

SMTC Sustainable Streets Project

Onondaga County
Planning Federation
March 13, 2014



*Grand Avenue Porous Pavement
Sidewalk Test Segment
OCWEP / Save the Rain*



SMTC's Sustainable Streets Project

- Part 1 → Sidewalks
- Part 2 → Transit
- Part 3 → Bicycle Facilities

Parts 2 & 3 are proposed for 2015 & beyond

Requested by SOCPA

Purpose: Collect information for the SMTC's Study Area in order to make planning and project implementation easier



Why Study Sidewalks?

Two important facts about sidewalks & walking:

1.) Sidewalks are not free

2.) People cannot go as fast as cars (or bikes)

4 feet per second = $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in 11 minutes

Who maintains crosswalks?

Man Goes To Jail For Painting His Own Crosswalk

In the recently-out-of-bankruptcy town of Vallejo, California, where public services are still scarce, one local man has gone to jail for taking matters into his own hands and painting a crosswalk in a dangerous intersection.

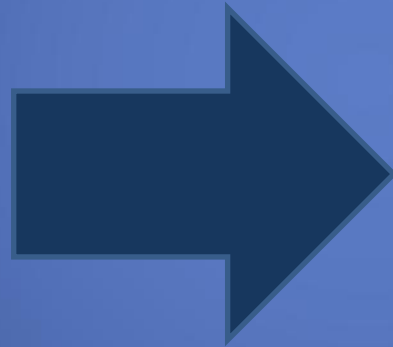
Fifty-two-year old Anthony Cardenas allegedly told city officials it was a necessary addition to the intersection of Illinois Street and busy Sonoma Boulevard. "He admitted freely that he had painted the crosswalk and he'd done what he thought was correct for the neighborhood," Vallejo Police Sgt. Herman Robinson told ABC7.



Screengrab of Cardenas' work via ABC7

Who maintains most sidewalks?

- NYSDOT? No
- OCDOT? No
- City?
- Town?
- Village?
- YOU?



Varies based on local ordinances (usually put onus on adjacent property owner)

Known Costs vs. Unclear Benefits

"How many people are going to use this thing? Can you answer me that question?"

Two hours of public comment and debate ended when the panel voted unanimously to send the plan back for revision. While 16 people praised the plan in general terms as an asset to community health, alternative transportation and economic development, more than two dozen spoke against it, virtually all of them with specific objections to elements of the plan that affect their property, and most of those were residents of 116th Street who objected to a proposed sidewalk.

Center...
that expanded stu...
damage rural scenery, in au...
safety concerns.

Sidewalks: Benefits

Sidewalks provide numerous benefits at a relatively low cost

- **Reduced road collisions**
- **Health benefits** from a more physically active population
- **Greater accessibility** to facilities and services for people of all ages and abilities
- Reduced congestion, fuel and other costs
- Reduced noise and air pollution
- Reduced carbon dioxide emissions
- Increased social capital
- Increased economic activity



From Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment

New York State Complete Streets Law (2012)

“For all state, county and local transportation projects that are undertaken by the Department or receive both federal and state funding and are subject to Department of transportation oversight, the department or agency with jurisdiction over such projects shall **consider the convenient access and mobility on the road network by all users of all ages, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users** through the use of complete street design features in the planning, design, **construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation,** but not including resurfacing, maintenance, or pavement recycling of such projects.”

New York State Complete Streets Law

Exceptions:

- Use by bicyclists and pedestrians is prohibited by law (e.g., interstates)
- Cost would be disproportionate to need, based on factors including:
 - Land use context
 - Current & projected traffic volumes
 - Population density

Where do you start?



Sustainable Streets: Sidewalks

- Phase 1
 - Information Collection
 - Analysis
 - Priority Zones
 - Reference Document
- Phase 2
 - Application Studies
 - Real world sidewalk planning problems
 - Put Phase 1 information into practice
 - 2014 / 2015



