

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Summer 2018



Hanover Square, Syracuse



Work Products Portfolio Available

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) recently created a Work Products Portfolio. This document, highlighting work completed by the SMTC, will serve as a reference guide to interested parties.

The SMTC completes a variety of different types of work products for the studies and projects undertaken. Some studies are recurring items, while other projects are undertaken at the request of member agencies or municipalities, with some items being federally required.

The document has six chapters providing brief descriptions of the projects in a given category. All final reports are made available in hardcopy at the SMTC office as well as on the "Final Reports" section of the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org. The Work Products Portfolio will be updated as projects are completed.



**Syracuse
Metropolitan
Transportation
Council**

WORK PRODUCTS PORTFOLIO [2005-2018]





Committee Chairs Elected

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is pleased to announce the following individuals were selected as committee officers through March 31, 2020:



Policy Committee:

Chair: Brian M. Schultz, Board of Members Chair, Central New York Regional Transportation Authority; and

Vice Chair: Martin Voss, Commissioner, Onondaga County Department of Transportation.



Planning Committee:

Chair: Mary Robison, City Engineer, City of Syracuse; and

Vice Chair: Megan Costa, Assistant Director of County Planning, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency.



Executive Committee:

Chair: Rick Lee, Executive Director, Central New York Regional Transportation Authority; and

Vice Chair: David Bottar, Executive Director, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board.

The SMTC Policy Committee provides overall policy direction and decision-making of the Central Staff; establishment of goals; adoption of transportation plans, programs, and projects undertaken by the Council; and adoption/acknowledgement of transportation reports and recommendations. The SMTC Planning Committee functions as a forum to discuss and resolve relevant transportation issues; oversee the technical activities of the SMTC; and analyze and determine transportation funding priorities for the Metropolitan Planning Area. The SMTC Executive Committee provides oversight for the day-to-day operations of the SMTC, primarily for financial management, personnel and other administrative requirements.



100 Clinton Square Conference Center



Centro System Map Updated

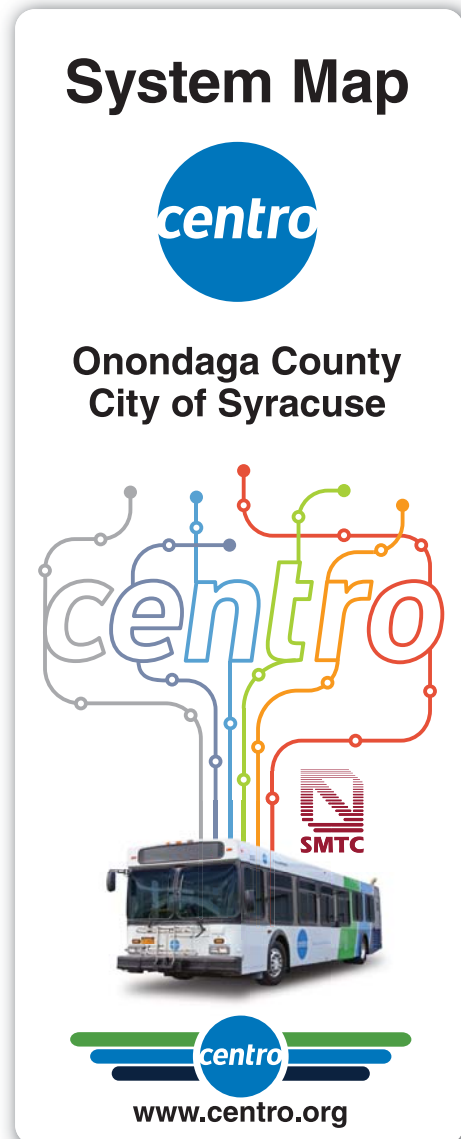
The SMTC, in conjunction with the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro), recently redesigned and updated the System Map – Onondaga County and City of Syracuse, a customer-friendly system map. Originally created in 2015, the color-coordinated map displays transit routes within Onondaga County with a special focus on the City of Syracuse. The free map was created to provide a single point of reference for an overview of the transit system.

The brochure includes three transit maps: Onondaga County, the City of Syracuse, and the Downtown Syracuse area.

