Honeywell property points of study

- Winding road, no shoulder (post-it placed under photo B, between Existing and Proposed)

##### Location C: Armstrong Road

- State Fair Blvd is a wicked up-hill going west (placed to the right of aerial and panorama)
- Can't picture a wicked uphill on State Fair Blvd (placed just left and below comment above)
- As a cyclist, I'm ok with some uphill, but not in traffic, too much smoke (placed on right side of board near current condition)
- IMO (in my opinion), sharrows are only acceptable in slow auto traffic areas (<20) (placed next to Option 1)
- Option 3 is ideal but option 2 is also good (placed near option 3)
  - Agree with Armstrong. Not too bad (post-it had arrow pointing to comment "Option 3 is ideal but option 2 is also good")

##### Location E: Gere's Lock No. 50

- Super (placed left of the word "Proposed")
- This looks good (post-it placed under "Proposed" photo)
- This is a treasure! We must use this! (placed over the word "location" on left side of board)

##### Location F: Water Street

- 2 way bike ped lane on one side of street with big buffer (post-it placed left of Option 1)
- Wider bike lane on side with structure and driveways (placed to the right of Option 1)
- Option 2 is fine for the amount of traffic on this street (placed in the right border between options 1 & 2)
- Option 2 is preferred. There is not much traffic on this street (placed to the right of Option 2)

##### Location G: Erie Blvd. East segment with center turn lane

- Prefer good buffer! (placed in left margin near option 1)
- Option 2 feels safer to me – the striped separation is clear to drivers (placed to the right of option 2)

- Prefer C (I think commenter meant 3 here). Gets cyclists off road (post-it placed to the right of option 3)

#### Location H: Off Road

- Tunnel under Thompson? (post-it points to Thompson Rd on the aerial photo, just south of the southern portion of the interchange)
- How would you manage crossing here? (post-it placed next to pink line that shows trail crossing Thompson at the intersection)
- This seems much less complicated (and less expensive) than the Erie Blvd suggestion
- I would rather see the route stay on Erie Blvd and encourage commuting by cycle/walking
- Shared path is great BUT important to dedicate a bike lane separate from walkers
- Not sure if separate cycling and walking is necessary. It doesn't happen anyway on the trail now (placed just underneath comment above)

#### Location I, K: Erie Blvd. East segments with medians

##### I: Green Median - Teall to Thompson

- Put the bike lane down the entire median of Erie!! Plantings on either side to buffer road from bikes (post-it placed over Current Condition section)
- Option 1 best (post-it placed over option 1, shared use path down median)
- Option 2 is the worst. Too close to bike and fast moving cars (post-it placed on Option 2).
- Option 2 would benefit those who take public transit to work on Erie Blvd where there are no sidewalks and no shelters (post-it placed to the right of option 2)
- Option 2 is a bad idea. Too many driveways (post-it placed underneath option 2 to the left)
- Option 2 great, with enhanced greenspace/eco-corridor down the center. Bike trail on sides provides easy entry/exit → separation can be enhanced to be safer (check out NYC, if they can have bike lanes through downtown NYC, they can do it in Syracuse!) (post-it placed underneath Option 2 to the right)

##### K: Concrete Median – Thompson to Bridge

- How about we run the two way bike trail all the way down median of the WHOLE boulevard, with trees! (post-it placed to the right of current condition)
- Eliminate 1 auto lane each way (post-it placed under Option 1)
- Prefer Option 2. Option 1 may look cool but cyclist would have to cross traffic to leave road (post-it placed next to option 1)

#### Location J: Erie Boulevard East/Thompson Rd Intersection Concept

- Put bikes down center in grass median. Put peds on sidewalk on side of road (post-it placed on the right side of the board between existing and proposed)
- I am pretty brave, but this scares me. What if the light changes when a cyclist is not in position, and 40 + mph traffic hits the intersection at speed? (post-its placed on Erie leg on the right in the intersection concept diagram)

#### Location L: Erie Boulevard East/Bridge Street Intersection Concept

- A meeting attendee was curious as to why there was not a multi-use (shared use) trail shown here (on post-it note, arrow pointing to proposed sidewalk added in front of vacant property)

where Celi Drive meets Towpath Road)? If a shared-use path was to be included, vehicles traveling north west on Erie Boulevard would not be expecting left turning (from Erie Boulevard southbound) cyclists to cross into their lane to reach the shared-use path, so we opted to place a two-way cycle track heading northeast on Bridge Street that cyclists could use. Cyclists would have to dismount to cross at the Erie Blvd/Bridge St intersection. Staff will be sure to explain in the text or diagram why a shared-use path was not suggested here.

