

# DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (SMTC) • WINTER 2017



Inner Harbor, Syracuse

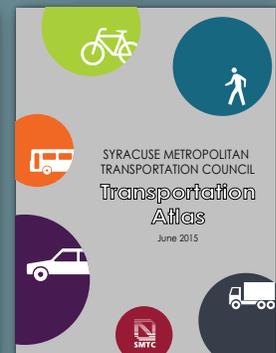
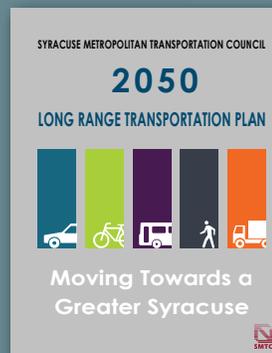
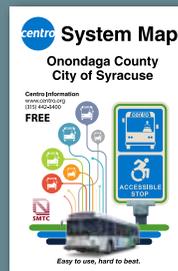


## 2017-2018 WORK PROGRAM ADOPTED

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) Policy Committee adopted the **2017-2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** on December 15, 2016. The UPWP 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, 2017 through March 31, 2018. 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.

SMTC Director, James D'Agostino, stated "given the size of the 2016-2017 Work Program, several projects are being carried over into the 2017-2018 program year." As a result, no new projects were added to the 2017-2018 program. However, staff will create a comprehensive traffic count program for the City of Syracuse. That effort will be added to the existing project underway for the Onondaga County Department of Transportation.

## UPWP 2017-2018 Unified Planning Work Program



SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

**Carryover projects\* from 2016-2017 include:**

- Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit (SMART) Study Phase 1
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Outreach Complete Streets Technical Analysis
- Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study
- ROW Data Collection and Inventory
- Town of Camillus – Connections to Township 5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment
- A Feasibility and Community Interest Assessment – Skaneateles Creek Pathway and Adjacent Roadway Enhancements
- Centro Surveys: Employer and Rider/Non-Rider
- Carrier Park Mobility Plan
- Fayetteville Route 5 Transportation and Land Use Analysis
- Local Comprehensive Plan Assistance
- Work Link.

*\*All above projects will be completed by March 31, 2018, or earlier in many cases.\**

Staff continues to participate in the New York State Department of Transportation's I-81 project. Staff is also working on the federally required tasks as directed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The 2017-2018 UPWP is available for viewing at the SMTC offices, 126 N. Salina Street, Syracuse; at the main branch of the Onondaga County Public Library, The Galleries, 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse; or on the SMTC web site: [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org).

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) recently held special elections to fill vacancies on their respective committees. The SMTC is pleased to announce the following individuals were selected as committee officers through March 31, 2018:

**Policy Committee:**

Chair: **Mr. Brian Schultz**, Board of Members Chair, Central New York Regional Transportation Authority.

**Planning Committee:**

Vice Chair: **Ms. Megan Costa**, Assistant Director for County Planning, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency.

**Executive Committee:**

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

For further information on the functions and roles of each of the SMTC Committees, visit the SMTC web site: [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org).

Congratulations to our new Committee officers!

## **DIRECTIONS**

**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.

**Editor: Patricia A. Wortley**

**Graphic Assistance: Kevan M. Busa**



# BRT OR LRT? LATEST UPDATE ON THE SMART 1 PROJECT

A lot has happened on the **SMART 1 (Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1)** project since the previous update in the Spring 2016 edition of *Directions*, particularly related to community outreach. Throughout April and May 2016, SMTC staff and the consultant team held nine pop-up meetings at various bus stops along the Destiny – Syracuse University and Eastwood – Onondaga Community College corridors. These provided an opportunity for the project team to inform and discuss the enhanced transit study with users of the existing transit system. Also in May, Focus Groups were held with major employers, educational institutions, and social service providers regarding the impact of transit on the needs and operations of their organizations, businesses, employees, and constituencies. The largest outreach effort took place in November 2016, when the SMTC hosted the second of three study-related public meetings.



