

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Fall - November 2020



Designated Bike Lanes in
Downtown Syracuse as part
of the new Empire State Trail



SMTC Adopts 2020 Update to the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

The SMTC Policy Committee adopted the 2020 Update to the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) at its September 23 meeting. The LRTP is one of the core functions of every Metropolitan Planning Organization. SMTC is required, by Federal legislation, to update the LRTP at least every five years, and our previous plan was adopted in 2015. The 2020 Update retains much of the basic structure of the plan from five years ago. Minor revisions were made to the goals and objectives to comply with newer Federal performance measures. The four regional priority projects remain in the Update, with the text of the plan updated to reflect the current status of the I-81 Viaduct Project, enhanced transit, our regional trail system, and the inland port project.

The LRTP Update envisions over \$3.26 billion in transit and highway-related projects for our region, with about \$3.30 billion in anticipated revenue. Maintenance projects make up the majority – about 88 percent – of the anticipated project costs, with “maintenance”

including any project that does not substantially alter the capacity or function of the system (for example, road paving, bridge replacements with no additional travel lanes, and bus replacements are all considered maintenance).

Even with that level of spending on maintenance projects, our member agencies know that additional funding will be needed to bring the majority of our aging transportation infrastructure into a state of good repair. And, this cost estimate does not include funding for the I-81 Viaduct Project or for operation of a bus rapid transit system as recommended in the SMTC’s Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit (SMART) Study – Phase 1; both of these projects present significant funding challenges that will likely need to be met outside of the SMTC’s traditional allocation of federal transportation funds.

The 2020 Update continues the 2050 LRTP’s focus on performance management, with additional

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The SMTC staff wrapped-up work on a number of studies in the past few months, and these were acknowledged as complete by the SMTC Policy Committee at their September 23 (virtual) meeting. These studies are highlighted here, and all of these final reports are now available on our website www.smtcmpo.org. You can also email contactus@smtcmpo.org or call the SMTC office at 315.422.5716 to request a copy of a report.



Complete Streets Review: South Geddes and West Fayette Streets



Lipe Art Park along Fayette Street

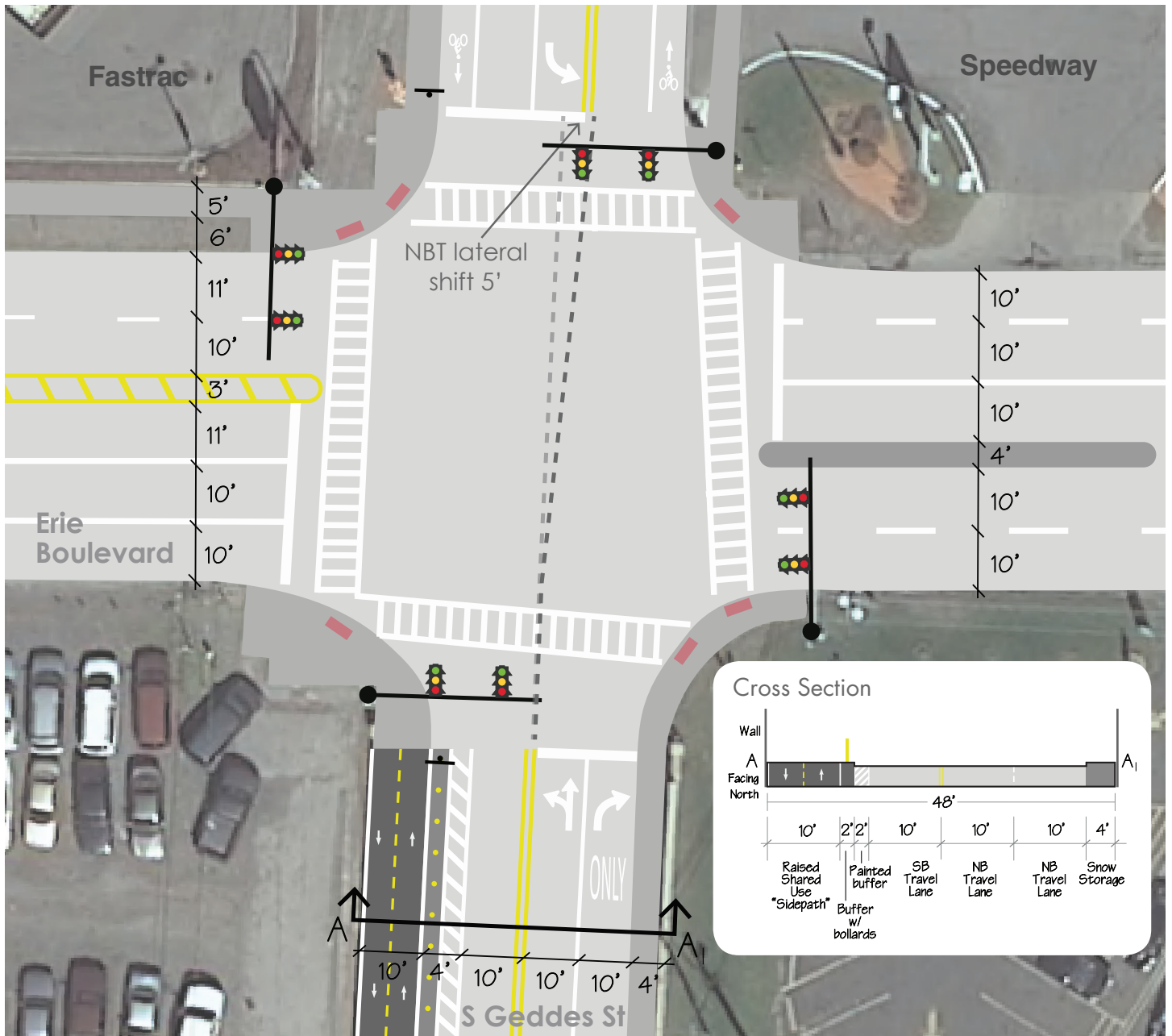
The South Geddes and West Fayette Complete Streets Review, which was completed on behalf of the City of Syracuse, identified opportunities to add or improve bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities within the existing rights-of-way on both corridors.