Project Process

Study Advisory Committee

- SOCPA
- NYSDOT
- OCDOT
- City of Syracuse
- Community Geographer

Working Group

- Town and Village Reps
 - December 2012
 - March 2014

Other Groups

- ARISE
- FOCUS
- Greater Syracuse
- Westside Residents Coalition

Project's Outcomes

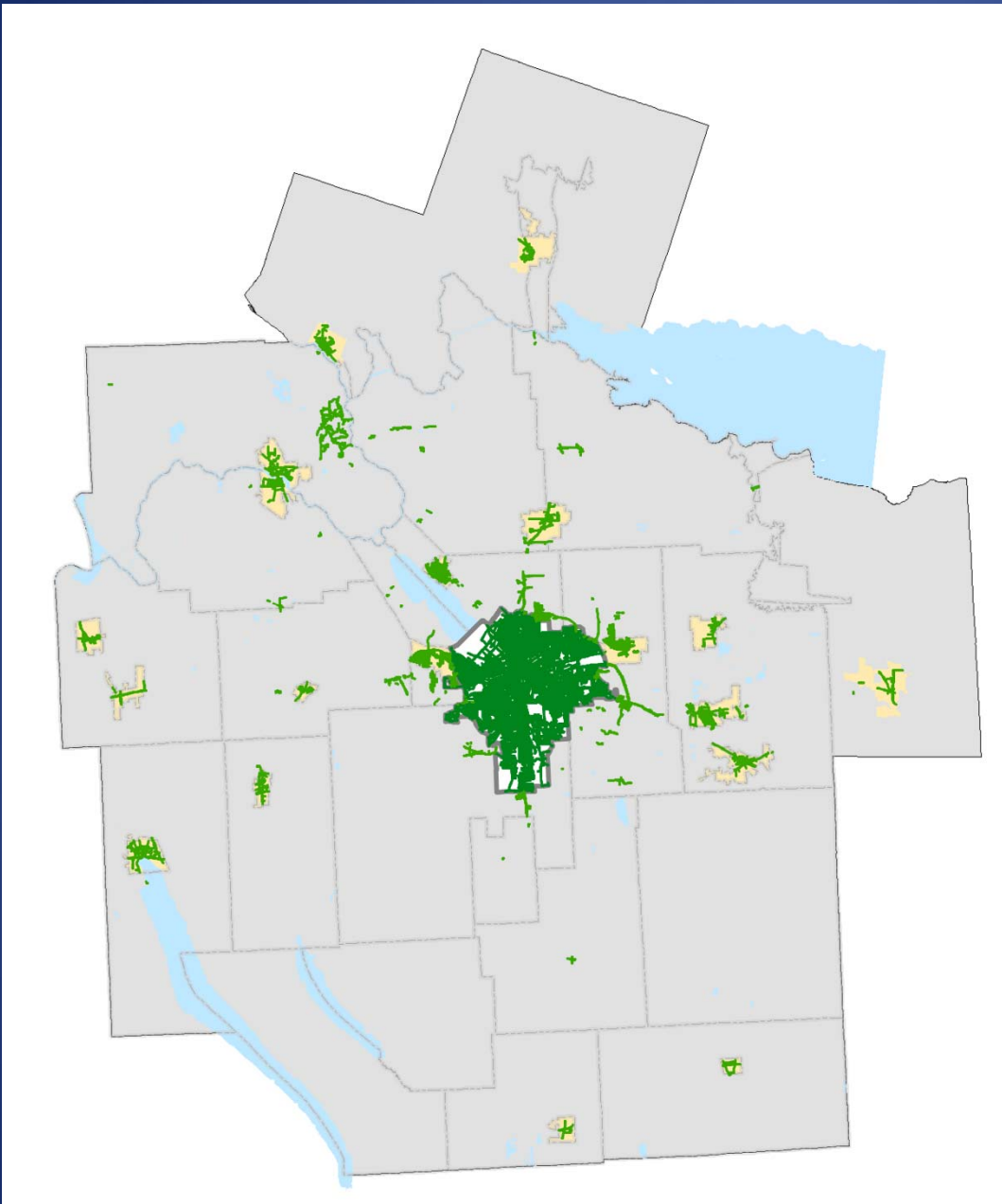
- **Sidewalk Inventory (GIS)**
 - *Towns and Villages*
 - *City – including ratings at the block level*
- **Sidewalk Ordinances**
 - *Inventory*
 - *Intra-county comparison, Models from other towns*
- **Research**
 - *Funding / Average costs*
 - *Benefits*
 - *Planning approaches*
 - *Legal aspects*
- **Pedestrian Demand Model**
 - *Analysis for SMTC's Planning Area*
 - *Scores based on proximity and mix of uses*
- **Priority Zones**
 - *Focus areas for maintenance and gap closure*
- **Reference Document**

Sidewalk Inventory

Total mileage = 830

City of Syracuse

- 586 miles
- Block-level ratings based on code compliance
- Aerial photo-based survey



Municipal Ordinance Inventory

Four elements addressed in many local ordinances:

- Liability
- Maintenance Responsibility
- Planning
- Design

Defense

Offense

Municipal Ordinance Inventory

“Defense”

- Prior Written Notice
- Homeowner responsible for maintenance
- Liability for accidents placed on adjacent property owner



Municipal Ordinance Inventory

“Offense”

- Subdivision Regulations
- Required near key destinations
- Sidewalk materials & width
- Special zones (e.g., business district)
- Reinforce ADA requirements



Municipal Ordinance Inventory

Elements **missing** from local ordinances:

- Primary / Secondary Street Network
(Penfield)
- Intensified Sidewalk Districts *(Penfield)*
- Green Infrastructure

Pedestrian Demand Model

- Based in GIS
- Split Study Area into thousands of 10m x 10m cells
- Compiled values from 18 different data layers into a single score for each cell
- Each cell receives a score on a scale of 0 to 100