Ridership Information includes:

- A color-coded Route Guide, designating individual routes, and highlighting routes grouped by service area;
- A Bike Rack Guide illustrating the proper way to load and unload bicycles using Centro's bike racks;
- Information outlining Centro's free over-the-phone interpretation service; and
- Get in the Know with Centro! - App, Track By Text, Bus Tracker, and social media information.

The map is available in both electronic and paper-copy format. The electronic map may be found on Centro's website, www.centro.org, and the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org. Paper copies of the map are available at the Syracuse Transit Hub, 599 S. Salina Street, Syracuse; Centro's main offices, 200 Cortland Avenue, Syracuse; as well as at the SMTC offices at 126. N. Salina Street, Suite 100, Syracuse.



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

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Centro Surveys Results Released

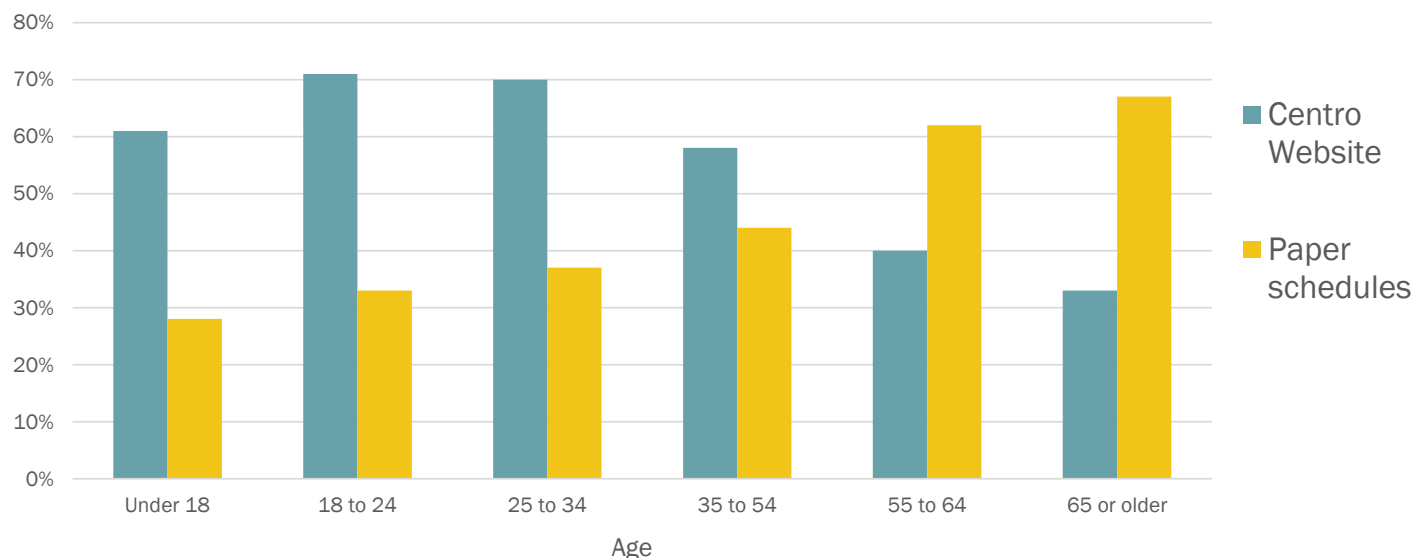
- Rider and Non-Rider surveys conducted on behalf of Centro
- 1,103 on-board Rider Surveys completed
- 1,125 Non-Rider Surveys returned via mail

The Rider Survey was completed in-person on-board buses. Two interns, along with occasional help from SMTC staff, rode the 20 highest-ridership Centro bus lines at morning, mid-day, and afternoon peak times. On board, riders were asked to complete the one-page, 17-question survey in exchange for a free ride pass. Spanish and online versions of the survey were also available. Only 400 surveys were needed to consider the study statistically valid; however, with the riders' willingness to respond and the efficiency of our surveyors, we gathered 1,103 completed surveys between April and July 2017. From the responses, we found that Destiny USA is the most popular destination, both for employment and shopping/entertainment. Eighty percent of respondents reported that they use Centro because they do not have access to a car, suggesting that the bus is their primary mode of transportation. The two most common ways in which users get information about Centro is through the Centro website and paper

schedules. There is a clear pattern here, as older users prefer paper schedules while younger users prefer the website. Ninety-one percent of respondents reported that the existing Centro system meets their needs, and only 35% of respondents provided suggestions for improvements, the most common being a higher frequency of buses on nights and weekends.

