

# Pedestrian Safety and Access Study

## Village of Skaneateles



August 2022





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### **Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council**

August 2022

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# Executive Summary

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As part of the 2020 – 2021 Unified Planning Work Program, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTTC) agreed to complete the Village of Skaneateles Pedestrian Safety and Access Study for the Village of Skaneateles (Village).

The Village of Skaneateles is one of the most popular destinations in the Finger Lakes region, frequently appearing on lists of the best places to visit in New York. The Village’s role as tourist destination is further cemented by its relative accessibility; the village sits on, and is bisected by, U.S. 20, a major east-west route across the state.

While the Village has an extensive network of sidewalks and other pedestrian safety features, including curb ramps, crosswalks, and signals that are timed to optimize pedestrian safety, there are persistent conflicts between drivers and pedestrians, particularly in the village’s central business district. The combination of tourists and through traffic, especially heavy vehicles, results in a village center that can be congested and that presents safety issues to both pedestrians and drivers.

This study’s goal was to review existing traffic and facility conditions and identify possible design options that will improve the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles in the village, with an emphasis on getting pedestrians across U.S. 20 safely.

This study focused on six locations:

- Kane Avenue (Route 41A) - Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection,
- West Lake Street - Hannum Street / U.S. 20 intersection,
- The portion of U.S. 20 between West Lake Street and Jordan Street,
- The portion of U.S. 20 between Jordan and State Streets,
- East Lake Street (Route 41)/U.S. 20 intersection,
- Jordan Street / Fennell Street intersection.

Design concepts for these locations were developed in consultation with a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) that included representatives from:

- Village of Skaneateles, including:
  - Village Board
  - Village Police
  - Skaneateles Volunteer Fire Department
  - Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Skaneateles
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
- New York State Department of Transportation.

The concepts presented in this study reflect best practices from across the country as they would be applied to locations in this context. Concepts presented in the final report are the result of an iterative process, working with the SAC members and based on public feedback. The SAC members did not reach consensus on all of the details presented here, so additional conversations should continue between all of the stakeholders before pursuing any of these concepts.

As documented in Appendix A, a slightly different set of design concepts, including ideas like raised curb extensions, curbed median islands, and bike lanes on U.S. 20, was presented at the SAC’s third meeting. This set of ideas was largely seen by SAC members as too radical for the village. There were emergency service concerns, concerns about compatibility with large agricultural equipment, and a general sense that these ideas were an overcorrection and would place too many constraints on motor vehicle traffic. For the purposes of long-term facility planning in the village, this represents valuable community input, signaling the limit of the village’s appetite for changes to traffic flow.

Skaneateles faces a problem that is common among tourist destinations: how to maintain the community’s character and meet the needs of

year-round residents, while accommodating a seasonal influx of visitors, most of whom arrive in private vehicles? Public feedback made clear that there is a mixed opinion about the impacts of seasonal visitors, with some expressing negative impacts (tourists not obeying pedestrian traffic signals, for example, and contributing to congestion) while others expressed that tourism brings vitality to the village and helps support the shops and restaurants that give the village its unique charm. The volume of pedestrians - including residents

and visitors - is unlikely to decrease, so the study seeks ways to enable pedestrian and vehicle traffic to safely coexist. Many of the concepts presented in the study attempt to move pedestrians more efficiently and safely out of the roadway through methods such as bump-outs (to reduce crossing distance) and raised crosswalks (to eliminate the grade change between sidewalk and crosswalk), thereby reducing conflicts with vehicle traffic and making the roadway safer for all users.



*U.S. 20 (Genesee Street) acts as the Village of Skaneateles' Main Street running the length of the Village from east to west.*

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Overview

As part of the 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) agreed to complete a Pedestrian Safety and Access Study for the Village of Skaneateles.

The Village of Skaneateles is located on the northern end of Skaneateles Lake, in the southwestern portion of the SMTC's metropolitan planning area. See Figure 1.1.

At the heart of the village's commercial activity, and transportation issues, is U.S. 20, a state-owned highway known locally as Genesee Street. U.S. 20 is the longest highway in the country, connecting Boston, Massachusetts and Newport, Oregon. In Central New York, U.S. 20 connects LaFayette, Pompey, and Cazenovia (east of Skaneateles) with Auburn, Seneca Falls, Waterloo, and Geneva (west of Skaneateles).

Like many communities that developed along a major travel corridor, the Village of Skaneateles faces the problem of how to safely mesh through traffic with local activity, particularly pedestrian activity in its central business district. Villages and hamlets in our region and around the country have been grappling with this issue for decades. Unique among villages in our region, Skaneateles is a major tourist destination, regularly appearing on lists of the best places to visit in New York State. The combination of tourists, both in vehicles and on foot, and through traffic, especially heavy vehicles, results in a village center that can be congested at times and that presents safety issues to both pedestrians and drivers.

The study's purpose was to identify opportunities to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles on the section of U.S. Route 20 in the Village of Skaneateles. The study focused on measures, such as pavement striping, that could be incorporated into an upcoming paving project with relatively little incremental effort and cost, since, at the time this study was initiated, the New York State Department of Transportation was planning a paving project for this section of

roadway within the next five years.<sup>1</sup> That project may create an opportunity to alter pavement markings or other features.

## 1.2 Study Process

This study was conducted with the advice and assistance of a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), which met four times over the course of the study. The SAC consisted of the following entities:

- Village of Skaneateles (Mayor, Board of Trustees),
- Village of Skaneateles Police Department,
- Village of Skaneateles Fire Department,
- Village of Skaneateles Chamber of Commerce,
- Town of Skaneateles,
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA),
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and
- Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT).

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were held virtually, using the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

## 1.3 Study Area

As shown in Figure 1.2, the study area consists of:

- U.S. 20 (Genesee Street) in the Village,
- State Street between Genesee Street and Academy Street,
- Jordan Street between Genesee Street and Academy Street, and
- Fennell Street between Jordan Street and Elizabeth Street.

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<sup>1</sup> PIN 307625, described on the SMTC's 2020-2024 TIP as: "MBC, mill & fill, pavement; address ADA deficient curb ramps; replace sidewalks, detectable warnings, crosswalks, signs, reference and culvert markers; fill sidewalk gaps; due to deterioration to bring to state of good repair; Rt. 20, Cayuga Co line to Rt. 175; Town and Village of Skaneateles, Onondaga Co." As of April 2022, detailed design was programmed for FFY 23/24, and construction and inspection phases are included in the draft 2023-2027 TIP in FFY 24/25.

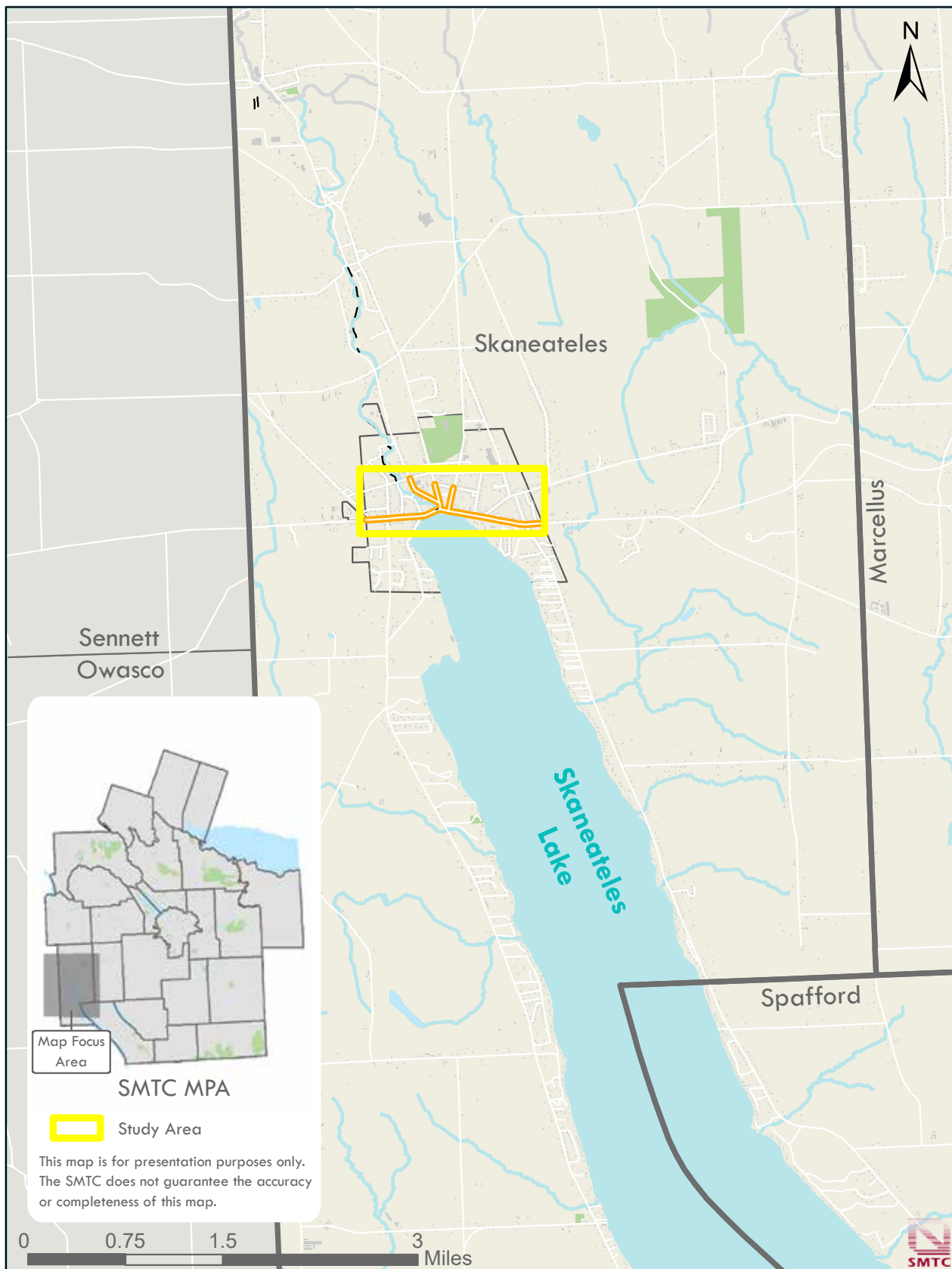


Figure 1.1: Regional context

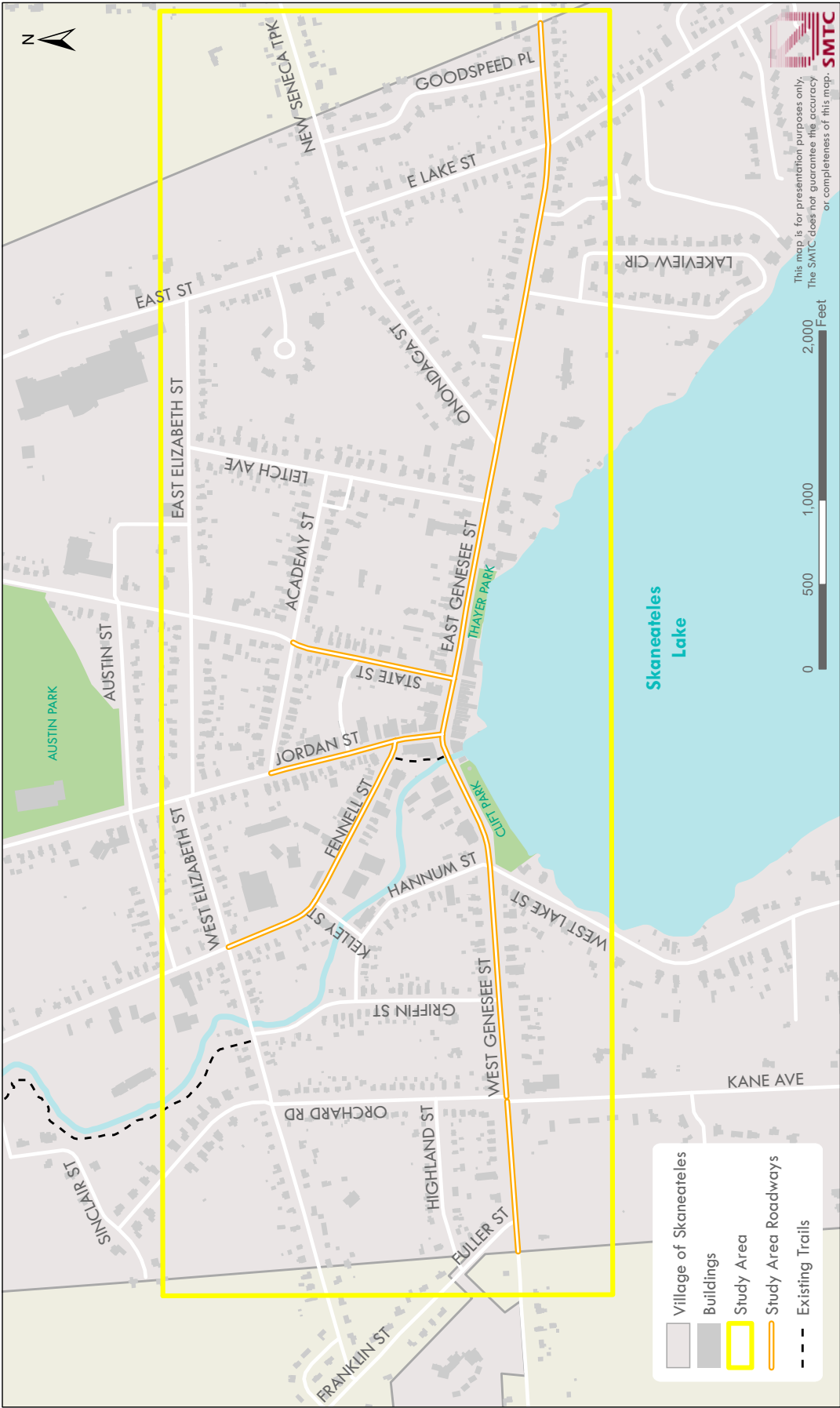


Figure 1.2: Study area

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## 2 Existing Conditions

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### 2.1 Demographics

#### 2.1.1 Population

The Village of Skaneateles has a population of 2,411 according to the data from the Census Bureau's 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS). While the Village makes up only three percent of the total land area of the Town of Skaneateles, it is home to 33 percent of the Town's population. As shown in Figure 2.1, most of the Village's population is concentrated in the 12 residential blocks bounded by Elizabeth Street, Genesee Street, Fuller Street, and Goodspeed Place. Residential density drops off dramatically outside of the village's boundaries.

The village's population has been gradually declining over the last 30 years. In 1990, the village's population was just over 2,700. Ten years later the population had slipped to just over 2,600, and in 2010, the Census recorded the village's population at 2,450. The Joint Comprehensive Plan notes that the area's population is aging and that housing in the Skaneateles area tends to be priced above what many young families in the region can afford.

#### 2.1.2 Age

The 2000 Census records the median age in the village as 44 years old. This was high relative to the median age in Onondaga County in 2000 (36 years old). As of the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS), the median age in the Village was 50, compared to a countywide median age of 39.

#### 2.1.3 Race and Ethnicity

The Village of Skaneateles' population is much less diverse than that of the rest of New York State and Onondaga County. In the 2014-2018 ACS, 97 percent of Village residents identified as white, compared to 64 percent of New York State residents and 80 percent of all Onondaga County residents. This lack of racial diversity is typical of villages in our region. Ninety-seven percent of the residents of Chittenango, Baldwinsville, and Liverpool identify as white, and the average proportion of white

residents in all the villages in the SMTC's planning area is 94 percent.

Skaneateles also has a lower proportion of residents of Hispanic ethnicity than the rest of the County. Excluding the City of Syracuse, three percent of county residents identify as Hispanic, compared to 0.3 percent of Village residents.

#### 2.1.4 Households and Housing Supply

The Census Bureau defines a household as "all the persons who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence." According to the ACS, there are 1,090 households in the Village, with an average household size of 2.2 people.

Nearly a quarter (23.3 percent) of Village households are made up of a single person 65 years old or older – substantially higher than the countywide proportion of 12.7 percent. This proportion is also high relative to other villages in the region; only in Central Square and Camillus are more than 20 percent of households made up of a single householder over 65.

The most unusual feature of Skaneateles' housing stock is its value. The median home value in Skaneateles is \$346,000, nearly two-and-a-half times higher than the countywide median of \$142,000. No other village in the region has a median home value over \$200,000; Manlius has the next highest median home value, at \$195,000.

### 2.2 Economic Activity

#### 2.2.1 Village Businesses

"Adorable, picturesque, like straight out of a movie." That is how one reviewer described the Village of Skaneateles on Yelp in 2017. Another reviewer, describing Clift Park, said: "We chose Clift Park for the setting of our winter wedding." Other reviews describe charming shops, restaurants, and lake views. Only a handful of retail districts in Upstate New York have a comparable combination of natural beauty, historic architecture, and a compact, walkable form.

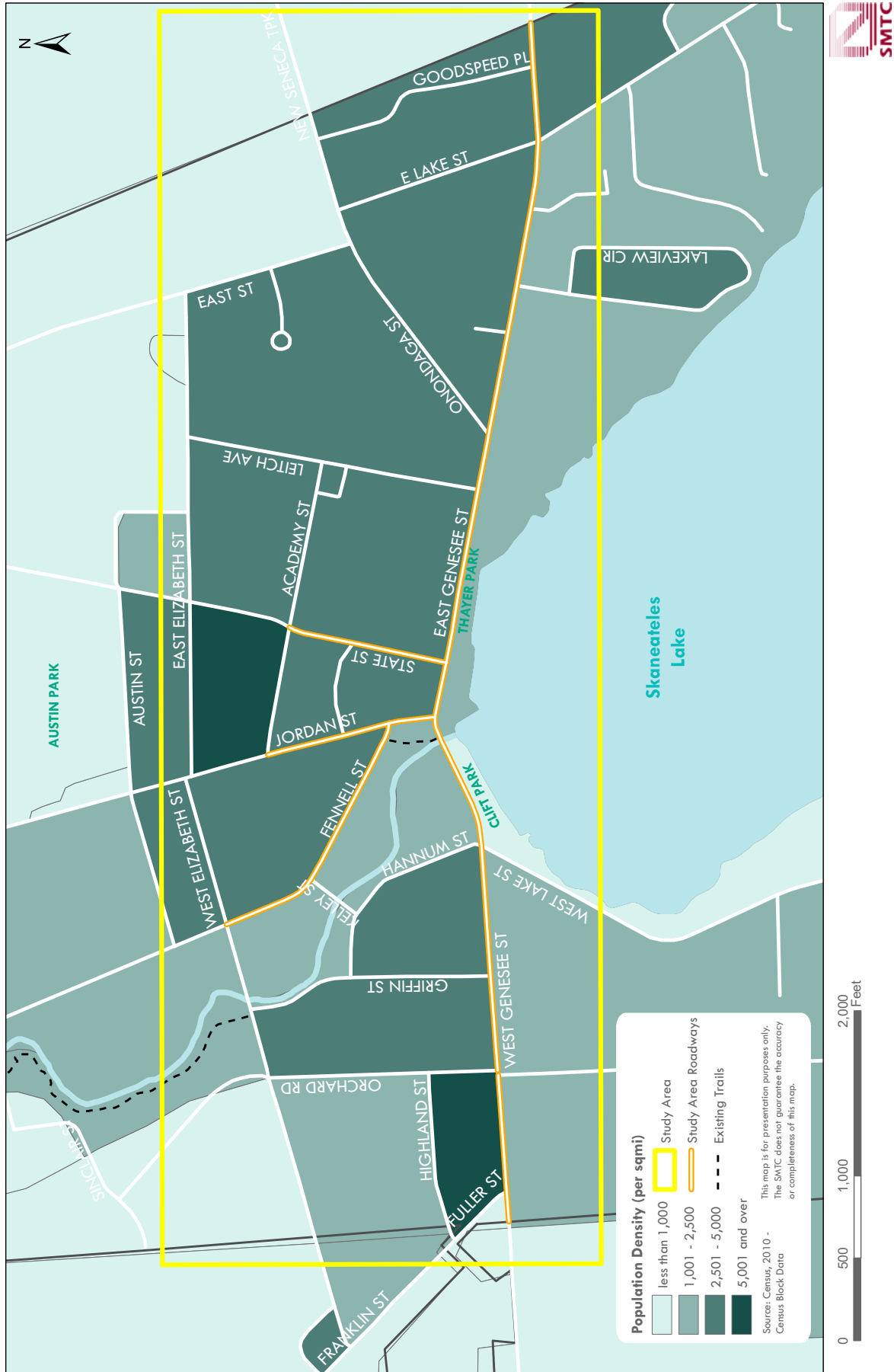


Figure 2.1: Population density

The village's retail district is roughly 1,200 feet long on U.S. 20, between Thayer Park on the east and Clift Park on the west. It also extends roughly 500 feet north along Jordan Street. Several of the restaurants in the village are well-known and attract visitors from across the region, including Doug's Fish Fry, the Blue Water Grill, Lake House Pub, and the Sherwood Inn. Shops in the village include Roland's Clothing Store, Skaneateles Jewelry, and multiple gift and clothing stores.

Mid-Lakes Navigation's boat tours of the lake draw visitors through the summer months, operating out of the lake access at Clift Park. Boat tours include dinner cruises, one-hour sightseeing cruises, and the unusual opportunity to accompany the Barbara S. Wiles, a mailboat, as it delivers mail to camps on the lake.

Mirbeau Inn and Spa, on the village's western edge, is one of the few hotels in the Syracuse area that offers both luxury hotel rooms and extensive spa amenities. Mirbeau draws customers primarily from the Syracuse and Rochester areas, but also attracts visitors from throughout the state and across the country.

### 2.2.2 Employment and Commuting

Of the 1,900 village residents who are 16 years or older, roughly 1,200 are in the labor force. Most of these workers – between 66 and 90 percent – commute to work in a single-occupant vehicle. Very few Skaneateles workers carpool to work, and a similarly low number (between zero and three percent of workers) take transit.

A relatively high proportion of workers were able to walk to work: between 5.7 percent and 12 percent, compared to fewer than five percent countywide. The proportion of workers working from home was also relatively high: seven percent, compared to four percent at both the state and county levels (based on 2014-2018 ACS data, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Skaneateles' distance from Syracuse means that average commute times for village residents are longer than for other Onondaga County residents: 26 minutes for village residents, compared to 20 minutes countywide.

Census data on occupations indicates that Ska-

neateles has a higher proportion of workers in "management, business, science, and arts" occupations than is found statewide, and lower proportions in the Census' other occupational categories, including services, sales, natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. Roughly a third of Skaneateles' workers are in the "Eds and Meds" industrial sector: educational services, and health care and social assistance. This is similar to the countywide average.

ACS data shows the median household income in the village at \$96,500, 1.5 times higher than the statewide median of \$65,000 and 1.6 times higher than the countywide median of \$59,000. Among villages in the region, Skaneateles has the highest median household income. According to ACS data, the poverty rate in the village is between 1.2 percent and just under five percent, compared to 12 percent countywide and 13 percent statewide.

### 2.2.3 Place of Work

The US Census Bureau's OnTheMap application, a web-based mapping and reporting application, can be used to show, in approximate terms, where Skaneateles' workers are employed. According to this data, roughly 60 percent of workers based in the village work more than 10 miles from home. The largest share (about 400 workers) head to the northeast, toward Syracuse. Another 200 workers head west, toward Auburn.

## 2.3 Local Plans & Studies

### 2.3.1 Skaneateles New York – Joint Comprehensive Plan 2015 (with October 31, 2016 revisions)

The *2015 Joint Town-Village Comprehensive Plan's* vision features walkability prominently – it is mentioned as a defining feature of the kind of smart growth that the plan is encouraging.

One of the plan's seven over-arching goals is to:

"Encourage Village gateway enhancement and the extension of higher density, mixed use and walkable neighborhoods with a diversity of housing types to those areas immediately adjacent to the village in a way that is compatible with existing village development patterns."

The first objective associated with this goal is



to: “Create gateway areas that provide clear transitions from town to village.”

The second objective associated with this gateway goal is to “Consider Village and adjacent Town neighborhoods as an interconnected system” to extend the village’s “traditional street network” into adjacent town areas.

