

SMTC will incorporate public comments collected during the 3-27-25 hearing into this draft once the meeting transcript notes are available from the Village. Any additional comments received will also be incorporated. Thank you for taking the time to review this document and for providing feedback.

DRAFT Memorandum #2

TO: Gary Butterfield, Mayor of North Syracuse
FROM: Michael Alexander
DATE: 3/27/25
RE: Improvement Options and Example Concepts – Grove, Maxwell, Van Mara Study

This technical memo (TM#2) documents planning-level options to eliminate cut-through traffic on Grove Street and Van Mara Drive and reduce the likelihood of cut-through traffic on Gertrude Street, Maxwell Avenue, and Watson Road. It also identifies strategies to make it safer and easier to walk across South Bay Road and walk and bike along South Bay Road.

SMTC used community feedback collected during the initial scoping meeting, the study advisory committee (SAC) meeting, a stakeholder meeting (e.g., police, fire, EMS, school, DPW, etc.), and the public meeting to refine planning-level options. Public meeting notes are included in Attachment 1.

Separate from and prior to this effort, the Village was awarded a TAP grant to make improvements along these roadways (See TM#1). The planning-level options identified in TM#2 will help inform the Village’s engineer’s (CHA Companies) final designs for funded improvements.

SMTC developed several figures to illustrate general recommendations and created detailed concepts for the following two areas:

- South Bay Road, where it intersects with Grove, Van Mara, Maxwell and Watson, is a complex multi-legged unsignalized intersection. Village residents, especially families with children, want to be able to walk safely across South Bay Road to access the pool at Kennedy Park (off Grove Street) and the restaurants on Main Street (off Maxwell Avenue).

The concept includes a combination of planning strategies to make it safer and easier to cross South Bay Road and to walk and bike along South Bay Road. The concept shows how access to Maxwell, Grove, and Van Mara from South Bay Road would need to change to enhance safety and address cut-through traffic. The concept also provides opportunities to make South Bay Road look less like a thoroughfare and more like a neighborhood street within a village. The intersection could become a gateway with ornamental lighting, ornamental signs, banners, and possibly even a monument.

- Village residents feel that there are opportunities to improve safety and landscaping along Maxwell Avenue near Route 11 (Main Street). The concept shows ways to manage driveway access to improve safety, provide space for a sidewalk, and create opportunities for landscaping. The concept also eliminates the need for parked cars to back up onto Maxwell Road, which is a significant safety issue, and makes it safer to park and access buildings. The concept also maintains most parking spaces and seeks to offset impacts, such as repurposing space for outdoor seating at the restaurant. Safe and aesthetically pleasing roadways can also enhance property values.

The details provided in these two concept areas illustrate how to best achieve desired goals and objectives and make the residential streets more welcoming for walkers and cyclists.

Figure 1 shows how access to Grove Street, Van Mara Drive, and Maxwell Avenue from South Bay Road could change to prevent cut-through traffic from occurring on Grove Street and Van Mara Drive. Maxwell Avenue would become right-in, right-out only. Grove Street and Van Mara Drive would become right-in only. The arrows illustrate permitted travel patterns. Full access is provided from Route 11 (to Maxwell) and from Church Street (to Grove and Van Mara). Limited access is provided from South Bay.

Figure 2 shows which side of the road should have 5-foot-wide sidewalks. (Sidewalks next to the edge of a road should be curbed.) Figure 2 also shows “speed cushion” locations – see page 7 for more information about speed cushions. The location of each speed cushion is under an existing cobra light and across from two adjacent lawns to avoid driveways. (Property addresses are provided for location reference.) The Village should consider reducing the speed limit of all village roads to 25 MPH, but at least reduce Van Mara to 25 MPH. “Ladder-style” crosswalk locations are shown. The northbound approach at the Kennedy Park entrance could be a “raised crosswalk” (see example on page 10).

Figure 3 shows the existing conditions at South Bay Road, where it intersects with Grove, Van Mara, Maxwell and Watson. As noted, it is a complex multi-legged unsignalized intersection. Figure 4 shows how to achieve the turning restrictions and many other desired goals and objectives.