Model Layers

Destinations

- Schools
- Grocery stores
- Pharmacies
- “Community Core”
- Post Offices
- Libraries
- Community Centers
- Convenience Stores
- Transit Stops

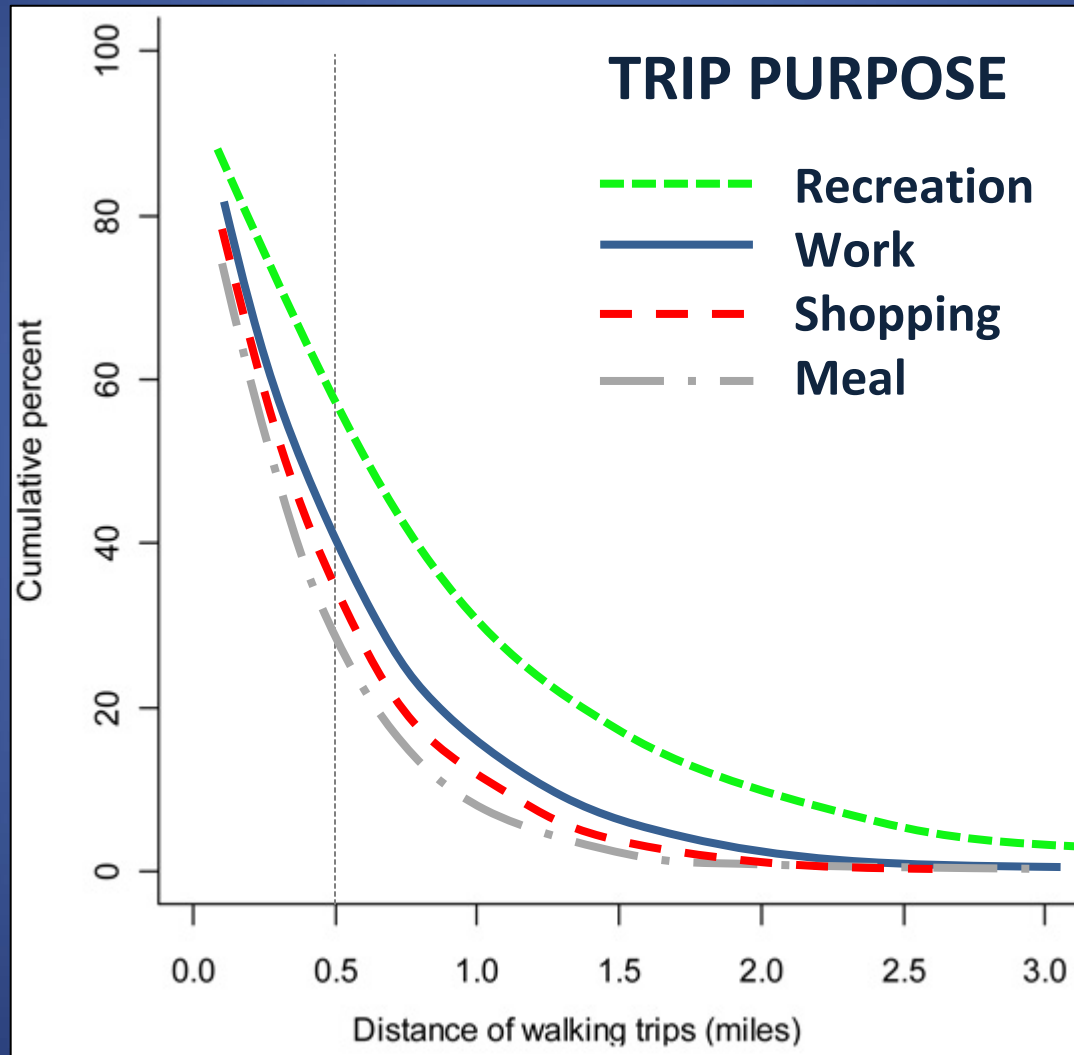
Neighborhood Characteristics

- Population Density
- Employee Density
- Households w/o Vehicles
- Pct. Walking to Work
- Population over 65
- Population under 18
- Refugee Resettlement Areas