Other notable objectives and proposed actions include:

- Take such steps as are necessary to implement the development recommendation in the Fennell Street corridor study. (Goal 5, Objective 2, Action a)
- Extend walkability in the village to all streets and neighborhoods. (Goal 5, Objective 5)
- Provide adequate sidewalks on both sides of all village streets, supplemented with walking paths as appropriate to provide continuity and to connect all contiguous residential areas with services and businesses and the village center. (Goal 5, Objective 5, Action a)
- Expand the existing trail system including the Charlie Major Trail and Steve Krause Trail along Skaneateles Creek to create a continuous path from the village center to Skaneateles Falls. (Goal 6, Objective 1, Action c)
- Explore the idea of establishing a sidewalk or bike trail from Welch Allyn along Route 321 to the Village center. (Goal 6, Objective 1, Action f)
- Create a bicycle-accessible community. (Goal 6, Objective 2)
- Establish bike lanes on major commuter roads and the Fennell Street Corridor. (Goal 6, Objective 2, Action a)
- Install bicycle racks in the village and hamlets. (Goal 6, Objective 2, Action c)
- Incorporate “Complete Streets” in planning new or rebuilt roads, giving equal priority to pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle use, with appropriate road dimensions and enhanced landscaping. (Goal 7, Objective 3, Action b)

### 2.3.2 Fennell Street Commercial Corridor Master Plan, March 2004

The study area for this *Master Plan* was the portion of Fennell Street between Jordan Street and Elizabeth Street in the Village of Skaneateles. The *Master Plan* is generally intended to upgrade and standardize the Fennell Street streetscape.

It identifies two separate character areas: the North End, north of Kelley Street, and the South End, between Kelley and Jordan Streets. The North End’s character is largely residential; the South End is primarily commercial.

The Master Plan is structured around four goals, which tie directly into pedestrian mobility considerations:

- Increase public parking count,
- Enhance pedestrian amenities, and
- Identify creekwalk parameters and strengthen linkages to Genesee Street.

The plan’s recommendations include:

- Increasing on-street parking spaces on Fennell Street by allowing parallel parking on both sides of the street between Jordan and Kelley Streets (on-street parking is currently prohibited in this street segment). Specifically, the plan recommends two seven-foot-wide parking lanes and 12-foot-wide driving lanes on Fennell Street, for a 38-foot-wide street cross-section. (The existing curb-to-curb width is closer to 32 feet.)

The plan also proposes:

- Removing curb cuts to improve on-street parking options.
- Increasing on-street and off-street parking options.
- Enhancing pedestrian amenities, including widening sidewalks to a minimum five-foot width (currently sidewalks are four feet wide).
- Using street lighting on Fennell Street that matches the lighting on Genesee Street.
- Planting street trees along the corridor at 30’ widths and developing a consistent five-foot

wide furnishing zone between the street and sidewalk.

- Providing crosswalks at the Kelley and Jordan Street intersections, with curb radii as small as possible to shorten the crosswalk distance and enhance pedestrian safety.

### 2.3.3 Strategies for Sustainable Skaneateles, 2010

The *Strategies for Sustainable Skaneateles* plan prepared by the University of Notre Dame’s Urban Design Studio in 2010 includes an assortment of recommendations that are relevant to pedestrian planning in the village. *Strategies for Sustainable Skaneateles*, like the *Joint Comprehensive Plan*, is intended to promote development that is in keeping with the development pattern already found in the village. The plan says specifically that it: “proposes traditional architecture and urbanism as the best way for Skaneateles to accommodate existing and future growth pressures in a way that both preserves Skaneateles’ historic character and extends it in a sustainable and consistent manner.”

Ideas proposed in this plan include:

- The Eastern and Western Gateways (the quarter-mile portions of U.S. 20 just outside of the village) are envisioned as boulevards, with added commercial development, visitor centers, and shuttle stops.
- This plan’s approach to the skewed intersection at Jordan and Fennell Streets is to adjust the horizontal alignment of Fennell Street so that

it meets Jordan Street at a 90-degree angle. This would create additional public space in the intersection’s southwest corner, which could be used for a new public pavilion. This pavilion, in turn, could be the starting point for a trail along Skaneateles Creek in the village.

### 2.3.4 Open Space and Recreation Plan

The *Open Space and Recreation Plan* appended to the *Joint Comprehensive Plan* was developed more than 20 years ago and, as a result, no longer reflects some on-the-ground realities in the area. Nevertheless, some of its observations and goals continue to be relevant.

The description of development along Skaneateles Creek, for example, is still somewhat accurate (although litter is not visible to the casual visitor):

“Development along Fennell Street has completely ignored the presence of the creek and, in fact, the stream has become a repository for old tires, bottles, cans, and miscellaneous junk and trash. Paved parking areas push practically to the waters edge; there is no reason why anyone should want to get near the creek or even be aware of its presence. That this should happen to an area that could be one of the most attractive natural spots in the Village is a waste that should be corrected immediately.”

### 2.3.5 Climate Action Plan

The *Village of Skaneateles Climate Action Plan (CAP)* was prepared with the support of the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB). The purpose of the *CAP* is to reduce the village’s contribution to climate change. The Village’s goal is to “reduce emissions from municipal operations by 50% by the year 2030.”

Specific actions proposed in the *CAP* include:

- Installation of bicycling paths and facilities,
- Safe routes to school,
- Increased bus ridership, and
- Electric vehicle charging stations.

The *CAP* also proposes that six streets be moved to the top of the list of streets to be improved with Complete Streets features:



Crosswalk at the Jordan St./Fennell St. intersection.

- Fennell Street,
- State Street,
- Onondaga Street,
- East Street,
- Kane Avenue,
- East and West Genesee Streets.

### 2.3.6 Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study

In 2016, the SMTC initiated a study of a possible extension of the existing Charlie Major Trail from Old Seneca Turnpike to the Village of Skaneateles.

This study focused primarily on the Town of Skaneateles, but it also included concepts for the Village of Skaneateles, including suggestions for the intersection of Jordan and Fennell streets.

### 2.3.7 Village of Skaneateles New Sidewalk Prioritization Assessment

In 2018, SMTC staff completed an assessment of the Village of Skaneateles' street network, noting where sidewalks were and were not present and, in the latter case, a rating for the level of difficulty involved in adding sidewalks.

### 2.3.8 Town of Skaneateles – Eastern Gateway

One of the *Joint Comprehensive Plan's* objectives is the development of gateway areas at both the east and west Village/Town lines. These gateways would use streetscape features such as trees, sidewalks, as well as building densities and green space to establish “clear transitions from town to village”. The Town of Skaneateles established an Eastern Gateway Committee in 2016 to turn this general description into a more specific set of recommendations for the segment of U.S. 20 between the Village line and Route 175.

This committee presented its findings to the Town Board in 2017. They include:

- Burying drainage and utilities,
- Creating clear driveway entrances on all commercial properties (rather than the existing large, paved areas between storefronts and the road),
- Adding sidewalks and decorative lighting to the Highway Commercial zone, and
- Creating design guidelines for this portion of the road.

In the spring of 2020, the SMTC's assistance was requested to develop a cost estimate for this streetscape design proposal. The SMTC also requested input from NYSDOT, since NYSDOT has proposed a paving project for the portion of U.S. 20 between the Cayuga/Onondaga County line and Route 175/Lee Mulroy Road (see note on page 1). The SMTC prepared a technical memorandum summarizing this information in March 2021.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.4 Land Use and Zoning

Land use in the study area transitions from primarily residential on both the east and west ends of U.S. 20 to a mixed-use and commercial-oriented village center (see Figure 2.2). The village's commercial core is the one-block segment of U.S. 20 between State and Jordan Streets. This area is home to a cluster of restaurants, small retail businesses, and public spaces. A larger, more suburban style shopping plaza with a large front parking lot, housing a Tops market, is located on Fennell Street just north of U.S. 20. The community's civic hub – including the village hall, Police Department, and the local Post Office – is also located on Fennell Street near Jordan Street.

Most of the village is zoned for low and medium-density uses (Residential A1 and A2 zoning).

Lakeview Cemetery, on the south side of US 20 between the village's western edge and Kane

<sup>2</sup> <https://smtcmpo.org/partner/town-of-skaneateles-eastern-gateway-assistance/>



*A dense urban form characterizes the Village's "Downtown District" zoning district.*

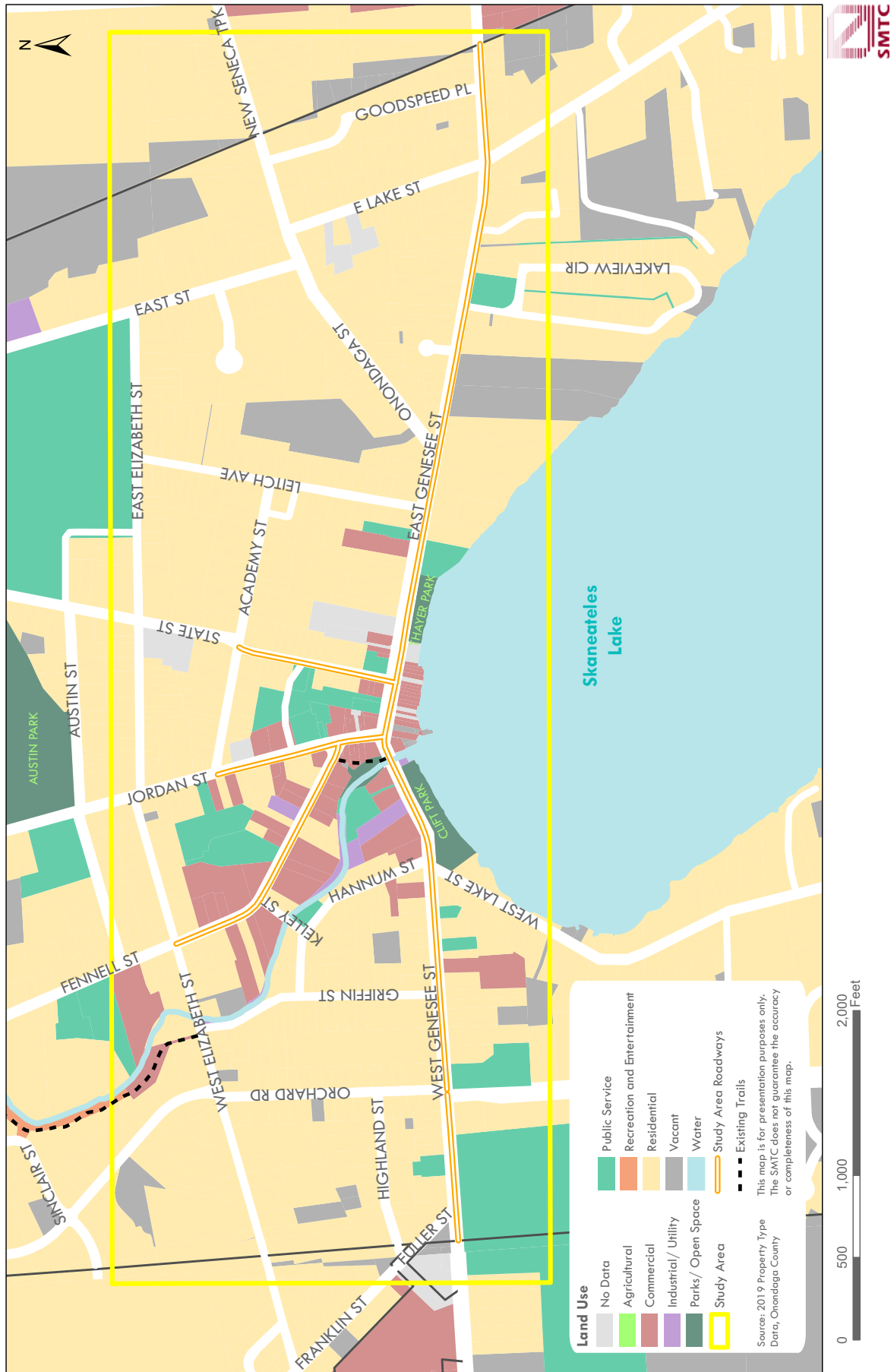


Figure 2.2: Land use

Avenue, is zoned as Public Land (PL), as are the parks on the south side of US 20: Shotwell and Clift Parks, located between West Lake Street and the Skaneateles Creek outlet, and Thayer Park, located just east of the village's central business district. The substation and other utility areas along Skaneateles Creek north of U.S. 20 are also in a PL district.

The commercial core itself is classified as a "Downtown District" (D), taking in both sides of U.S. 20 between State Street and Jordan Street, the north side of U.S. 20 between Jordan and Hannum Streets, the Jordan Street corridor as far north as Academy Street, and the Fennell Street corridor as far north as West Elizabeth Street.

## 2.5 Roadway Characteristics

Figure 2.3 shows road ownership in the study area. Each of the major roadways in the study area is described below. Note that there are no marked bicycle lanes on any roads in the village, and a visual inventory did not identify any bike racks. Mirbeau Inn and Spa has a small collection of bikes that it lends to its guests free of charge.

### 2.5.1 U.S. 20 (Genesee Street)

In the Village of Skaneateles, U.S. 20 is known as East and West Genesee Street, with the transition from East to West at Jordan Street.

U.S. 20 in the Village is generally a two-lane road with sidewalks on both sides, a furnishing strip varying in width from four to 15 feet, and on-street parking present for much of its length. Figure 2.4 shows the typical cross-sections at various points along U.S. 20 in the study area.

The travel lanes on U.S. 20 are unusually wide for a road in a village setting. As part of the National Highway System (NHS), the lanes on U.S. 20 must meet a minimum 12-foot width standard, but through Skaneateles they are as wide as 22 feet in some sections. Figures 2.5 and 2.6 provide streetscape dimensions at a few locations throughout the village.

Roughly 150 feet east of Jordan Street, a second eastbound lane is available for through and left-turn movements; vehicles in this lane have a protected left-hand turn signal, but it is not a left-turn only lane.

The segment between Jordan and State Streets is striped for four lanes on U.S. 20: two eastbound lanes, a westbound right-turn lane for traffic heading north on Jordan Street, and the westbound through / left-turn lane (a left-turn is available for vehicles heading to the small dock-side parking area between the lake and U.S. 20).

### 2.5.2 State Street

New York State Route 321, known locally as State Street, is an 8.5-mile connection running between Route 5 in the Town of Camillus on the north and the Village of Skaneateles on the south. The route's northern terminus is in the hamlet of Bennett's Corners (north of Route 5 the road is known as Bennett's Corners Road). North of the Village of Skaneateles, Route 321 is a two-lane facility with narrow (three- to five-foot wide) shoulders, no sidewalks, open drainage, and no bicycle facilities. In the Village, State Street is a two-lane facility with sidewalks on both sides (south of Austin Street) and two uncontrolled mid-block crosswalks providing access to Austin Park.

Two major facilities are accessed by Route 321 north of the village:

- Hanson Aggregates, a 200-acre sand and gravel quarry located just north of Stump Road, and
- Hill-Rom's Welch Allyn campus, located at the intersection of State Street and Mottville Road. Total employment on the Welch Allyn campus was 950 workers in 2018.

The intersection of State Street with U.S. 20 is signalized.

### 2.5.3 Jordan Street

Jordan Street is a County-owned two-lane facility, varying in width from 24 feet in the village to 35.5 feet as it approaches Old Seneca Turnpike north of the village.

Jordan Street has sidewalks on both sides between its southern terminus and Austin Street; north of Austin to the village line there is a sidewalk on the west side of the street only.

For approximately 700 feet north of U.S. 20, Jordan Street forms the third leg of the village's commercial core, with storefronts and restaurants

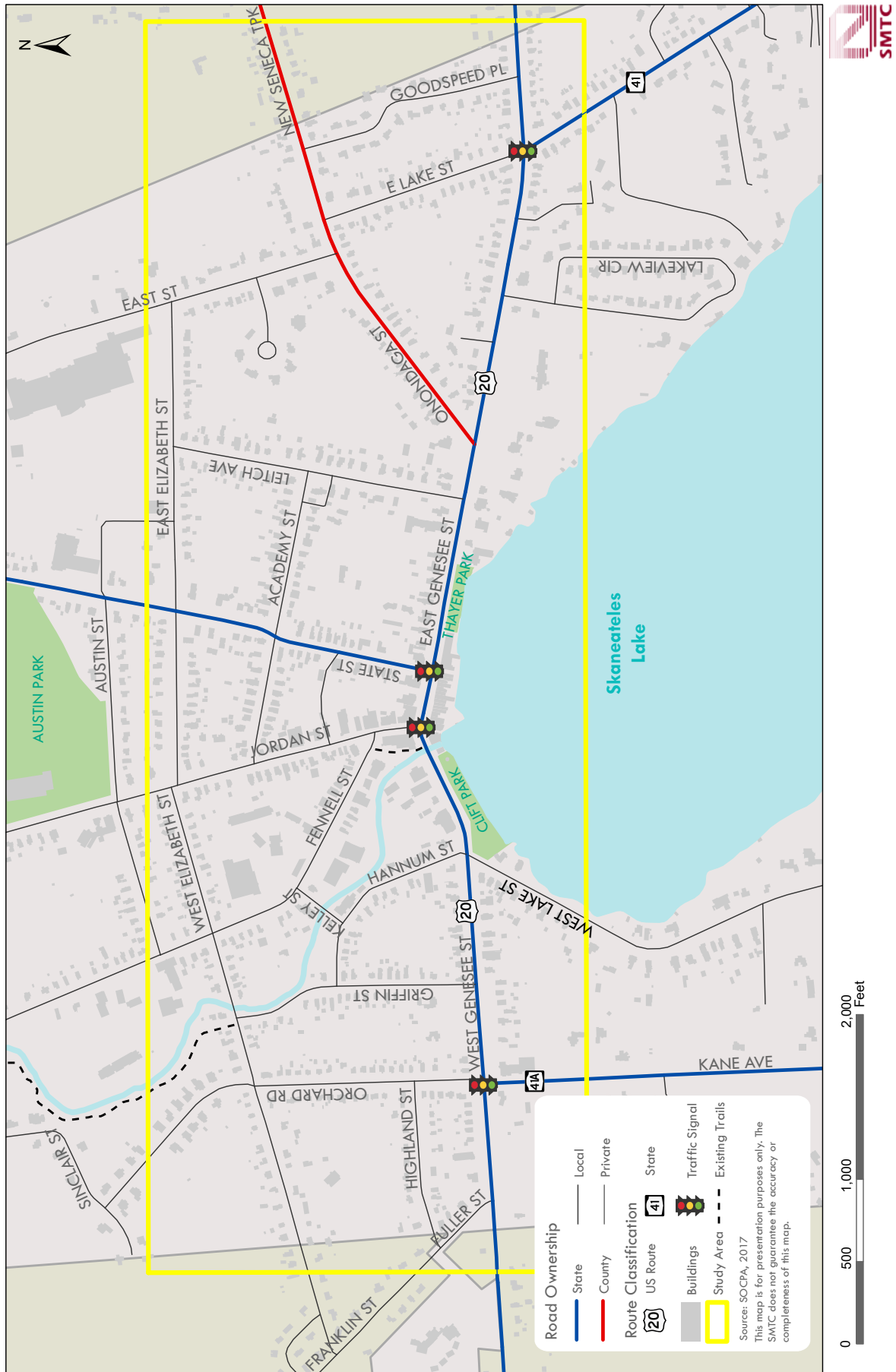


Figure 2.3: Road ownership

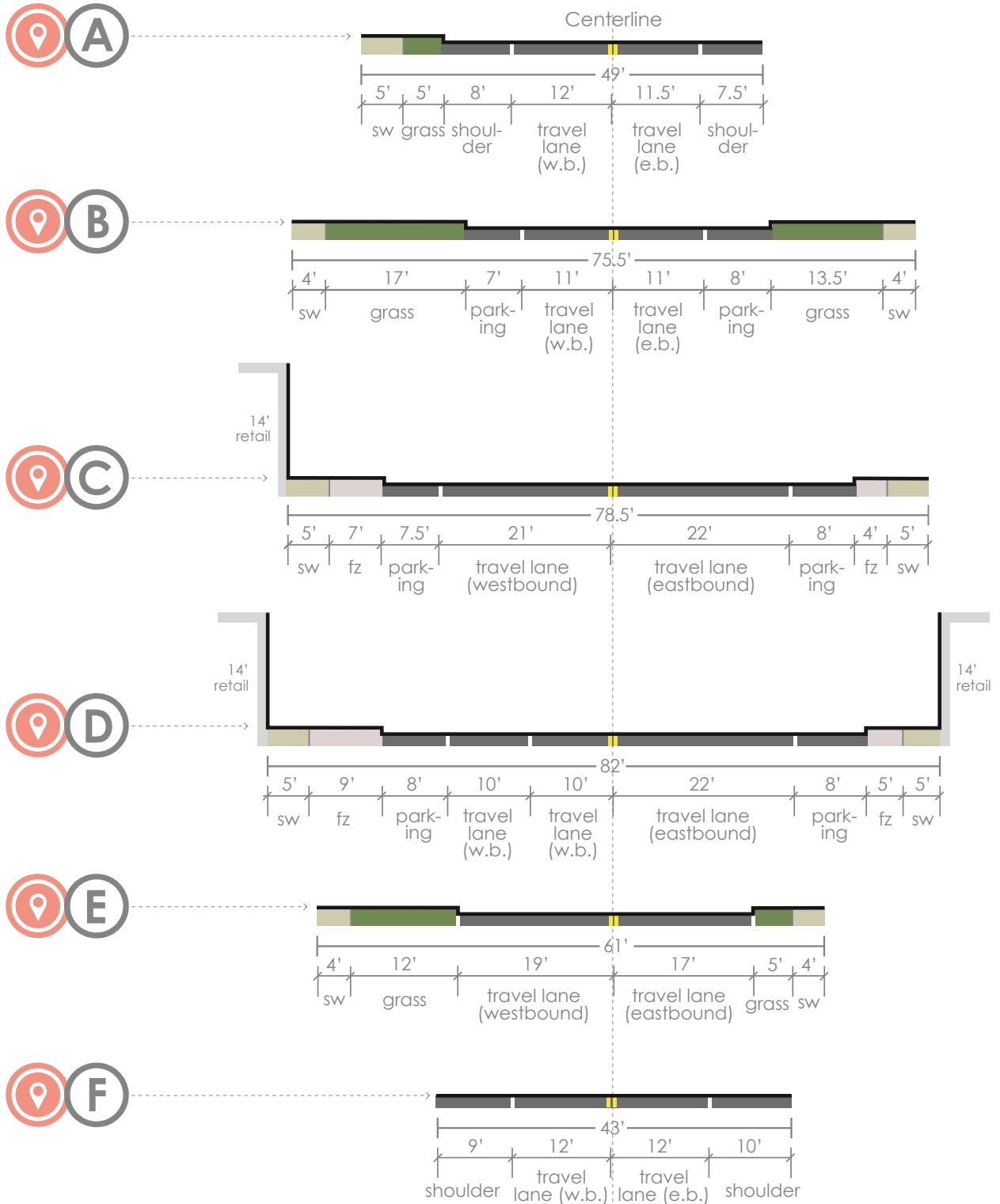


Figure 2.4: Cross sections of U.S. 20

lining the street on both sides between U.S. 20 and Fennell Street. Further north, land use is primarily residential, giving way to a mix of residential and community facilities north of Austin Street. The intersection of Jordan Street with U.S. 20 is signalized.

#### 2.5.4 Fennell Street

Fennell Street is a locally owned two-lane facility that runs roughly northwest to southeast, intersecting Jordan Street at a 55-degree angle.

Sidewalks are present on both sides of the road south of the Skaneateles Ambulance Volunteer Emergency Services building at 77 Fennell Street.

#### 2.5.5 East Lake Street (State Route 41)

New York State Route 41, known locally as East Lake Street, runs between U.S. 20 and Route 281 in the Village of Homer, just north of Cortland. In the Skaneateles area, East Lake Street provides access to the homes and seasonal rentals that line the east shore of Skaneateles Lake. Dozens of driveways and small access roads branch off of East Lake Street (known as East Lake Road south of the village). A sidewalk extends along the east side of East Lake Street for about 900 feet south of U.S. 20. The intersection of East Lake Street with U.S. 20 is signalized.

#### 2.5.6 Kane Avenue (State Route 41A)

State Route 41A, known in the village as Kane Avenue (and as West Lake Road further south), is a two-lane road that runs between U.S. 20 in Skaneateles and Route 41 in the hamlet of Homer Gulf in Cortland County. Like Route 41, Route 41A's function locally is to provide access to Skaneateles Lake's west shore. Lot sizes tend to be larger on the lake's west side, with very large residential properties interspersed with agricultural uses, and other specialized sites, such as the Skaneateles Country Club, lake access points, and the Skaneateles Aerodrome, a small, privately owned airport.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) operates one of the few public boat launches on Skaneateles Lake, located two miles south of the village on Route 41A. Users cycle in and out throughout the day and the Town



*The northbound Kane Avenue approach is controlled by a stop sign and a yellow/red flashing signal.*

of Skaneateles' Recreation Supervisor estimates that on a given weekend day in the summer, as many as 90 vehicles (towing boats) may use the launch.

The Town of Skaneateles Boat Launch, in the hamlet of Mandana, is located five miles south of the village on Route 41A and has parking for 90 vehicles with trailers. This facility attracts users from throughout the region and is heavily used on summer weekends.