For the Non-Rider Survey, 10,000 households in the Syracuse Urban Area received the survey in the mail. Households were selected randomly, but proportional to the actual population in Census block groups in order to achieve a representative sample of the population. Recipients were asked to complete the survey only if they had not used Centro bus service within the past six months. Although only 400 responses were anticipated, we received an incredible 1,125 surveys at an 11% return rate! This survey asked if and how they commute to school or work, why they do not use Centro buses,

How do riders get informatoin about Centro?





and what, if anything, could be changed to make Centro buses an option for them. Unfortunately, only 27% of respondents reported that they would consider using Centro buses even if changes were made mainly because they simply prefer having their cars with them, there are no bus stops near their home, or bus travel takes too long. Of those respondents that said they would consider using Centro service to commute, the most common reason given for not using Centro at present was that service is not frequent enough. However, 55% of respondents reported that they would

use Centro buses for special events such as the New York State Fair or concerts the St. Joseph’s Health Amphitheater at Lakeview. Centro already provides service to both of these destinations.

Overall, Centro’s riders are generally satisfied with the service provided, and non-riders would be willing to take advantage of the service on occasion.

The final reports are available on the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org.

Why don't you use Centro service to get to work/school?	All respondents	Only respondents that would consider taking Centro in future
Response	Percent of respondents	Percent of respondents
I need my car during the time I'm at work/school.	33%	18%
Service is available, but the trip by bus takes too much time.	22%	32%
There is no bus line near my home.	22%	30%
Service isn't frequent enough.	20%	35%
Service isn't available during the hours I start and/or end work/school.	15%	24%
I'm not comfortable taking the bus.	13%	12%
There is no bus line near my place of work/school.	9%	14%
Other	32%	33%



Skaneateles Moblity Plan Finalized

- Study completed at the request of the Town of Skaneateles
- Identified technically-feasible on- and off-road bicycle/pedestrian amenities
- Study identifies options to improve two focus area intersections

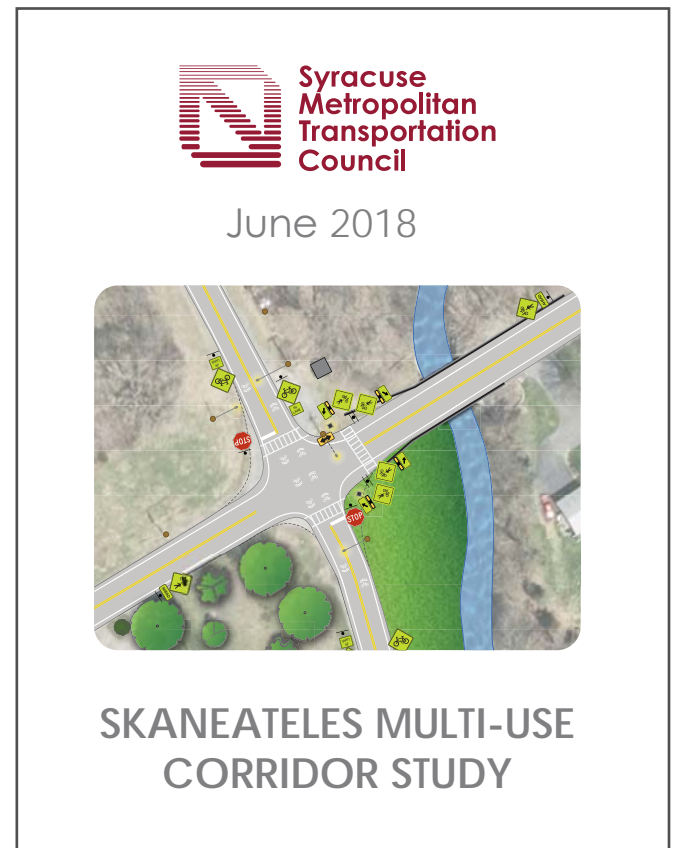
The Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study was acknowledged as complete by the SMTC Policy Committee on June 12, 2018.

