

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Spring 2018



Construction work on I-690 over Teall Ave

New Work Program

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) Policy Committee met on February 16, 2018, and adopted the 2018-2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The document is intended to provide a mechanism for the coordination of transportation planning efforts by local, state, and regional agencies through the SMTC. The UPWP incorporates into one document all transportation planning activities in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area that are conducted from April 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the New York State Governor, the SMTC is responsible for carrying out the continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area.

The 2018-2019 UPWP includes new local projects, requested by our member agencies:

- US 11 Corridor Study (Town of Cicero and Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA));

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council logo, featuring a stylized 'S' made of horizontal lines, is positioned to the left of the text 'Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council'. Below the logo are five circular icons: a blue car, a green bicycle, a green bus, an orange pedestrian, and a red truck. The entire graphic is set against a white background with a dark blue wavy bottom edge.

**Syracuse
Metropolitan
Transportation
Council**

[UPWP 2018-2019]
Unified Planning Work Program

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- Erie Boulevard Transit Mobility Enhancement (Town of DeWitt);
- Safety Assessment and Analysis (Onondaga County Department of Transportation);
- Regional Transportation Center/Market Area Access Study (City of Syracuse);
- Walton St./Armory Square Mobility Plan (City of Syracuse);
- W. Fayette Street Complete Streets Evaluation (City of Syracuse);
- S. Geddes Street Complete Streets Evaluation (City of Syracuse); and
- Onondaga County Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance (SOCPA).

Staff will begin working on a Congestion Management Process Update and an Environmental Justice Analysis during 2018. The SMTC will also assist the Village of Skaneateles with a sidewalk inventory, the City of Syracuse with a multi-modal access assessment of W. Florence Avenue, and the Village of North Syracuse with an examination / analysis traffic flow

Rail bridge over W. Fayette Street, Syracuse

of a municipal parking lot bounded by Main Street and Church Street.

Staff efforts are also focused on federally required items. Additionally, staff will finalize carryover projects from the 2017-2018 UPWP. On-going projects include: Right-of-Way Data Collection and Inventory, Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study, Centro Surveys, and the Village of Fayetteville Route 5 Transportation and Land Use Analysis. Staff will be working on an update to the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, City and County Traffic Count Programs, as well as the Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System. The SMTC staff will continue their participation in the NYSDOT's I-81 project, by attending meetings for various NYSDOT I-81 associated committees and providing Travel Demand Modeling assistance.

The 2018-2019 UPWP is available at the SMTC offices at 126 N. Salina Street, Syracuse, N.Y.; at the main branch of the Onondaga County Public Library, The Galleries, 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse; or on the SMTC website – www.smtcmpo.org.

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

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2017/2018 Coordinated Plan Available

The SMTC Policy Committee acknowledged the completion of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, a.k.a. Coordinated Plan, on February 16, 2018. Following federal requirements, the Coordinated Plan is updated every four years and includes the following components:

- Assessment of available services;
- Assessment of needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low income;
- Strategies, activities and/or projects to address identified gaps between current services and needs; and
- Priorities for implementation.

The federal government mandated that projects chosen to receive Section 5310 federal transit funds must be derived from the locally developed Coordinated Plan. This 2018 document reaffirms most, if not all, recommendations from past versions and establishes the types of projects that are eligible for Section 5310 funding as solicitations occur over the next four years.

The Coordinated Plan is available on the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org.



Route 57 Assessment

The SMTC recently completed a technical analysis for Route 57 between the Thruway ramps and John Glenn Boulevard. This assessment was completed as part of the Comprehensive Plan Assistance Block. The assessment was guided by a Working Group consisting of Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation, Town of Clay, and Town of Salina.

The SMTC's work is documented in two technical memorandums, available on the SMTC website, www.smtcmpo.org. Tech Memo 1 includes an assessment of existing and future base traffic conditions in this corridor. With input from the Working Group, SMTC identified a long-term future development scenario for this corridor that included over 800 new residential units and over 400,000 SF of commercial uses. This

type of “infill development” in an existing built-up area is consistent with the goals of the SMTC’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The future base assessment indicated that the corridor could accommodate development with minimal changes in level of service (LOS), except for increased delay at Old Cove Road (currently unsignalized) and John Glenn Boulevard.