The U.S. 20 / Kane Avenue intersection has a flashing yellow signal on the U.S. 20 approaches and a flashing red signal on the Kane Avenue and Orchard Road approaches.

## 2.6 Roadway Usage – Trends and Characteristics

### 2.6.1 Traffic Volumes

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) on U.S. 20 in the village ranges from a high of 10,600 in the village core to a low of 7,200 on the village's eastern edge. West of the village, U.S. 20 sees average volumes of 8,400 vehicles daily.

Route 321 is the next busiest route in the village, with 6,800 vehicles daily. This route is the primary corridor between Skaneateles and the Syracuse area and, as mentioned above, provides access to the Hill-Rom Welch Allyn campus, which employs several hundred workers.

No other streets in the village see volumes over 5,000 vehicles daily. State Route 41A (known



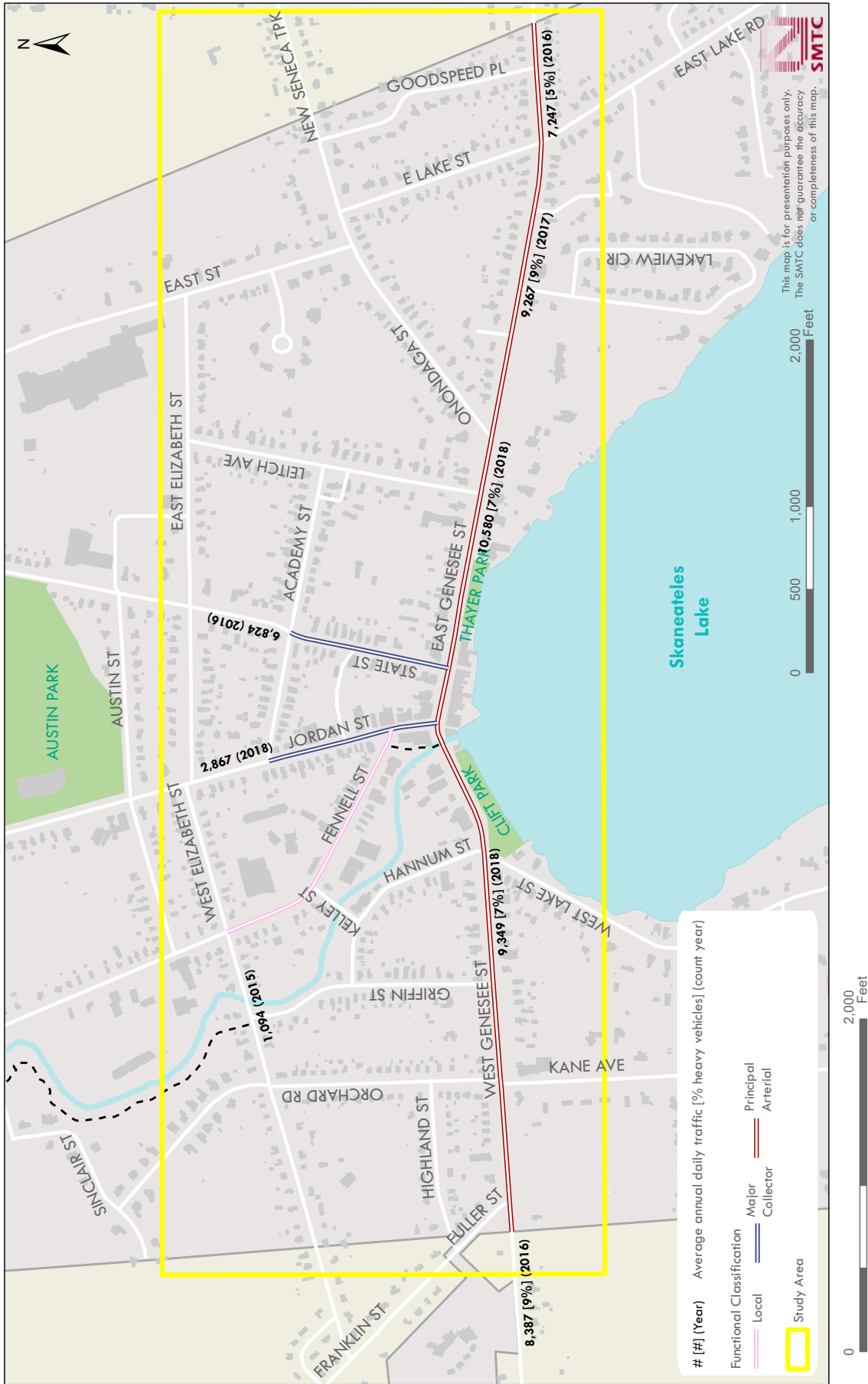


Figure 2.5: Traffic volumes, heavy vehicle percentage, and functional classification of study area roads.

locally as Kane Avenue), Jordan Street, and State Route 41 (East Lake Road) see 3,500, 2,800, and 2,000 vehicles a day, respectively.

### 2.6.2 Heavy Vehicles

Heavy vehicles make up between five and nine percent of all vehicles on U.S. 20 on an average day. The average heavy vehicle percentage for other roads also classified as rural principal arterials (non-Interstate/expressway) in NYSDOT Region 3 is 9.2 percent<sup>3</sup>, meaning that the proportion of large trucks in Skaneateles is not unusual, relative to other roadways in the region with the same functional classification.

### 2.6.3 Speeds and Speed Limits

The speed limit is 30 MPH on all roads in the Village of Skaneateles.

The process of setting posted speed limits depends to a large degree on the speed that most drivers feel is safe and comfortable on a given road. Most guidance on setting speed limits recommends using the 85th percentile speed as a starting point. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of drivers travel.

Eighty-fifth percentile speeds on U.S. 20 in the

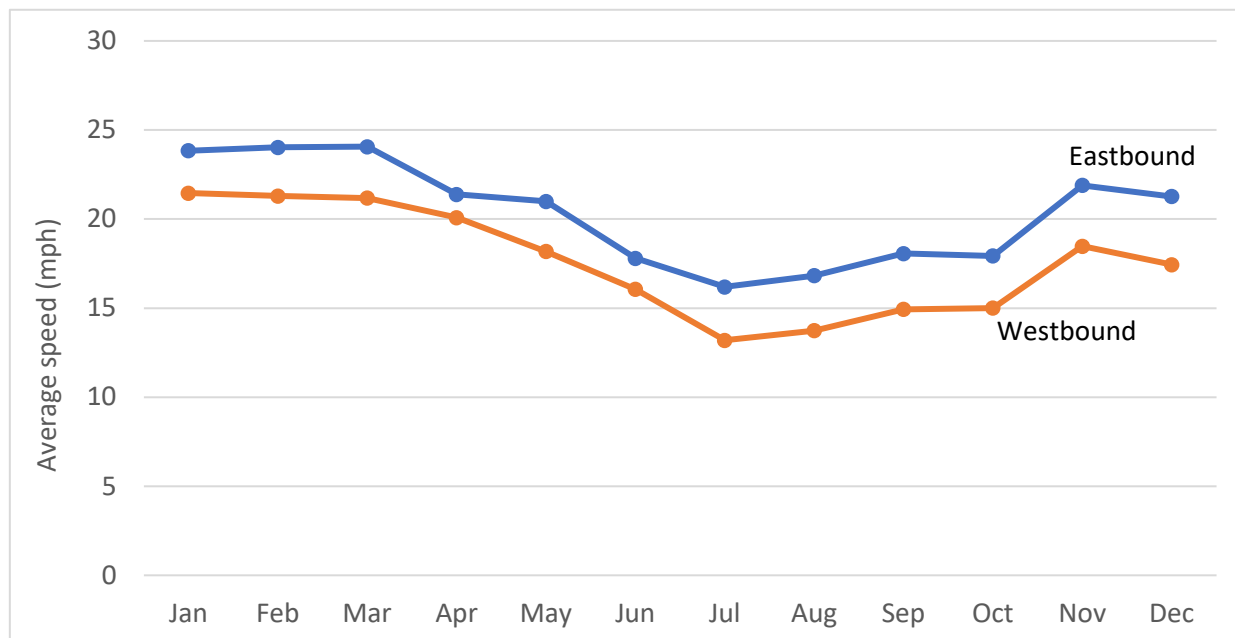
<sup>3</sup> New York State Department of Transportation, "Heavy Vehicle (F04 - F13) Percentages 2018."

Village of Skaneateles range from 32 MPH to 36 MPH. In contrast, the 85th percentile speed on Jordan Street is 30 MPH, suggesting that this street's relatively narrow dimensions and residential character slow drivers down. On Route 41A, the 85th percentile speed was measured at 40 MPH in 2018, with the recorder placed just north of Heritage Woods Road (where the speed limit is 30 MPH).

One of the characteristics that sets Skaneateles apart from other communities in the Syracuse area is its ability to attract large numbers of people to seasonal events. When Skaneateles holds its annual Dickens Christmas event on weekends in December, featuring actors in Victorian-era costume and character, it draws crowds from across Central New York. According to one source, as many as 20,000 visitors come to the village over the four weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Other popular festivals and events include a farmer's market, concerts in Clift Park, an annual antique boat show, and events at the Sherwood Inn.

In July and August, Skaneateles sees an increase in activity. There are seasonal visitors staying in summer rentals, tourists passing through on U.S. 20, and visitors from throughout the region taking day



**Figure 2.6: Average monthly vehicle speeds on U.S. 20 (Route 41 to Route 41A) by direction.**

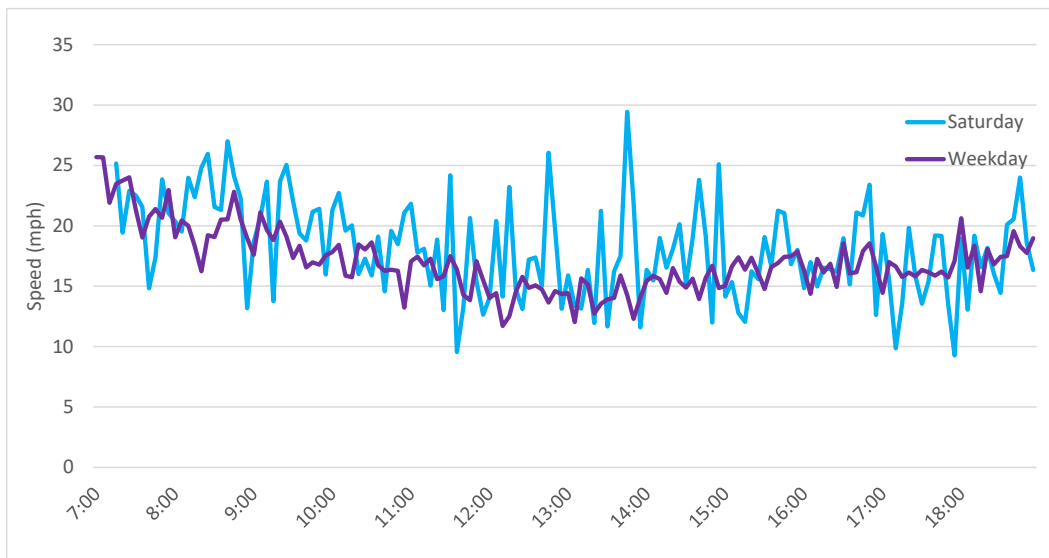
Source: NPMRDS, 2019

trips to Skaneateles. One way to quantify this is by looking at data from the National Performance Management Data Research Set (NPMRDS), which provides average speeds on selected roads throughout the year.

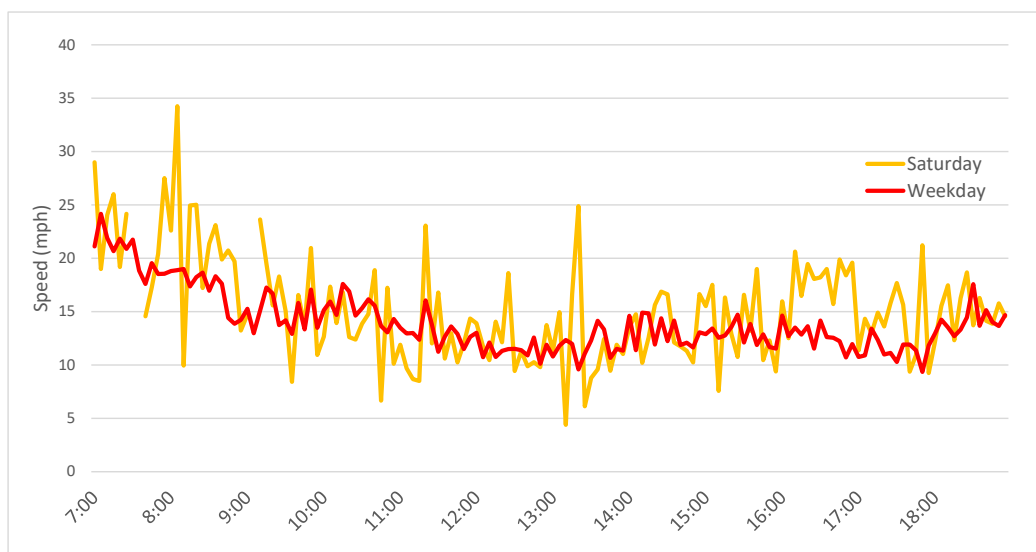
As shown in Figure 2.6, average speeds on U.S. 20 between Route 41 and Route 41A are dramatically lower in July and August than in the rest of the year. Average speeds in the winter months are between 21 and 24 mph, but drop to between 13 and 17 mph in July and August. (Note that these

are overall average speeds, so incorporate stopped time, including at intersections.)

More than just a drop in average speed is observed on summer weekends. As shown in Figures 2.7 and 2.8, weekday speeds in the summer are fairly consistent throughout the day but speeds are highly variable throughout the day on Saturdays. This level of unreliability is often more frustrating to drivers than the actual drop in speeds, as it sets up unrealistic expectations or can make it difficult to plan your trip.



**Figure 2.7: Vehicle speeds on U.S. 20 eastbound during July and August, weekday vs. Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Source: NPMRDS, 2019**



**Figure 2.8: Vehicle speeds on U.S. 20 westbound during July and August, weekday vs. Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Source: NPMRDS, 2019**

## 2.7 Pedestrian Infrastructure and Usage

### 2.7.1 Crosswalks and Pedestrian Signals

Table 2.1 provides an inventory of pedestrian amenities at intersections in the study area, and Figure 2.9 indicates the location of sidewalks and crosswalks.

There are crosswalks on all approaches at the Jordan Street and State Street intersections with U.S. 20, both of which are signalized intersections. At the Route 41/East Lake Street intersection with U.S. 20 - the only other three-color signal on U.S. 20 in the village - there are crosswalks on the U.S. 20 approaches but the crosswalks on the side street approaches were removed and not yet restriped as of this writing.

The remaining crosswalks across U.S. 20 in the village are uncontrolled, meaning that vehicle traffic is not controlled by a stop sign or a traffic signal on the U.S. 20 approaches. The uncontrolled crosswalk locations on U.S. 20 are:

- Fuller Street eastbound approach
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church mid-block crosswalk (with bright red flags provided for pedestrians to carry)
- West Lake Street / Hannum Street westbound approach
- Clift Park mid-block crossing about 200 feet west of the Jordan Street intersection
- St. James Episcopal Church mid-block crosswalk.

Crosswalks are striped across the side streets at most of the remaining intersections on U.S. 20.



*The crosswalk at the West Lake Street / Hannum Street intersection across U.S. 20 is uncontrolled.*

### 2.7.2 Curb Ramps

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires municipalities to provide curb ramps at pedestrian crossings and at public transportation stops where walkways intersect a curb so that people with disabilities can safely cross streets. Detectable warnings alert pedestrians with visual impairments about the sidewalk to street transition. Truncated domes are the required type of detectable warning according to the ADA, and are required to contrast visually with adjacent walking surfaces, either light-on-dark or dark-on-light.

Most intersections in the study area have a curb ramp of some kind, but because most of the intersections between U.S. 20 and a side street do not have a crosswalk across U.S. 20, very few of the intersections between U.S. 20 and side streets have curb ramps designed to allow pedestrians to cross U.S. 20.

### 2.7.3 Pedestrian Activity

Pedestrian activity is focused at the two signalized intersections in the village's commercial core: the U.S. 20 intersections with Jordan and State streets. The available four-hour (weekday peak period) counts indicate that each leg of these intersections sees between 18 and 80 pedestrians in an hour.

The midblock crossing just west of Jordan Street - sometimes referred to in this document as the Gazebo Crosswalk because of its proximity to the large gazebo in Clift Park - is also a popular crossing point for pedestrians.

Activity levels vary by time of year and day of week, but the following general statements can be made about pedestrian activity with a high degree of confidence:

- Pedestrian activity is centered around transportation nodes, especially the large municipal parking lot in the heart of the village, the Sherwood Inn's large parking lot, the municipal parking on Fennell Street, and tour bus drop-off points near the Sherwood Inn.

**Table 2.1: Traffic control and pedestrian amenities at study area intersections**

Location	Control	Crosswalks	Ped signals/ buttons	Countdown timers	Curb ramps	Detectable warnings
<i>U.S. 20 intersections</i>						
Fuller St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Kane Ave. (Rt. 41A) / Orchard Rd.	flashing yellow/ red signal	○	-	-	○	○
Griffin St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
W. Lake St./Hannum St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Jordan St.*	signal	●	●	●	●	-
State St.	signal	●	●	●	●	●
Leitch Ave.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Onondaga St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Chestnut Cir.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Lakeview Cir.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
E. Lake St. (Rt. 41)	signal	○	●	●	●	○
Goodspeed Pl.	stop	○	-	-	○	-
<i>Other intersections</i>						
Fennell St./Jordan St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Fennell St./Kelley St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Fennell St./W. Elizabeth St.	stop	○	-	-	○	○
Jordan St./Academy St.	stop	○	-	-	○	-

- Not present

○ Present on some approaches

● Present on all approaches

\*NB approach at this intersection is a parking lot driveway controlled by the traffic light and does not have any of the pedestrian amenities listed; however, there is a sidewalk across this approach.

- As with tourist activity in general, pedestrian volumes are highest in the summer months (July and August) and at the time of the Dickens Christmas event.
- Most visitors are drawn to the lake frontage (Clift Park) and to restaurants and shopping, meaning that pedestrian destinations (and activity) decline west of the West Lake / Hannum intersection and east of State Street.
- In the central segment of U.S. 20 from the West Lake / Hannum Street intersection to State Street, there is sufficient pedestrian activity in the summer months and during special events to justify improvements at key locations to improve safety.



Figure 2.9: Pedestrian and transit facilities.

## 2.8 Parking

Parking spaces in the village, particularly in the heart of the village, are highly sought after during special events and on weekends in the summer. Figure 2.10 provides an overview of parking supply in the study area.

### 2.8.1 On-Street Parking

Metered on-street parking is available on U.S. 20 in and adjacent to the CBD. There is also free on-street parking on U.S. 20 between Hannum Street and Orchard Street, and east of the CBD. Many of the village's side streets also allow on-street parking.

### 2.8.2 Off-Street Parking

The largest supply of off-street parking in the village's CBD is the municipal lot in the block bounded by U.S. 20, State Street, Jordan Street, and Academy Street. This lot has parking for more than 230 vehicles. Parking costs \$0.75 per hour or \$6.00 for a daily pass; Skaneateles Village and Town residents get discounts on this rate.

Some more remote parking options are available throughout the village free of cost. There are two parking lots adjacent to the Austin Park Pavilion at the corner of Jordan Street and East Austin Street, about a ten minute walk from the heart of the Village. During the Dickens Christmas event, horse-drawn wagons provide a shuttle between the Austin Park lot and the CBD. A smaller lot is available near the intersection of Leitch Ave and East Elizabeth Street just south of the high school's football field. There is also a free lot off of Fennell Street, in the Tops Friendly Markets plaza near the Village Hall. While this lot is free, it is primarily used for the customers and visitors of the shops and offices in the plaza.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Village of Skaneateles had an ordinance on file that put the value of a parking space at \$7,500. The ordinance required property owners whose properties lacked sufficient off-street parking to pay this amount to a Village-administered parking fund. In 2011 the statute was amended to eliminate this fee.

## 2.9 Safety Assessment

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2020, there were 377 vehicle collisions in the Village of Skaneateles. While U.S. 20 makes up only nine percent of the village's 16.3 miles of road, over half of all collisions in the village during this period occurred on U.S. 20 (201 collisions on U.S. 20).

Eighty percent of all crashes happened in daylight hours, rather than at night. Collisions were distributed throughout the week fairly evenly, but Fridays see more than average (18%) and Saturdays and Sundays see slightly less than average (13% and 10%, respectively).

Collisions with pedestrians are relatively rare: in the latest five-year period, there were eight reported pedestrian crashes. Half of all pedestrian collisions village-wide occurred at one location: the U.S. 20 / State Street intersection. There were also four collisions with a bicyclist during this time-frame throughout the village. Figure 2.11 shows the location of collisions, including those involving a pedestrian or bicyclist, in and around the Village of Skaneateles between 2016 and 2020.



*Metered parking along Fennell Street.*

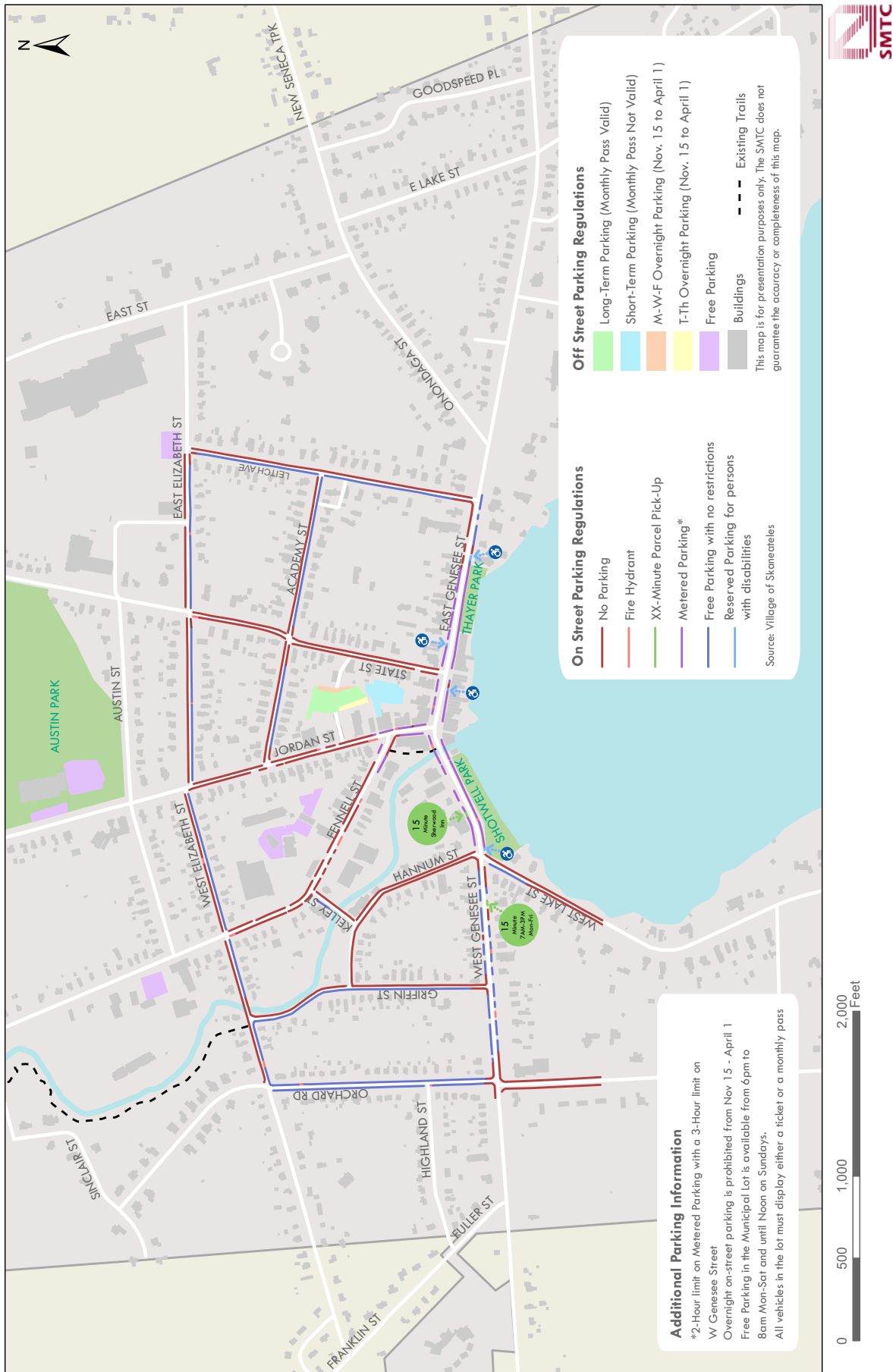


Figure 2.10: Parking restrictions in the Village Center



### 2.9.1 U.S. 20 Non-Intersection Collisions

Vehicle collisions on U.S. 20 can be divided into two categories: collisions that occur at intersections and collisions that occur on segments, or “non-intersection collisions.” There were 102 non-intersection collisions on U.S. 20 in the village between 2016 and 2020. This is 1.8 times higher than the statewide average for similar facilities.