SMART 1 Public Meeting #2 attendees at SKY Armory

On November 10, 2016, the SMTC held the second open house for the SMART 1 project. Format and content of the meeting was similar to the one held in February 2016, with a combination of five interactive stations and a presentation at two set times. The meeting provided general information on project background, purpose and goals, mode eligibility screening, preliminary route alternatives, evaluation criteria, and next steps. All rail-related alternatives (Light Rail Transit and

modern streetcar) and one Bus Rapid Transit alternative (Bus Rapid Transit – Busway) were not advanced given a combination of multiple items such as anticipated high capital cost, lack of consistent and/or available dedicated right-of-way, practicality of providing local share of funding, and increases in operation costs. In contrast, based on eligibility screening analyses, three alternatives were recommended for continued analysis:

- Existing service improvements;
- Bus Rapid Transit – Mixed Traffic; and
- Bus Rapid Transit – Bus Lanes.

		Recommended for further study?
		?
Light Rail Transit		X
Modern Streetcar		X
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-Busway		X
BRT-Bus Lane		✓
BRT-Mixed Traffic		✓

### Modes Defined:

#### Existing service improvements

Changes to existing bus service, without major capital investment. Improvements may include consolidating stops and installing Transit Signal Priority technology.

#### BRT – Mixed Traffic

Limited-stop bus service operating mostly within mixed traffic on existing roads with upgraded amenities.

#### BRT – Bus Lanes

Limited-stop bus service operating in designated bus-only lanes on key roads with upgraded amenities.

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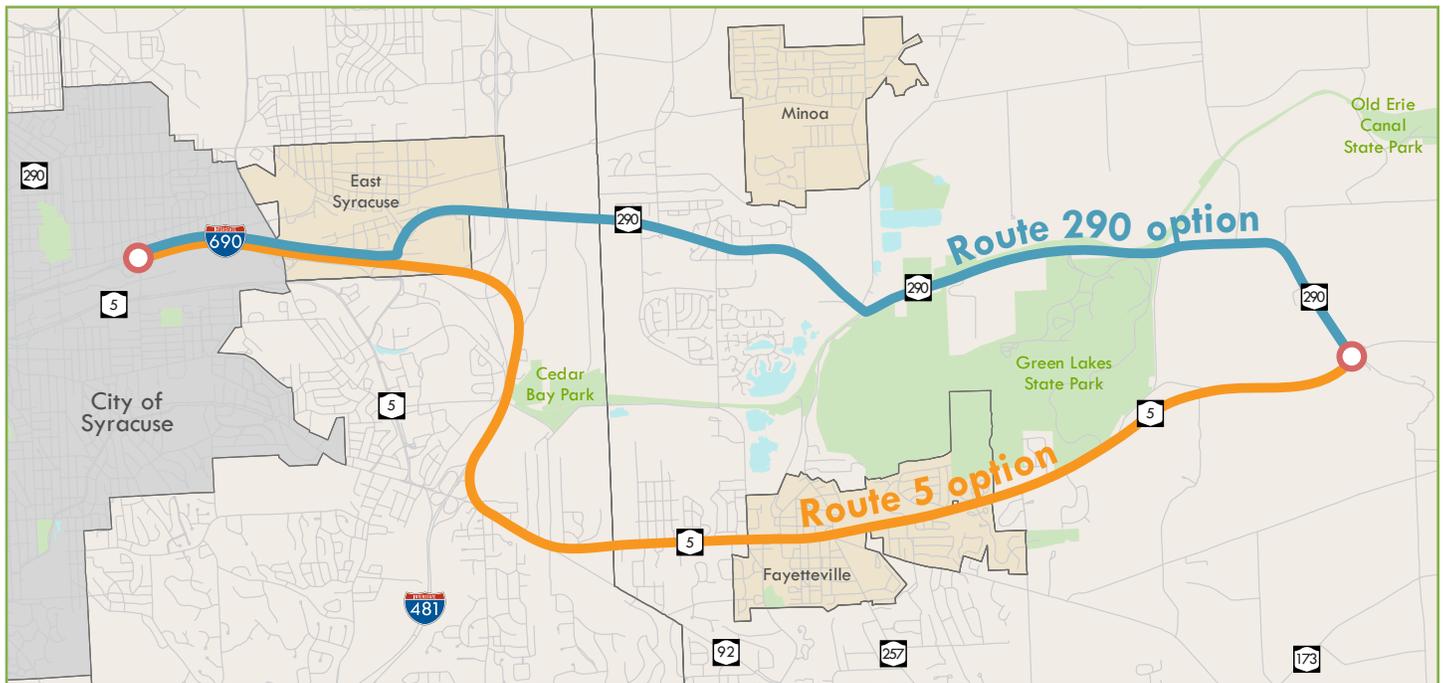
## WORK UNDERWAY ON FAYETTEVILLE ROUTE 5 ANALYSIS

In September 2016, the SMTC Planning Committee approved the Scope of Work for the **Village of Fayetteville Route 5 Transportation and Land Use Analysis**. The Village proposed this study 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 SMTC will expand on this objective by analyzing the potential for alternate routes for through traffic – using the existing transportation network – and looking for opportunities to improve vehicle flow without substantial infrastructure expansion. The study will also consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists moving within and through the village.