The Town of Skaneateles requested the SMTC complete this study to identify a menu of options to improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility between the Charlie Major Trail and the Fennell Street business district. An off-road trail option as well as on-road improvement options are offered for consideration by the local community. The study suggests that bike lanes are feasible within the Fennell Street business district. The remainder of the corridor could include sharrow pavement markings to accommodate bicyclists.

This study also investigated the feasibility of extending the Charlie Major Trail south towards the Village of Skaneateles along the Skaneateles Short Line railroad bed, an option that initial planning-level slope and environmental assessments suggest could be feasible. The environmental considerations provide insight into the level of environmental review and mitigation that may be required.

Regarding on-road improvement options, this study looked closely at two intersections (i.e., Old Seneca Turnpike/Fennell Road and Fennell Street/Jordan Street). Improvement options for Fennell Road between the two intersections were also provided.

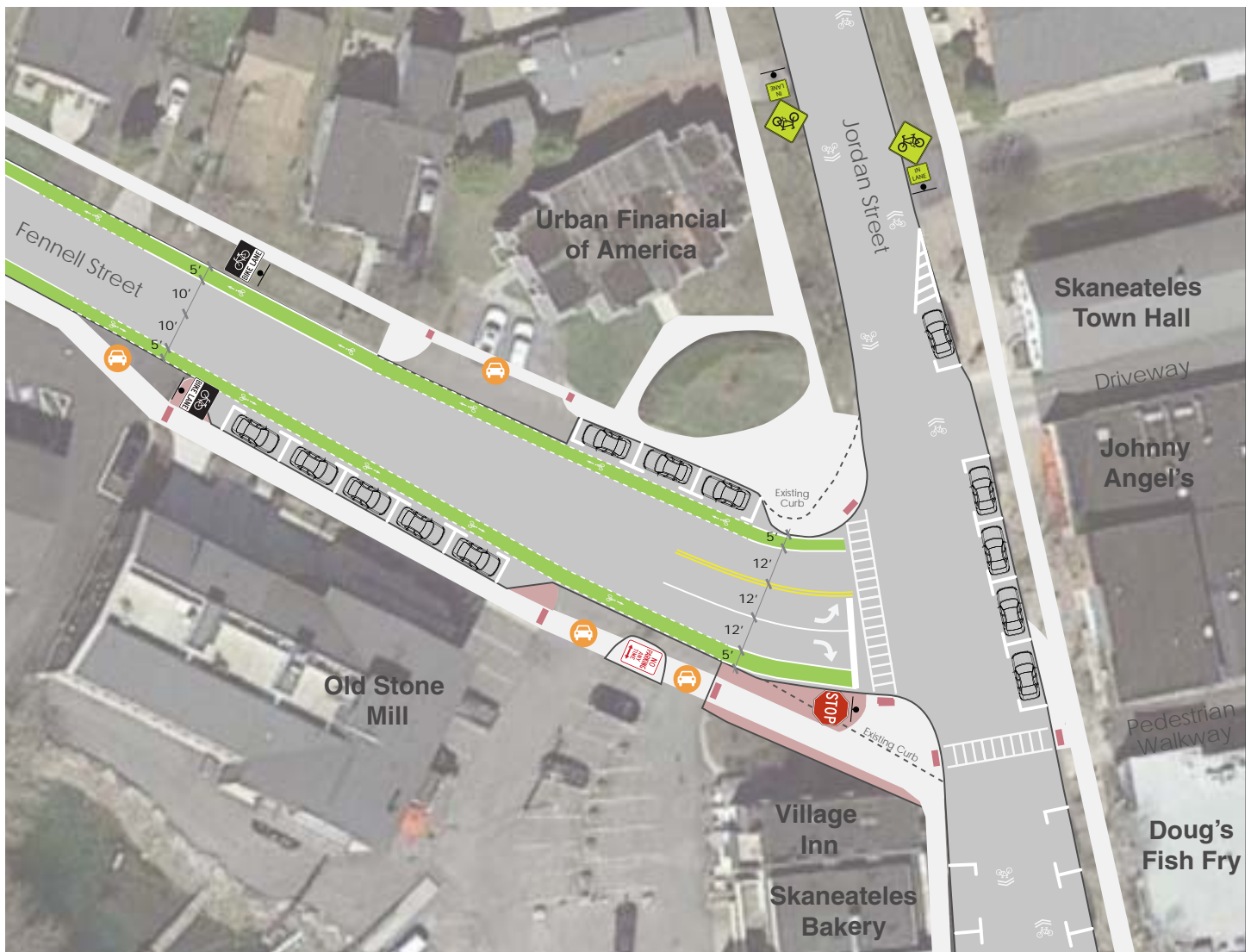
Two improvement options exist for the Old Seneca Turnpike/Fennell Road intersection. The first option identifies on-road improvements: realign Fennell Road and Mill Road, street lights, three high-visibility crosswalks, pavement markings (i.e., stop lines, sharrows, double yellow center lines, edge striping along Fennell Road and Mill Road), and warning signs –