As shown in Figure 2.12, the most frequent type of segment collision on U.S. 20 was overtaking. Overtaking collisions are caused by one vehicle attempting to pass another in an unsafe manner. Village-wide, overtaking collisions make up only 18 percent of all collisions, but over half of all overtaking collisions in the village happened on U.S. 20.

Rear end collisions made up just over a quarter of all segment collisions, with “other” collisions making up 23 percent (these include collisions with a bicycle or pedestrian, deer or other animals, and “fixed objects” such as light posts).

### 2.9.2 Intersection Collisions

There were 107 collisions at intersections on U.S. 20 in the village between 2016 and 2020. Over half of these occurred at three intersections: Kane Avenue-Orchard Road; Jordan Street; and State Street. Figure 2.13 shows collisions by type at these three intersections.

#### *Kane Avenue (Route 41A)-Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection*

From 2016 to 2020, there were 12 reported collisions at the intersection of U.S. 20 and Route 41A (Kane Avenue)/Orchard Road. This equates to a crash rate of 0.59 crashes per million entering vehicles, which is 1.7 times higher than the statewide average for similar intersections.

Half of the collisions at this intersection were left-turn or right-angle crashes – crash types that are usually considered to be preventable by the addition of a traffic signal. As discussed in Appendix B, however, this is insufficient to meet the “Crash Experience” warrant as described in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Chapter 4C). Meeting this warrant requires that an intersection see five or more such crashes in a 12-month period.

#### *Jordan Street / U.S. 20 intersection*

From 2016 to 2020, there were 22 reported collisions at the intersection of U.S. 20 and Jordan Street, resulting in a crash rate that is 2.4 times higher than the statewide average for similar intersections. The bulk of these crashes were not based in conflicting movements: eight resulted from overtaking (unsafe passing) and seven were rear end collisions.

One of the collisions (in the “Other” category) at this intersection was a collision with a pedestrian, resulting in an injury.

#### *State Street / U.S. 20 intersection*

The U.S. 20 / State Street intersection saw 23 crashes in the period from 2016 to 2020, for a crash rate that is 1.96 times higher than the statewide average.

Less than a third of the collisions at this three-legged intersection involved conflicting movements. For drivers and passengers in vehicles, this is a relatively safe intersection. With four pedestrian collisions in five years, however, this is a relatively dangerous intersection for pedestrians.

There were five “injury” accidents, one “serious injury” accident, and a fatality. Other than two injuries sustained in vehicle-vehicle collisions, the injuries, serious injury, and fatality involved pedestrians.

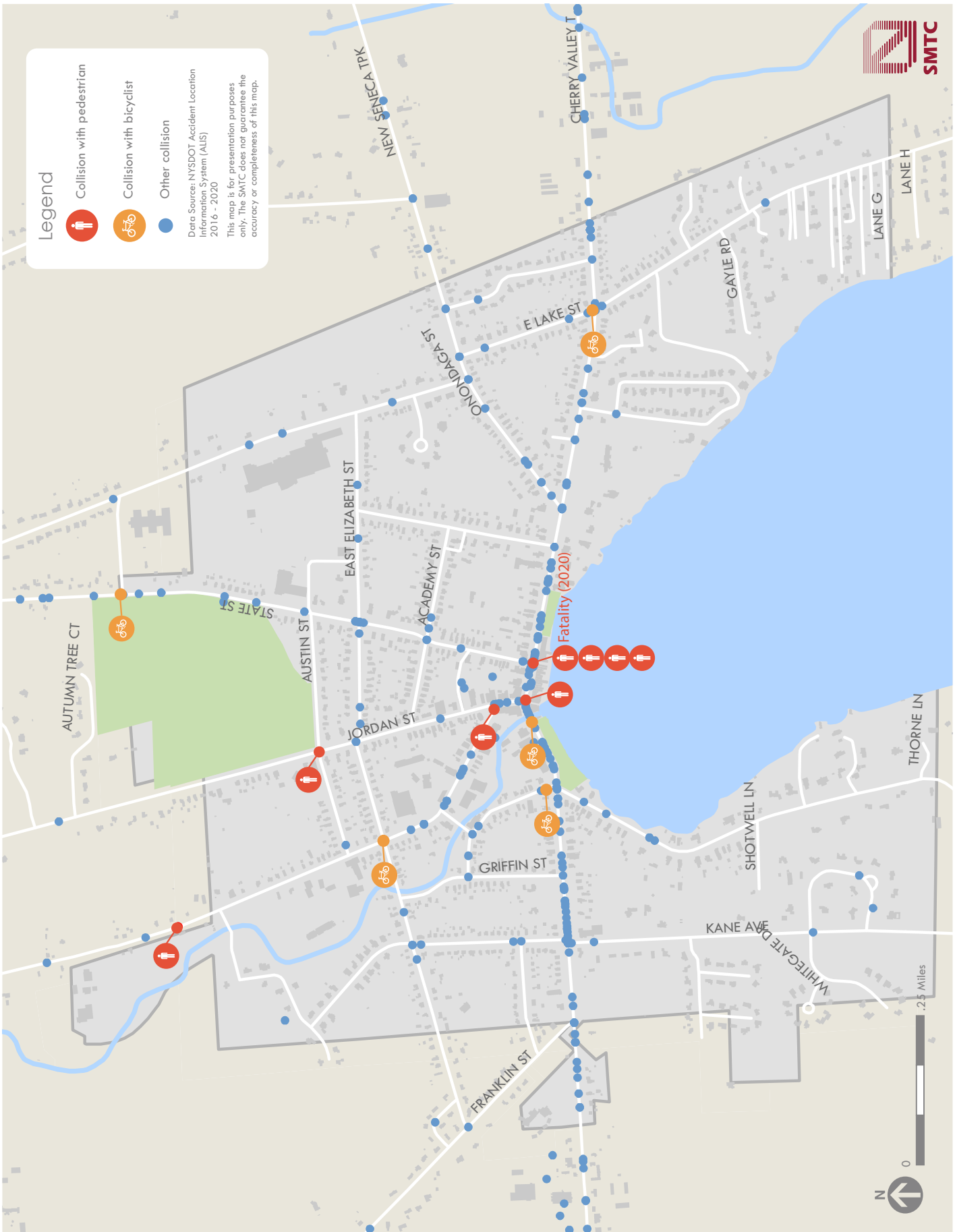
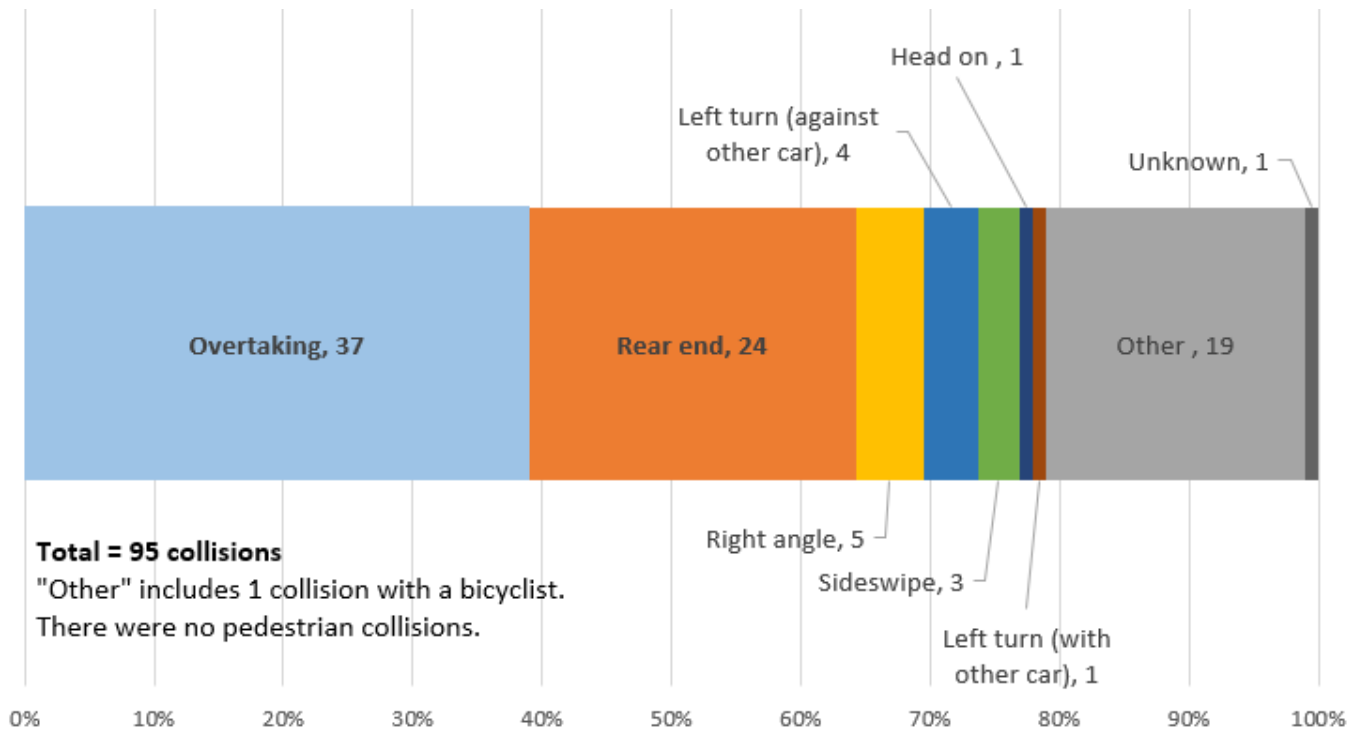
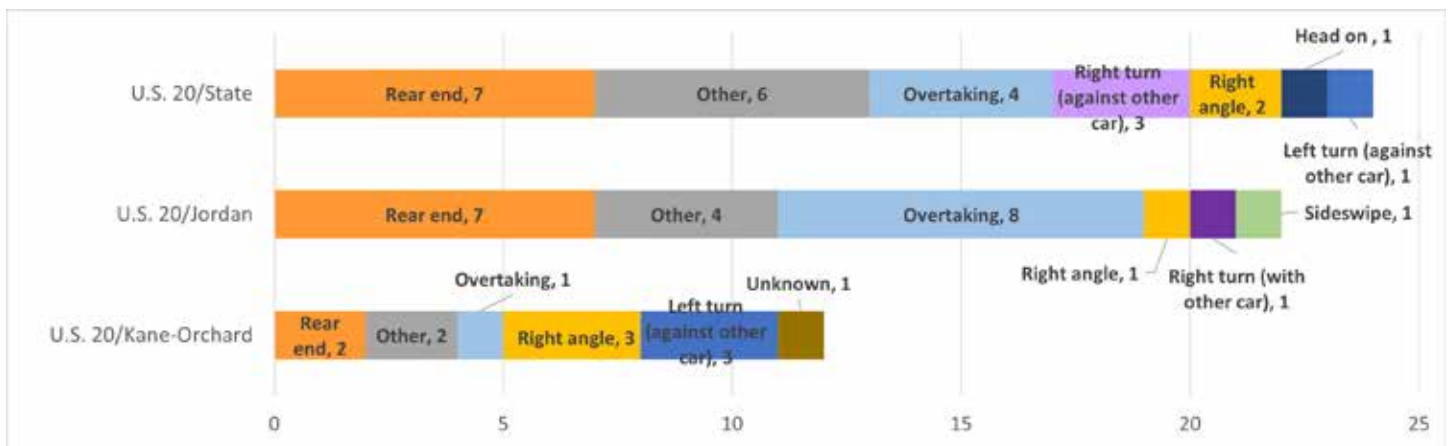


Figure 2.11: Collisions, 2016 to 2020.



**Figure 2.12: Non-intersection (segment) collisions on U.S. 20 by collision type.**

Source: NYSDOT Accident Location Information System (ALIS), 2016-2020.



**Figure 2.13: Collisions by type at selected study area intersections.**

Source: NYSDOT Accident Location Information System (ALIS), 2016-2020.

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# 3 Mobility Issues Assessment

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## 3.1 Assessment Process

Competing forms of traffic converge on the streets within the Village of Skaneateles daily. Heavy trucks, local and visitor vehicle trips, as well as pedestrians and cyclists each look to reach their destinations in a safe and timely manner, resulting in several conflict points. The built environment at each of these conflict points has resulted in mobility issues for each mode.

SMTC held two SAC meetings focused on the identification of safety, mobility, and accessibility issues for pedestrians within the study area. In many cases, these pedestrian concerns are inseparable from how vehicles use the village streets. The issues that were identified through these discussions with the SAC members are summarized here by location (from west to east) and on Figures 3.1 through 3.3. This issues assessment formed the basis for recommendations, which were reviewed with the SAC and the public, as described in the next chapter of this report.

## 3.2 West Side of Village

The issues that were identified by the SAC members on U.S. 20 from the western village line to Hannum Street are shown on Figure 3.1.

### 3.2.1 Kane Avenue (Route 41A)-Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection

This is the first major intersection vehicles encounter entering from the western edge of the Village. The surrounding land use is predominantly residential with the village fire department located on the southeast corner. The Kane Ave and Orchard Rd approaches are controlled by stop signs, while vehicles on U.S. 20 do not need to stop. Sidewalks are present on both sides of U.S. 20 and on the eastern side of Kane Ave. No pedestrian-vehicle collisions have been recorded at this intersection in the last 10 years. The main mobility issues identified at this intersection include:

- High traffic intersection, with increased traffic

during summer months due to boat launch access farther south on Kane Avenue (Route 41A).

- Offset alignment, with Kane Ave centerline approximately 30 feet west of Orchard Rd centerline.
- Vehicles making the northbound left-turn movement block other northbound movements.
- No crosswalks across U.S. 20.

### 3.2.2 West Lake Street-Hannum Street / U.S. 20 intersection

On the western edge of the central business district, West Lake and Hannum streets intersect with U.S. 20 at oblique angles. The eastern corners of the intersection are home to locally popular destinations: the Sherwood Inn to the north and Shotwell Memorial Park to the south. Sidewalks are present on all approaches, with crosswalks across Hannum, West Lake, and the eastern leg (westbound approach) of U.S. 20. This is a two-way stop-controlled intersection with stop signs on the Hannum and West Lake approaches only. There is a “Yield for Pedestrians” in-street sign at the crosswalk on U.S. 20, but otherwise the U.S. 20 movements are uncontrolled. The main mobility issues identified at this intersection include:

- There has been one pedestrian-vehicle collision recorded in the last 10 years.
- The angle of the crosswalk across U.S. 20 increases the crossing distance and time for pedestrians.
- Events at the nearby Sherwood Inn attract a large number of pedestrians needing to cross at the intersection.
- SAC members report poor driver compliance with the crosswalk (yield to pedestrians).

## 3.3 Center of Village

The central portion of the study area stretches from Shotwell Memorial Park to Leitch Ave, and includes the intersections of Jordan and State

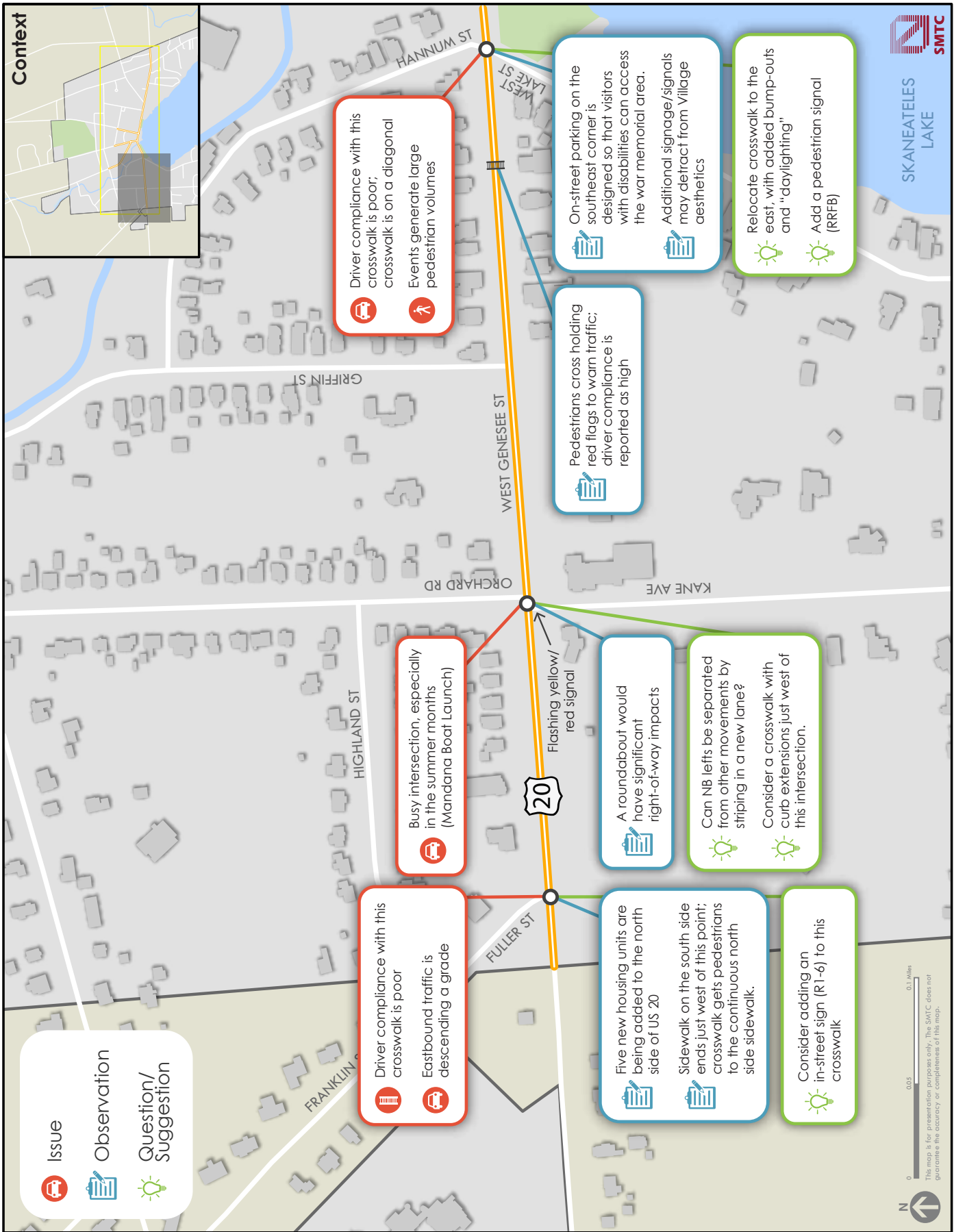


Figure 3.1: Mobility issues, observations, and suggestions - West.

streets with U.S. 20, as well as the Jordan St/ Fennell St intersection. This segment includes two uncontrolled crosswalks: the “gazebo crosswalk” near the pier, and another crosswalk at St. James church.

### 3.3.1 U.S. 20, Clift Park area to Jordan Street

Clift Park sits on the south side of U.S. 20 about halfway between West Lake Street and Jordan Street, and is a hub of activity for the Village all year round, providing access to boat slips and the waterfront in the summer months as well as winter festivals as it gets colder. A midblock crossing across U.S. 20 connects the boat slips and park on the south with the commercial corridor to the north. Sidewalks are present on both sides of U.S. 20. On-street parking is available along both curbs, with five nose-in parking spots available at 18 West Genesee (north side of U.S. 20). No pedestrian-vehicle collisions have been reported here in recent years. The main mobility issues along this segment include:

- Poor pedestrian visibility at the crosswalk.
- Westbound traffic sometimes backs up into intersection with Jordan due to insufficient queuing space.
- Vehicles double-parked near crosswalks. Overly-wide travel lanes may contribute to this, especially near restaurants where take-out pick-ups are common (for example, U.S. 20 westbound, just west of Jordan Street).
- Heavy usage of the midblock “gazebo crosswalk” during the busiest times of the year (especially summer weekends), which interrupts traffic flow on U.S. 20.
- Nose-in parking creates additional conflict points with pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

### 3.3.2 U.S. 20, Jordan Street to State Street

As the heart of the Village’s central business district, both the Jordan Street and State Street intersections with U.S. 20 experience substantial vehicle traffic and pedestrian movements. Both intersections are signalized, with crosswalks on all approaches. There are two travel lanes in each

direction on U.S. 20 in this segment<sup>4</sup>. The right-most westbound lane in this segment is a right-turn only lane for traffic turning right onto Jordan Street. The main mobility issues at these intersections include:

- Five pedestrian-vehicle collisions since 2011: one at U.S. 20/Jordan St, and four at U.S. 20/ State St including 1 fatal.
- Westbound heavy vehicles turning right onto Jordan and State impinge on southbound vehicles.

<sup>4</sup> The eastbound lanes of U.S. 20 were restriped in fall 2021, after the previous striping had prematurely faded. In conversations with the SAC prior to fall 2021, the lack of striping on this segment had been identified as a point of confusion for drivers. This issue has since been corrected by NYSDOT.



*The uncontrolled crosswalk on U.S. 20 at Clift Park is especially busy when tour buses arrive in the Village.*



*Nose-in parking at grab-and-go food locations on U.S. 20 regularly create conflicts with pedestrians.*

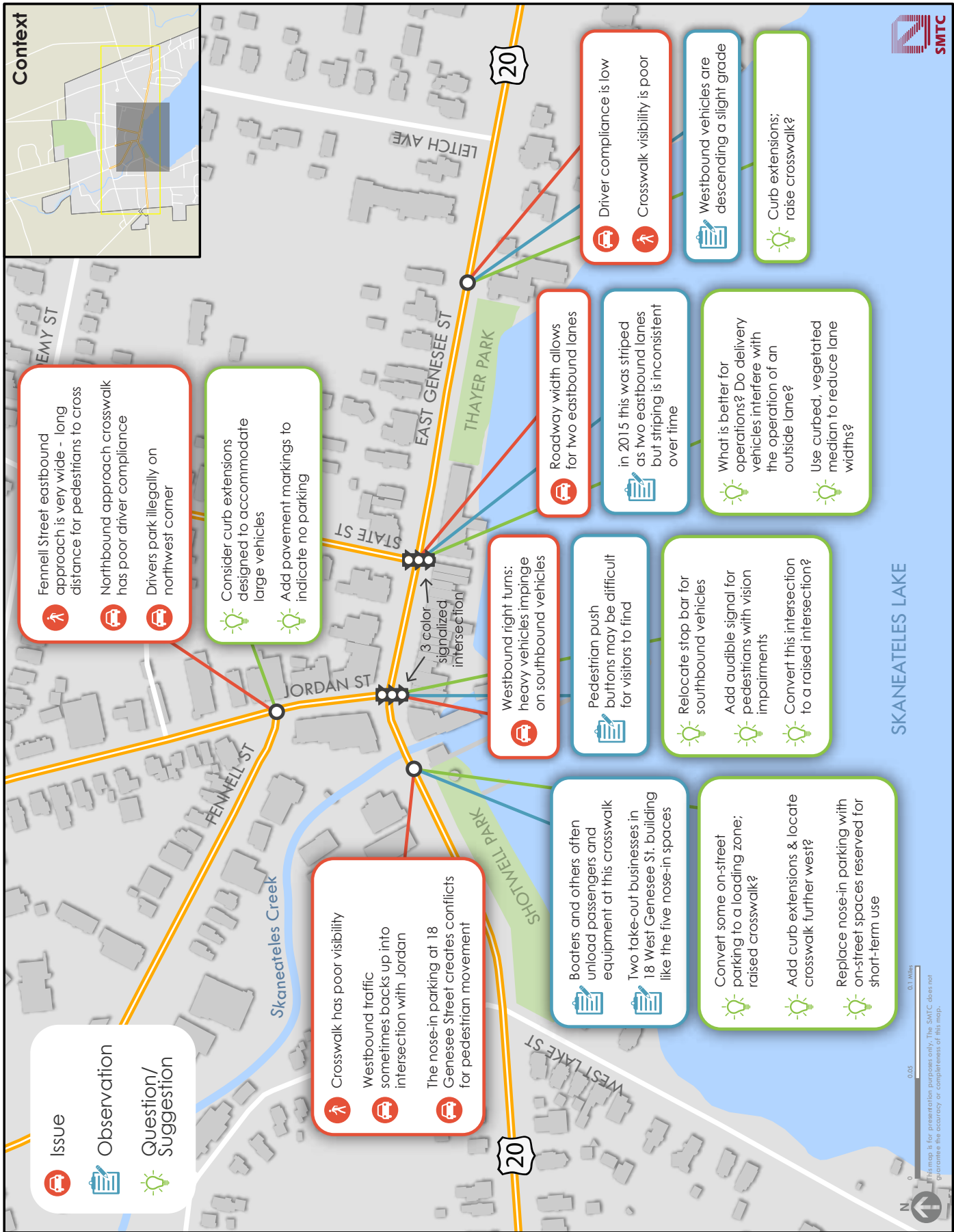


Figure 3.2: Mobility issues, observations, and suggestions - Center.