In Tech Memo 2, the SMTC analyzed the impacts of two sets of future transportation network changes to address some of the operational concerns associated with the 2030 future traffic volumes identified in the first tech memo. This analysis indicated that signalization at Old Cove Road would improve LOS, but showed no substantial change at John Glenn Boulevard. A new intersection on the Liverpool Bypass was included in the future alternatives analysis, to provide access to potential redevelopment at the existing Liverpool Golf Course and Syracuse Kickball Park. Providing access to redevelopment areas from a new internal road network would preserve capacity on Route 57, and would also create new travel route options between Route 57 and Morgan Road.

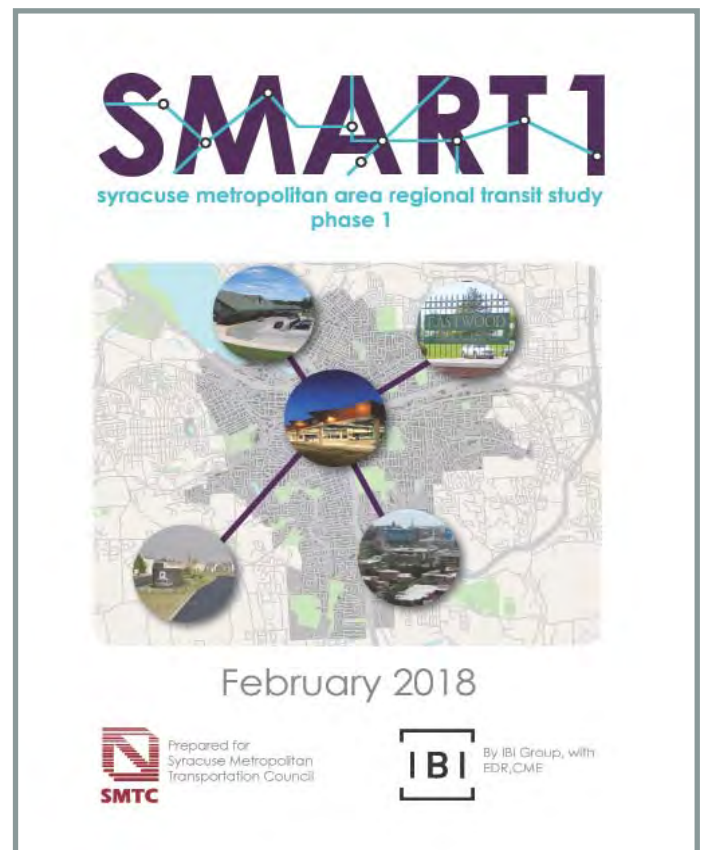


BRT – Mixed Traffic recommended as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the SMART 1 project

- Study examined the concept of enhanced transit in Syracuse
- Focused on two bus corridors in the Centro system
- Presentation of a Locally Preferred Alternative

On February 16, 2018, the SMTC Policy Committee acknowledged completion of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (SMART 1). The SMART 1 study, completed on behalf of Centro, was an inclusive multi-year examination into the concept of enhanced transit for the Syracuse area. The SMART 1 study completed an evaluation of modes, alignments, station locations, ridership, service plans, capital/maintenance/operational costs, economic development, land use, zoning, engineering feasibility, and environmental factors associated with the Regional Transportation Center (RTC) – Syracuse University (SU) and Eastwood – Onondaga Community College (OCC) corridors to identify a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for each corridor. Throughout the project, the SMTC engaged in a public outreach process in order to get input, feedback, and community involvement. Three public meetings, three Focus Group meetings, and nine pop-up events were held throughout the development of the SMART 1 study. The third and final public meeting occurred in November 2017, where SMTC staff and the consultant team presented the project's LPA.