- Right-in only single-lane connections are made at Grove and Van Mara. Their approach angle only allows cars to turn right into the neighborhood roads. Their single-lane design prevents cars from trying to turn right from the neighborhood roads (note the placement of the two “Do not enter” signs.) To facilitate emergency cut-through access (as requested by the police department) Van Mara Drive is shown with “mountable curbs” at its connection to South Bay Road. That way emergency vehicles would still have two-way access if needed.
- A right-in, right-out only on Maxwell is also shown. To achieve this, new curbed hardscaping is shown along South Bay Road. A “mini roundabout” is shown on Maxwell Avenue. And lane dividers are shown on Maxwell Avenue and Watson Road to facilitate movements into the mini roundabout. Mini roundabouts have a minimum diameter of 50 feet and are usually put within neighborhoods.
- A single 5-foot-wide curbed sidewalk is shown abutting Maxwell, Grove, and Van Mara. Non-abutting, non-curbed five-foot-wide sidewalks are also shown on both sides of South Bay Road.
- An 8’ wide Shared Use Path is shown connecting the Grove and Van Mara sidewalks; and it also connects to “ladder-style” crosswalks across South Bay Road, Maxwell Avenue, and Watson.
- Double-sided rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) are shown on either side of the crosswalk on South Bay Road. The RRFBs are push-button activated. “Shark Teeth” (i.e., advanced yield) pavement markings are shown on South Bay Road approximately 30 feet before the crosswalk.
- The concept shows raised curbs along both sides of South Bay Road in advance of and through the intersection to prevent vehicles from “overtaking” each other (i.e., going around a vehicle yielding to someone in the crosswalk). This prevents pedestrians from getting hit by an overtaking vehicle. The curbs are setback at least 2 feet from the edge line to prevent snowplow strikes.
- Solid “green” bike lanes are shown along South Bay Road. They become dashed markings at road entrances. Sharrows (i.e., shared lane markings) are shown along Maxwell, Grove, and Van Mara.
- Three pairs of ornamental pedestrian-scale light poles are shown opposite of each other at the intersection along South Bay Road. An ornamental light is shown in the center of the mini roundabout and at the northwest corner of Maxwell and Watson.

