



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE MINUTES – JULY 21, 2026 CHAD RYAN, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Ryan, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Bush, Mr. McCarron

MEMBERS ABSENT: Leader Hernandez

ALSO PRESENT: Chairwoman Watts; also see attached list

Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. ONONDAGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: Martin E. Voss, Commissioner; James Fensken, PE, Deputy Commissioner

- a. Authorizing the County of Onondaga to Act as Lead Agency for the Canalways Trail Salina Extension Project, Phase I & Phase II, PIN's 3756.22 & 3757.02 Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA); Determining the Classification of Type I Actions; Accepting and Adopting the Negative Declarations for the Projects; and Authorizing the Filing, Distribution, and Publication of the Negative Declarations
- SEQR for the Loop the Lake Salina Extension is a very big deal; Department has been working on it for the better part of three years, and myriad approvals are required to advance the project through the federal aid process
 - Document before the committee represents three years of work between the Department, the consultant Barton & Loguidice, who prepared the document, the Law Department, and others who had to weigh in
- Document to be submitted to the State this month (July); Legislature expected to adopt it at the August session; Department seeking final design approval from the State and the FHWA in August 2026, which will allow Phase 1 construction to begin in spring 2027
- Probably the biggest project the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner have been involved in at the Department; work since 2016 includes:
 - Solvay connection and Solvay street work, which connects to the trail; trail connection over Nine Mile at the far end of the amphitheater was just being completed
 - State and County worked together on the pieces around the amphitheater; Honeywell partnered with the County on some of the lakeshore work visible from 690
 - New bridge built over the railroad tracks behind the former Roth Steel property, which runs alongside Webb; after that section came the Murphy's Island piece, the boardwalk
- Final phase brings the whole thing together and connects the loop; going to take a couple of years to build
- Project broken into phases:
 - Phase 1 starts at Bloody Brook at Onondaga Lake Park and comes down the parkway approaching the railroad bridge

- Second part: new bridge from Murphy's Island over the railroad tracks and over Lake Creek, down to the State right-of-way along the I-81 on-ramp from the parkway, then carrying forward along the salt ponds to the railroad bridge
- Final phase will connect those two pieces under the railroad bridge; based on what is known from the State, a six-foot trail could conceivably fit under the railroad bridge while maintaining safety and room for traffic
- Department in frequent communication with the State about the changes and improvements the State will make there, as there are a lot of differing opinions about what should happen
 - Department's strong opinion is that the road needs to be narrowed and de-emphasized because of existing volume issues in Liverpool; as the I-81 project gets closer to being done, travel patterns in the community will change
 - Longstanding position of the County is that this needs to be a recreational area around the park; Onondaga Lake Park is the premier County park, the biggest and the nicest
- Trail network will enable someone to walk from the City of Syracuse, the Regional Market, or the mall to Liverpool and vice versa, to bike to work from Liverpool to the City, or conceivably to walk to the amphitheater from further away
 - Going to build it and people are going to love it
 - Every segment opened since 2016 has gone over universally well; people from every walk of life and every part of the community out enjoying the lake, which wasn't always that way
- Going to change community for the better; seeing constant use, especially during COVID
- Trails built using the federal aid program; the minute they are done, keys turned over to the Parks Department, which takes care of them from there on out
- Parks Department tries to keep the trail clear in the winter as best it can so that people can snowshoe and cross-country ski

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Ryan: Is this SEQR going to be the last SEQR in this project? Are we done with this?
- Mr. Fensken: Yes, I would say this is going to be
- Mr. Ryan: Phase one is going to be spring of '27. I'm looking for a little bit of a timeline guesstimate; phase two, phase three - next year, the year after?
- Mr. Voss: If we had our way, we would start and not stop, and we would keep going until we finished. There's more to come with this project in terms of the regulatory agencies that are involved and the constructability
 - With any construction project there's the risk that our best estimate from our professionals, our engineers who do this every day, might be off a dollar or two and we realize we don't have enough money
 - We're not there yet; we may get there, but the point is to keep the shoulder down, keep pushing, keep building, and pull together whatever we have to pull together to get it finished. I can't sit here today and tell you it will be done by a date certain
- Mr. Ryan: A couple of years?
- Mr. Voss: It would be disrespectful of me to tell you it's going to be done by a date just because it's easy to throw a number out there. Some things come in a little sooner than expected; some things take longer
 - Every step forward on this one is complicated by the environmental issues and all the questions that have to be answered, the I's that have to be dotted and T's that have to be crossed. DEC is a big one; Army Corps
 - Without me even saying my least favorite four-letter word, CSXT. Right now things are going smoothly with them, but they're still not going to let us cross their tracks to build our bridge. So