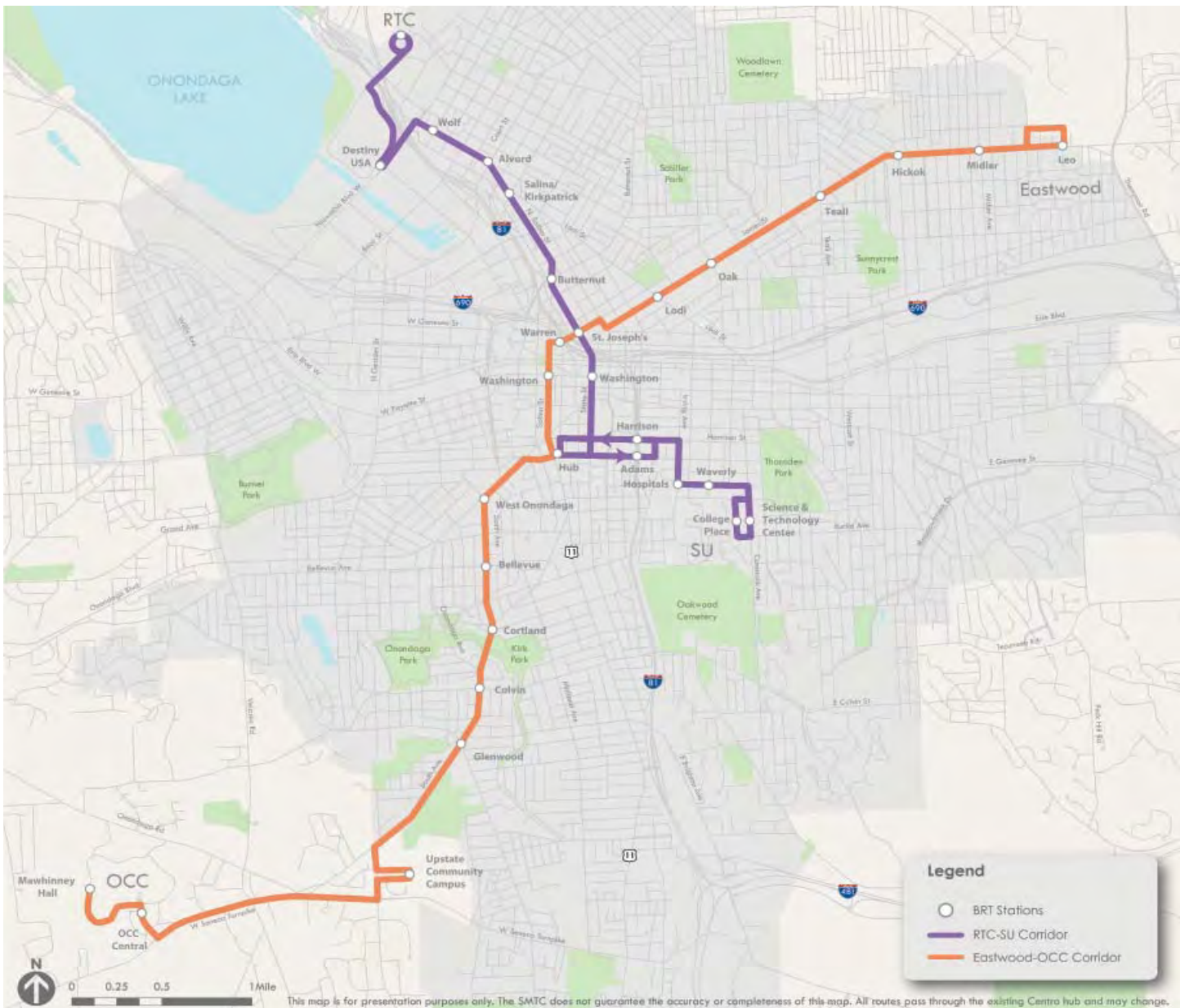
Following an extensive existing conditions research, the first stage of analysis within the SMART 1 process was mode screening that examined various modes of transit potentially applicable in the study corridors. The mode screening recommended against several high capital cost alternatives (i.e., Light Rail Transit, modern streetcar, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) – Busway), which would be very difficult to fund and construct. The next step was to develop specific route and mode “alterna-



tives” for each of the modes recommended for further consideration: BRT – Bus Lane, BRT – Mixed Traffic, and Existing Service Improvements. Characteristics that were considered in the development of “alternative” routes included directness, connections to important activity centers, accessibility for pedestrians, and use of main commercial streets where possible, both to provide access to these places and to avoid noise and traffic impacts on quieter residential or secondary streets. These characteristics provide the environment needed for fast and frequent BRT service while limit-

ing any adverse effects. To identify the project’s LPA, “alternatives” were evaluated against a number of varying criteria. Based on the evaluation of alternatives process, BRT – Mixed Traffic was chosen for both corridors. Collectively, implementing both corridors at once as the single LPA will create a BRT system that increases the number of trips that can be made through connections and therefore increase ridership on both.