- Pedestrians frequently cross the road without activating the pedestrian signal. The location of some push buttons may not be apparent, especially to visitors, particularly for the push buttons that are located on the traffic signal poles towards the back edge of the sidewalk (away from the curb edge).
- Double parking is common for delivery vehicles along the southern curb.

### 3.3.3 Jordan Street / Fennell Street intersection

At the center of the Village’s business district, Fennell Street meets Jordan Street at an oblique angle. The eastbound Fennell Street approach consists of two lanes (one left-turn lane, one right-turn lane) and is controlled by a stop sign; there are no stop signs on Jordan Street. There are crosswalks on the Fennell Street approach and the northbound Jordan Street approach only. The crosswalk on Jordan Street connects to a pedestrian walkway to the main Village parking lot. On-street parking is available on Jordan Street from the Skaneateles Town Hall south to U.S. 20, and limited spaces are available on Fennell Street from Jordan Street to roughly 200 feet west of the intersection. The main mobility issues identified at this intersection include:



*The crosswalk across Fennell Street at Jordan Street is 77 feet long.*

- The angle of Fennell Street results in a very long crosswalk on this approach, increasing the exposure time of pedestrians.
- Vehicles often park illegally on the southwestern corner of the intersection, blocking the crosswalk.
- Driver compliance with the crosswalk on the northbound Jordan Street approach is poor.
- Pedestrians have poor visibility and enter into traffic without proper visual communication regularly at the crosswalk on Jordan.

### 3.4 East side of Village

The focus of discussion on the east end of the U.S. 20 in the village was on the East Lake Street intersection. SAC members also expressed some interest in extending the 30 mph speed limit east of the village line (where it is currently 45 mph).

#### 3.4.1 East Lake Street (Route 41) / U.S. 20 intersection

East Lake Street acts as a major thoroughfare for students walking to and from the high school a half-mile to the north of the intersection with U.S. 20. The surrounding land use is primarily residential, with this intersection acting as a gateway into the Village from the east. Sidewalks are present on all approaches with crosswalks on both approaches of U.S. 20. No crosswalks are present across East Lake Street. The main mobility issues identified at this intersection include:

- One pedestrian-vehicle collision in the past 10 years.
- Roadway width allows for informal eastbound and northbound right-turn lanes.
- Northbound left-turns by heavy vehicles encroach on eastbound lanes.
- No crosswalks across East Lake Street.



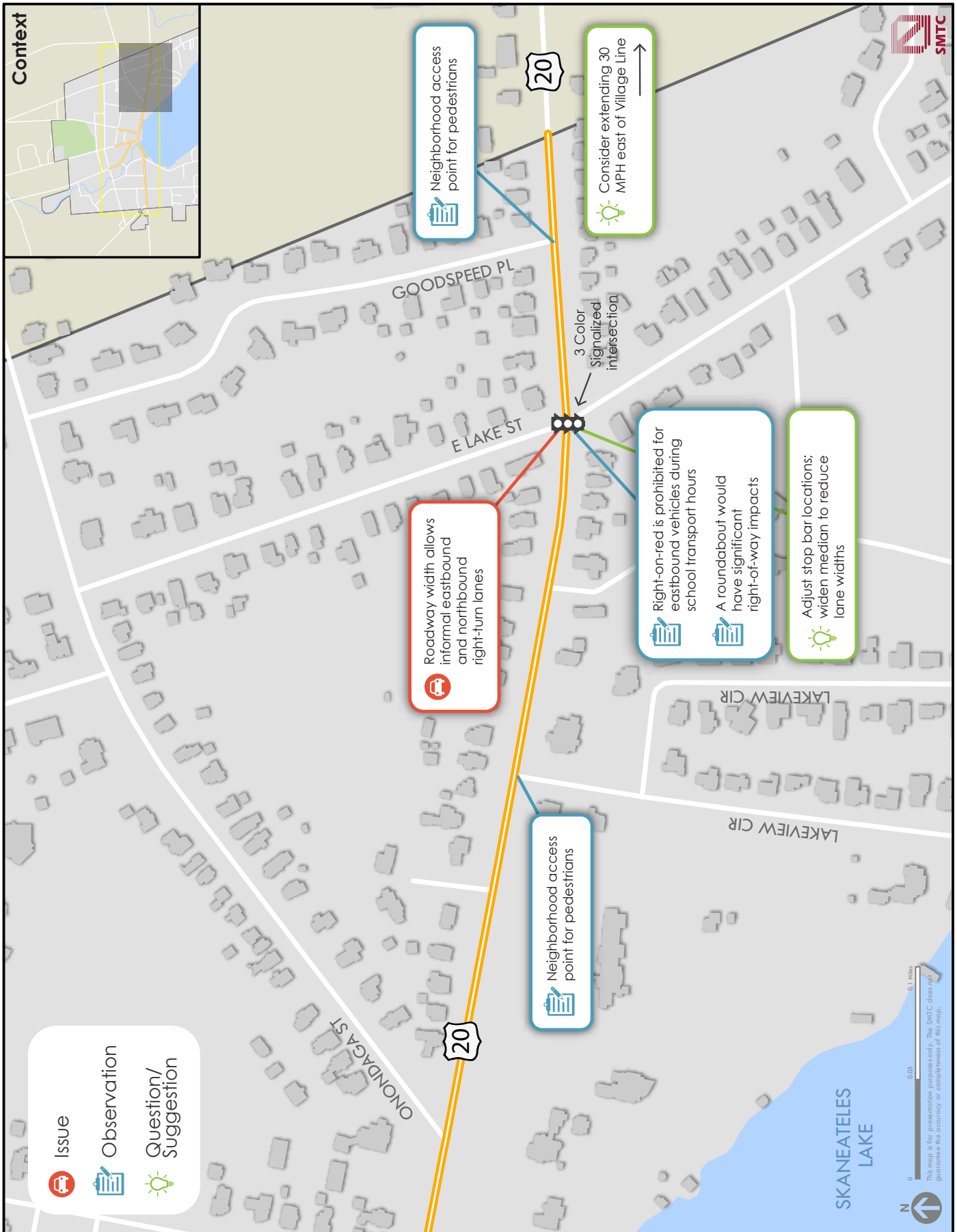


Figure 3.3: Mobility issues, observations, and suggestions - East.

# 4 Design Concepts

## 4.1 Concept Development Process and Public Engagement

Based on the discussion of issues with SAC members, SMTC developed design concepts for six focus locations within the Village, which are indicated on Figure 4.1. An initial set of draft concepts was presented to the SAC. SMTC staff then used SAC feedback to refine the initial set of concepts into a selection of concepts for public review. SMTC created a video presentation for the public that included existing conditions information, an overview of the study area issues, and a detailed review of the design concepts for the focus locations. This presentation was available on the SMTC's YouTube channel starting on January 6, 2022, and a meeting was held on

Zoom on January 18, 2022, during which members of the public were able to ask questions about the concepts and discuss their concerns directly with SMTC staff. The video presentation and the Zoom Question & Answer session were advertised through SMTC's email list and social media, as well as the Village's own communication channels. Twenty-eight people participated in the Zoom session, and many submitted written comments. Additionally, the draft final report was made available for public review and comment on the SMTC website from May 23 to June 3, 2022 and comments were accepted via email. Appendix E includes a summary of the January 2022 public Q&A session and public comments submitted in writing at that time, as well as additional public



Figure 4.1: Concept development focus areas.

comments submitted in response to the draft final report in May/June 2022. Public feedback on the design concepts is incorporated into the discussion of each location in this chapter.

The goal of these design concepts is to address some of the pedestrian safety concerns within the Village while continuing to be a destination that attracts people from across the region. These concepts represent a mix of solving problems and improving pedestrian safety. These concepts share some common goals across locations:

- Traffic calming
- Increase pedestrian visibility at crosswalks/intersections
- Narrow long crossing distances at crosswalks
- Delineate travel lanes
- Maintain on-street parking

U.S. 20 within the Village of Skaneateles is a major east-west road but by bringing speeds down and enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, the goal of better pedestrian safety can be achieved.

Additionally, this study recommends that the Village consider developing a shuttle system for the busiest days of the year, using the Dickens Christmas horse-drawn wagon as a model.

#### 4.2 Kane Avenue (Route 41A) - Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection

Existing conditions at this intersection are shown in Figure 4.2. Two concepts were developed for this intersection, with both concepts including the following proposed improvements:

- Add a three-color signal (to replace the existing red/yellow flashing warning signal).
- Designate a right-turn only lane for northbound vehicles.
- Add curb ramps to new crosswalks across U.S. 20 on the eastbound and westbound approaches.
- Add two ladder-style crosswalks on U.S. 20.
- Add sidewalk extensions to connect sidewalks to the crosswalks across U.S. 20.
- Upgrade the crosswalk across Orchard Rd to ladder-style.
- Add a stop bar on the southbound approach.

Several SAC members felt strongly that a three-color signal would be beneficial at this location, because of the amount of congestion frequently experienced by northbound vehicles, and public input favored this as well. When volumes on U.S. 20 are at their highest, breaks in traffic can be few and far between, leading northbound vehicles to take risks. The risks to driver safety are compounded when the northbound vehicle in question is towing a boat, as is sometimes the case.

Although the three-color signal is included in both of the concepts for this location, appropriateness of a traffic signal is ultimately at NYSDOT's discretion. A preliminary review of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) signal warrants suggests that traffic volumes at this location meet both the eight-hour and four-hour volume warrants (see Appendix B). The MUTCD explicitly states that whether or not a given signal is appropriate is a matter of engineering judgement, not a pass/fail decision made solely on the basis of traffic volumes or any other single criterion.

As described in the MUTCD, traffic signals have advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include improving the orderly flow of traffic, increasing the traffic-handling capacity of an intersection, reducing the frequency of right-angle collisions, and the ability to coordinate with other signals.

However, installing a signal where it is not needed can lead to issues, such as reducing the roadway's efficiency, increasing driver frustration, and in-



*Flashing yellow lights on the eastbound approach of U.S.20 at the Kane/Orchard intersection.*

creased collisions, particularly rear-end collisions.

Adding a traffic signal at this location - if it is deemed appropriate - would create an opportunity to add pedestrian signals and crosswalks across U.S. 20.

SAC members were skeptical about the need for crosswalks and curb extensions at this location, which does not see pedestrian activity at the levels seen in the village core. However, this is a key village gateway: adding features to visually reduce the roadway's width (via painted curb extensions or median striping) can have a traffic calming effect. Also, this is a residential area in a densely-populated village; accommodating pedestrian activity and reducing pedestrian exposure is good planning practice, even if pedestrian use is not currently on par with the village core.

Adding a signal also creates an opportunity to add a right-turn only lane to the northbound approach. Since the majority of northbound traffic heads east, this signal would provide a substantial benefit to operations at this intersection.

In **Concept A** (Figure 4.3), the proposed crosswalks are supplemented by striping to create median islands. While striped-in median islands do not provide the safety benefits of a curbed median island, they have the advantage of being easier to maintain.

**Concept B** (Figure 4.4) is identical to Concept A, but rather than adding a painted median, this concept would use painted curb extensions to shorten pedestrians' crossing distance and give the road the appearance of having narrower lanes.

Painted curb extensions are used in cities across the country as an inexpensive way to both calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety. The painted curb extensions could be paired with flexible bollards (thin, durable, plastic stakes that can be driven over, if needed) or with small delineators known as "armadillos".

Armadillos are small, rubberized delineators that are fastened to the pavement. They can be installed and removed seasonally. Like traffic cones, vehicles can drive over them without harm to either the delineator or the vehicle, but they help reinforce pavement markings.



Example of a painted median (Auburn, NY). (Photo: Google Streetview)



Painted curb extensions can be aesthetically pleasing while providing a benefit to pedestrians. (Photo: Seattle Department of Transportation)



An 'armadillo' delineator.

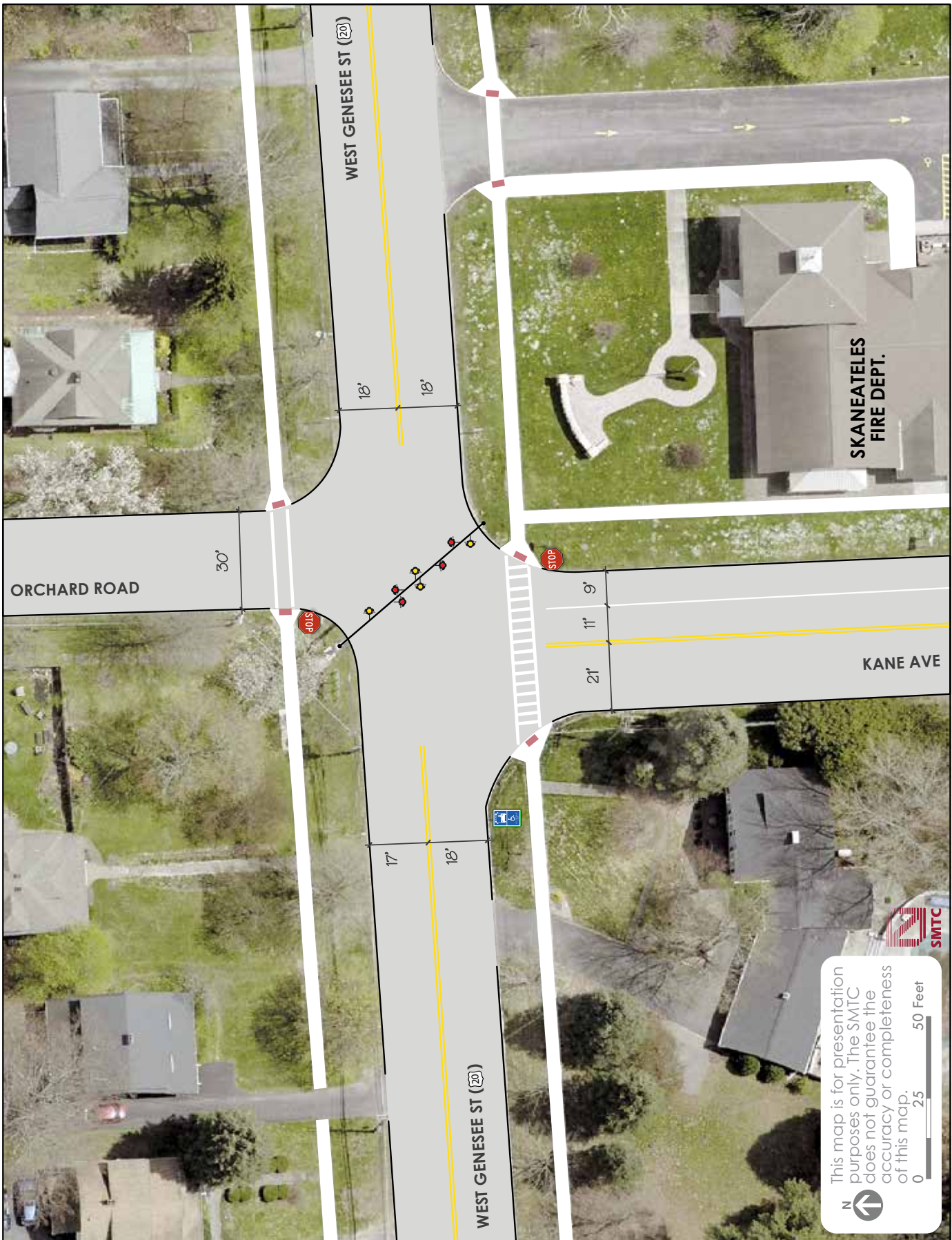


Figure 4.2: Kane Avenue (Route 41A)-Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection existing conditions.



Figure 4.3: Kane Avenue (Route 41A)-Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection concept A.

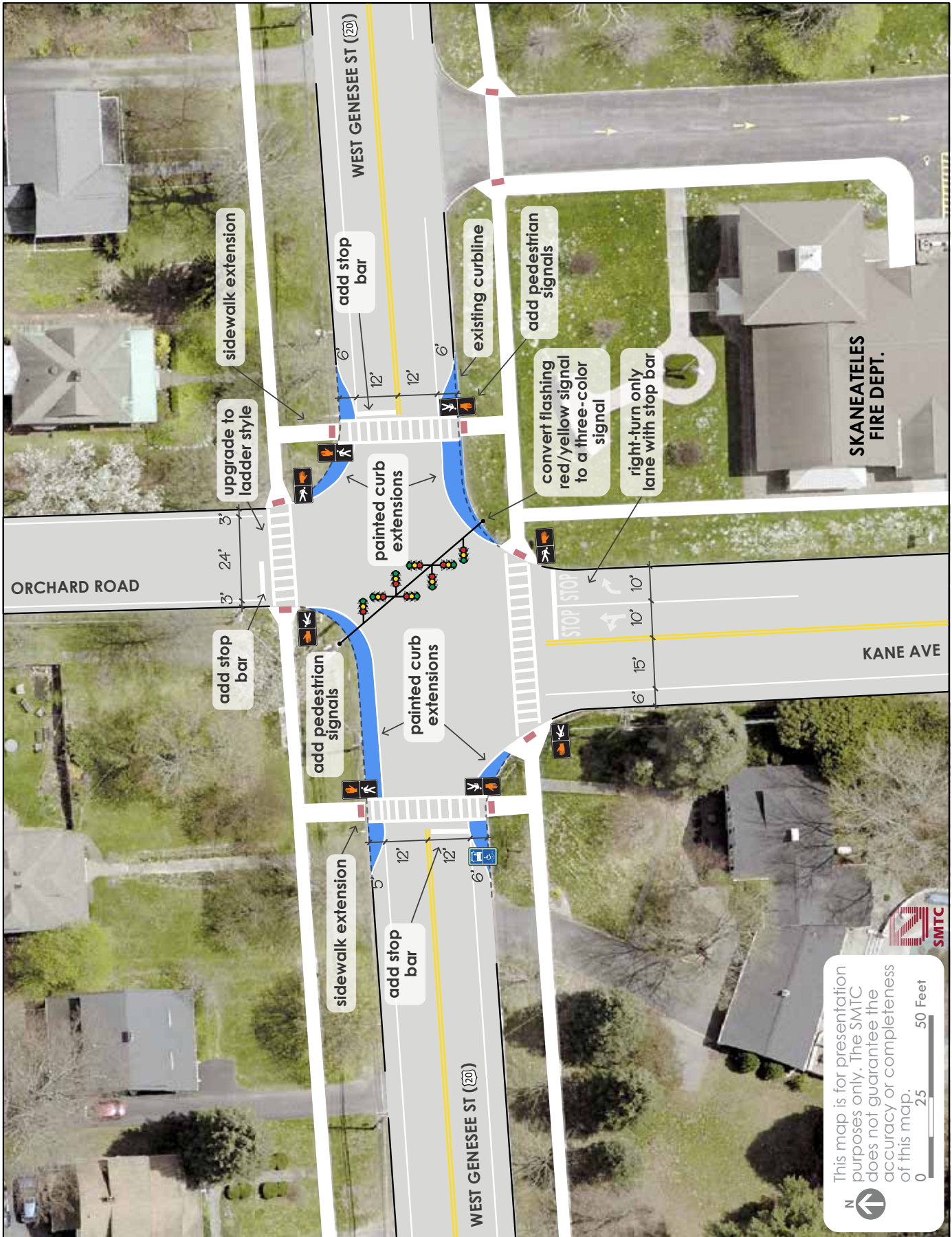


Figure 4.4: Kane Avenue (Route 41A)-Orchard Road / U.S. 20 intersection concept B.

Some members of the public expressed concern that painted curb extensions would wear away quickly, and asked that the curbs be moved to create actual bump-outs. As stated at the January 2022 public meeting, the focus of this study was on opportunities for pavement striping changes that could be incorporated into an upcoming NYS-DOT project. Moving curbs is much more involved and expensive, and would require more conversations between the Village and the NYSDOT. Painted curb extensions could be done with “semi permanent” water-based road paint as an opportunity to test their effectiveness (this is a technique often used in “tactical urbanism”), or could be done with higher-quality, more durable road marking paint as is used for other pavement striping.

#### 4.3 West Lake Street-Hannum Street / U.S. 20 intersection

The design concepts for the West Lake Street-Hannum Street / U.S. 20 intersection are intended to correct this intersection’s greatest challenges to pedestrian movement: wide lanes and a skewed crosswalk (see Figure 4.5). The existing crosswalk on the westbound approach has a diagonal alignment that adds length to the crossing distance. The total width of the traveled way on U.S. 20 on the westbound approach is 34 feet, ten feet wider than the standard width of a two-lane NHS facility.

The wide lanes in this section of U.S. 20 work against both efficient mobility and pedestrian safety. Research predicts that with overly wide lanes comes erratic driver behavior and a high proportion of crashes related to unsafe passing, and that is the pattern that is seen in this part of U.S. 20.

When pedestrians’ crossing distance is longer, it means that drivers have to wait longer for pedestrians to cross the street. An extra ten feet equates to two to three extra seconds per pedestrian under the standard walking speed of 4 feet per second. But for people with mobility limitations, that extra ten feet can get closer to five seconds per person. This leads to unnecessary driver frustration which can, in turn, lead to reckless behavior. In Skaneateles, a major east-west freight corridor must mix with a well-known and attractive tourist destination. Wherever possible, the major pedes-

trian crossing points on U.S. 20 should be designed to minimize pedestrians’ exposure.

The design concepts for this location were both developed to encourage the orderly movement of both traffic and pedestrians. Both concepts include:

- Add a stop bar on the southbound (Hannum Street approach).
- Add double-yellow lane line marking to northbound (West Lake Street) approach.
- Upgrade crosswalks across Hannum St and West Lake Street to ladder style.
- Realign the crosswalk on the westbound U.S. 20 approach to reduce the crossing distance.
- Add two on-street parking spaces on the south side of Route 20 west of West Lake Street.

Currently, the on-street parking space on the southeast corner is reserved for people with disabilities. Both design concepts move that space to the east, to allow for the realigned crosswalk. But with the addition of two spaces to the west of the intersection, there would be a net gain of one parking space in this area.

**Concept A** (Figure 4.6) would shorten the crossing distance and reduce lane widths by using painted curb extensions and a re-aligned crosswalk. The re-aligned crosswalk would be 12 feet shorter than the existing crossing, reducing crossing time by 2.3



*U.S. 20 eastbound approach at the West Lake Street intersection.*



seconds (or by five seconds for pedestrians with mobility limitations).

As with the Kane Avenue / Orchard Road intersection, the painted curb extensions here could be delineated with flexible bollards or armadillos.

The current snow removal practice on this portion of U.S. 20 is to remove snow from the road curb-to-curb wherever possible. This means that it is not practical to utilize delineators to define curb extensions in the winter months: snow plows would eradicate them. On the other hand, this snow removal practice suggests that, on balance, the painted curb extensions (and other lane markings) should be visible through most of the winter.

**Concept B** (Figure 4.7) includes median striping rather than curb extensions to reduce lane widths.

This concept also includes the use of signage and pedestrian-activated lights on the westbound approach, to improve pedestrians' visibility. These lights, officially known as rapid rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs) have been shown to reduce pedestrian-vehicle crashes by 47 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Striped medians are an inexpensive way to improve safety and have been shown to have a traffic calming effect, helping to slow vehicles as they enter the village center. Medians also provide pedestrians with a refuge, reducing their exposure time in the street.

<sup>5</sup> National Cooperative Highway Research Program Research Report 841, *Development of Crash Modification Factors for Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing Treatments*. 2017.