- we've already figured out an alternative construction method, because if we can't cross the railroad tracks, we still have to barge in lots of equipment and materials to do this project
- The pilings for these bridge supports go down almost 200 feet; if you go out and look at the bridge that's out there now, these are massive structures
 - Mr. Ryan: Bring me up to speed on the funding so far, or what you anticipate. Are you funded using capital improvement project funds? Have these already been approved? Are you good as of now?
 - Mr. Voss: Very good question. The Solvay extension was a separate one-off that the then Governor, County Executive, and Chairman: Cuomo, McMahon, and Mahoney. Everything we've done on this, with the exception of the Solvay extension, has been through the federal aid program that we receive our funding through the SMTC, like the city and the state and some of the municipalities do.
 - We have money identified in the various programs on the federal TIP to make this qualify. The biggest lift at the beginning of this whole journey was getting the federal government to agree that this multipurpose trail was eligible for federal aid because it's pedestrians and bicycles; that's why it's built as wide and as strong as it is
 - We have to be ADA compliant, but you also have to be able to get an ambulance up there; when these bridges are 1,400 to 1,500 feet long and somebody collapses or has a medical episode, EMTs have to be able to get up there
 - That's part of why they're so long and so flat, and that's also what makes it eligible, it's multipurpose transportation. You can't take vehicles on it, only bicycles and things like that, and that makes it eligible for the federal money
 - We've had to use federal money for design and for the whole approval process, and now we're going to be using it for construction. As of today, we're okay
 - SMTC, some of you have started participating in the meetings there, it's always a shell game over there, and there are always a lot of hands in the pot trying to grab that money. Our job as county representatives is to make sure the money we've allocated and negotiated with the city and the state stays there for our big projects
 - Mr. Thompson: Do you have a diagram of what this last extension looks like? I don't know if it was in other material that I hadn't received
 - Mr. Voss: It's in the SEQR
 - Mr. McCarron: Its in that 96 pages
 - Mr. Voss: I can give you mine when we're done, so we don't have to kill a tree. The actual alignment is what it is, you've heard me use the term ballet; we are literally doing ballet on this to avoid icky spots that we don't want to touch, gas lines, utilities, sewer pipe, railroad tracks, and highway on-ramps
 - The Danforth Pond and the salt ponds, we're going to build a plank boardwalk over the salt ponds because those are historic features that you can't disturb
 - Mr. Ryan: Not to sound uninformed, the Loop the Lake. This will loop the lake?
 - Mr. Voss: When complete, this will be it, roughly 18 miles
 - Mr. McCarron: This is the part that's left. We've been talking about this for years; this is truly a landmark time, in my opinion, for parks, for highway, for the County. This has been discussed for decades
 - Mr. Voss: This goes back to Mulroy. When we looked at the files, there was material from the 1960s when they were having meetings about putting some sort of recreational trail around the lake, long before the amphitheater, the improvements at the fairgrounds, Amazon, or even the Carousel Mall, when there were oil tanks down there
 - This community has a lot invested in this: four county executives have worked on it, probably a half a dozen DOT commissioners, and I don't know how many parks commissioners
 - We want to get this over the bow line and make the link. You could do marathons, bike races, all kinds of cool stuff. If you're so motivated, you could park at the Regional Market, walk into

Liverpool, get lunch, and walk back. There are people out there constantly; they pick a spot. The boat launch the DEC put in is a cool spot to park, you can walk all the way down to Hiawatha and back, which is about 4.2 miles