#### Location M: Towpath Road

- Canal trail users are not all adults (post-it placed to the right, between options 2 & 3)
- Prefer off-road (post-it placed to the right, between options 2 & 3)
- I like Option 3 (post-it placed to the right of option 3)
- Raised pathway (post-it placed under option 3, with arrow pointing up to shared-use path)
- A meeting attendee was concerned that the cross-section shown is not indicative of the entire corridor. Wanted to know what would happen when the road cannot be expanded in the widewaters area (closer to Celi Drive/ErieBoulevard area). SMTTC staff indicated that sharrows are a possible solution in this section of Towpath Road.

#### Location N: Kinne Road Bridge

- Traffic light on DeWitt side of bridge (post-it placed to the left of the panorama)
- I prefer Option 2. I don't think we gain enough to justify the cost of Option 3 (post-it placed to the right of option 2)
- Connect to north side (post-it placed to the left of Option 2, indicating to put cantilevered bridge on north side instead of south)
- #2 or #3 (post-it placed to the right of Option 3)
- A meeting attendee suggested placing a pedestrian bridge or cantilevered bridge on the north side of Kinne Road instead of the south side. Staff will take a look at this suggestion.

#### General Comment(s)

- Separated lanes for bicycles created perpendicular risk for collision w/vehicles entering roadways from parking lots. A result of spacing created from roadway and vehicles moving out to wait to turn into traffic thinking about car traffic not bikes. Most risky where visibility is limited. Also where parked cars separate; similar but different (accompanied by drawing on post-it notes).
- Comment (and drawing) about buffered bike lanes, and wouldn't it make more sense to have the solid line that is on the inside of the buffer be dashed so cyclist knows they can cross. We told the meeting attendee that the striping type is determined by regulations (Highway Design Manual, etc.).

Thank you for attending the Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project public meeting on December 3, 2015, at the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST), in Syracuse. Please provide any additional comments you may have in the space below.

This form can be returned to the comment box or to any SMTC staff member at tonight's meeting. You may also return this form via mail (SMTC, 126 N. Salina St., Suite 100, Syracuse, N.Y. 13202) or fax (315-422-7753). Please return comment forms by Tuesday, December 15, 2015.

mello velo Bicycle Shop & Cafe is relocating to 790 Canal St (corner of Walnut & Erie/Canal St.) It would be great to have the path extend along Canal St. until Walnut before it turns onto E Water so that we have the opportunity to serve the many cyclists & also serve as an info center. We already do this for many users of the canal trail at our Westcott location. Having small businesses & eating places along the trail encourages patrons of these businesses to use the recreational trails & areas before them. It also enhances the users experience. The canal trail in Rochester (Pittsford especially) is quite different. The potential to create a similar feel / usage is great. In Pittsford, Tempah Bike Shop is located right on the trail & offers bike / kayak rental & service. I picture development like this along the inner harbor & by our new bike shop location on Canal St (which we chose due to the historic

Name (optional) Sara Morris (owner mello velo) canal path & proximity to the University  
Address (optional) 556 Westcott St Syracuse NY  
E-mail (optional) Sara@mellovelobicycles.com

Would you like to be added to the SMTC mailing list? Yes ☐ No ☐ already on it

For additional information on the Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project, please contact Danielle Krol at the SMTC by phone (315-422-5716) or e-mail (dkrol@smtcmpo.org).



Thank you for attending the Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project public meeting on December 3, 2015, at the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST), in Syracuse. Please provide any additional comments you may have in the space below.

This form can be returned to the comment box or to any SMTC staff member at tonight's meeting. You may also return this form via mail (SMTC, 126 N. Salina St., Suite 100, Syracuse, N.Y. 13202) or fax (315-422-7753). Please return comment forms by Tuesday, December 15, 2015.

Dear Danielle:

December 08, 2015

Thank you for your presentation at the MUST. The Canal Corporation always attempts to arrange their trails off-road as safety is a prime concern. Route #1 takes you along Airport Rd. which is extremely dangerous. We would strongly consider Rt. #2 through Honeywell property to Bridge Street.

We have two pillars of the Erie Canal First Enlargement. The first is the restored Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct and the second is Gore's Lock.

207,000 visitors in 2011 stopped at the Aqueduct (Canal Corp.)