As part of this study, the SMTC recently completed a travel time study comparing Route 5 and Route 290 between Mycenae (east of the Village of Fayetteville) and Syracuse. The village expressed interest in encouraging through traffic from the

east to use the Route 290 corridor rather than Route 5 to reach I-481/I-690 and other points to the west. The travel time study was designed to quantify average travel time on these two east-west commuter routes, as well as to identify areas of recurring congestion during the peak commuter periods. To conduct this study, SMTC staff members drove each route during the commuter peak hours (morning and evening) while carrying GPS units in their vehicles. With ten different staff members participating over eight days in September and October, we were able to collect 24 different “runs” on each route, recording time and location at one-second intervals along the way. From this data set, we were able to determine the average travel time on each route, and the locations of congestion.

The results of this travel time study indicate that the Route 5 option and the Route 290 option between Mycenae and Syracuse (at the Midler Avenue exit on I-690) offer comparable travel times, both under 20 minutes on average. In all cases, the overall average



*This map shows the two routes that were studied using GPS units to record travel time and identify locations of congestion*

## MOVE OVER - IT'S THE LAW!

travel time on Route 5 was greater than the average travel time on Route 290, although the difference was relatively small. The greatest difference in average travel times was observed for the westbound trips during the morning peak period with the average travel time on Route 5 just under four minutes greater than the average travel time on Route 290. Although greater congestion was observed during the evening peak period, overall, most segments of both routes were found to be uncongested during the peak periods. Areas of congestion were relatively short.

The travel time study is just one of the tasks scoped for the Route 5 Transportation and Land Use Analysis. The overall study is expected to be complete by the end of 2017. The next steps include projection of future trips associated with anticipated development in and around the village and the use of the SMTC's travel demand model to analyze impacts. At least one public meeting is anticipated for this study, which will likely be held in the fall once additional analysis is complete and initial recommendations have been drafted.

The study is being guided by an Advisory Committee consisting of the Village of Fayetteville, Town of Manlius, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency.

Contact Meghan Vitale, project manager, at 315.422.5716, or [mvitale@smtcmpo.org](mailto:mvitale@smtcmpo.org), to learn more about this project.

### Upcoming Public Meeting:

The **Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study Public Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at H.W. Smith School, 1130 Salt Springs Road, Syracuse.

Further details about the meeting can be found on the SMTC web site: [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org).

New York's "**Move Over**" law requires motorists to use due care, slow down, and safely move over whenever approaching an emergency or hazard vehicle on the shoulder, or travel lane, displaying red, white, amber, blue, and/or green lights.

New York State's first "Move Over" legislation took effect on January 1, 2011. The original law was designed to protect the safety of law enforcement and emergency responders along the state's roadways. The law has been expanded to include a wider range of hazard and emergency vehicles. On January 17, 2017, the state expanded the "Move Over" law to include any volunteer fire fighter and ambulance worker vehicles that display blue or green lights. The expanded "Move Over" law also includes sanitation vehicles, such as recycling and garbage trucks.



*Courtesy of NHTSA*

Drivers need to be mindful of the "Move Over" law not only when they see emergency responders, but also when they see construction and maintenance vehicles. Drivers should slow down and safely move over as soon as they see lights, vests, or reflectors.

For more information on the "Move Over" law or to view New York State's public service announcement visit: <http://www.thruway.ny.gov/travelers/safety/moveoverlaw.html>.



## ROUNDBABOUT FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

At its December 15, 2016 meeting, the SMTC Policy Committee acknowledged the completion of the **Roundabout Feasibility Analysis**. This study re-imagined three intersections in the region as modern roundabouts and took an in-depth look at the costs and benefits of roundabout implementation.

Two of the intersections are signalized: Leavenworth Circle (the intersection of Delaware Avenue, Tallman Street, Onondaga Avenue and West Onondaga Street) and East Colvin Street at Comstock Avenue. The third is an all-way stop in the Town of Dewitt: Springfield Road at Thompson Road.