An enhanced transit system is supportive of the SMTC’s Long Range Transportation Plan, City of Syracuse re-zoning efforts, and community input. The BRT system is critical to achieving various goals and inspiring people, businesses, and institutions to support implementation and funding. With this support, regional leadership can decide to spend the money required to transform the transit system.



Potential options of BRT Corridors

The final report is available on the SMTC website at www.smtcmpo.org. Additionally, the report and associated project materials such as the public meeting presentations, station display boards, and

meeting summaries are available on the SMART 1 project website at www.smtcmpo.org/SMART.



Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study Finalized

- Examined Route 5 from Beech Street to East Genesee Street
- Erie Boulevard intersections part of NYS's Empire State Trail
- NYS to study Erie Boulevard as part of Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

The Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study (Pedestrian Study) was completed by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) on the behalf of the City of Syracuse (City) and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and acknowledged as complete by the SMTC Policy Committee on February 16, 2018.

Erie Boulevard is one of the primary east-west travel routes through Onondaga County, with surrounding neighborhoods having relatively high population density. This study focused on the portion of Erie Boulevard East (Route 5) between Beech Street in the City of Syracuse and East Genesee Street (Route 92) in the Town of DeWitt. The study also included the intersection of East Genesee Street/Jamesville Road located just west of the Erie Boulevard/East Genesee Street intersection. The City and NYSDOT expressed concern about several pedestrian safety incidents along Erie Boulevard East, including some fatalities involving pedestrians trying to cross the heavily traveled boulevard. Through this study, SMTC conducted a thorough investigation of the existing sidewalk system, examined the pedestrian accident history, and identified pedestrian needs and improvement opportunities (including Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance) in the study area. Although there is a desire to develop a long-term multi-modal plan for the Erie Boulevard East corridor, the intention of this study was to examine current issues and concerns relative to pedestrian travel along this corridor, and develop recommendations that seek to address these current issues in the near-term.

During the development of the assessment and recommendations portion of this study, Governor Andrew Cuomo initiated the NYSDOT Empire State Trail (EST) project, which is focused on combining and completing the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Erie Canalway Trail by 2020 to create the EST. All of the intersections along Erie Boulevard East that are included in the EST project are part of the SMTC's Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian study. As of February 2018, the NYSDOT is in the early stages of preliminary design for the local portions of the EST. The trail will be located on Erie Boulevard East, likely along the north side of the road from Beech Street to Teall Avenue, and in the median of Erie Boulevard from Teall Avenue to Bridge Street. Also, the Town of DeWitt recently released the Elevating Erie Concept Plan, which was completed in junction with the NYSDOT's work on the EST (see www.elevatingerie.com for more information).

In addition to the EST, Erie Boulevard East will be examined as part of the State's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The PSAP will identify current safety conditions and implement a distinct set of education, engineering, and enforcement countermeasures that can be accomplished over the next five years to improve pedestrian safety. As of January 2018, the NYSDOT was proposing the limits of the Erie Boulevard East PSAP to extend from Bridge Street to East Genesee Street (as locations on Erie Boulevard west of Bridge Street that are part of the EST will likely receive treatment consistent with the PSAP guidelines).



A pedestrian in a crosswalk on Erie Blvd.