includes a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at the Seneca Turnpike crosswalk.

The second option considered a 10-foot wide off-road stone dust trail along Skaneateles Creek. Additional features include two high-visibility crosswalks, advanced yield pavement markings on Fennell Road, RRFBs at Old Seneca Turnpike crosswalk, street lighting improvements, and advance warning signs.

Three intersection improvement options were examined at the intersection of Fennell Street and



Recommendation options for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Jordan Street. The first option considered bike lanes along Fennell Street and would narrow Fennell Street to shorten the walking distance. A new high-visibility crosswalk at Jordan Street was also considered as well as sharrow pavement markings along Jordan Street.

The second option is the same as the first, but it maximizes on-street parking by improving access management. Prioritizing on-street parking encourages motorists to drive slower, serves as a buffer between sidewalks and the road, provides high turn-over parking for shoppers, and reduces conflict points between motorists, walkers, and bicyclists. The disadvantages include fewer driveways and off-street parking spaces.

The third option considered a roundabout which requires access management similar to the second option. Roundabouts create a unique gateway feature and provide continuous traffic flow for vehicles and bicycles. However, a roundabout may result in the loss of parking and create multiple crosswalks and refuge islands. The limited space at this intersection also reduces the traffic calming effectiveness typically associated with roundabout designs.

The final report can be found on the SMTc website, www.smtcmipo.org.



SMTC Completes Transportation and Land Use Analysis for Village of Fayetteville

- Focused on Route 5 in the Village of Fayetteville
- Travel time study conducted on Route 5 and Route 290
- Route 5 is a commuter route, commercial corridor, and “main street”

The SMTC recently completed the Fayetteville Route 5 Transportation and Land Use Analysis for the Village of Fayetteville. This study was proposed by the village to “identify methods to allow the Village of Fayetteville to continue to develop existing underutilized properties by improving and/or creating new vehicle capacity within the village.” The Study Advisory Committee included the Village of Fayetteville, Town of Manlius, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA).

As part of this study, SMTC staff conducted a travel time comparison of the Route 5 and Route 290 corridors from the eastern suburbs to the City of Syracuse. (The travel time analysis was described in more detail in our Winter 2017 issue of *DIRECTIONS*.) The travel time analysis found that the Route 290 option is faster, but only by about 3-4 minutes in the westbound direction and less than 2 minutes in the eastbound direction, on average. Trips traveling eastbound on Route 5 during the evening peak period were found to have the greatest variability in trip time: from a low of 17 minutes to a high of 25 minutes.