- Mr. Bush: Is this Loop the Lake connected to the trail that runs through the state?
- Mr. Voss: Yes, sir. That was one of the key features when the state did the Erie Canalway Trail, this connected to that. Our bridge is actually part of the Empire State Trail; we built it, but they had some of the money, so we let them put their signs on it
 - The whole point was that when you're on that statewide Erie Canal trail, you can come into Syracuse and get to the fairgrounds, the amphitheater, the restaurants in the Village of Liverpool, and the Regional Market, because there are bicycle groups that do cross-state tours
 - Ken, I know where you're goin, if the municipalities that are interested in some of the state funding that's out there for planning additional trail work pursue it, those could all be connected as well
- Mr. Bush: It has tremendous potential for the serious bike person that runs from Buffalo to Albany. They'll be able to get off in Syracuse, see some of the city, see some of the area, and enjoy part of their biking
- Mr. Voss: It's a very cool concept, and it's taken a lot of ballet to get it where it is so far. I feel like we're on the cusp of having it really cool, where people say, wow, this is really awesome that the county did this
 - The good thing about this project, which we've enjoyed since the beginning, is that it transcends socioeconomic issues and transcends politics. It's universally appreciated as something that this community deserves and should have as an asset
- Mr. Thompson: You mentioned driving these giant pylons into the ground, for support of what? Was it for the bridge?
- Mr. Voss: We have to build another bridge to get over Lay Creek and the tracks again. Right now Murphy's Island is on the correct side of the railroad tracks for purposes of getting to Murphy's Island, but to get back to the parkway, Lay Creek comes in off the southwest part of the lake, and then you have to get over the set of railroad tracks that goes out to Liverpool
 - So we've got to come back over, and then we've got to go under again to get back down to Onondaga Lake Park
- Mr. Thompson: You were saying a moment ago that everything on Murphy's Island is done?
- Mr. Voss: You take the city's Creekwalk to Murphy's Island now, and there's a boardwalk there that you can go down; it terminates in the middle of Murphy's Island, where there's a roundabout, a clearing, and a bunch of trees, nice and peaceful, but you can't go any further
 - This project will remove that little terminus; you'll go a few hundred feet in, then up onto another bridge, cross the tracks, and come down by the on-ramp to I-81 south from the parkway. You'll slide down there, see the cattails and the phragmites, come around the dam for the salt pond, and reach a temporary terminus where you'll stop until we can make the connection with the other side of the railroad bridge
 - In a dream world, the state would say it found \$50 million, take that railroad bridge out, and put in a new one that's 20 feet higher. I don't know if that's realistic or not, but regardless, we're still going to go forward
- Mr. Thompson: Are there any concerns about working in that area, and perhaps it's already been accounted for? Murphy's Island has a reputation for pollution. Like what we found with the marina, where they were surprised to find a mercury deposit, is there something accounting for potential discoveries of further pollution that might have to be remediated in that section?
- Mr. Fensken: No, that's all part of it, it's all part of the SEQR. We have to do historical environmental hazardous waste research as part of preparing the SEQR document itself. We have no concerns over it