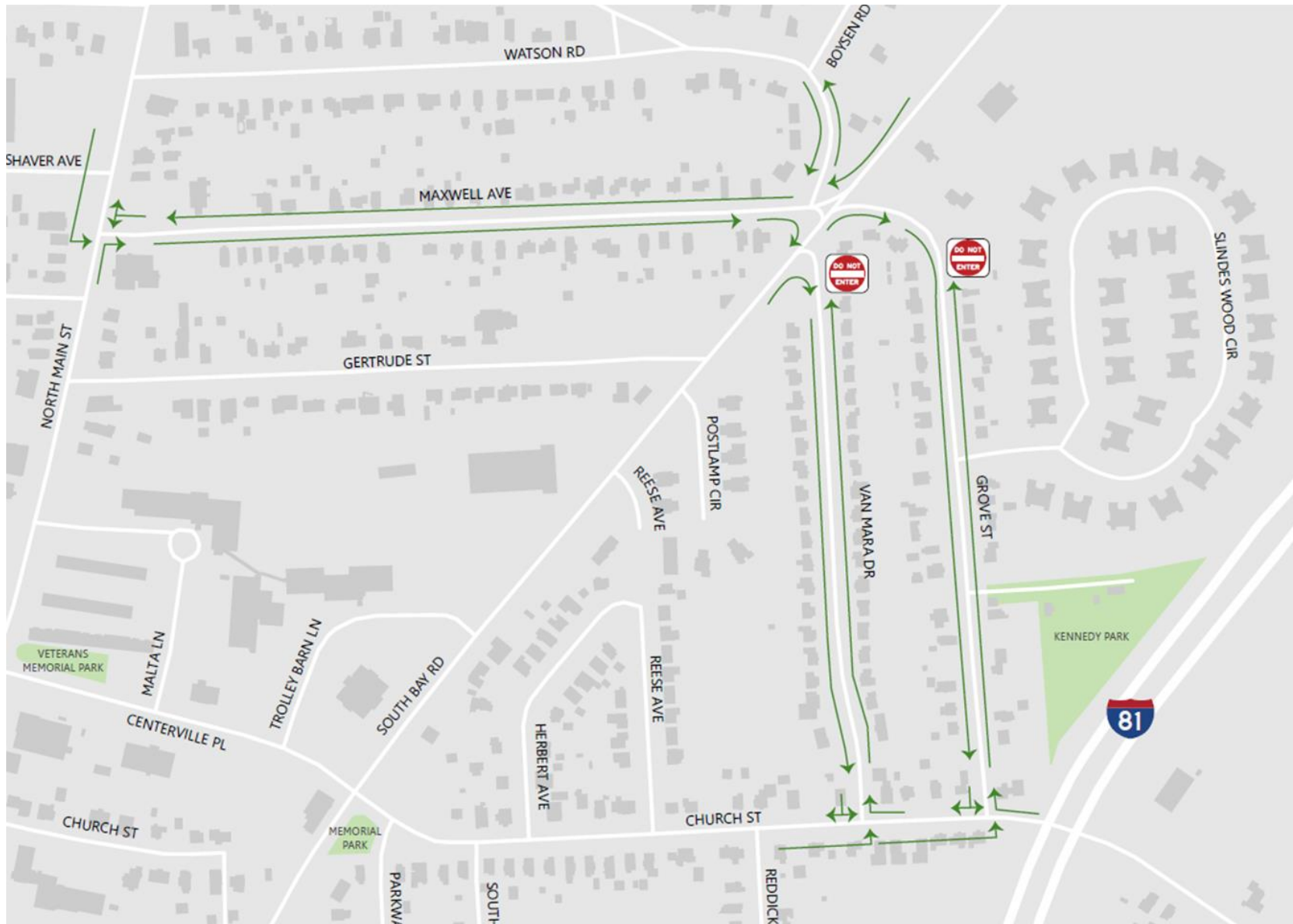


Figure 1 – Proposed Access Modifications to Grove Street, Van Mara Drive, Maxwell Avenue to Eliminate/Reduce Cut-Through Traffic