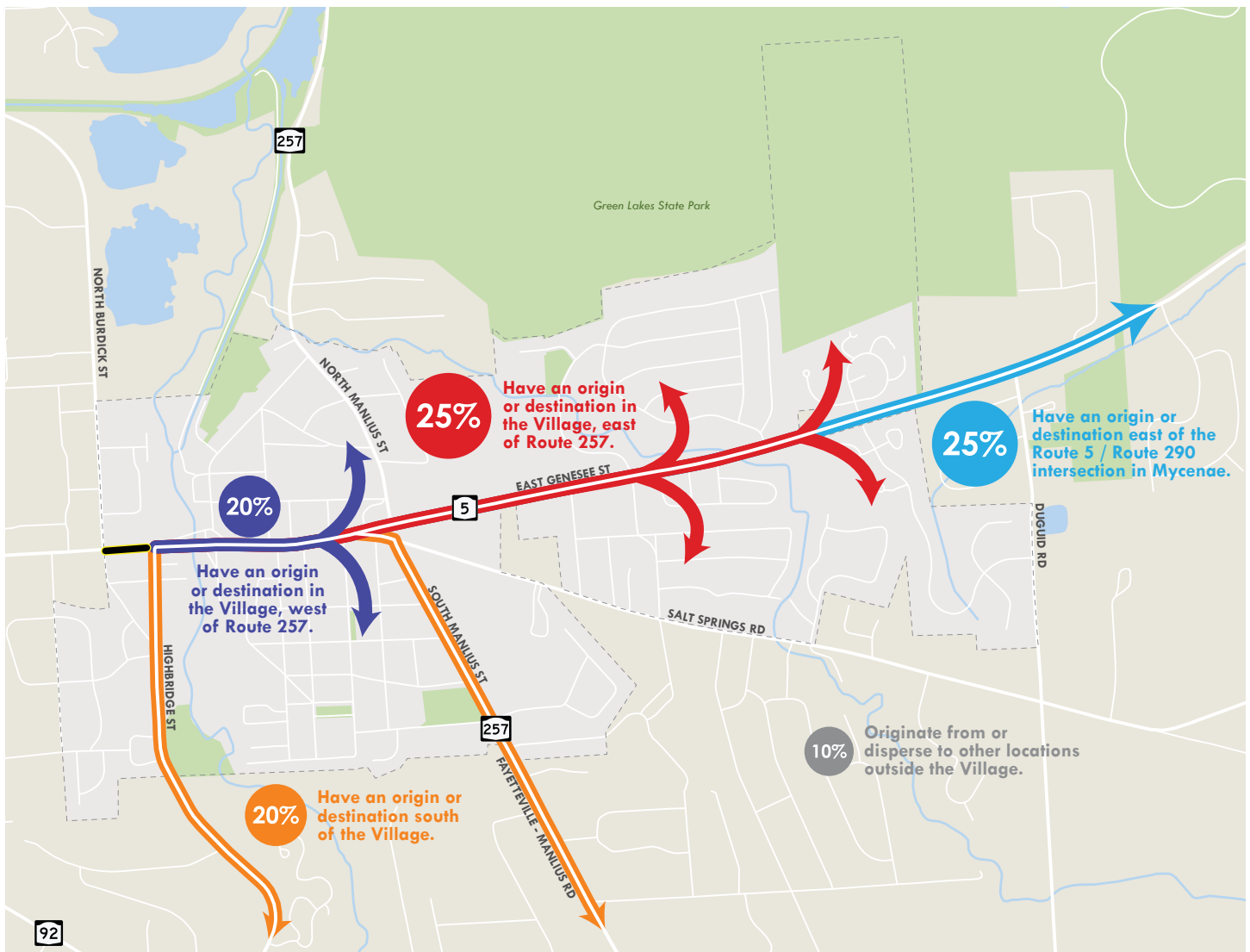
One of the objectives of the overall study was to better understand the existing traffic patterns within the village. SMTC staff analyzed existing intersection turning movement counts and used outputs from our travel demand model to determine where the highest traffic volumes are, where trips are typically coming from, and where trips are typically going. This analysis showed that the busiest segment of Route 5 within the village is between Burdick Street and Highbridge Street, and that the majority of the traffic on this segment has

an origin or destination within the village or south of the village. The analysis also showed that traffic volumes on Route 5 increase fairly steadily over the course of an entire day, which is indicative of a road that is highly varied in use, serving both commuter traffic and providing access to numerous commercial destinations.

Using our travel demand model, SMTC staff was able to evaluate the traffic impacts of additional development in and around the village. Based on input from the village, a scenario was modeled with an additional 430 residential units and 87,000 square feet of commercial development over six years. The model results indicate growth in traffic volumes on Route 5 ranging from about 5 percent at the western end of the village (where traffic volumes are currently highest) to about 10 percent in the eastern portion of the village (where traffic volumes are currently lower). This equates to a total increase of about 100 vehicles in the morning peak and 150 vehicles in the evening peak. This is not anticipated to change operating conditions substantially.

As part of this study, the travel demand model was also used to test a scenario with expanded capacity (i.e. an extra travel lane) on Route 290 from Route 5 to Basile Rowe, to determine if a substantial number of trips might divert to Route 290. The model outputs showed very little change in traffic volume on Route 5 as a result of additional capacity on Route 290. This also supports the conclusion that most of the traffic on Route 5 has an origin or destination near the village, or is drawn to the many commercial destinations along Route 5.