- Mr. Voss: If you look at the first page of the resolution, you'll see the alphabet soup of federal and state agencies involved in the approval of this; that's why it takes so long. We spent 10 months arguing with SHPO about the visual impact of our bridge on the highway overpass
- Mr. Thompson: Visual impact?
- Mr. Voss: I wish I was kidding, 10 months on something that should have been turned around in two weeks, because you're not looking at anything; you're looking at a gray concrete barrier wall on the highway. When you're dealing with people out of town in Albany and Washington who've never been here and don't use this stuff, they don't understand that we're not harming the historical visual nature of the I-81 on-ramps
- Mr. McCarron: Nobody took care of that
- Mr. Voss: Yeah, nobody cares. We'll get a curve ball every now and then. Fish and Wildlife was super to work with this time, and the Army Corps has been great, but there's a lot of ballet. The barges we're going to use to bring materials in can't affect the lake level, so we have to plan the timing of how and when we're going to use them
 - With any project, if something comes up as we go, there are systems in place to deal with anything we didn't anticipate
 - For example, the National Grid gas lines that have been back there for decades – we see where they are on the map, but if everything National Grid put in the ground was actually where they said it was, everything would be easy
 - Sometimes they're not exactly where they say they are, so we'll cross that bridge, no pun intended, when we get to it
- Mr. Thompson: You mentioned the Regional Market. As someone who has ridden his bike down Route 370 to get to the farmer's market, at some point you have to cross over 370, over the four lanes of traffic. Is there any plan, whether as part of this or down the line, to make that easier, since the path is going to be on this side of 370?
- Mr. Voss: You would have to get off the trail, go down Park Street, and cross at the crossing; if you're on a bicycle, you can probably swing it over. There were conversations at one point. The short answer is there's a crossing on Park Street now, and that's something we could talk with the city about. I guarantee you, if we get this built and it's up and functioning and people want to do that, the city would probably cooperate on working out some sort of new crossing if needed
- Mr. Thompson: That would be great, because that area gets a little bit of a tangle with the on-ramp going up and trying to get under the bridge. Anything we could do to make that accessible and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists would be great
- Mr. Voss: That would be a great problem to have; if we get to the point where a crossing is the only thing we have to solve, that's one the engineers could dig into and fix in about an afternoon
- Mr. Fensken: Our recent Liverpool project put sidewalks all the way down to Buckley Road that are supposed to connect to a set of sidewalks being developed by the candle factory; they're supposed to put in a whole series of sidewalks that go right into the city from the Regional Market. We're doing our due diligence to increase the connectivity to that area for people to get to the Regional Market
 - This is always kind of an ongoing process; unfortunately we can never do all of it at once. We can do our part of it and then work with the rest to make the other connections
- Mr. Ryan: Just for my own clarification, you're good with this body, and the next thing we'll hear is when you're doing a ribbon cutting and taking a lap?
- Mr. Voss: No. I need the SEQR today so it can get to the state, so they can hopefully approve it in a timely fashion and get the FHWA to approve it. That allows us to get the contract signed for construction and get this out to bid over the winter; then we're going to start the first phase
 - I will be back for some sort of problem; I guarantee that. I'm not going to lie to you; it is what it is. It's a construction project, it's going to be tens of millions of dollars, and there's going to be a food fight at SMTC about the money, but we're going to do what we have to do

- Mr. Ryan: To your point earlier, this is an interesting issue for a lot of people in the county; I think people like to be paying attention
- Mr. Voss: We'll have to wait and see where the money shakes out. If the federal government could be so kind as to pass a new T-bill with lots of cash in it for local governments, that would be super; that would allow us to advance this without too much brain damage through the process. But it is what it is, we've done it before, we'll do it again, and it can get painful. We will be back to you folks for more in one way or another, whether as part of our budget or through other resolutions or amendments; I just can't say for sure
- Mr. Ryan: I appreciate your efforts. I'll be looking for a motion

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve this item; Ayes 4 (Ryan, Thompson, Bush, McCarron). MOTION CARRIED;

2. COUNTY LEGISLATURE:

- a. Authorizing the Transfer of the Traffic Control Signal Located at Gillespie Avenue and West Genesee Street in the Town of Camillus from the Town of Camillus to the County of Onondaga Pursuant to Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law for Purposes of Repairing Same – Martin E. Voss, Commissioner
 - When a traffic signal sits at an intersection of a county and state road, a county and town road, or a town and village road, the higher municipality typically takes control of that infrastructure
 - Most signals at intersections with state roads, like Routes 31 and 57, are controlled by the state
 - Signals at town roads, county controls the infrastructure and maintenance
 - This one is an outlier; went down in March through April of this year
 - Town doesn't have a traffic group in its highway department to fix it; highway superintendent was out there pushing buttons trying to figure it out
 - County crew ended up dispatched to fix it anyway
 - Led to the conversation about taking over the signal to maintain it going forward and add it to the network, since county controls everything else on West Genesee Street
 - As infrastructure modernizes, old magnetic loops in the pavement that sense vehicles are being replaced with a white J-bar and a 360 degree camera, the small black fishbowl, that feeds back to the vision system and coordinates signal timing based on what it sees
 - At John Glenn Boulevard and Route 57, a busy intersection, the computer and AI can be watched changing signal timings in real time to move vehicles through during peak hour backups
 - System is being added to more intersections every year, paid for by the federal government as part of county projects
 - This would be one more intersection added to the network
 - No major capital project planned there currently
 - Cost of maintaining this signal is in the hundreds of dollars a year; can likely be absorbed into the traffic systems management budget