South Geddes and West Fayette Streets are important corridors on the City's Near West Side, linking neighborhoods to one another and to Downtown Syracuse. This study focused on the portion of South Geddes Street between Erie Boulevard West and Bellevue Avenue and along West Fayette Street between Walton Street and Tompkins Street.

General recommendations suggest adding transit-friendly features (concrete landing pads, benches, etc.) and bringing all pedestrian facilities into ADA- and City-codes compliance on both corridors. Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB), which supplement pedestrian warning signs at uncontrolled intersections or mid-block crossings, are recommended at key crossing locations.

To accommodate bicyclists, a shared-use sidepath on the west side of South Geddes Street, or a road diet on South Geddes Street (so that bike lanes can be added) is recommended. During a public meeting held in February 2020, the public noted preference for the sidepath option. On West Fayette Street, formalized parking on the western end of the corridor is recommended along with improved sidewalks.

A walkway design concept for the area under the bridge on West Fayette Street (just west of South Geddes Street) was developed that would enhance the pedestrian experience between Geddes Street and the Tipperary (Tipp) Hill neighborhood. Through this study, it is also clear that a multi-use trail linking Lipe Art Park to the west side of South Geddes Street is highly desired by the public and would make a great addition to the West Side, with connections to Tipp Hill and Downtown Syracuse.



Intersection of Erie Boulevard West/South Geddes Street, showing sidepath concept for South Geddes Street



EXISTING



PROPOSED

Walkway concept under railroad bridge on West Fayette Street



RTC/Market Area Mobility Study



Example of a concept plan - intersection of Park Street and Hiawatha Boulevard near the CNY Regional Market

The City of Syracuse wants to make it easier for Northside residents to walk and bike across Hiawatha Boulevard to access the Regional Farmers Market for food, the Regional Transportation Center for transportation, and Destiny USA for services and employment. Per the City's request, SMTC developed a mobility study that prioritizes crossing locations for potential improvements at the following four locations:

- Hiawatha Boulevard/Park Street
- Hiawatha Boulevard/Carbon Street
- Hiawatha Boulevard/Tex Simone Drive/First North Street
- Park Street/NBT Bank Parkway/Harborside Drive.