SMTC staff worked with NYSDOT staff to evaluate some potential changes to the road network in



This figure shows origins and destinations for trips on Route 5 between N. Burdick St. and Highbridge St. (westbound during the morning peak and eastbound during the evening peak), using outputs from the SMTC’s travel demand model.

and around the village. NYSDOT Main Office staff developed two preliminary roundabout concepts for the Route 5/Route 257/Salt Springs Road intersection area, but initial review suggests that both would have substantial property impacts to this area of the village. A two-way (center) left-turn lane was evaluated for the segment of Route 5 east of Route 257, and the planning-level analysis indicates that this is feasible and would have benefits; this could be coordinated with future development along that segment. Reducing driveways, consolidating access at existing signalized locations, and providing more local road connections – all elements of “access management” – could also help to improve traffic flow in the village.

A public meeting was held for the study in February, which was attended by about 20 people. SMTC staff presented the analysis that had been completed, discussed “issues and opportunities” with the meeting attendees, and collected feedback on the concepts presented.

Overall, the study helped all stakeholders gain a more thorough understanding of the existing traffic patterns in and around the village and the potential to manage future traffic impacts. The final report from the study is available on the SMTC’s website, www.smtcmpo.org.



Pavement Report Available for the MPA

- Annual Report
- Focused on all Federal-Aid Eligible Roads in the MPA
- Report justifies the funding of TIP projects in the area