A towpath along Gore's Lock Road is the best choice. The road is closed due to the bridge-out and the fish ladder underneath. The towpath is in excellent condition for a bike trail.

Remediation and restoration of Gore's Lock would be a tremendous bike/hiking/auto historical stop. The important Lock #50 was a prototype of future locks on the first Enlargement in 1845. There is a good on-site parking lot.

We would greatly appreciate your consideration in this important choice of routes.

Liz & Dave Beebe - Camillus Canal Society  
Treas. of Camillus

Name (optional) Liz and David Beebe

Address (optional) 109 East Way - Camillus, NY 13031

E-mail (optional) dwbeebe @ verizon.net

Would you like to be added to the SMTC mailing list? Yes ☒ No ☐

For additional information on the Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route project, please contact Danielle Krol at the SMTC by phone (315-422-5716) or e-mail (dkrol@smtcmpo.org).



**Comments received via email following the December 3, 2015 public meeting:**

12/3/15

Dear Ms. Krol:

I did not attend tonight's public meeting in Syracuse, but I would like to submit a comment for SMTC and other influencers of the Syracuse Connector Route Project to consider...

My perspective is I live in the Town of Dewitt and use the canal towpath multiple times per week year 'round. Many here are still smarting from the ill-conceived towpath paving project that took place in the towns of Dewitt and Manlius early this fall (2015). There are numerous reasons why so many people opposed the paving and rallied somewhat successfully to stop it (for now) from proceeding eastward. I won't go into all those reasons here. The question is – what does the paving east of the city have to do with a connector route through the city? The answer is that impetus for the paving came from Albany (not the local community nor the Central Region office of NYSPRHP). This I learned from a source in the Central Region office. That source also informed me that the grand plan calls for a strip of asphalt 10 ft. wide from Buffalo to Albany, regardless of the preferences of local users for the historic, traditional stone dust or natural unimproved surface. The same people pushing for asphalt are also helping to revive the long bantered about recreational connection from Camillus to Dewitt.

To be sure, I support the development of a connector route through Syracuse and in all likelihood this trail would and should have a paved surface as it will no doubt consist (at least in part) of designated lanes along existing roadways. But that does *not* mean I support *every* objective of the grand plan. I would be much obliged if the SMTC would go on record as taking the same position, i.e. supportive of the Connector Project, but agnostic about what happens to the towpath surface in neighboring towns. Please don't let your efforts on behalf of the Connector be construed by the NYSPRHP and the Governor's office in Albany as further evidence that oh yes, see this proves we need asphalt 10 ft. wide the length of the Old Erie Canal. Support of the Connector proves no such thing. Please make that clear.

Here's where the grand plan is faulted. The "vision" of a contiguous ribbon of recreational asphalt across NY State is being sold as economic driver that will supposedly pump millions into the local economies. According to an article on Syracuse.com regarding the towpath paving on the east side: "The state-funded project received praise from Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney, Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton, Sen. John A. DeFrancisco and several others across the state." Their praise is based on wild eyed projections of tourists coming in droves from afar to take advantage of the amazing recreational resource that the ribbon of asphalt supposedly will represent. The problem with all the hype is that it's fiction. THE VAST MAJORITY OF TRAIL USE IS AND WILL ALWAYS BE LOCAL. This will also be true of the Connector through Syracuse. We're talking about people who go out for a mile or more and come back. These users spend not a dime more or less into the local economy than they otherwise would whether or not millions of dollars are invested by the government.

Because recreational trail development impacts primarily local residents, the preferences and input of those local residents who actually use the trails should be paramount and thus take precedence over decision making from outside the community as to whether said development is a benefit or a detriment. We don't live in a dictatorship where the all-seeing eye of Horace knows best.

Thank-you,  
Vonden Sleight

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12/4/15

Hi Danielle,

I didn't make any comments on the boards at last night's Erie Canalway Trail meeting, so I'll officially submit this comment to you...

Thanks,  
Jeanie

### **We need a new option – the Erie Boulevard Median Option**

I really think DOT, with the City and the Town, should take a look at the idea of using the entire length of Erie Blvd. center median for implementation of the Erie Canalway Trail. It just makes more sense, and here's why:

There are 142 individual points of entry to private commercial establishments along Erie Blvd. between Genesee St. and S. Beech St. To install bike lanes on either side of Erie Blvd. would involve a very complex, multi-year, multi-property access management project to address 142 conflict points for cyclists. Instead, we could run the multi-use trail down the center median which has only 10 conflict points. This would meet two of the 3 project planning objectives right away: 1. keeping cyclists off road, and 2. following the historic route of the Erie Canal. As a landscape architect, I would note that it could also be a far less expensive and complex a design to implement.