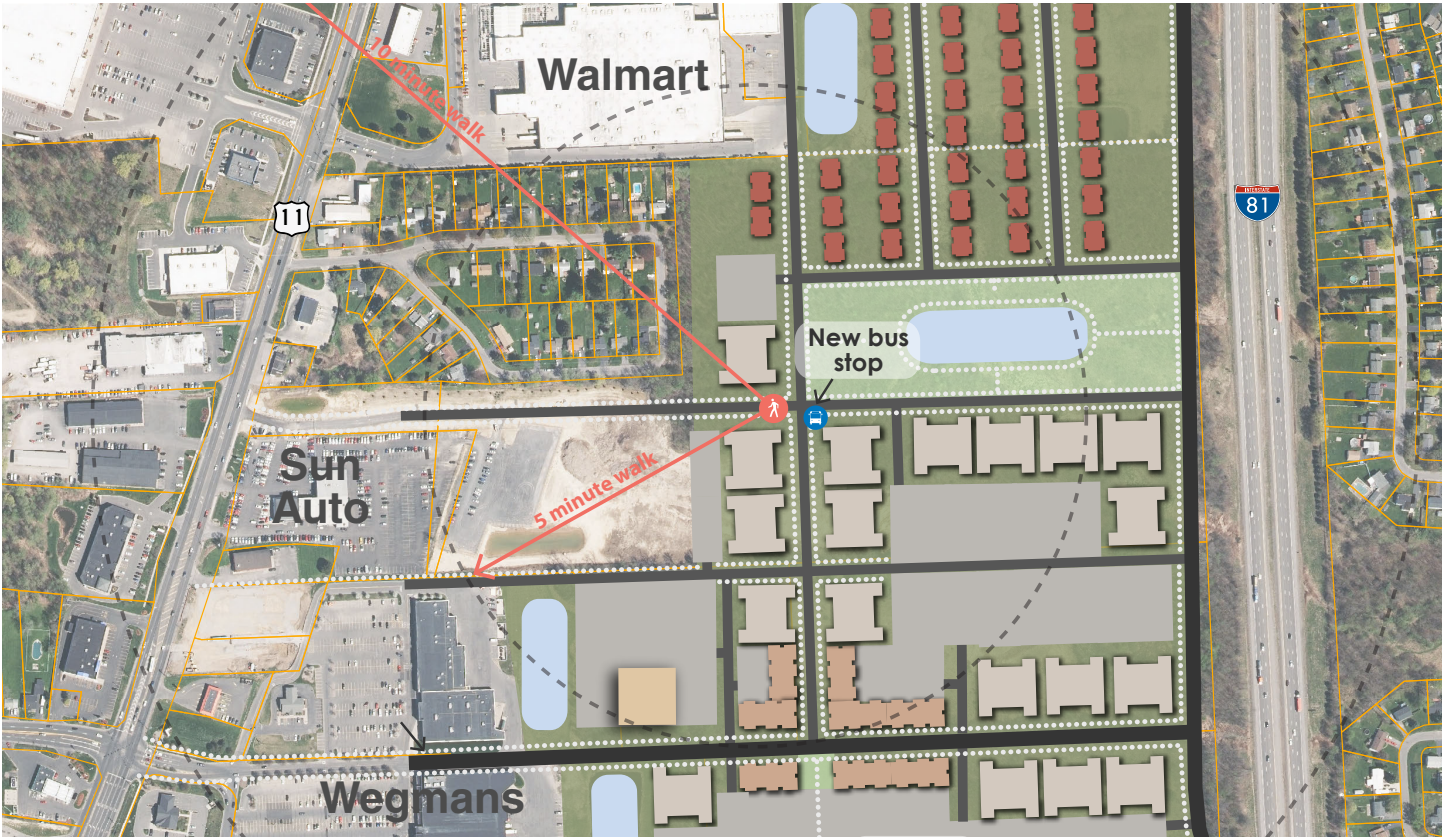
During the planning process, SMTC staff observed where people crossed the road and met with about 100 community stakeholders and agency representatives. The collaborative process ensured that the options were

well-versed with the road owners and the community. Options strive to balance the needs of walkers, bicycle riders, motorists, and truck drivers.