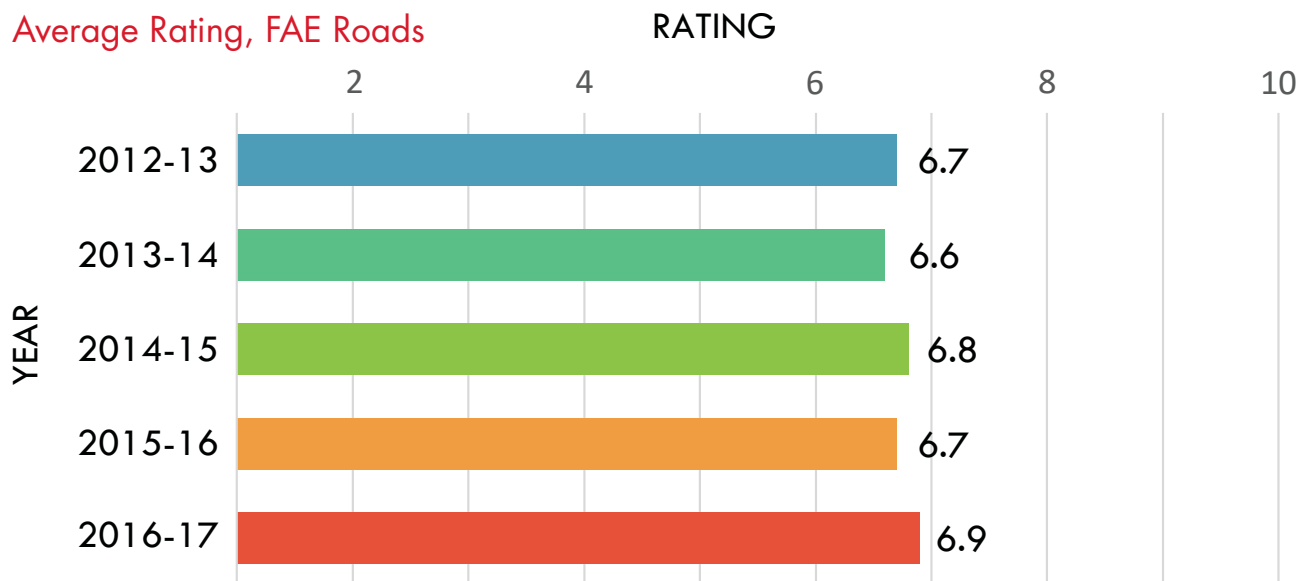
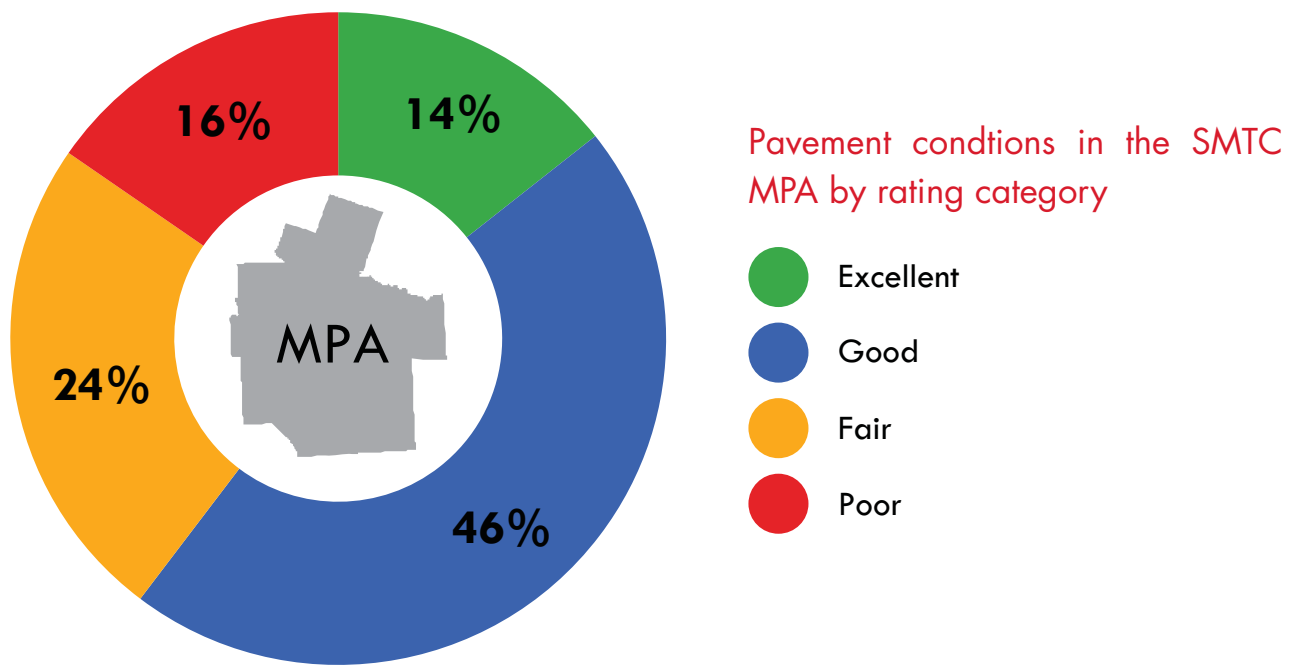
James Street, Syracuse

The Pavement Section of the SMTC's annual Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System (BPCMS) project was recently completed and is available online in the "Reports" section of our website, www.smtcmpo.org. Due to changes in bridge rating methods, the Pavement Section and Bridge Section are being released separately this year; work on the Bridge Section is nearing completion.

The Pavement Section reports on all Federal-Aid Eligible (FAE) roads in the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Beginning in 2015, all roads have been rated

by either New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) or SMTC staff, using the NYSDOT rating scale. This has paved the way for more standardized data collection and allows the SMTC to compile a database with ratings on all FAE roads, which can be shared easily with member agencies. Fieldwork to collect this year's road ratings is currently underway.

Methods to collect pavement conditions have been rapidly changing over the last few years. New technologies allow for the measurement of a number of different pavement metrics, boosting the amount of data



that can be collected on any given road segment. New information on surface cracking, pavement roughness, rutting, and faulting will improve our knowledge of pavement conditions in the SMTCC's Metropolitan Planning Area. NYSDOT has begun to collect this additional data, and the SMTCC will continue to work closely with the Department to integrate this new information into future pavement reports.

By keeping track of pavement conditions, the SMTCC hopes to underscore the importance of ongoing support for infrastructure maintenance efforts. The

deterioration of pavement is a constant process, and conditions need to be both monitored and maintained or improved. The report also serves to justify the large portion of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funds allocated to highway and bridge projects, and recommends that these funds are invested appropriately.

For additional information, please contact Andrew Frasier, 315.422.5716 or afrasier@smtccmpo.org.

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