CDTC’s Regional Sidewalk Inventory

Overview

CDTC created a GIS-based inventory of existing sidewalk infrastructure in all 77 municipalities within CDTC’s planning area. This inventory indicates presence and surface type of sidewalk only, not condition ratings. CDTC started this project in 2014. Data collection was completed in December 2017. The primary objective for creating this inventory arose from an increasing emphasis by USDOT to ensure that MPO’s and State DOT’s are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which requires local governments to develop Transition Plans to identify a course of action to bring deficient pedestrian facilities into ADA compliance. CDTC’s Sidewalk Inventory is intended to be used as a baseline or first step in assisting municipalities with developing a screening process to evaluate ADA compliance of their existing sidewalk facilities. The inventory will be useful to CDTC internally as well. In addition to providing a summary of our regional sidewalk mileage, the inventory will be used to help in future planning projects and programs by identifying existing pedestrian facilities as well as gaps in the pedestrian network.

Data Collection Methodology

CDTC student interns and staff scanned every municipality within CDTC’s planning area for the presence of sidewalks to create a master GIS (Geographic Information System) database of existing sidewalks. The following data sources were used: existing GIS sidewalk data collected by CDTC or consultants as part of previous projects, existing GIS data provided to CDTC by municipalities or as part of NYSDOT’s 2008 ADA Inventory, existing data provided to CDTC by municipalities in digital formats other than GIS, and aerial imagery from various sources and various years; including imagery from the NYS GIS Digital Orthoimagery Program, ESRI/Arc GIS Online imagery and Google Imagery/Google Street View. In some cases, data for smaller villages was collected by CDTC in the field using a mapping grade handheld GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. The years of source data ranged from 2005 to 2017.

Data Elements Collected

The following data features were collected: route number, road name, side of road, start and end points, sidewalk surface type, and sidewalk length in miles and feet. Data received from NYSDOT’s 2008 ADA ratings for state-owned facilities were included where applicable.

Other Data Elements

Data received from NYSDOT’s 2008 ADA ratings for state-owned facilities were included where applicable. Additionally, several municipalities provided partial data to CDTC in various formats which in some cases contained surface condition ratings, ownership and width.

Data Packages

CDTC produced and electronically distributed data packages to all of the municipalities in which sidewalk infrastructure exists. All data packages were sent by the end of March 2018.

All data packages consisted of the following products, in addition to this document:

1. An Excel file export of the GIS database containing all of the attribute data.

2. An Excel file Field Key containing definitions of all data fields.
3. A PDF overview map of all existing sidewalks.

4. A Word document containing a brief summary of notes specific to each municipality.

5. A GIS database file in ESRI shapefile format.

Data Review & Updates

Upon receipt of the data packages, CDTC requested that each municipality do the following:

1. Review the data for any sidewalk infrastructure that may be missing from CDTC’s database. (Due to the varying sources of data and varying years of the data sources, this inventory may not represent what is presently on the ground).

2. Provide feedback to CDTC regarding any missing or misrepresented data.

3. Provide any edits, additions\(^1\) or updates made to CDTC’s original GIS database back to CDTC in GIS format to incorporate into our master regional database. This will allow CDTC to keep our data current and relevant. In the absence of GIS, data edits, additions or updates may be shared in other formats. However, these updates may or may not be incorporated back into the master GIS database.

\(^1\)Examples of additional data include attributes such as surface condition ratings, ADA ratings, etc.
CDTC’s Regional Sidewalk Inventory Highlights

There are approximately 1,225 miles of sidewalks within the CDTC Planning Area. When comparing the regional sidewalk mileage collected by CDTC to the regional road mileage from NYSDOT’s 2016 Highway Mileage Report, (6738 miles) we find that nearly 20% of the region’s roads have sidewalks. Sidewalk infrastructure in our region’s cities totals 850 miles or 69%, towns account for 245 miles or 20% and our villages contain 130 miles or 11%. All of our cities and villages contain sidewalk infrastructure to some degree. The City of Albany contains the most sidewalks within the region of any city or municipality type at 273 miles. There are 14 rural towns (30% of towns) and three rural villages (14% of villages) with less than one mile of sidewalk infrastructure. At the county level, Albany County contains the most miles of sidewalks in the four county region at 511 miles, which accounts for almost half of the entire region’s sidewalk mileage (42%).

There are only 9 towns (19% of towns) within our region that do not contain any sidewalk infrastructure and they are all rural. Five of these towns are located in western Saratoga County. Schenectady and Albany Counties each have one town without any sidewalk infrastructure and there are 2 towns without any sidewalks in Rensselaer County.

Sidewalk infrastructure in the rural towns in the region is primarily located along NYS Routes or local streets within hamlet areas. In suburban towns, the location of sidewalk infrastructure varies greatly, but in general sidewalks are primarily located along NYS Routes, hamlets, residential developments or major commercial areas. Sidewalk infrastructure also varies in villages with some rural villages containing less than one mile of sidewalk, while other rural villages contain 10 or more miles of sidewalk. In villages with limited sidewalk infrastructure, sidewalks generally exist along NYS Routes and “Main Street” or other commercial areas.

Concrete sidewalks are prevalent in the region and account for 86% or over one thousand miles of the region’s sidewalks. Other sidewalk materials or surface types include asphalt, brick and slate. About 100 miles or 8% of sidewalks within the region alternate between the four surface types, while about 5% consist of asphalt only. The remaining 1% of regional sidewalk mileage consists solely of brick or slate.
CDTC Regional Sidewalk Inventory, town’s without sidewalks:

- Charlton
- Galway
- Nassau
- Day
- Grafton
- Princetown
- Edinburg
- Knox
- Providence
Sidewalk mileage distribution by county

- Albany County: 42%
- Rensselaer County: 22%
- Saratoga County: 18%
- Schenectady County: 18%
Green Island is counted as a town.

urban/suburban/rural was defined/determined by surrounding land use/density.

Most miles of sidewalk by municipality type and size:

- Suburban Town - Colonie: 46 miles
- Rural Town - Ballston: 7 miles
- Town - Colonie: 46 miles
- Rural Village - Ballston Spa: 16 miles
- Urban Village - Scotia: 31 miles
- Village - Scotia: 31 miles
- Small City - Cohoes: 44 miles
- Large City - Albany: 273 miles
- City - Albany: 273 miles