*An example of a painted curb extension in Seattle, Washington. (Photo: Seattle Department of Transportation)*



*A set of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) across Warners Road in Camillus, along the Empire State Trail.*

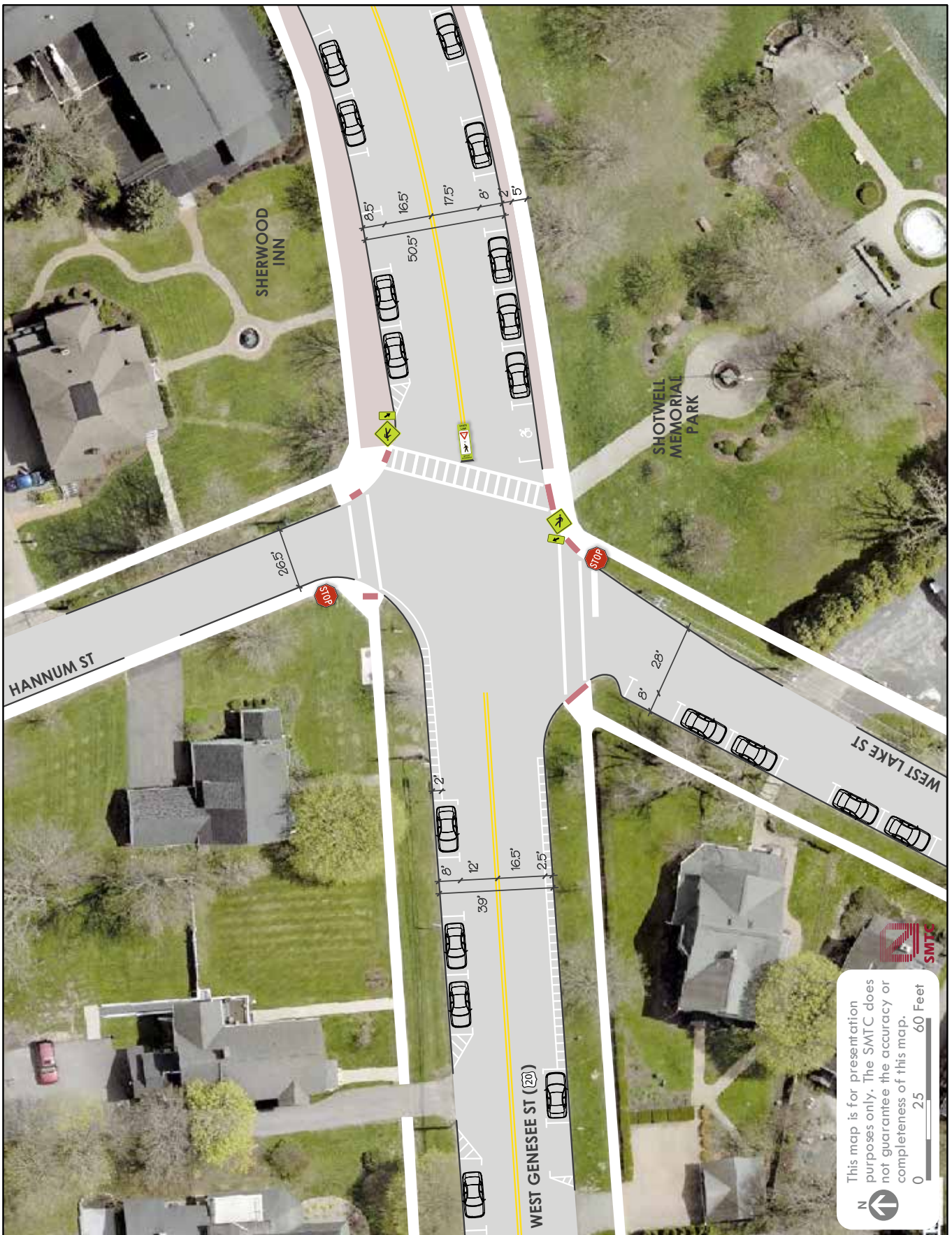


Figure 4.5: West Lake Street-Hannum Street/ U.S. 20 Intersection existing conditions.

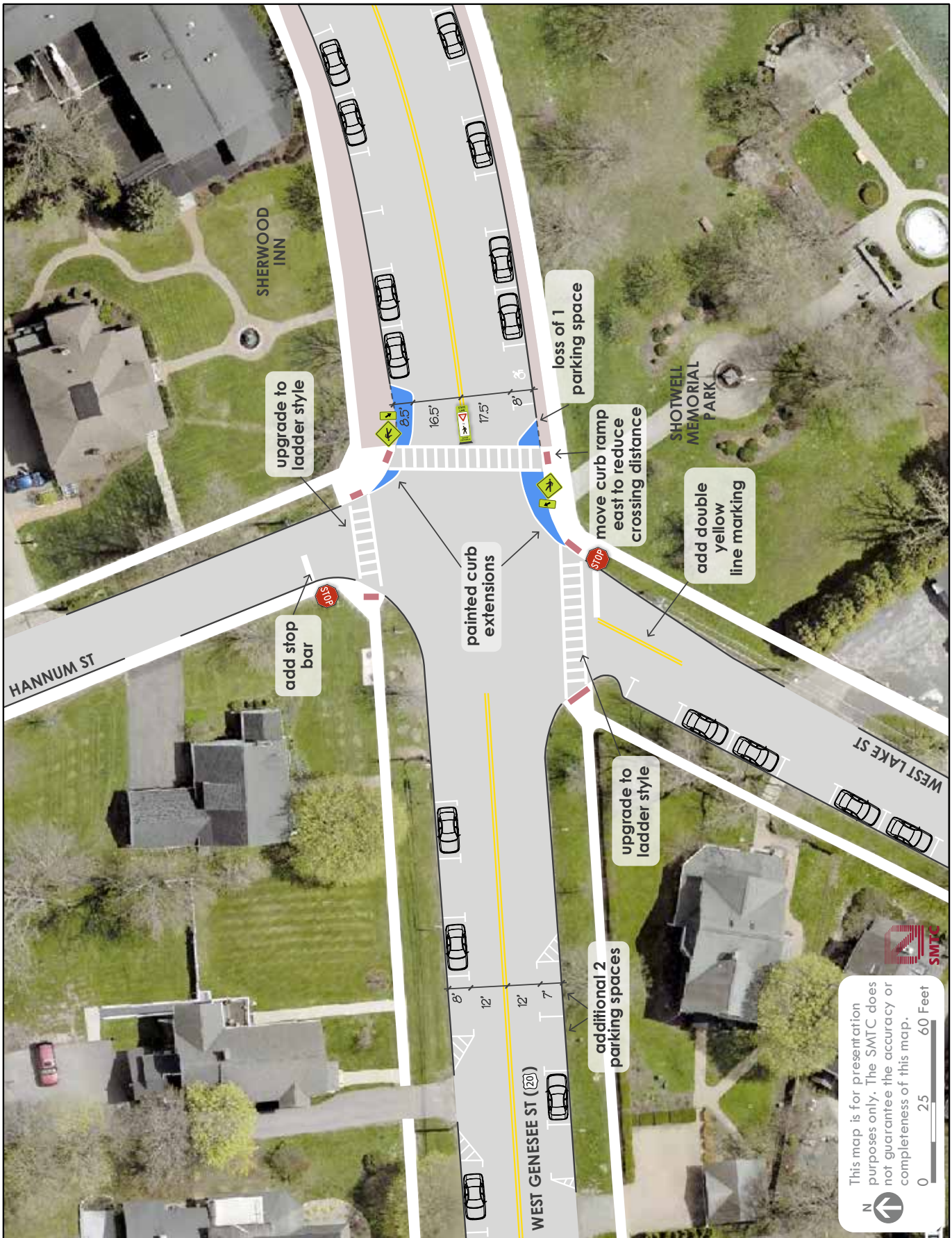


Figure 4.6: West Lake Street-Hannum Street/ U.S. 20 intersection concept A.

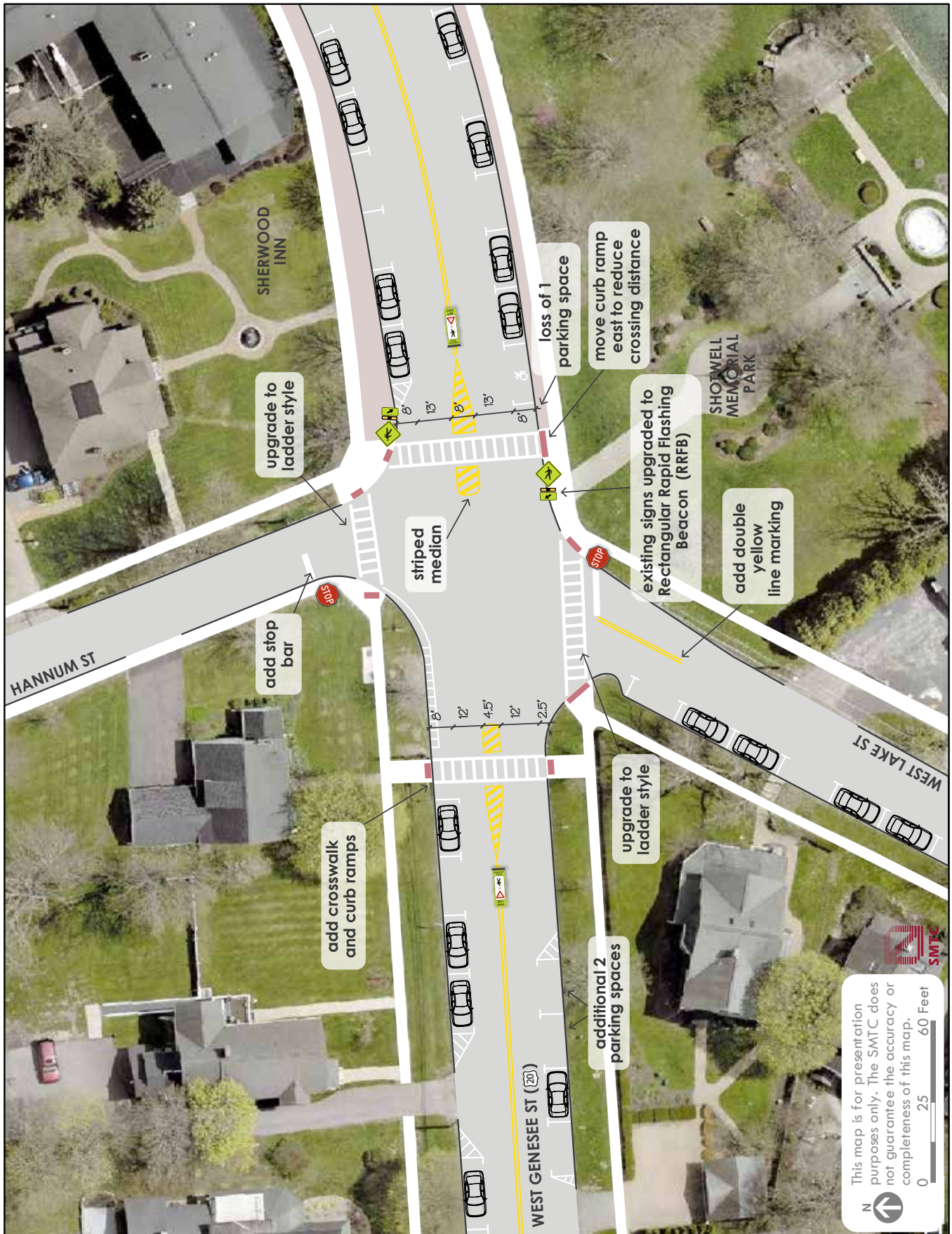


Figure 4.7: West Lake Street-Hannum Street / U.S. 20 intersection concept B.

#### 4.4 U.S. 20, Clift Park area to Jordan Street

The segment of U.S. 20 from West Lake Street-Hannum Street to Jordan Street is 760 feet long. The south side of the road is almost entirely occupied by two major visitor attractions: Clift Park and adjacent Shotwell Memorial Park. Parking for visitors is primarily found on the north side of the road, leading to the predictable and recurring problem of large numbers of pedestrians crossing U.S. 20 in this segment.

The concept proposed (Figure 4.9) for this section includes the following elements:

- Relocate the mid-block crosswalk farther west, to the Sherwood Inn, and consider converting it to a raised crosswalk.
- Designate two parking spaces on the south side of U.S. 20 near the pier as 15 minute loading/unloading only (relocating the crosswalk would allow an additional parking space on each side of U.S. 20 at this location).
- Add a striped center median to narrow this section to one travel lane in each direction and delineate a left-turn lane on the eastbound U.S. 20 approach at Jordant St.

The travel lanes on U.S. 20 adjacent to Clift Park are 20 feet wide. This excess width encourages drivers to increase speed (especially heading west out of downtown), and gives passenger vehicles dangerous opportunities to pass one another. A striped median would clearly define one narrower travel lane in each direction in this segment (with an eastbound left-turn lane at the Jordan Street intersection).

The existing mid-block crosswalk at the Clift Park gazebo sits about 200 feet west of the U.S. 20 / Jordan Street intersection. When large groups of pedestrians are using this crosswalk, it can lead to back-ups for westbound traffic that can impact the Jordan Street intersection. At times, this can result in back-ups for eastbound traffic on Fennell Street.

Some SAC members were in favor of eliminating this crosswalk in order to alleviate this problem. However, given pedestrians' motivations to cross U.S. 20 in this segment, a midblock crosswalk is needed to prevent jaywalking. The suggestion to relocate the crossing received mixed feedback at

the public meeting - about evenly split in favor and against - with some concerns about "just moving the issue" without solving it. There were also concerns voiced about stormwater drainage around a raised crosswalk, which would need to be addressed in design.

A raised crosswalk<sup>6</sup> would improve pedestrian visibility and slow traffic on U.S. 20 in this pedestrian-oriented area. Raised crosswalks have been shown to reduce vehicle-pedestrian crashes by up to 45 percent, according to the FHWA. The added safety of a raised crosswalk may be more attractive to pedestrians, reducing their inclination to jaywalk elsewhere in this segment.

Raised crosswalks and raised intersections (see Section 4.5) signal to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian-oriented setting. These are relatively new traffic calming treatments although they are becoming increasingly popular. Members of the public tend to be more familiar with speed bumps, which have been in use for decades. As described in NYSDOT's Engineering Instruction 13-018 on Raised Crosswalks, they provide "an algebraic difference in slope of 4% that operates similar to a vehicle crossing the normal crown of a major highway. The concrete approach slabs help provide a visual contrast and the illusion that the vertical change is greater than 4" (100 mm)."

As noted in Section 3.4.1, the "gazebo crosswalk" is heavily used during the busiest times of the year. SAC members and members of the public repeatedly expressed frustration with the flow of pe-

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures\\_detail.cfm?CM\\_NUM=7](http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=7)



*Raised crosswalk at the 12th Street/Main Street intersection in Cincinnati, Ohio.*

pedestrians at this location and there was a strong desire to implement a solution that would “pulse” pedestrians, forcing them to cross in groups in order to minimize how often traffic on U.S. 20 needs to stop. This is a challenge to address, because most pedestrian safety countermeasures for mid-block crossings are intended to draw attention to crosswalks to increase driver compliance (“conspicuity enhancements”), but not to “control” pedestrians. For example, the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)<sup>7</sup> uses lights to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians in the crosswalk, but *does not* include pedestrian signal heads (so cannot indicate DON’T WALK to pedestrians).

It was suggested that traffic could be stopped on U.S. 20 and pedestrians allowed to cross at the gazebo crosswalk at the same time that pedestrians receive the WALK indication to cross U.S. 20 at Jordan Street. This would require a signal system at the crosswalk to be coordinated with the Jordan Street signal. The WALK indication at Jordan Street is displayed during the interval that the Jordan Street southbound approach receives the green indication. Vehicles making the southbound right-turn movement from Jordan Street would, potentially, be stopped at the crosswalk, only about 170 feet to the west.

Installing a full three-color signal at the gazebo crosswalk would control pedestrians and stop traffic on U.S. 20, but would likely be prohibitively expensive, complex (due to the proximity to the Jordan Street intersection), and not warranted the majority of the time outside of special events.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs)<sup>8</sup> include a pedestrian signal head that indicates WALK/DON’T WALK. Although it is possible to coordinate PHBs with existing signal systems, “immediate response is preferable to having pedestrians wait for the WALK signal.”<sup>9</sup> Some studies have found that a delayed response from the PHB results in pedestrians crossing against the signal, and driver frustration if traffic is stopped after a pedestrian has already crossed. This can lead to noncompliance with the

PHB on the part of both drivers and pedestrians.

Another option to consider, especially during peak times such as the Dickens Christmas festival and weekends during July and August, is the use of a police officer to control both pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

NYSDOT Region 3 staff cited the example of the crosswalk on State Fair Boulevard, where a temporary 3-color signal is used during the New York State Fair but is manually controlled by a police officer. The officer can observe the pedestrian demand and decide to stop traffic and allow pedestrians to cross once a sizable crowd of pedestrians has gathered, which balances pedestrian safety with the desire to maintain vehicular traffic flow on a major roadway.



*A pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB) on West Street in the City of Syracuse.*



*Temporary 3-color signal at crosswalk on State Fair Boulevard. (Photo: Google)*

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures\\_detail.cfm?CM\\_NUM=54](http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=54)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures\\_detail.cfm?CM\\_NUM=53](http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=53)

<sup>9</sup> [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/tools\\_solve/fhwas14014/](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/fhwas14014/)

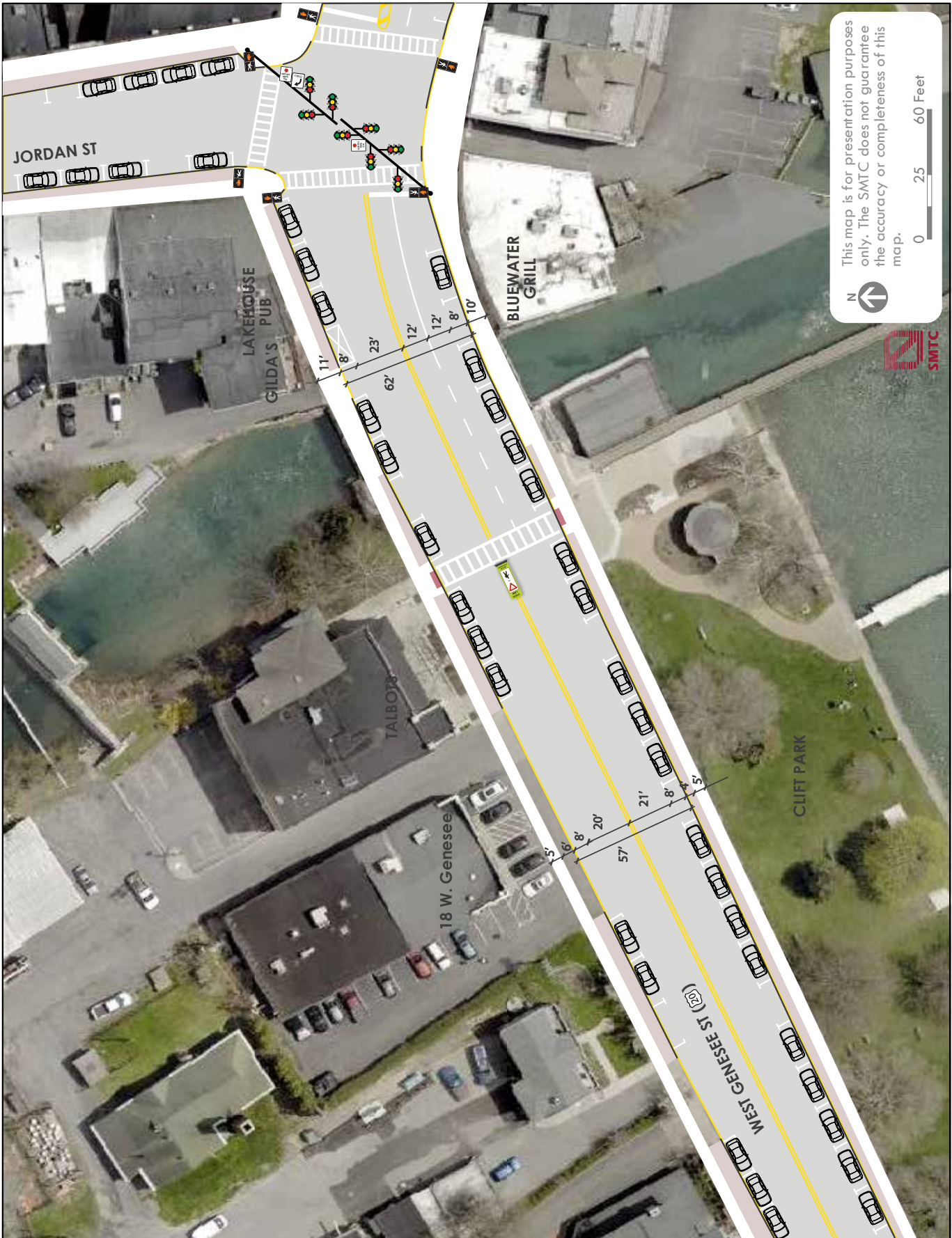


Figure 4.8: U.S.20, Clift Park area to Jordan Street existing conditions.

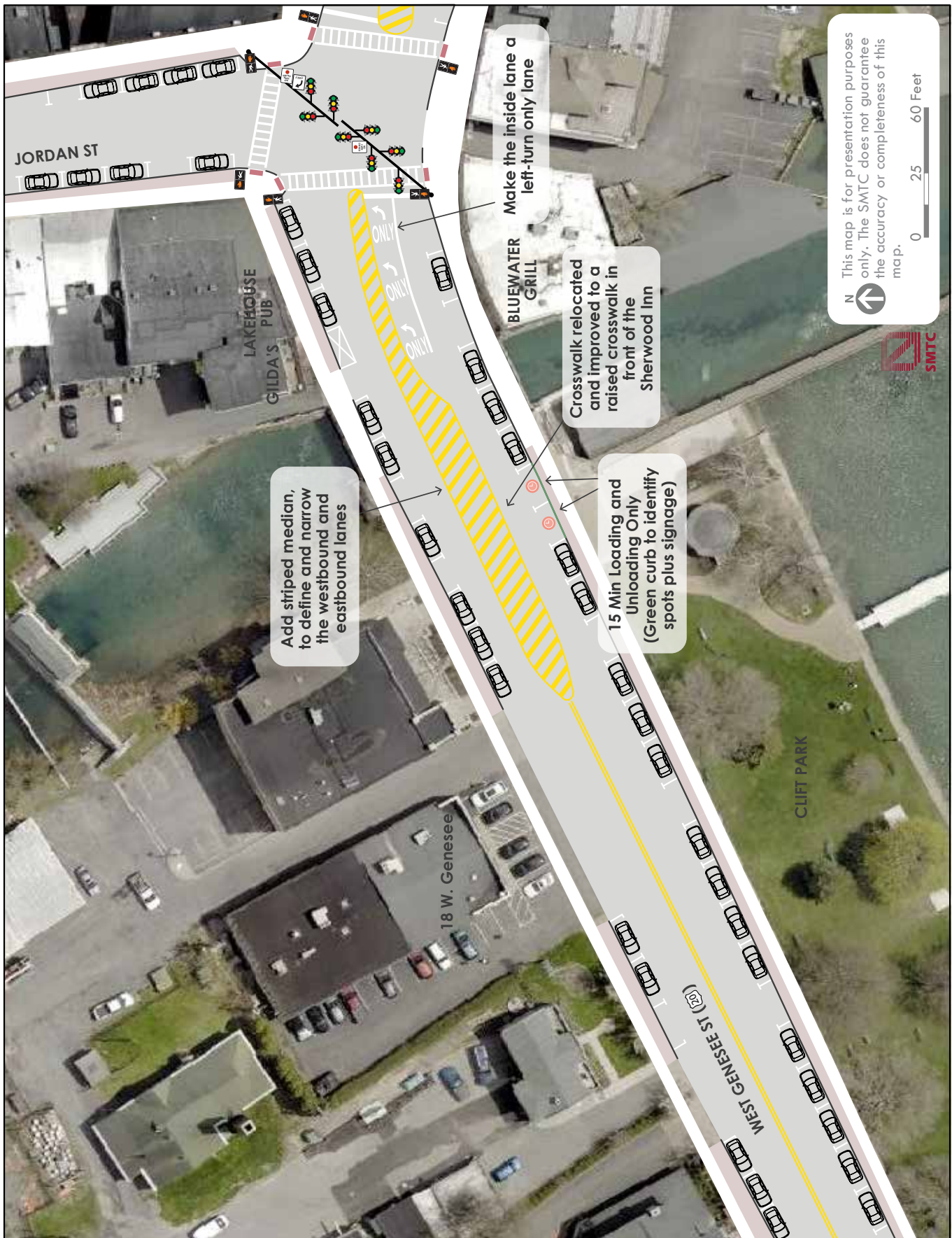


Figure 4.9: U.S.20, Clift Park area to Jordan Street concept A.





*A photosimulation of a raised crosswalk on U.S. 20 near the Sherwood Inn.*

#### 4.5 U.S. 20, Jordan Street to State Street

The segment of U.S. 20 between Jordan and State Streets is the heart of the village's business district. The largest block of public parking in the village is on the north side of this block, while shopping and other destinations are found on the south side. Pedestrian activity is extremely high in this segment and the existing traffic signals and intersection design include numerous elements to support pedestrian movement, including leading pedestrian interval signal timing and curb extensions.