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. McCarron: Is that because of all the heavy traffic coming off Gillespie?
- Mr. Voss: Yes
- Mr. McCarron: Maybe out of Valvoline; Nestico's too
- Mr. Ryan: Is it good equipment that we're taking?
- Mr. Voss: No, it's old stuff, but it's okay, we have some nice historical equipment that we can replace it with. It'll be fine, and there's no reason for the town to have it; it's just a hassle for them. They have

to call a contractor and spend a lot more money every time something happens. It's a lot easier for us to just do it

A motion was made by Mr. Bush, seconded by Mr. McCarron, to approve this item; Ayes 4 (Ryan, Thompson, Bush, McCarron). MOTION CARRIED;

b. DISCUSSION: Proposed ADA Committee, County-Wide Accessibility Standards and Oversight

- As the clerk mentioned in meetings a couple of months ago, accessibility standards are changing in New York State
 - Pertains to digital access to minutes, presentation access, and so forth
 - Triggered a conversation about accessibility at the Legislature and the County
- Among the outside boards and commissions the Legislature is responsible for appointing people to, one is the Council for the Disabled
 - Defunct since 1999
 - Appropriate time to re-energize that committee with a new name
 - New name informed by current nomenclature deemed appropriate, honoring, and respectful to those in the community with all different abilities and access needs
- Looking to put this committee into place over the next couple of months
 - Would advise the entire county, including the Legislature, on what genuine accessibility looks like
 - Ensuring not only ADA compliance but that the County is accessible for all members of its constituency
- Wanted to come to every committee meeting because accessibility is an across-the-board conversation
- Asked the Facilities members what would be important to set up the facilities elements of the county for success
 - Whether particular people need to sit on the committee
 - Anything that should be a priority as it gets launched

Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Ryan: I personally feel someone from the Facilities Committee would be helpful to be on that, particularly because of the element of the buildings that we have
- Mr. McCarron: Probably the chair
- Mr. Ryan: Not the chair
- Mr. McCarron: It's my final term; I would hate to have to make a change
- Mr. Ryan: But I think that would be helpful to the committee and to the facilities
- Mr. McCarron: What's the timeline? How quickly is this committee going to be reestablished?
- Ms. Watts: We're looking to reestablish it with a resolution in an upcoming session and then populate it, appoint people to it, the following session
- Mr. Thompson: Are you looking for suggestions for people to be on it, or suggestions of what it might focus on?
- Ms. Watts: In this particular moment, feel free to email me if you have people; myself and legislator Block are working on curating that list of people right now. What I'm looking for today is anything you want to flag that you think would help set this up for success, because this committee is only going to be successful if its suggestions are implemented. We want to make sure we've got the right people and the right connections for it to be as helpful as possible to our county
- Mr. McCarron: It's pretty much an advisory committee?
- Ms. Watts: Exactly, yes, it would be serving more than advisory

- Mr. Ryan: I would imagine, speaking with Commissioner Wixson, he'd have a pretty good inventory of where we're at throughout our buildings and facilities throughout the county in regards to ADA compliance
- Mr. McCarron: There are a lot of counties that are not
- Mr. Ryan: He probably has a decent comprehensive list of it
- Ms. Watts: Excellent. If you have thoughts or anything on it, please direct them to legislative staff and myself

C. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to adjourn the meeting; Ayes 4 (Ryan, Thompson, Bush, McCarron). MOTION CARRIED;

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.



Respectfully submitted,
SPENCER BERG, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: COUNTY FACILITIES AGENDA

DATE: JULY 21, 2026

NAME (Please Print)	DEPT/AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
MARTY VOSS	DOT
James Fenskey	DOT
Jason Doe	Finance