The SMTC completed an inventory of existing pedestrian facilities in the study area in regards to ADA accessibility, and gathered traffic counts (including vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic) along the corridor. In general, of the counted locations, those with the highest vehicular volumes are in the Town of DeWitt, while City intersections have more pedestrian and bicycle traffic than DeWitt locations. Most City intersections have at least some accessible features, while most Town of DeWitt locations do not have any. Because of the on-going SMTC study, the EST project, and anticipated PSAP improvements, the SMTC worked carefully to coordinate the recommendations of the SMTC Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study so that efforts are not being duplicated. Recommendations fell into six categories:

- Implement pedestrian improvements at signalized intersections, prioritized by need;
- Implement recommendations from the EST, which is focused on the area between Beech and Bridge Streets on Erie Boulevard East;

- Implement future recommendations from the NYSDOT PSAP, primarily focused on the area between Bridge and East Genesee Streets;
- Implement recommendations from the SMTC's Central DeWitt Mobility Plan, which is focused on the small portion of East Genesee Street included in the Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study;
- Continue to seek opportunities for access management along Erie Boulevard East; and
- Consider pedestrian needs in the municipal site plan review process.

The study recommendations in this plan lean heavily on the outcomes associated with the planning of the EST and the NYSDOT PSAP. The NYSDOT has utilized data gathered by the SMTC during the Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study (traffic counts, accident data, field work, etc.) to inform the development of the EST/ Erie Canalway Trail along Erie Boulevard East as well as to inform the PSAP.

The completed study is available on the SMTC website at www.smtcmppo.org.



Pedestrians and Bicyclists in Camillus

- Increase in bicyclists and pedestrians in Township 5 area
- Town identified corridors for potential bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- Assessment serves as a guide for facility improvements

The Town of Camillus – Connections to Township 5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment Project (Assessment Project) was recently acknowledged as complete by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) Policy Committee.

The Town of Camillus requested this study after seeing an increase in commercial and residential development in and around the Township 5 area, along with an increase in population and pedestrian and bicycle traffic, in an area with little to no existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The land uses near Township 5 are of medium population density, with many apartments and townhomes flanking Milton Avenue. As development associated with the Township 5 plaza continues (including the addition of apartments and hotels), the potential for more people to travel by foot and on bike has increased.

The Town identified several corridors between residential neighborhoods, shopping plazas, and the Township 5 development, owned by either the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT), the Town of Camillus, or the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), to examine for potential future bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Those corridors are as follows:

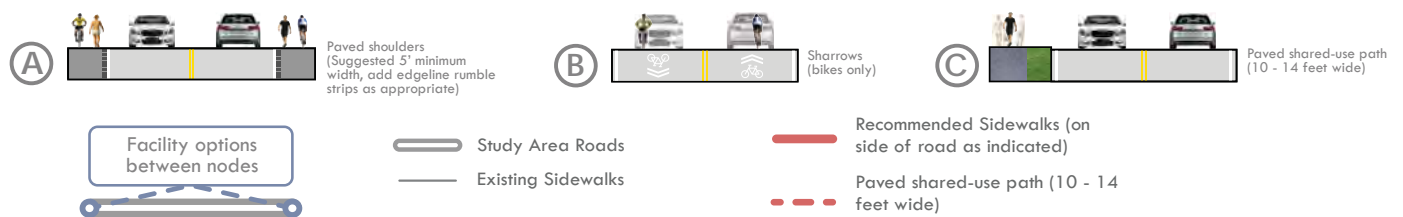
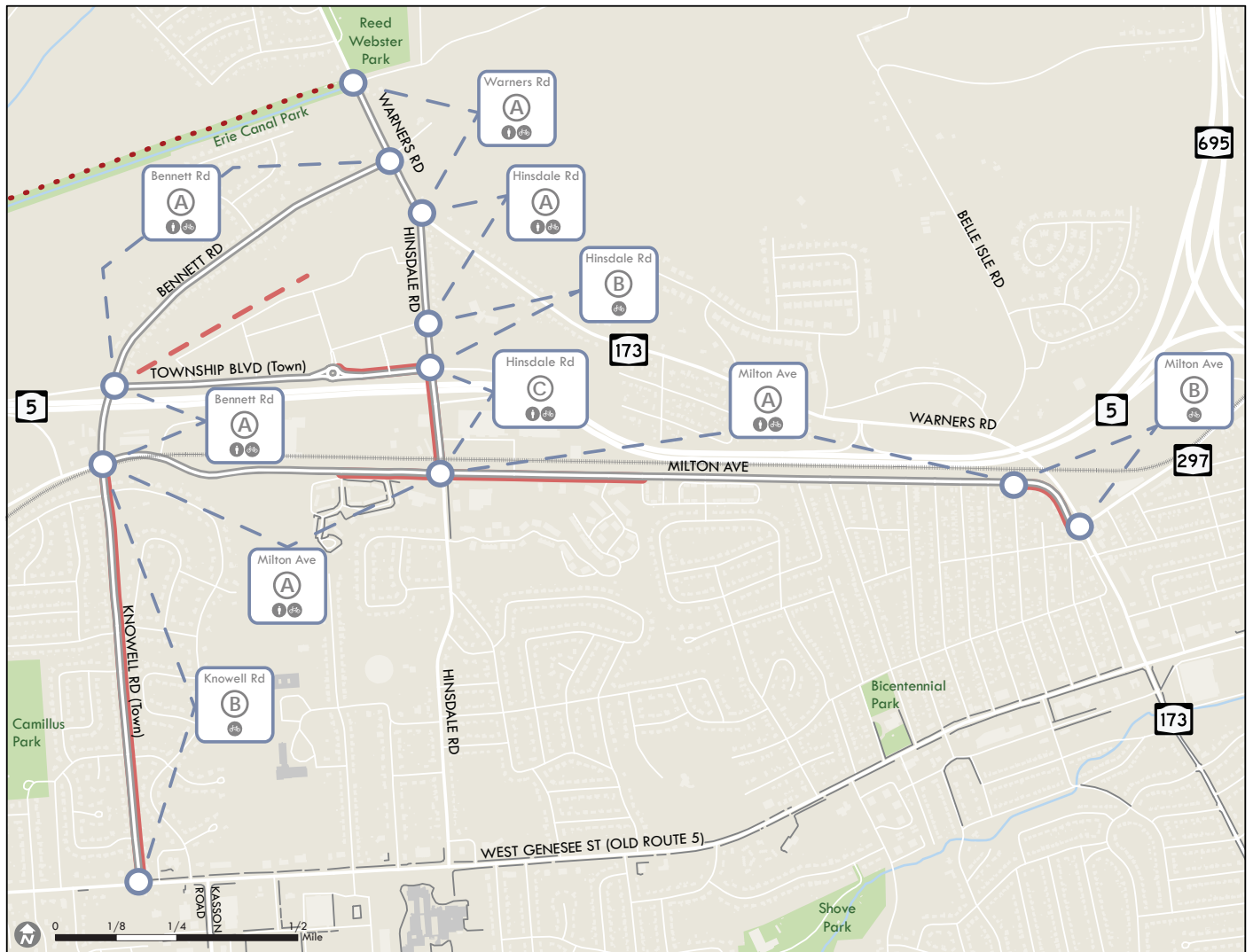
1. Knowell Road/Bennett Road: West Genesee Street to Township 5 Boulevard (Camillus/OCDOT/NYSDOT);
2. Township 5 Boulevard: Knowell Road/Bennett Road to Hinsdale Road (Camillus);
3. Hinsdale Road: Township 5 Boulevard to Milton Avenue (OCDOT);
4. Milton Avenue: Knowell Road to Warners



Road (OCDOT);

5. Bennett Road: Township 5 Boulevard to Warners Road (OCDOT); and
6. Hinsdale Road: Township 5 Boulevard to Warners Road (OCDOT).

As part of this study, the SMTC assessed the existing transportation system, identified issues related to bicycle and pedestrian access and travel along each corridor, examined the connectivity from populated areas to destinations, looked at closing the gaps in the system from adjacent pedestrian facilities, and identified potential locations for bicycle



Recommendation options for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

and pedestrian facilities along each corridor within the existing pavement width and/or right-of-way.

Study recommendations for the Assessment Project were developed in consultation with the Study Advisory Committee and organized into the following categories: systemic guidelines, corridor specific, and railroad crossings. Recommendations are based on a planning-level assessment, and serve as guidance about what options may exist to add or improve bicycle and pedestrian amenities along study area corridors. A generalized menu of potential treatments are presented on the Recommen-

ation Options map (see map). An engineering assessment is suggested to help identify the most appropriate facilities and determine specific design parameters. The Town of Camillus may use the SMTC's Assessment Project to guide discussions, and as support to seek local, state, and federal funding resources for facility improvements, in cooperation and collaboration with the OCDOT and NYSDOT.