The cost and property ownership issues involved in developing access management for 148 commercial establishments along Erie Blvd. would be far more challenging than addressing the 10 crossings of the boulevard median between Dewitt and Downtown. And with only two or three owners involved in the decision-making the entire project could be designed and approved much more quickly. If we want to get this done in a reasonable timeframe, at a reasonable cost, and in a way that meets the stated goals of the project, the median option must be considered.

Pedestrian crossings do need to be added along the Blvd. in any case. Having a tree-lined Erie Canalway Trail on the median, where families can ride together safely across the City, makes much more practical sense for the Erie Canalway Trail. Completing the sidewalks along the commercial fronts is a much simpler task. The existing boulevard is wide enough to develop a lush center median all the way along its entire length from Genesee St. to S. Beech St. where the trail could link to the E. Water Street Park and the Canal Museum. The boulevard median idea is a compact and doable opportunity for greening the Town and City with street trees, plantings, and pocket parks, and interpreting Erie Canal history. It could change the face of Dewitt and Syracuse and catalyze a rebirth of economic development along Erie Blvd. and surrounding areas.

Jean B. Gleisner

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## **Other comments received via email:**

2/26/16

Danielle:

Here are brief comments from Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) on the draft document for the Erie Canalway Trail - Syracuse Route Connector Phase II. At each stage in the Phase II process, Fran Gotcsik has shared the concept plans and points of discussion from the project with PTNY trails staff. These comments reflect PTNY's collective thoughts.

### **Page 2**

The third footnote should be updated to the 2014 version of the Close the Gaps Report, Parks & Trails New York, *Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail 2014*, <http://www.ptny.org/application/files/9314/3586/1090/closing-the-gaps2014-final.pdf>. The 2015 version is in preparation now.

Under Part I (Short-term Route), please change the mention of the bike tour to read "Cycle the Erie Canal (CTEC) Bike Tour."

### **Page 17 – West Section Route Options**

Route Option 2 is preferred.

#### **Segment D – Armstrong Road**

Option 2 could suffice for the near term, while Option 3 is preferred long-term.

#### **Segment F – Water Street**

Option 2 is preferred.

#### **Segment G – Erie Boulevard East**

Option 2 could suffice for the near term, while Option 3 is preferred long-term.

### **Page 35 – Road Diet for Erie Boulevard East**

PTNY is supportive of further study of a road diet for Erie Boulevard East, as the roadway's current width and overall environment are unwelcoming to pedestrians and cyclists.

#### **Segment M – Towpath Road**

Under Option 2, the text specifies a bike lane width of 5' but the diagram puts the same bike lane width at only 4'. Option 3 is preferred.

#### **Segment N – Kinne Road Bridge**

The requirement that bicyclists dismount and walk across the proposed pedestrian path on the Kinne Road bridge, mentioned in Option 1, seems unfortunate. We assume this is in response to state and/or local traffic rules. If there is any workaround possible, we think it should be pursued, even if it is short-term, as it could provide access across the Kinne Road bridge at far less cost than the other options.

Assuming that the requirement to dismount remains, Option 2 would be the preferred short-term solution, with Option 3 being the best long-term solution.

**Page 66 – Request for Champions**

PTNY looks forward to being involved in planning for trail completion and enhancement in the Syracuse area. As a statewide promoter of the Erie Canalway Trail, PTNY brings a unique perspective to route planning in the Syracuse area. PTNY provides direct services to current and potential trail users, both through our CycletheErieCanal.com website designed to elevate the visibility and reputation of the Erie Canalway Trail as a world-class cycling destination and directly market the trail to the national and international adventure traveler and cycling tourist, and through phone and email conversations where we offer advice on topics ranging from route selection to cycling equipment choices. Our partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation and experience managing the volunteer Trail Ambassador and Adopt-a-Trail programs, and hosting the annual Bicyclists Bring Business event will be useful in bringing these programs in the Syracuse area. We hope PTNY will continue to be consulted and thought of as a “Champion” for all efforts relating to the Erie Canalway Trail and its completion.

Thanks again for all your work, Danielle.

Please feel free to reach out to us with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

James Meerdink  
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