Nevertheless, there are opportunities to eliminate conflicts in this section of road, making it safer for all users. Eliminating access to the municipal parking lot on the north side of U.S. 20 and restricting access to the lakefront parking area to right-in/right-out only would reduce turning movements - and conflict points - in the segment.

Both of the concepts developed for this segment include the following elements:

- Add a stop bar to southbound Jordan Street.
- Relocate all stop bars based on an evaluation

of the turning radii of large tractor-trailers, to ensure that stopped vehicles are not in the path of travel of large trucks.

- Relocate pedestrian push buttons on the south side of U.S. 20 to bollards adjacent to crossing points to improve their visibility.
- Consider automatic recall for pedestrian walk phases during highest-demand times (especially summer weekend days).
- Install ADA-compliant detectable warnings on the curb ramps at the Jordan Street/U.S. 20 intersection.
- Replace access to the municipal parking lot on the north side of U.S. 20 with public space.
- Restrict access to the lakefront parking area to right-in and right-out only.

**Concept A (Figure 4.11)** for this location also includes:

- Use brick pavers (or stamped and colored concrete) on the Jordan Street crosswalks to draw attention to these crosswalks.
- Designate the left-most (inside) lane on the eastbound approaches at Jordan Street and State Street as a left-turn only lanes.

- Use median striping to create a center median and a single eastbound travel lane between Jordan Street and State Street.

An evaluation of traffic operations using Synchro software indicated that these lane designation changes would result in minimal overall change in delay at these two intersections (see Appendix C).

**Concept B (Figure 4.12)** proposes using raised intersections at both Jordan and State streets to ensure pedestrian visibility and to slow all vehicles down.

The City of Philadelphia implemented raised intersections in Center City to create a gateway to the city’s theater and arts district. Closer to home, the Village of Fayetteville installed two raised intersections to ensure that drivers obey posted speed limits.

When designed properly, raised intersections can be traversed by all vehicle types, including agricultural equipment, and can reduce operating speeds by between 14 and 24 percent.

NYS DOT recently implemented a raised intersection on Route 787 in Cohoes – a major thorough-



*Raised intersection in Matthews, North Carolina. (Photo Alta Planning + Design)*

fare that sees twice as many vehicles as U.S. 20 and many fewer pedestrians than are found daily in Skaneateles.

Both concepts for this segment of U.S. 20 show the closure of the access driveway to the municipal parking lot on the north side of U.S. 20. This would eliminate a vehicular conflict point, and also create an opportunity to develop a public space. This is shown on the concepts as green space, but could also be a pedestrian plaza, or some combination of greenscape and hardscape. This idea received a very favorable reaction from the SAC and at the public meeting. It was even suggested that the alley next to Skaneateles Creek (also on the north side of U.S. 20) should be a candidate for similar treatment. The Village could pursue one or both of these alley closures using tactical urbanism techniques in the short-term. For example, using movable planter boxes to close the driveway and setting up furniture and potted trees (this is similar to what has already been done with the alley off of Jordan Street at the Fennel Street intersection). If the public response is positive, the Village could pursue more permanent measures such as replacing the existing pavement with pavers or with grass for all of these locations. This could also be an opportunity to create stormwater management features. Both the City of Chicago<sup>10</sup> and the City of Detroit<sup>11</sup> have “Green Alley” programs that provide examples.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/Green\\_Alley\\_Handbook\\_2010.pdf](https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/Green_Alley_Handbook_2010.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://detroitfuturecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Green-Alleys-Detroits-Opportunity-for-Innovation-1.pdf>



*Brick pavers are frequently used to make crosswalks visually distinct from the surrounding pavement. They are used at many crosswalks in Auburn (top photo) and Lake Placid (bottom photo). (Photo: Google Streetview)*

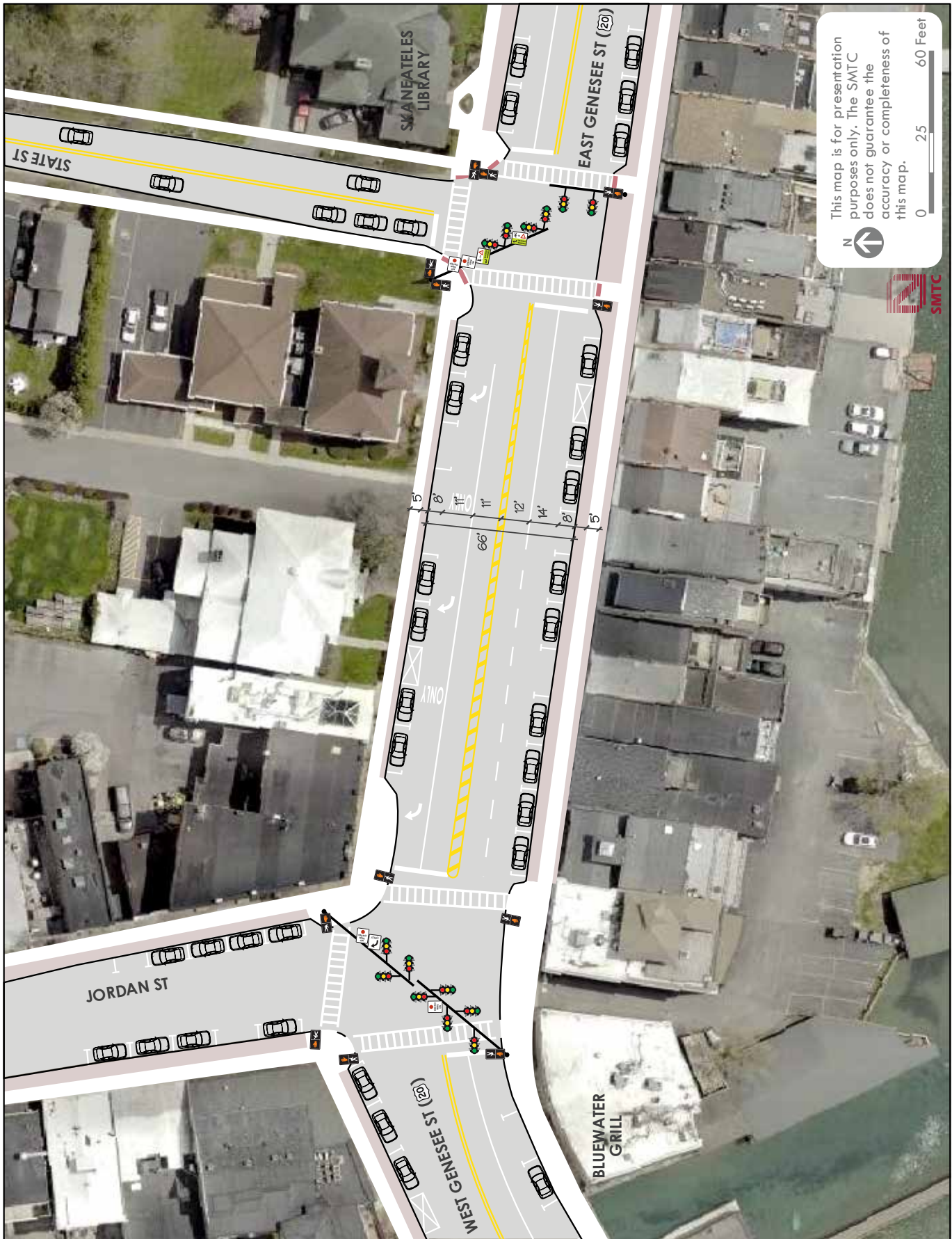


Figure 4.10: U.S.20, Jordan Street to State Street existing conditions.

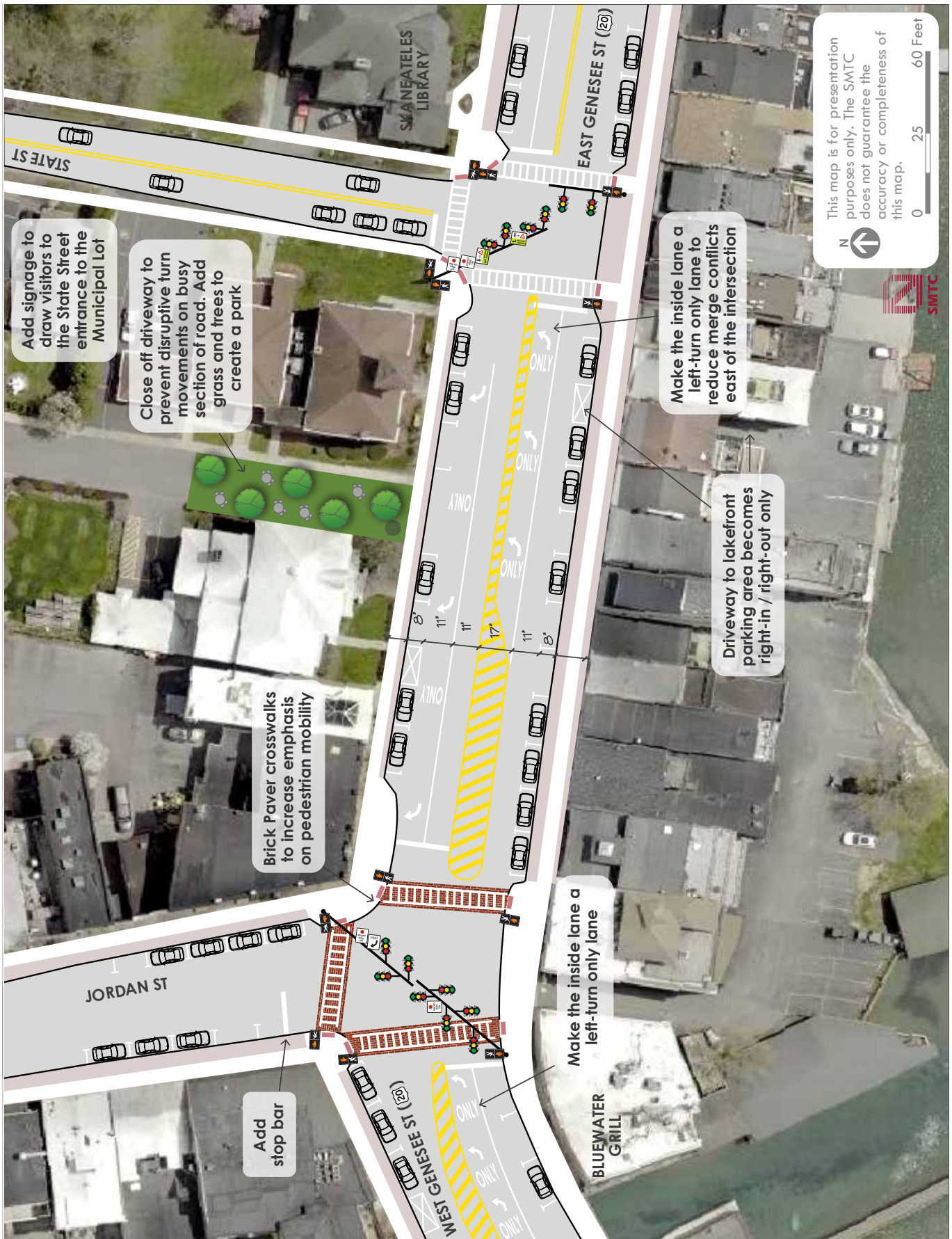


Figure 4.11: U.S.20, Jordan Street to State Street concept A.

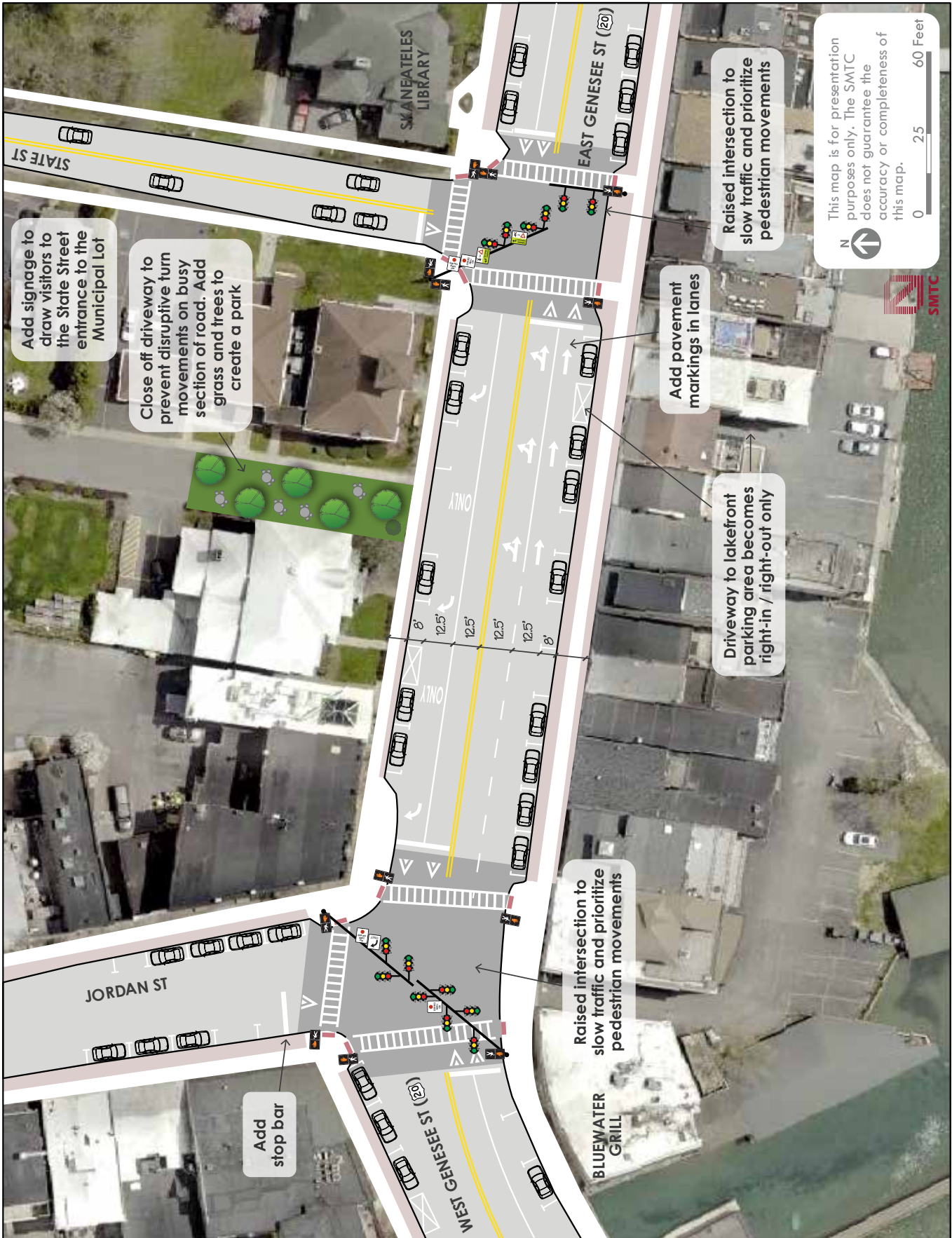


Figure 4.12: U.S.20, Jordan Street to State Street concept B.

#### 4.6 East Lake Street (Route 41) / U.S. 20 intersection

The East Lake Street (Route 41) intersection with U.S. 20 is a signalized intersection that functions well. It is not within the village's central business district, but it is on the north-south walking route for students at Skaneateles High School, making it a significant crossing point for students. For this reason, eastbound right-turns on red are restricted during school arrival and dismissal times (Monday-Friday, 7:00-9:00 a.m. and 2:00-4:00 p.m.).

As is true elsewhere in the village, excess lane width is an issue at this intersection. The eastbound approach consists of a single 22-foot wide lane, leaving plenty of room for eastbound right-turning vehicles to create their own lane at the signal.

The collision rate at this intersection is below the statewide average for similar intersections, suggesting that major design improvements are not necessary.

The concept (Figure 4.14) developed for this location includes the following improvements:

- Stripe a right-turn lane on the eastbound approach.
- Add stop bars and crosswalks to the northbound and southbound approaches and evaluate stop bar placement on all approaches to ensure that stopped vehicles are out of the path of large vehicles making turns.
- Extend sidewalks east to the Village line on the south side of U.S. 20.
- Use striping to create two 3.5-foot shoulders on U.S. 20 east of the intersection.

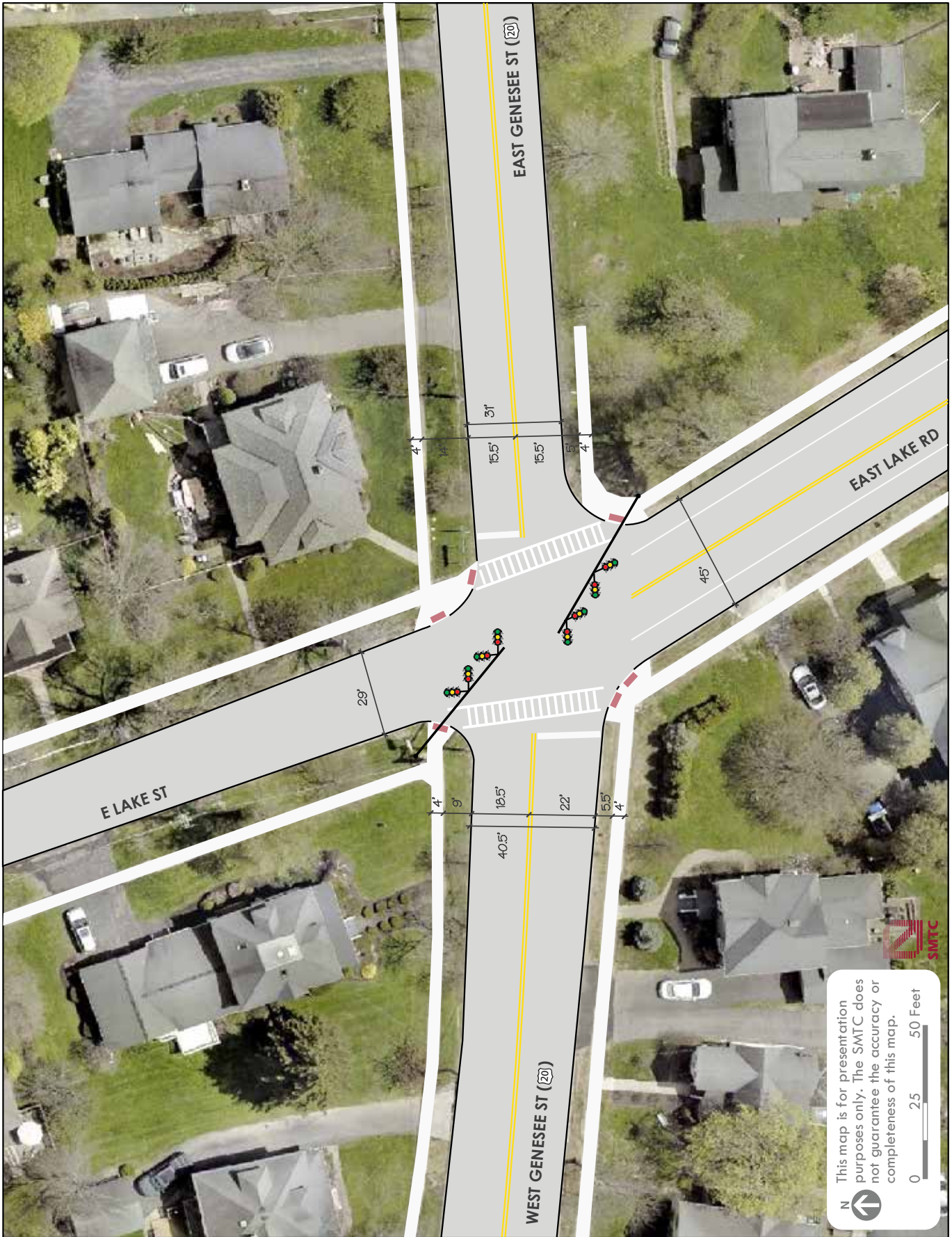
These are relatively minor improvements at an intersection that currently sees few operational issues. Striping a turn lane would clarify driver expectations at this intersection.



*Existing conditions on U.S. 20 eastbound at the East Lake Street (Route 41) intersection.*



*This photosimulation shows eastbound U.S. 20 with a proposed dedicated right-turn lane to southbound East Lake Road.*



53 Figure 4.13: East Lake Street (Route 41)/ U.S. 20 intersection existing conditions.

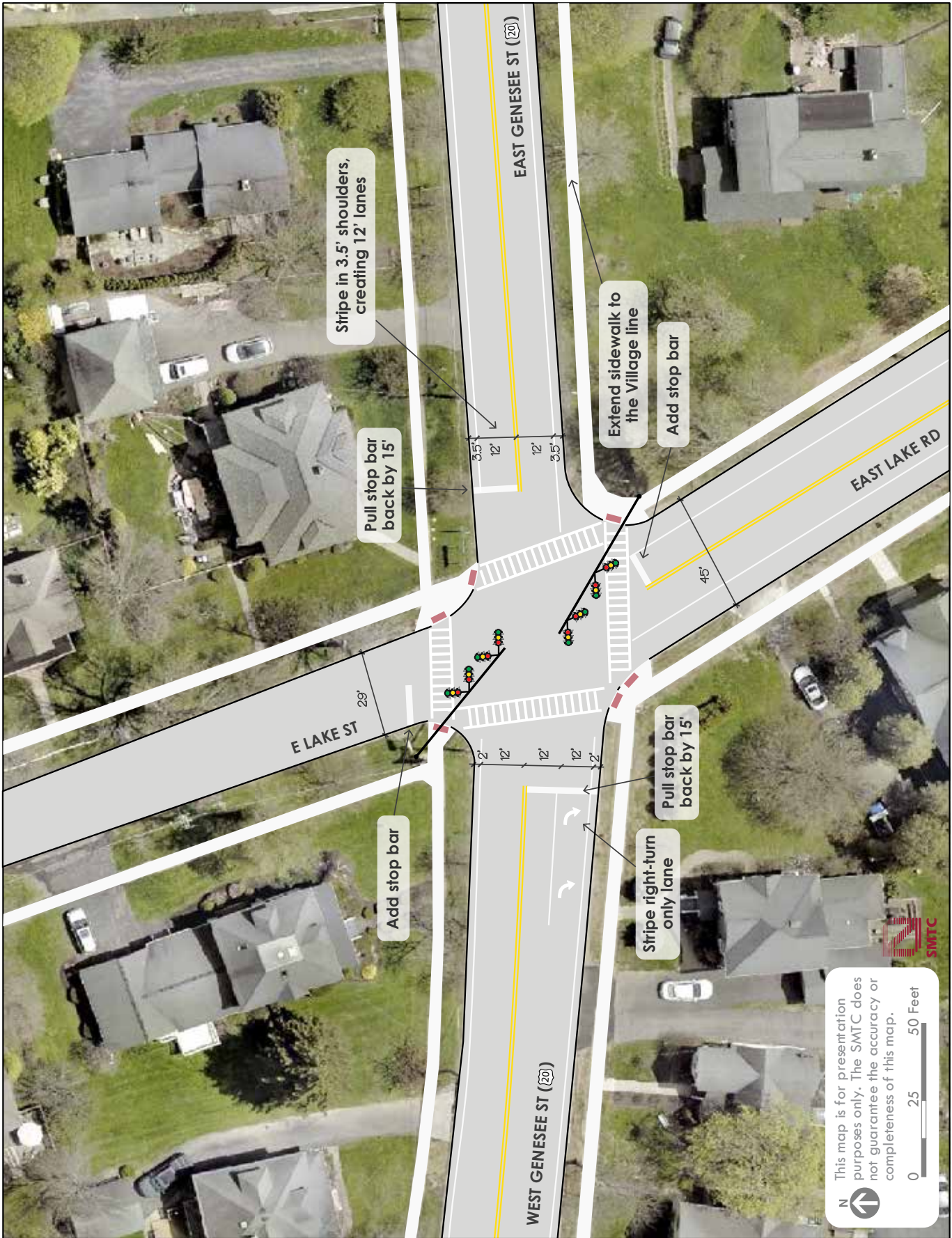


Figure 4.14: East Lake Street (Route 41)/ U.S. 20 intersection concept A.



#### 4.7 Jordan Street / Fennell Street intersection

Given that neither Jordan Street nor Fennell Street are major highways, this intersection is inherently less complex than the intersections on U.S. 20. Lane widths are not constrained to the NHS standard of 12 feet and traffic volumes are a fraction of what they are on U.S. 20.

However, this intersection has complicating elements. While Jordan Street sees a third of the traffic that uses U.S. 20 daily, it is a major north-south route in the Skaneateles area. Similarly, Fennell Street is an important route within the Town of Skaneateles.