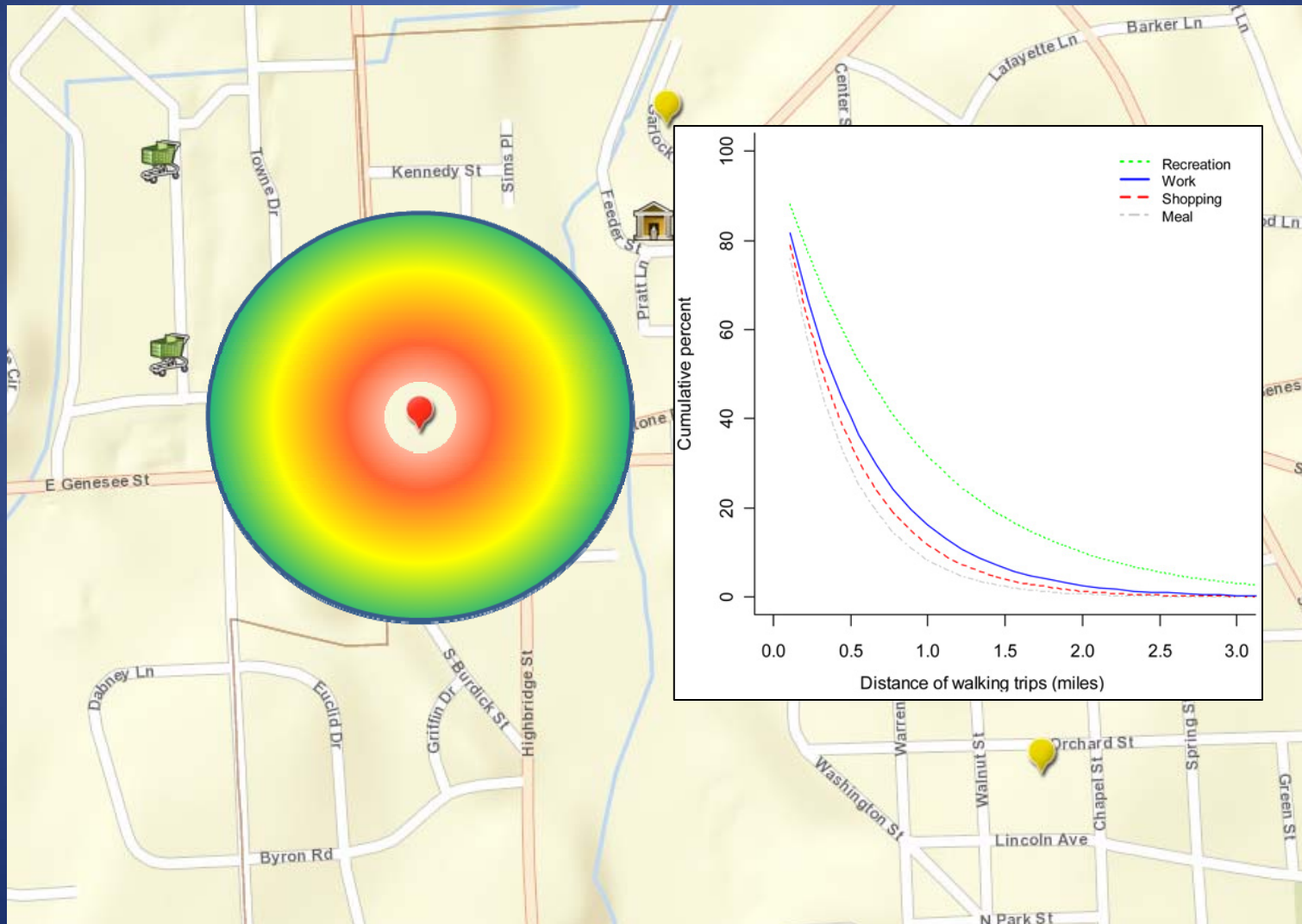
Pedestrian Detractors

- Pedestrian/Vehicle Collision Density

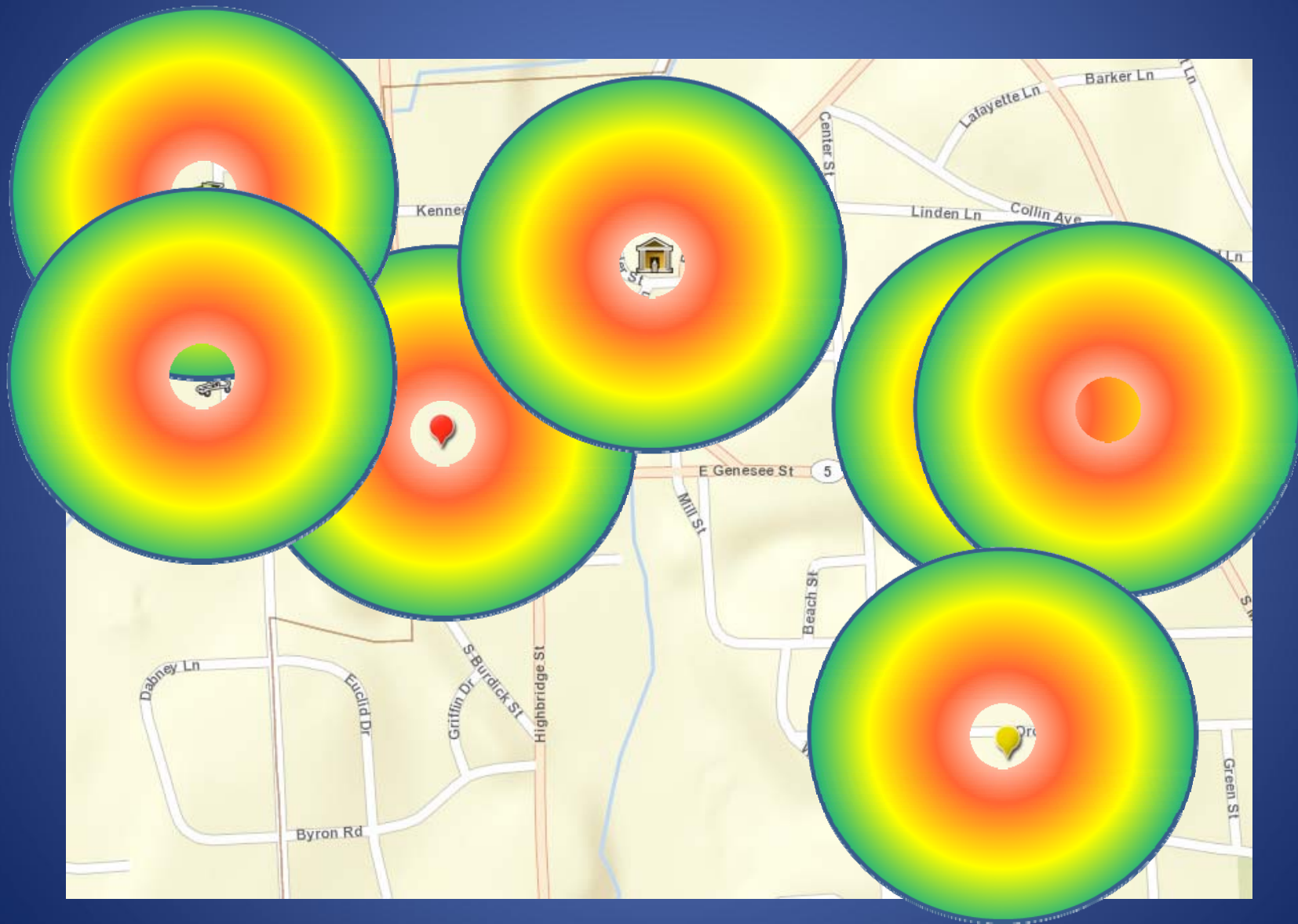
Destinations & “Distance Decay”