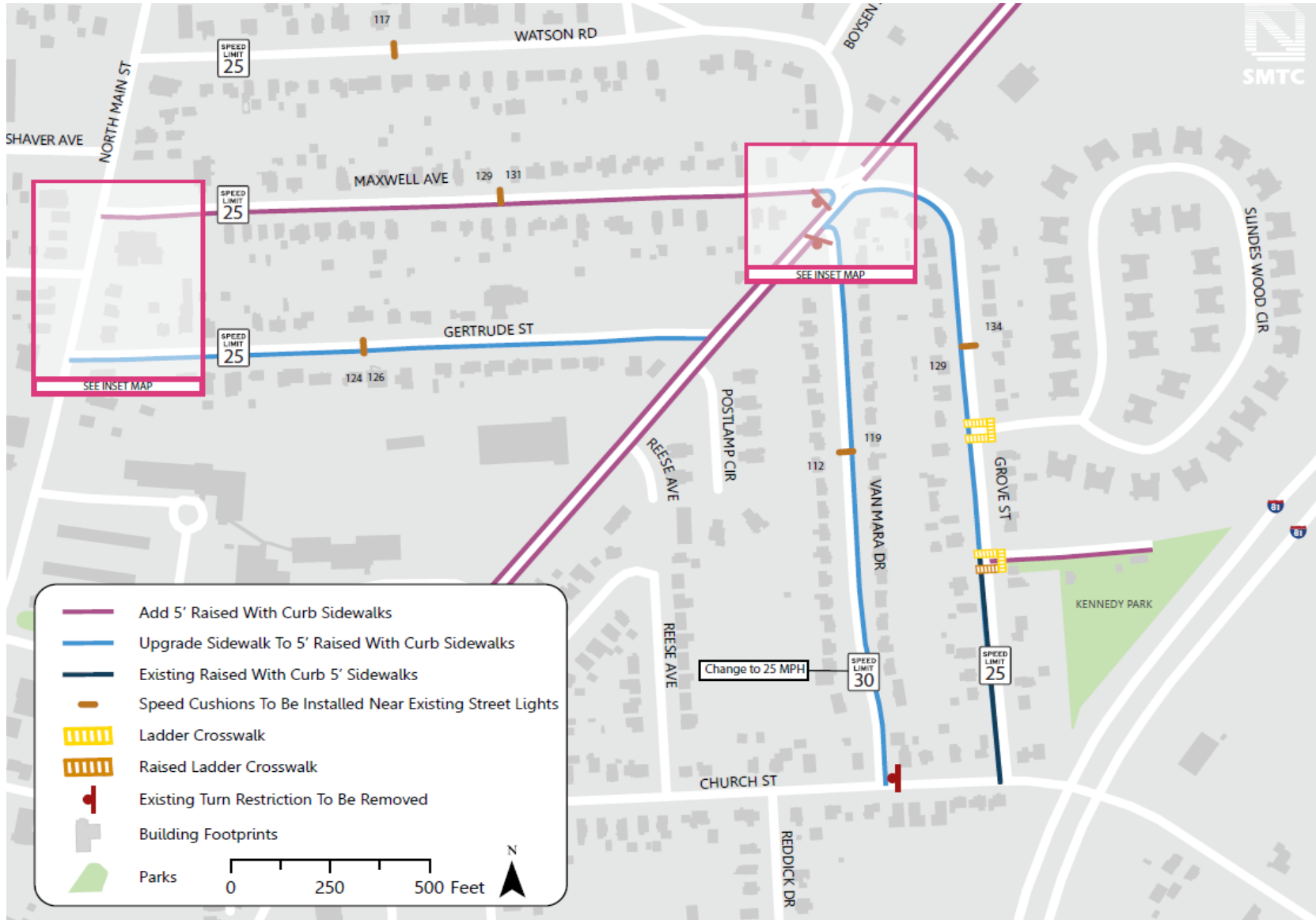


Figure 2 – Proposed Sidewalk, Speed Cushion & Crosswalk Locations

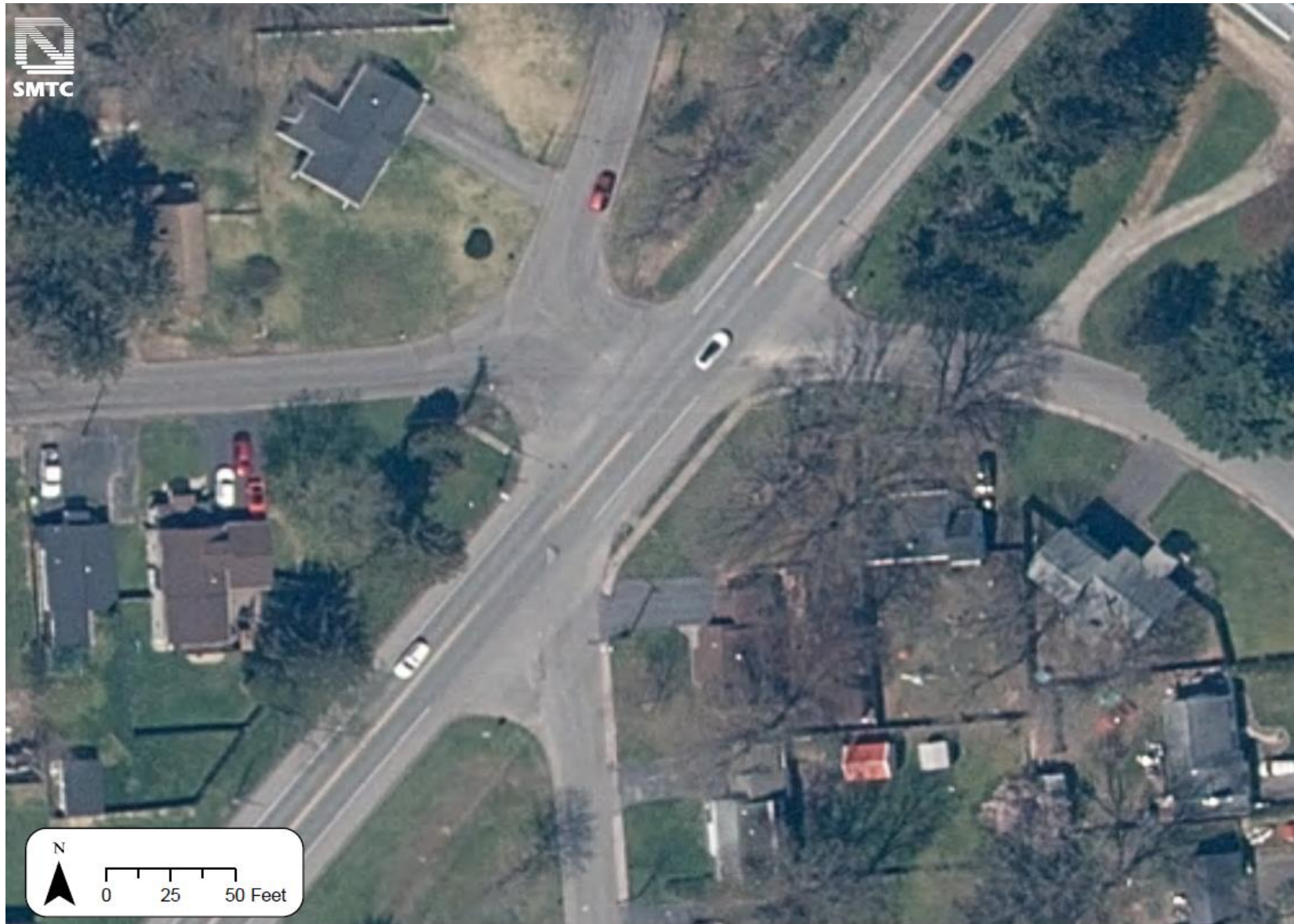


Figure 3 – Existing Conditions of South Bay Road, Grove Street, Van Mara Drive, Maxwell Avenue and Watson Road