SMTC developed planning-level concept plans for each location to show bicycle and pedestrian amenity options. Where deemed feasible, SMTC presents options for on-road bike lanes and shared lane markings, off-road shared use paths, lane reductions, sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps and crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI), and on-road parking. Most options are compatible with each other and may require additional study and engineering review. SMTC also identified 'big picture' opportunities to connect to existing trail networks to inform other planning efforts (e.g., Loop-the-Lake, etc.).



US 11 Corridor Study (Town of Cicero)



A section of the design concept for a new town center development including a mix of housing types and retail development with internal roadways and pedestrian facilities

The US 11 Corridor Study inventoried a variety of demographic characteristics, existing transportation infrastructure, and traffic volumes on US 11 between Bear Road and Route 31. Crash data were also examined. Staff also considered bicycle, pedestrian, and transit usage of the corridor.

The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) provided input to the anticipated future development (type and amount) in the study corridor, and SMTC staff used various analysis tools to determine the expected impacts on the transportation system. The development scenario included: over 3,400 new residential units; 20,000 square feet of commercial space; and a hotel. Analysis showed that the largest increase in traffic volumes would be expected at the northern end of the study area, though most intersections analyzed would still operate at acceptable levels.

The SAC identified four focus areas, and SMTC staff worked with the SAC members to create conceptual development plans for these areas with an emphasis on a mixing of uses, internal road connections, and walkability. The focus areas included: new town center (west of I-81, to the rear of the existing WalMart, Sun Auto, and Wegmans buildings); new mixed-use neighborhood (the area around the Route 31/Lawton Road intersection); Town Hall area access option; and access management for Route 11 from Target/WalMart driveways to Bear Road. All of these are conceptual only, but may be used by the Town to inform future plans.



City of Syracuse Sidewalk Maintenance Prioritization

In January 2020, the City of Syracuse asked the SMTC for assistance with the question of how to prioritize investments in sidewalk maintenance, in the event that the City takes over sidewalk maintenance citywide in the future. SMTC staff prepared a technical memorandum that recommended prioritizing maintenance by looking at three factors: 1.) The Snow Removal Pilot corridors already adopted by the City. These routes provide connections to key neigh-

borhood destinations, like schools and grocery stores. 2.) Pedestrian demand, as estimated by the SMTC's pedestrian demand model. This model combines data from 19 inputs to estimate which parts of the city are most likely to have high pedestrian activity. 3.) Traffic volume. As traffic volume increases, so does the importance of a good sidewalk.



Onondaga County Safety Assessment

The Onondaga County Department of Transportation wants to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes across its road network and asked SMTC to conduct a data-driven crash assessment on its behalf. SMTC reviewed crash data for events that occurred during a three-year period (2015-2017). The assessment identified 92 'focus areas' that sorted into 12 'hot spots' and 80 'special mention' (Tier I-III) locations. SMTC summarized additional information for the hot

spots. SMTC also identified roads that correlate with particular crash types (rather than crash frequency) for six systemic emphasis area categories: Intersections, Lane Departure, Vulnerable Users, Speed, Age-Related, and Driver Behavior. This data-driven assessment of fatal and serious injury crashes will inform future decisions and support future funding requests. SMTC is currently progressing a similar safety assessment for the City of Syracuse.



2020 Bike Suitability Map of Greater Syracuse

The SMTC is excited to announce the publishing of its updated Bike Suitability Map. The previous Bike Suitability Map, previously released in 2011, has been an extremely popular product over the last decade. Data collection for the new map took place last summer, with SMTC staff categorizing select roads into four categories of suitability for the average bicycle commuter: Excellent, Good, Average, and Poor. In addition to the suitability rating, the map also includes existing bicycle infrastructure, trails, bicycle safety,

bike racks, how to load a bike onto a Centro bus, and the location of SYNC bike share hubs. The map is available in PDF form at <https://smtcmpo.org/data/pdf-maps/> and in an interactive format at <https://smtc.maps.arcgis.com/>. Printed copies, which fold to a convenient 6 inch by 4 inch size and are on weather-resistant paper, have also been shared with local bike shops and can be obtained by reaching out to Kevan Busa at kbusa@smtcmpo.org.