The width of Fennell Street is an issue at this intersection. As a former rail corridor, Fennell Street is wider than most other village streets. At its intersection with Jordan Street, the crosswalk across Jordan Street is 77 feet wide, owing both to the width of the street as well as the angle of the intersection. An able-bodied person walking at an average pace would need 18 seconds to cross this crosswalk. A pedestrian with a mobility limitation might need as much as 30 seconds to cross the entire width of Fennell Street at this crosswalk.

The design concept (Figure 4.16) for this location comes from a previous SMTC study, the *Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study*, completed in 2018. This study considered how to connect the Charlie Major Trail in the Town of Skaneateles to the Village of Skaneateles. The study proposed adding bike lanes to Fennell Street and included a few concepts for improving the Jordan / Fennell Street intersection, one of which is shown in Figure 4.16.

The concept utilized raised curb extensions (that is to say, not painted) to reduce the width of the westbound approach, dramatically reducing crossing distances (and times).

Similarly, this concept proposes curb extensions to reduce the crossing distance on the northbound approach. Since the completion of the *Skaneateles Multi-Use Trail Study*, the Village has implemented a crosswalk at the northbound approach to this intersection. SAC members report that driver compliance with this crosswalk is poor, a condition at-

tributed to the fact that the crosswalk was added without the accompanying curb extension.

As shown, this concept would also include bike lanes on Fennell Street. There are a number of challenges to consider in thinking about the suitability of bike lanes on U.S. 20 through the Village of Skaneateles. Fennell Street, on the other hand, has ample width for bike lanes for its length within the Village.

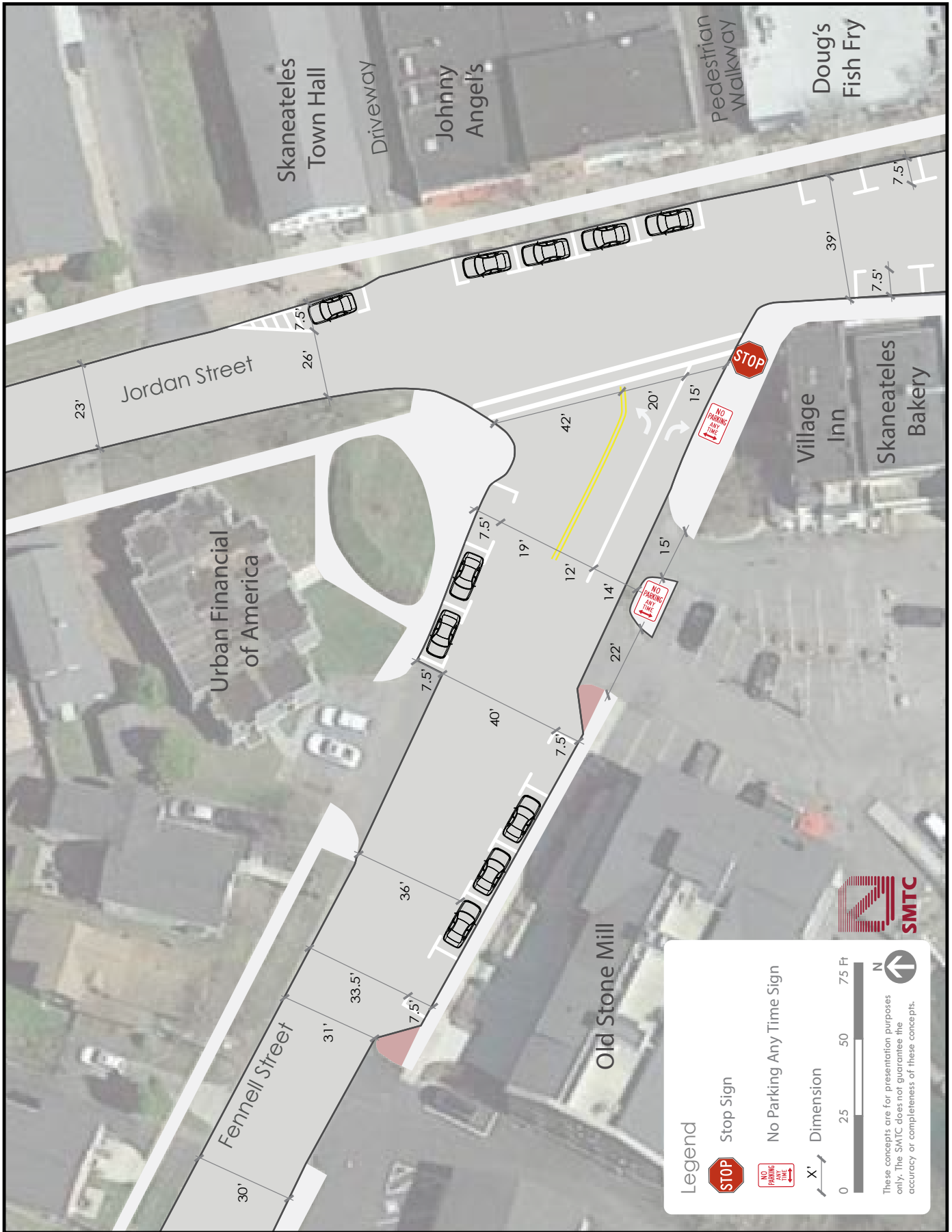


Figure 4.15: Jordan Street / Fennell Street intersection existing conditions, from the Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study.

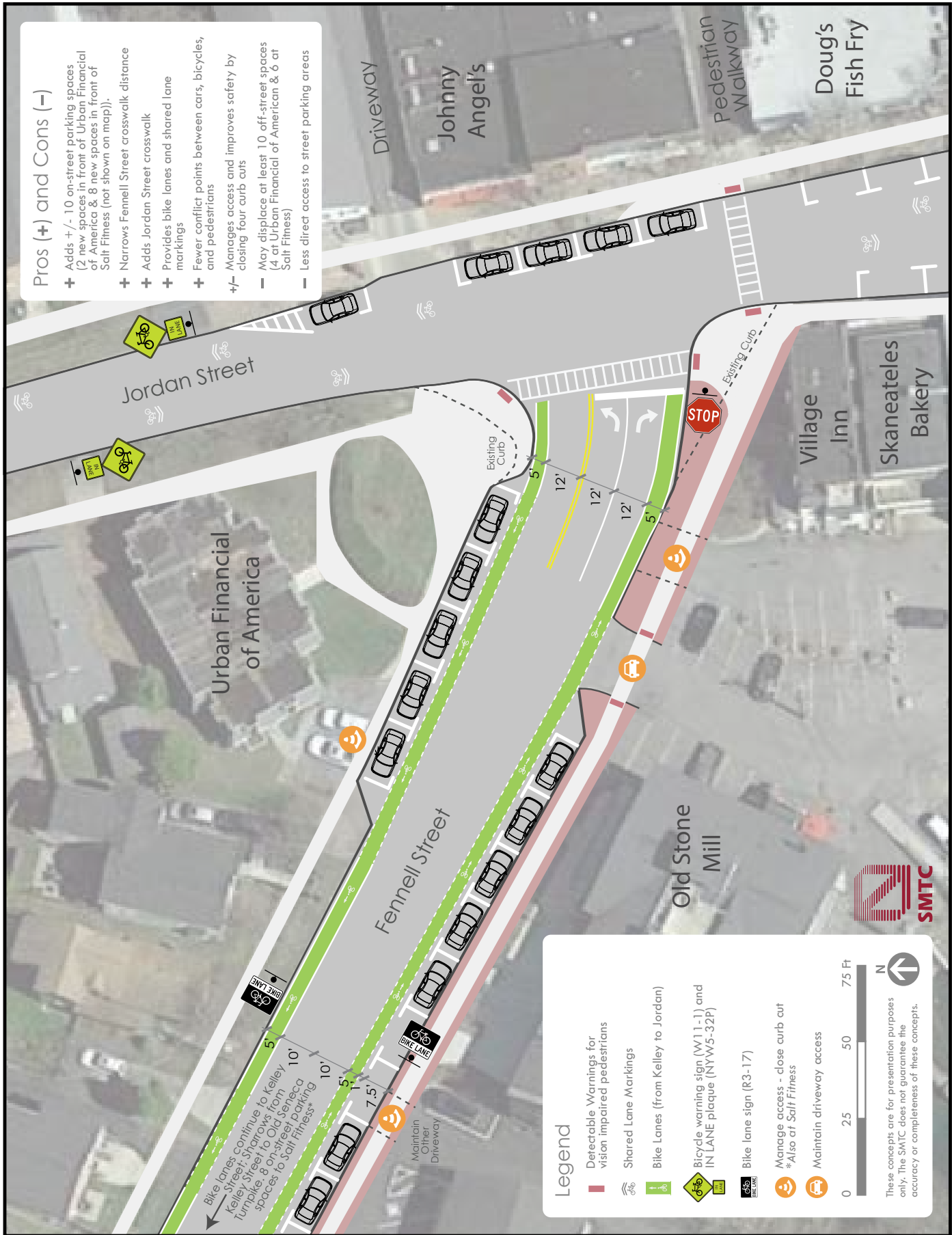


Figure 4.16: Jordan Street / Fennell Street intersection Concept A, from the Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study.

#### 4.8 Parking Shuttle Concept

In addition to redesigning selected intersections and street segments, the village should consider developing a free shuttle to carry visitors from parking lots on the village's edge to the heart of the village on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in the summer. A shuttle system would take pressure off the limited supply of parking in the village's center. This would both prevent some vehicles from entering the village's central business district and remove some traffic that currently circles the downtown core looking for parking.

The supply of parking is on the order of 800 spaces (combined on- and off-street parking) in the heart of the village. Given an effective supply rate of 85 percent, this equates to 680 spaces. While this is more than enough parking capacity for the average village on most days, the Village of Skaneateles attracts large numbers of visitors on summer weekends, in addition to the many workers, residents, and delivery vehicles that need access to stores and restaurants in the village's center.

A free shuttle system is one way to help address the village's parking problem on summer weekends. To be most effective, it should be paired with a signage and advertising program. Ideally, a shuttle system's cost could be offset through the sales of advertising space both on (and in) the shuttle vehicles and at the pick-up and drop-off points. A shuttle could also be coordinated with tour bus companies, and with bus parking fees another possible revenue source.

The route and pick-up and drop-off points for such a shuttle could be modeled on the route currently used by the horse and wagon shuttle system used during the Dickens Christmas weekends. The horse drawn wagons run between the Austin Park Pavilion (at the corner of Austin and Jordan Streets), the High School's student parking lot (at the corner of East Elizabeth Street and Leitch Avenue) and the village center.

Costs for a shuttle system would depend on the total number of shuttle runs. One practical approach would be to initiate a pilot program funded by the Village for weekends in the summer, with shuttles running twice an hour for the busiest hours of the day. Operating hours should be determined in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

The operation of such a shuttle could be put out to bid by the Village and operated like any other contracted service. However, to be an attractive alternative to visitors, it is strongly recommended that this service be provided at no cost to visitors and that it be made as convenient as possible. Since one of the groups with the greatest need for easy, convenient parking options is people with disabilities, it is critical that this shuttle accommodate wheelchairs and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



*The Placid Xprss, a free park and ride trolley in Lake Placid. (Photo: Bill Onasill, Flickr)*



**Figure 4.17: Proposed route and parking areas for a free Village of Skaneateles park and ride shuttle**

#### 4.9 Roundabouts

Two intersections on U.S. 20 were evaluated for their suitability for installation of roundabouts: the Kane Avenue-Orchard Road intersection and the East Lake Street intersection. Figure 4.18 shows planning-level concept sketches of these roundabouts, both of which were based on circulating roadway diameters of 105 feet.

Roundabouts at these locations would serve as gateways to the village's business district, add a traffic calming element for east-west traffic, and enhance crossing opportunities for pedestrians. Current total traffic volumes at both locations appear to be suitable for single-lane roundabouts. However, both intersections are dominated by through east-west movements, which can be problematic for roundabout operations; roundabouts tend to function best with more balanced traffic volumes. A more detailed operational analysis would be necessary at both locations.

The preliminary roundabout designs that SMTC staff developed indicate that the right-of-way needed to construct roundabouts at these locations would be significant, dramatically reducing the green space buffer between adjacent residences and the roadway. Based on those property impacts, SAC members were not in favor of pursuing these roundabouts further. However, SAC members were in favor of adding a three-color signal to the US 20 / Route 41A intersection, citing operational and safety concerns. It is possible that an alternate roundabout design at this location, with fewer right-of-way impacts, would be palatable to SAC members and the community at large. The Village could continue exploring this idea with the NYSDOT if desired.



Figure 4.18: Draft design concepts for roundabouts at the U.S. 20 intersections with State Route 41A (top) and State Route 41 (bottom).

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# 5 Conclusion

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## 5.1 Summary of Design Concepts and Cost Estimates

Table 5.1 includes a summary of the intersection design concepts described in Chapter 4. Many of the proposed concepts mix and match interventions to achieve similar goals of increasing pedestrian safety and improving the flow of traffic within the Village. The table is provided as a quick reference guide to assist with further discussions of the concepts within this report.

Cost estimates were developed for each location and are included in Table 5.1. The details of the cost estimates can be found in Appendix F. These are intended to be order-of-magnitude estimates that the Village can use for planning purposes. Many factors - including the variability of material and labor costs and any potential right-of-way impacts - can influence these costs.

## 5.2 Implementation

Unlike a sidewalk or trail project on locally owned facilities, most of the concepts presented in this study relate to U.S. 20, a National Highway System facility owned and maintained by NYSDOT (see Section 2.5.1). With this knowledge, we must consider what the Village can do on its own and what improvements must be completed with the approval and support of NYSDOT.

### 5.2.1 What the Village Can Control

Suggested improvements that fall outside of the right-of-way of U.S. 20 are within the control of the Village of Skaneateles and should be considered by local leaders to implement at their discretion.

A “Green Alley” program, which would see the transformation of underused or problematic alleys and driveways into public plazas, could be implemented quickly and at a minimal cost. As discussed in Section 4.5, the program could include the driveway to the municipal parking lot on the north side of U.S. 20 between Jordan and State as well as the alleyway next to the

Skaneateles Creek. Utilizing planter boxes, café style seating, and potted trees could immediately create new public spaces within the central village. Should the program prove successful and create a desire for a more permanent alteration, the Village should work with surrounding businesses to install features identified within “Green Alley” handbooks utilized in cities across the country, including permeable pavers and rain gardens.

The Jordan Street/ Fennel Street intersection is the only intersection within the Study Area that falls completely within local control, presenting an opportunity for the Village to improve access to its commercial center without State approval. Although bike access was not the focus of this study, creating a safe bicycle route within the Village can also increase pedestrian safety as traffic lanes are narrowed and vehicles move at slower speeds.

Additionally, the Village is not restricted when it comes to the development of a shuttle bus service for the busy summer and holiday months. The Village owns and operates public parking lots throughout the area that should be promoted as the preferred destination for visitors. By connecting the lots to the village center with a free shuttle, visitors would be able to avoid adding to the congestion experienced along U.S. 20 while looking for a parking spot and have a convenient way back to their vehicle after their trip.

### 5.2.2 Approaches to U.S. 20

Due to the state ownership of U.S. 20, the Village cannot directly implement improvements such as raised crosswalks or signage along the corridor. The Village may be allowed by NYSDOT to add painted curb extensions, but this would require a permit from the State, with the Village permitted to add these features under specific conditions. On the other hand, it is unlikely that NYSDOT would permit the Village to alter or install traffic control devices such as median striping or crosswalks under any circumstances. And, of course, the

**Table 5.1: Summary of Suggested Interventions by Concept**

Location		Kane-Orchard / U.S. 20		W Lake - Hannum / U.S. 20		U.S. 20, Clift Park to Jordan Street* (\$8,200)	U.S. 20, Jordan St to State St		E Lake / U.S. 20 (\$38,700)	Jordan St / Fennel St (\$53,600)
		A (\$275,100)	B (\$278,400)	A (\$14,000)	B (\$42,600)		A* (\$56,200)	B (\$111,300)		
Elements	Painted Curb Extension		✓	✓						✓ raised curb extensions
	Painted Median	✓			✓	✓	✓			
	Upgrade Existing Crosswalk			✓	✓					✓
	New Crosswalk	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
	Brick Crosswalk						✓			
	Raised Crosswalk					✓				
	Raised Intersection							✓		
	Add/Relocate Stop Bar(s)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Other Pavement Markings	✓ turning lanes	✓ turning lanes	✓ double-yellow/ parking spaces	✓ double-yellow/ parking spaces	✓ turning lane/ 15-minute loading zones	✓ turning lanes	✓ turning lanes	✓ turning lanes/ shoulders	✓ bike lanes/ sharrows
	Add/Relocate Curb Ramps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
	Extend Sidewalks	✓	✓						✓	
	3-Color Signal	✓	✓							
	Add/Relocate Pedestrian Signals	✓	✓				✓	✓		
	RRFB				✓					
Signage				✓ in-street ped crossing		✓ no left turn in-out of driveway/ parking lot	✓ no left turn in-out of driveway/ parking lot		✓ bike lane/ bike in lane	

\* Median striping for the Clift Park to Jordan Street segment is included in Jordan/State & US20 Concept A cost estimates. Striping of this segment MUST coincide with other Concept A interventions.



question of whether a three-color signal would be added at the U.S. 20 / Kane Avenue / Orchard Road intersection is entirely at the discretion of NYSDOT.

As a result, a traditional implementation plan, consisting of short- and long-term steps that the Village can take to carry out this plan's recommendations, is of little relevance. NYSDOT is currently planning for a paving project for a segment of U.S. 20, including the section in the Village. While the concepts presented in this document are not necessarily endorsed by NYSDOT, they are all well-established practices that are either supported by the State's Highway Design Manual or in use on other similar state-owned facilities.

An ideal planning approach would be for the Village as a community to come to a consensus on which design concepts are the highest priority for implementation and use this as the basis for a series of discussions with NYSDOT on how to get these ideas included in the designs being developed for U.S. 20.

In other cases, NYSDOT has been willing to implement streetscape improvement ideas put forward by a town or village, as long as the municipality pays for them. This is formally known as the State's Betterment Process, and it can be used for a variety of work items in the State's right-of-way. The Betterment Process allows the State to defray the costs of work that is outside of a given project's scope of work, while giving communities a degree of control over the streetscape of State roads that serve as local main streets.

### 5.2.3 Pedestrian-Vehicle Conflicts in Context

The Village of Skaneateles has a problem that a lot of small communities in Upstate New York would like to have: its commercial district and open space areas are extremely popular with visitors. But the combination of large numbers of tourists and seasonal residents, combined with relatively high traffic volumes on U.S. 20, creates the potential for conflicts between pedestrians and moving vehicles. Besides being frustrating for all roadway users, it can result in safety issues for pedestrians.

No design solution can eliminate the problem of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles

on a busy street or highway in a setting that attracts a lot of pedestrians. To cite an extreme example: pedestrians and drivers are in conflict at (seemingly) every intersection in Manhattan. In recent years, New York City and other large cities have implemented the kinds of design ideas that are proposed in this document to help resolve these conflicts. Curb extensions are part of the New York City Department of Transportation's Street Design Manual. Philadelphia used raised intersections to create a gateway to its theater district. Raised crosswalks are used selectively where there are very high numbers of pedestrians in cities across the country.

Design elements cannot control behavior, but they can make it easier for all users to use the street in the appropriate way. It is extremely difficult to eliminate jaywalking, but making crosswalks more attractive, by making them the safest, shortest points at which to cross a busy street, can help. A small police department cannot possibly ticket every speeding driver. But tighter lane widths and intersections that signal to drivers to slow down can be in place around the clock. Good design can encourage drivers and pedestrians to use the road responsibly.

The design concepts presented in this study would achieve these aims without disrupting other key functions of the roadway, such as emergency access. At several of the key crossing points, the most elegant and effective solution is to find ways to reduce the amount of open roadway that pedestrians must cross.

An unusual feature of U.S. 20 in Skaneateles is its relatively wide lane widths. The 20-foot lane widths found in some segments of the road can be confusing for all users, but particularly for drivers who are unfamiliar with the road. A very wide lane gives even a conscientious driver the ability to accidentally "create" a second lane where none exists, leading to unsafe passing when the lane narrows again. The wide lanes also mean a greater distance for pedestrians to cross. As a result, most of the design ideas developed through this study focus on ways to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians.

### 5.2.4 Bicycle Facilities

This report has focused on pedestrian amenities at selected locations but has primarily omitted a discussion of facilities for cyclists. This in spite of the fact that Skaneateles has several factors that should make it a hotbed of cycling: relatively flat topography, large numbers of summer visitors (many of whom stay in seasonal rentals a bikeable distance from the village center), superb scenery, links to a route around the lake, and roadway connections to the Charlie Major Trail, just north of the village.

While U.S. 20 is, as noted, exceptionally wide in some sections, it is insufficiently wide in other sections to allow the installation of a standard-width bike lane on both sides of the road without the loss of either on-street parking or mature street trees (for instance, by adding a bike path in the space between the sidewalk edge and the curb or roadway edge in some segments). Initial discussions with stakeholders through the Study Advisory Committee meetings indicated that bike facilities were low on the list of priorities for mobility in the village, relative to balancing pedestrian and vehicular mobility. However, feedback from the public towards the end of this study process included some suggestions for more bicycle facilities, so that is something that the Village and the NYSDOT should continue to consider.

Bicycle facilities were included in the Jordan Street/Fennel Street intersection design, as noted above, which was borrowed from the Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study previously completed by the SMTC. The current character of Fennel Street, with its wide right-of-way and minimal curb cuts, makes it an ideal candidate for bicycle lanes to improve access to the village center while keeping cyclists off of U.S. 20.

### 5.2.5 Public Feedback Themes

It would be erroneous to state that the design ideas presented herein represent the consensus of a broad-based group of stakeholders: 28 individuals attended the virtual Q&A session and nine individuals submitted comments in response

to the draft final report (see Appendix E). It is also not true that these ideas represent the state of the art in planning for pedestrians – that is to say, these are not avant-garde ideas presented in spite of a lack of support. Rather, these concepts represent a set of achievable, commonsense solutions.

Each intervention recommended within the report has evolved based on input from members of the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) and the public. Most stakeholders emphasized the need for flexibility along the corridor, voicing a preference towards restriping and temporary installations that can be adjusted over time. Hardened streetscapes, such as curb extensions and median islands, were rethought as painted medians and extensions that could be equipped with armadillos during summer months, providing added pedestrian space and visibility, that can be removed as a better way to accommodate snow removal in the winter. Painted medians and curb extensions also have potential to be incorporated into the NYSDOT paving project. (Although a few members of the public stated support for more permanent changes, such as moving curbs to narrow lanes and provide wider sidewalks, and questioned the long-term viability and effectiveness of painted modifications.)

A few stakeholders mentioned the need for improvements to the mid-block crossings at the churches on both the west and east sides of the village core. These were not within the focus areas identified early-on by the Study Advisory Committee. Similar to concepts presented for other locations in the village, painted curb extensions might be an option at those locations, along with removing the parking spaces closest to the crosswalks to improve sight lines. These are ideas to continue discussing within the context of the upcoming paving project.

One concept nearly all stakeholders supported was the introduction of a three-color signal at the U.S. 20 / Kane Avenue / Orchard Road intersection. Public comments emphasized the feeling of northbound drivers being rushed to turn during short gaps in traffic, creating unsafe conditions for all users at this location. As stated above, the decision to install a three-color signal sits entirely

within NYSDOT's control but is within reason for this location and should be reviewed by State engineers further.

Multiple commentors felt that the pedestrian push buttons at the intersections of Jordan Street and State Street on U.S. 20 are ignored, and that they need to be more visibly prominent so that people will use them (rather than crossing against the light). One commentor noted that the audible pedestrian indications are not loud enough to be heard over the traffic (especially when large trucks are shifting/braking).

The idea of closing the driveway from U.S. 20 to the municipal parking lot also received many positive responses in the public comments that were submitted.

Public feedback at the virtual Q&A session and comments submitted in response to the draft final report varied in regard to the idea of moving the "gazebo crosswalk." Nearly all commentors expressed an opinion on this idea, but sentiments seemed fairly evenly split between supporting or opposing this. Some suggested that crosswalks at both locations are needed.

The long crossing distance at Fennell Street / Jordan Street was also cited by numerous commentors

as a safety concern. This location was examined in a previous SMTC study (Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor Study), and the issues and potential design ideas remain relevant.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Conflicts between pedestrians and drivers are a product of the overall success of the Village of Skaneateles as a true regional destination. The U.S. 20 corridor, which functions as the Village's Main Street, must balance the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors as well as the regional truck traffic that frequents the corridor. Village leaders are rightfully concerned about getting this balance right and should work closely with NYSDOT as they move forward with a planned paving project in the near future. This will require local leaders coming to a decision on which recommendations would best suit their needs and visions for the Village and advocating for them within the scope of the NYSDOT project.