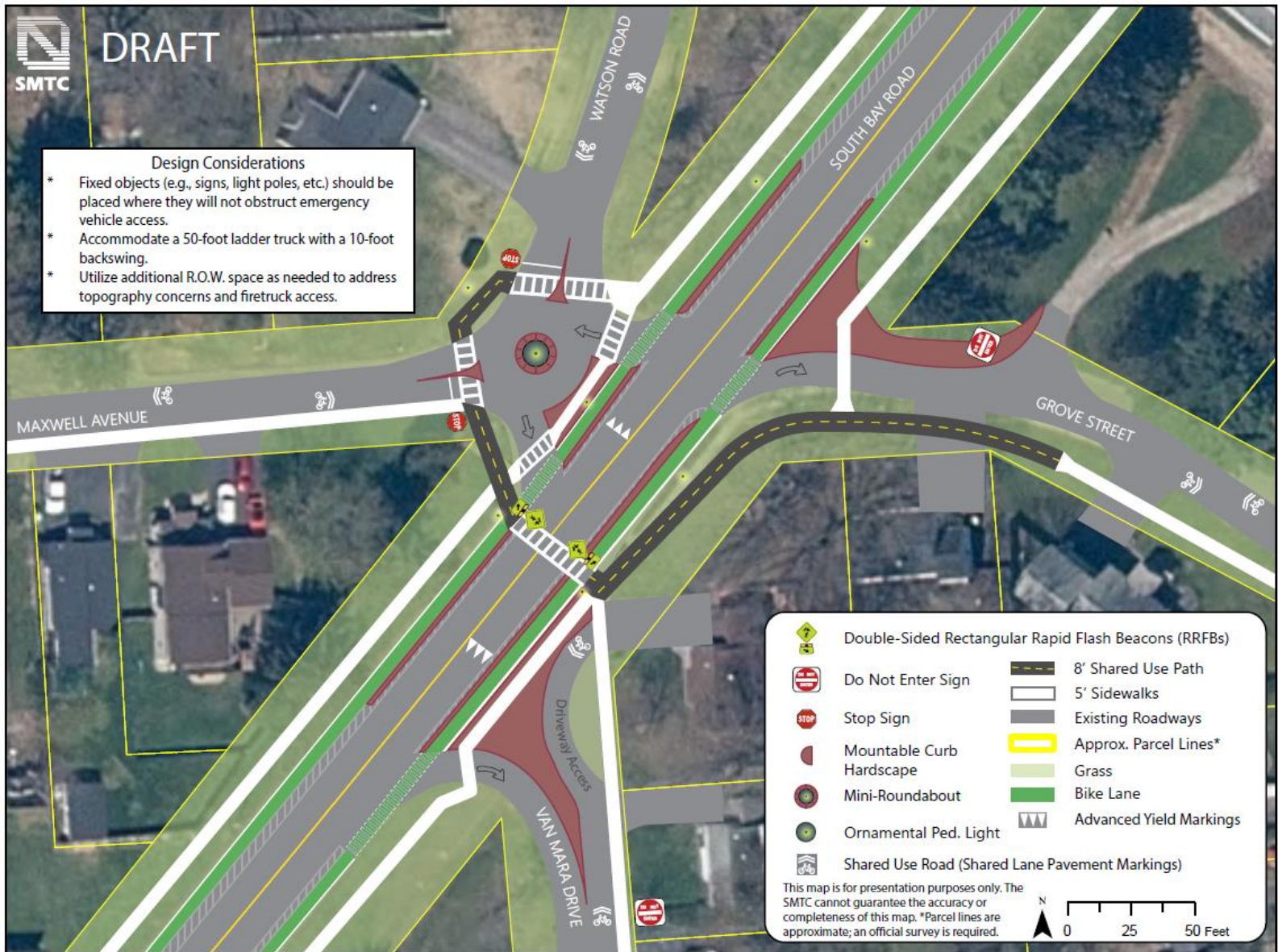


Figure 4 – Option for Access Changes and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Enhancements