Experience with roundabouts in other regions and states suggests that converting a signalized intersection to a roundabout will reduce injury accidents by 60 percent and reduce delay considerably. Converting an all-way stop controlled intersection to a roundabout would not be expected to improve safety, but usually produces a significant improvement in the number of vehicles moving through the intersection in an hour. Generally, roundabouts are considered safer for pedestrians, are more visually attractive than traffic signals, and provide an environmental improvement, since they eliminate vehicles' idling time at traffic signals.

**Leavenworth Circle** emerged as a possible candidate for roundabout conversion because it was, until the early 1970s, a traffic circle with a fountain in the middle. The base of the fountain is still there and could form the center of a new, modern roundabout.

Based on a preliminary roundabout concept, converting Leavenworth Circle to a single-lane roundabout would cost roughly \$1.5 million and would require minor acquisitions from adjacent property owners. Over a period of 20 years, it

would pay for itself six times over, in the form of reduced accidents, time saved, and fuel consumed.



*Leavenworth Circle roundabout concept*

The signalized intersection of **East Colvin Street and Comstock Avenue**, adjacent to Manley Field House, Comfort Tyler Park, and Oakwood Cemetery, was also considered for roundabout conversion. As the southern gateway to Syracuse University, this intersection is relatively busy, with a mix of cars, buses, pedestrians, and cyclists. A roundabout was considered to help move all users through this intersection safely and efficiently.

A roundabout at the Colvin / Comstock intersection is estimated to cost \$1.68 million and would likely require the acquisition of adjacent land – including property acquisitions from both Oakwood Cemetery and Comfort Tyler Park. Since the use of federal funds to acquire park property is typically frowned upon by the United States Department of Transportation, roundabout construction on this site would face a significant roadblock. If it could be constructed, long-term safety and operational benefits would be expected to exceed costs.



*East Colvin Street / Comstock Avenue roundabout concept*

Like the intersection of East Colvin and Comstock, the three-legged intersection of **Springfield and Thompson Roads** in DeWitt is a gateway: traffic coming from I-690 to the north bound for LeMoyne College passes through this intersection.

Sometime in the next 20 years, the Town of DeWitt is probably going to have to upgrade the Springfield / Thompson intersection. Traffic operations under the existing all-way stop control are currently acceptable, but as traffic volumes increase vehicle delays are projected to reach unacceptable levels.



*Springfield Road / Thompson Road roundabout concept*

Adding turn lanes and traffic signals to this location is estimated to cost \$920,000, providing a moderate improvement in traffic movement. A roundabout would be less expensive, roughly \$840,000, and would be expected to provide better traffic movement than either the existing stop-sign control or a traffic signal. A roundabout at this site would be expected to pay for itself 41 times over a 20-year period, primarily in the form of reduced delay time.

While the Roundabout Feasibility Analysis was not intended to guide transportation decision-making on a broad scale, it underscored the value of considering roundabouts rather than traditional signalized intersections. Signals need maintenance on a regular basis – signal timing needs to be update periodically and hardware can malfunction. Roundabouts do not need additional maintenance to operate effectively: the design itself improves vehicle movement and safety. And roundabouts always outperform all way stops in terms of vehicle movement. Given their many benefits, it seems likely that more roundabouts will be developed in our region in coming years.

The completed analysis is available on the SMTC web site, [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org), Final Reports section. Copies may also be found at the SMTC Offices: the main branch of the Onondaga County Public Library, The Galleries, 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse; or the DeWitt Community Library, ShoppingTown Mall, 3649 Erie Blvd., East, DeWitt. For further information on the project, contact Aaron McKeon, project manager, at 315.422.5716, or [amckeon@smtcmpo.org](mailto:amckeon@smtcmpo.org).



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**THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

## **SMART 1 CONT. FROM PAGE 3**

In the months to come, analysis will be completed to identify a single Locally Preferred Alternative for each of the two corridors under review. A third and final public meeting will take place in late 2017 to wrap-up the project.

For those who could not attend the November meeting, all station display boards, copy of the presentation, meeting summary and, the latest project brochure are available on the SMART 1 project web site at [www.smtcmpo.org/SMART](http://www.smtcmpo.org/SMART).

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to sign up for our SMART 1 stakeholder list, send us an e-mail at [contactus@smtcmpo.org](mailto:contactus@smtcmpo.org).



*Attendees review the SMART 1 information at SKY Armory*



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