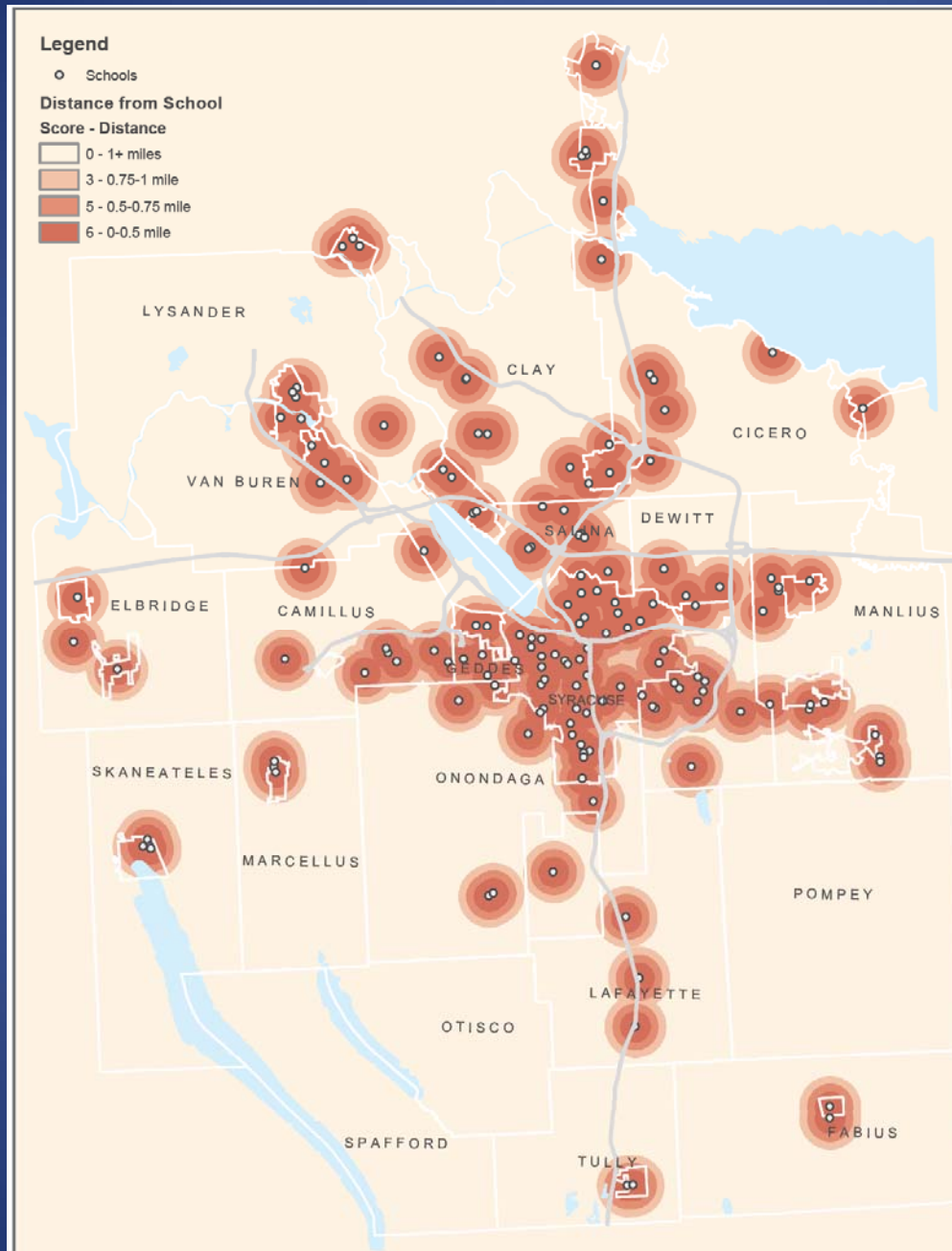
Destination & Distance Function



Distance & Model Values



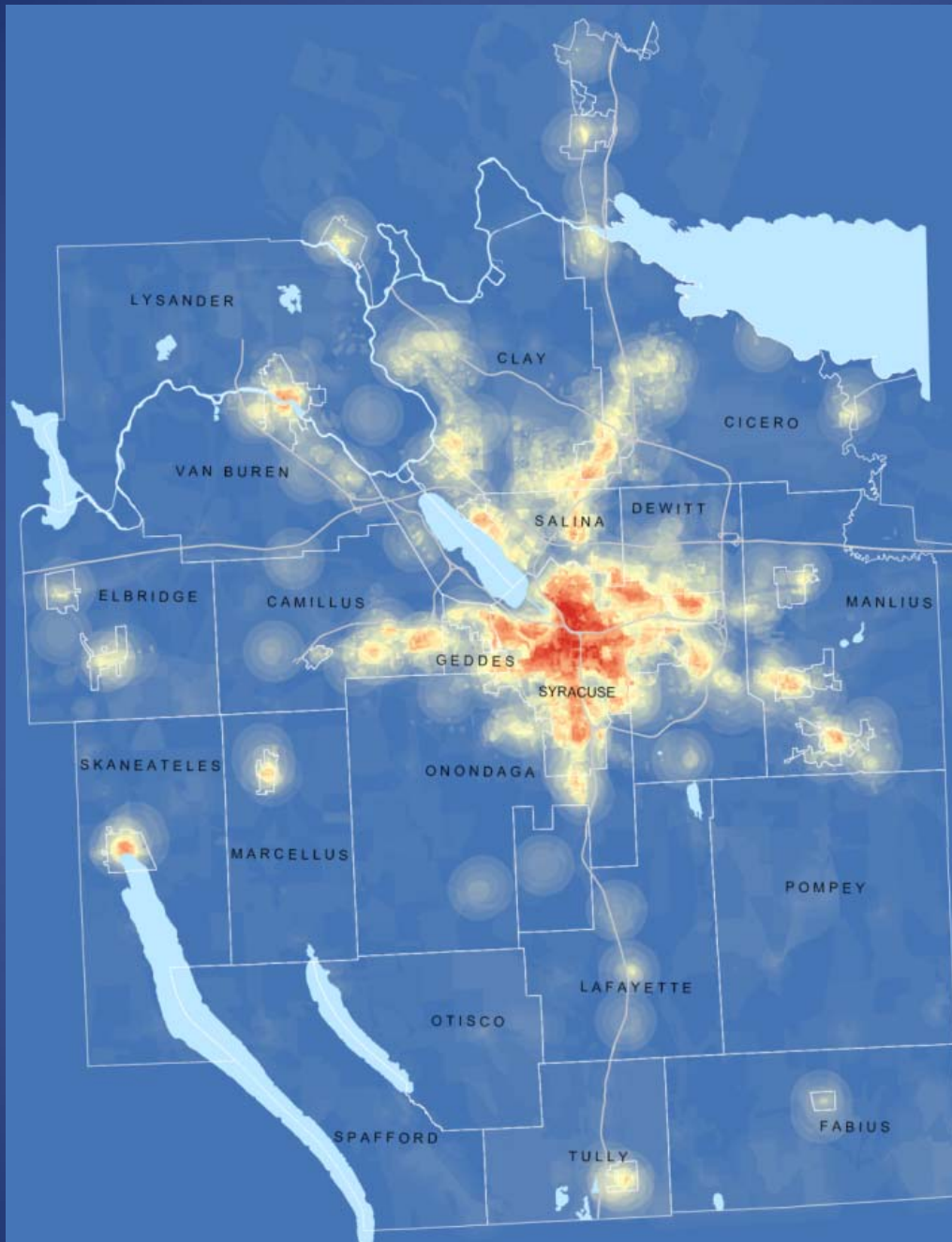
Schools



Legend
○ Schools
Distance from School
Score - Distance
0 - 1+ miles
3 - 0.75-1 mile
5 - 0.5-0.75 mile
6 - 0-0.5 mile