The assessment report is available on the SMTC website, www.smtcmppo.org.



Carrier Park Mobility Plan Completed

- Area is gateway to tens of thousands of visitors annually
- The Field of Dreams Park opened in 2016
- Plan recommends a wide range of improvements to make it easier to travel by foot or bicycle

There are many charming and attractive places in which to take a stroll in the Syracuse area, but the Carrier Circle area is not, currently, one of them. Sidewalks are scarce and safe ways to cross major roads on foot are lacking. Like a lot of industrial areas, Carrier Circle and the roads that feed into it were designed to move workers and industrial products as quickly and efficiently as possible from one point to another.

Recently, however, the area south of the Thruway between Thompson and Fly Roads has begun to pivot from a manufacturing center to a mix of uses, including more white collar jobs and, in 2016, the Field of Dreams Park.

The first phase of the Field of Dreams is already open and includes two baseball fields designed for all users, including children and adults of all physical, mental, and emotional abilities. Plans call for the addition of seven more fields in coming years. In addition to hosting Syracuse's Challenger Baseball league, the Field of Dreams is expected to draw tournaments from throughout the northeast.

In another setting, a major new recreational facility might not beg the question: can you walk there? In this case, however, the Field of Dreams is a ten-minute walk from one of the region's largest concentrations of hotel rooms.

There are over 2,000 hotel rooms in the Carrier Circle area, and it's the gateway to Syracuse for tens of thousands of visitors every year. Additionally, Carrier

Corporation's research center and Aspen Dental's national headquarters draw thousands of trainees and project staff stay in this area annually. Hotel staff have reportedly been known to advise their guests not to try to walk to Aspen Dental's nearby office on Sanders Creek Parkway because of the difficulty involved in crossing Route 298.

The SMTC's Carrier Park Mobility Plan recommends a wide range of improvements to this area to make it easier to get around on foot or by bike. Amenities that should be standard at all signalized intersections in this area include crosswalks and pedestrian signals activated by push buttons. Additionally, sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, and landscaping improvements are recommended for the local roads in the Hotel District north of Route 298.

The Carrier Park Mobility Plan also looked at making major changes to the Route 298 / Kinne Street intersection, either by converting it from a signalized intersection to a multi-lane roundabout, or by removing the slips ramps at this intersection. These slips ramps – allowing eastbound traffic on Route 298 and northbound traffic on Kinne Street to bypass the signal at this intersection – do little to improve traffic movement and create additional obstacles for pedestrians to cross.

Getting from Carrier Circle's Hotel District to the Field of Dreams on foot means crossing Route 298 at Kinne Street, an intersection that lacks crosswalks and pedestrian signals



Visualization of pathway at Sanders Creek

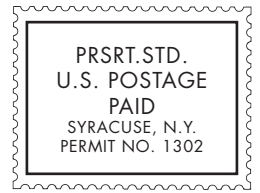
To make it easier and safer for pedestrians to get between the Hotel District and the Field of Dreams, the Plan recommends reducing the four-lane section of Kinne Street in this area to two lanes. This would make it possible to add a trail along Kinne Street’s west side and to add bike lanes to Kinne Street.

The motivation for making it easier to walk around this area goes beyond connecting visitors to a new athletic field. Increasingly, businesses are looking to locate in walkable areas. Suburban office parks, popular with both developers and firms in the 1980s and 1990s, are facing an unexpected level of competition from redeveloping urban office properties in walkable, transit-friendly neighborhoods. To continue to be relevant over the next several decades, places like Carrier Circle need to invest in their walkability and aesthetics.

The recommendations in the Carrier Park Mobility Plan do not alter the underlying land use pattern in this area: there is no central business district and there are only a handful of destinations that even the bravest pedestrian can get to. And yet, with a concentration of residents, workers, and hotel guests, there is the potential for a lot of foot traffic in this area every day – at least as much as in a highly walkable village like Liverpool. The Carrier Park Mobility Plan’s recommendations can help the Town of DeWitt tap into that potential and increase this area’s overall appeal.

To view the study, visit www.smtcmppo.org, and click on the Final Reports tab.

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