*Speed Cushion Pilot Program,
Syracuse, NY*

According to the City of Syracuse’s website, the city installed several traffic-calming speed cushions in neighborhoods as part of a pilot program to test their effectiveness. The city collected speed data before and after installation and monitored changes in traffic patterns. After installing several different styles of speed humps, the city opted to go with the “speed cushion” design that slows passenger vehicles but allows fire trucks to pass through without delay. As shown on the city’s cover image below, the speed cushions are tapered speed humps denoted with pavement markings. The cushions do not extend all the way across the road and include openings that accommodate fire trucks. More information can be found here:

<http://www.syr.gov/speed-cushions>

Speed Hump/Cushion Pilot Program Review



Department of Public Works

City of Syracuse
1.3.2024



Figure 5 shows the existing conditions at Maxwell Avenue near Route 11 (Main Street). Figure 6 shows driveway access improvements. The driveway to the Twin Trees parking lot on the north side of Maxwell is improved with a crosswalk across the driveway and a crosswalk across Maxwell that leads to a sidewalk that connects to the Twin Trees side door. A much narrower Twin Trees driveway along the south side of Maxwell is shown to prevent cars backing out onto Maxwell from the “nose-in” parking that currently exists along the building. Space is reclaimed for outdoor seating and/or landscaping along Maxwell. Parking in the Twin Trees parking lot behind the building has been rotated east to west to accommodate the new driveway entrance. That entrance also aligns with and provides direct access to the dumpsters. Three new driveways are shown on the north side of Maxwell – one on either side of the VFW building and one at the residential property. This allows for landscaping along Maxwell and a new sidewalk and landscaping to the VFW’s front entrance.



Figure 5 – Existing Conditions Maxwell Avenue, Route 11, and Gertrude Street



Figure 6 – Proposed Access Modifications to Maxwell Avenue to Improve Safety and Landscaping



Image 1 – Example of a Raised Crosswalk (and RRFBs) with Pavement Markings

Public Outreach Feedback

The SMTC held two outreach sessions. The first session occurred on 3/14/15 at the Village Hall and included the following stakeholders:

- Village Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Village Police Chief
- Village Fire Department Deputy Chief
- Village Superintendent of Public Works
- Village Engineer – CHA Companies
- Village Clerk

SMTC shared planning-level options and noted the following substantive comments to inform CHA’s design considerations:

- All roads should provide FD access from both directions.
 - SMTC modified the graphics to show mountable curbs at the right-in only entrances.
- Road design should accommodate a 50’ long ladder truck with a 10-foot back swing.
- Fixed objects (e.g., signs, poles, lights, etc.) should not be placed where they would obstruct fire truck access (or be struck by a fire truck’s 10-rear swing).
- Maxwell and Watson should be stop sign controlled.
- Sidewalks should be placed along the edge of the roadways.
- Utilize additional ROW space as needed to address topography concerns and firetruck access.

A public hearing was also held at the Village of North Syracuse Community Center at 5:30 p.m. on March 27, 2025. The meeting consisted of _____. SMTC remained after to answer questions and to take comments. The meeting was also broadcast live via the Village of North Syracuse’s social media platforms. Comments collected by the Village of North Syracuse were provided to SMTC and are included in the public meeting notes. SMTC also posted draft copies of TM#1 and TM#2 on SMTC’s website from ____ to _____. SMTC received _____ additional comments, which it included in the public meeting note summary. In short, comments were _____. The biggest issues of concern included:_____. Public outreach summary notes are provided in Attachment 1.

Conclusion

SMTC identified several planning-level improvements to inform the Village engineer’s designs for projects that have already received funding to develop. SMTC summarized the improvement ideas in figures and summary text within TM#2. The planning-level improvements eliminate cut-through traffic on Grove Street and Van Mara Drive. They also reduce the likelihood of cut-through traffic along Maxwell Avenue, Gertrude Street, and Watson Road. To achieve this, SMTC suggests modifying access from South Bay Road to Maxwell Avenue through a right-in, right-out only, and to Grove and Van Mara as right-in only movements. Other recommendations for improving pedestrian crossings (including across South Bay Road), access management, sidewalks, bike facilities, lighting and landscaping are made.

Attachment 1
Stakeholder Meeting Notes
&
Public Outreach Summary Notes