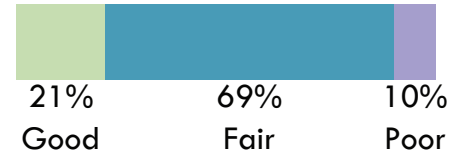


Bridge and Pavement Report

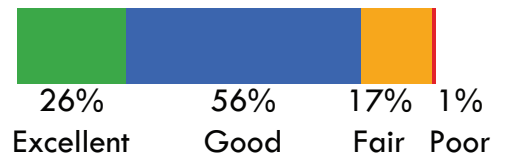
The SMTC’s annual Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System (BPCMS) report contains information on all roadway bridges and federal-aid eligible (FAE) city-, county- (Onondaga, Madison, and Oswego), town-, and village-owned roads in the SMTC’s Metropolitan Planning Area. All data in the report were collected in 2018 and 2019.

The City was interested in a pavement prioritization analysis, and sought the SMTC’s input on streets which may be better suited for repairs, utilizing condition and other road attributes to help make data-driven decisions. City and SMTC staff settled on the following attributes to weight and score roads: road type, pavement condition, average annual daily traffic (AADT), current planned and prior maintenance, proximity to major institutions, history of water main breaks, emergency snow routes, and others. The results were provided to the City. For additional information, please contact Andrew Frasier, afrasier@smtcmo.org.

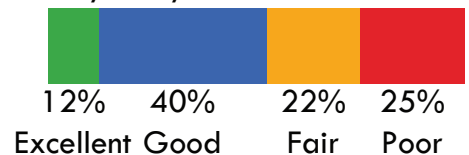
Bridges



Onondaga County FAE Pavement

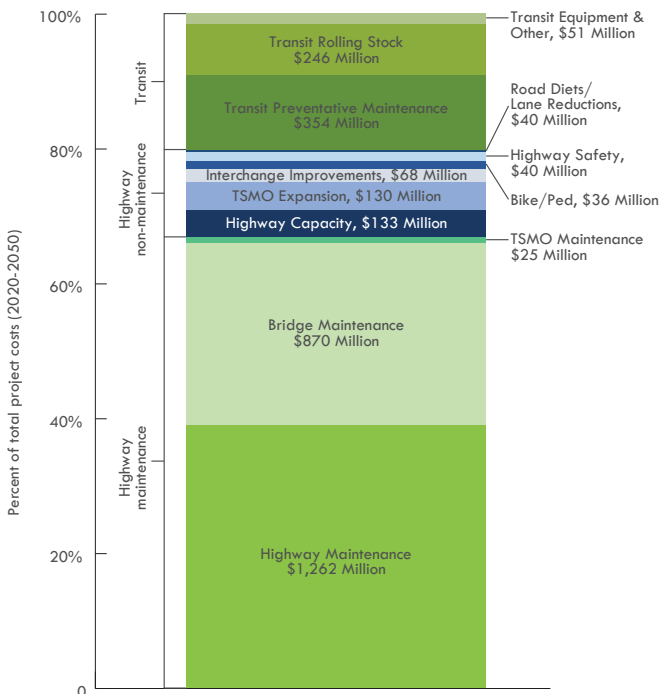


City of Syracuse FAE Pavement



L RTP

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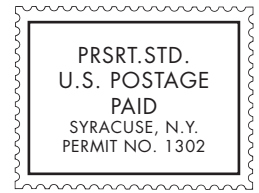


performance measures defined for many aspects of the transportation system and much more (and newer) data provided within the System Performance Report. The 2020 Update also includes a new section that explores emerging trends in transportation technology.

Beyond the substantial maintenance needs of our existing roads, bridges, and transit system, the 2050 L RTP – 2020 Update continues to support the expansion of our region’s bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, increasing safety for all users, and the integration of transportation systems management and operations. The next update to our L RTP will be due in 2025, or sooner to incorporate a decision about the I-81 Viaduct Project.

As the L RTP concludes: By investing in transportation projects that support the objectives of this L RTP, the Greater Syracuse region of the future should offer residents additional means to travel within and beyond their neighborhoods by embracing options to walk, bike, ride, and drive. Our infrastructure investment decisions will further strengthen our existing communities: our villages, suburban town centers, city neighborhoods, and the heart of our region, downtown Syracuse.

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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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