Legend

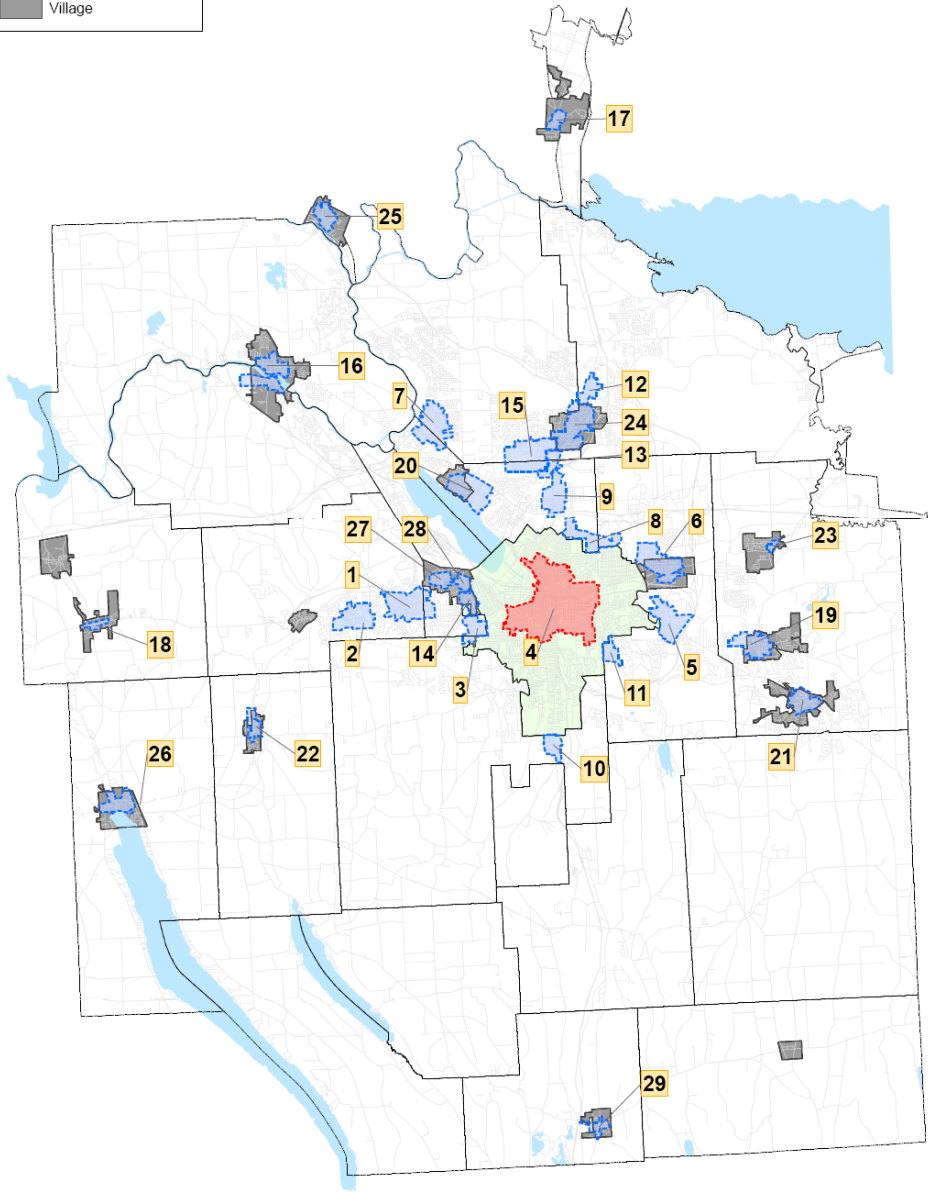
○ Schools
Distance from School
Score - Distance
0 - 1+ miles
3 - 0.75-1 mile
5 - 0.5-0.75 mile
6 - 0-0.5 mile



- Higher scores/warmer colors indicate greater probability of pedestrian activity
- Highest scores in City
- Highest score = 92 out of 100

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Roads
-  Village



Priority Zones

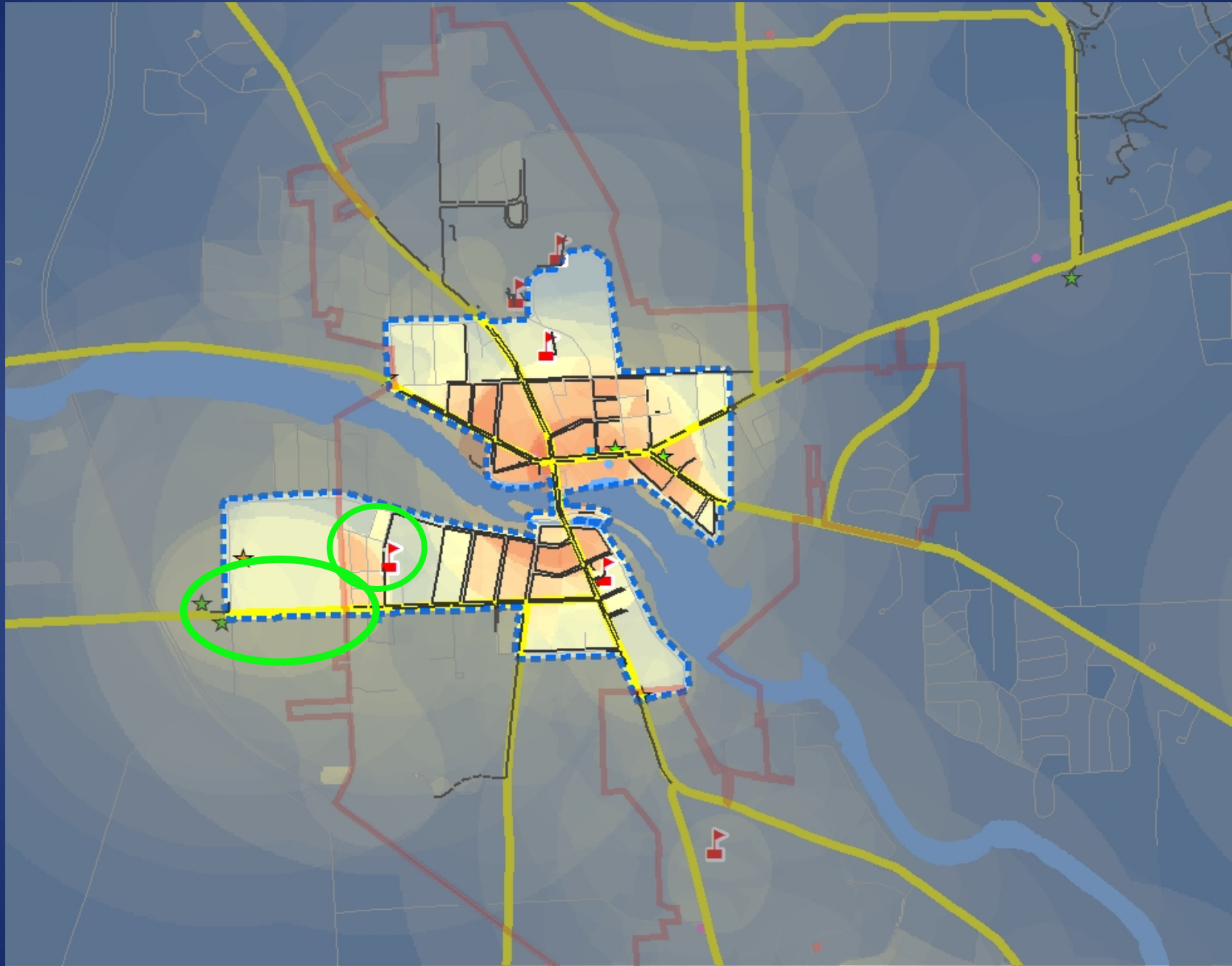
- 30 of these areas across the Planning Area (including Oswego & Madison Counties)
- Identify geographies where one obstacle, **distance**, is minimized

Priority Zones

What they ARE	What they are <u>NOT</u>
Advisory	Statutory
A starting point for sidewalk planning	A boundary defining where sidewalks should / should not be
Model-based	Based on surveys or observations
Walkable areas based on <i>proximity</i> and land use	Walkable areas based on existing facilities

Planning with Priority Zones

- Focus on Arterials & Collectors
- Compare against sidewalk inventory
- Examine routes to key destinations
 - Schools
 - Grocery stores
- Opportunities for connections?
- New development?



Reference Document

- Draft available at CNY Pathways website (www.walkbikecny.org)
- Subjects discussed:
 - What's the average cost for a mile of sidewalk?
 - Why should I care about my community's sidewalk ordinance?
 - Would a porous pavement sidewalk be worth the extra money?
 - How long does a sidewalk last in Central New York?
 - What does it cost to keep a mile of sidewalk snow-free for a winter?

Next Steps

- Present to SMTC's Planning & Policy Committees
- Meet with Municipal Leaders to discuss Phase 2 - Application Studies
 - Up to three small studies demonstrating applications of Phase 1 products to real-world situations
 - March 18, 2014, Liverpool Library, 9:30 AM

Questions?

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Thank You!

