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## City & Region

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city of olean

### **\$6.5 million grant to help transform Olean's North Union Street Key street will become pedestrian-friendly**

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WASHINGTON – The City of Olean's main downtown street will be converted into a pedestrian-friendly boulevard thanks to a \$6.5 million federal grant announced Thursday.

The money will be used to reinvent North Union Street in the city, the largest in Cattaraugus County.

Now a four-lane thoroughfare designed to handle 50,000 vehicles a day – nearly five times as many as use the street – North Union will be reworked so that it has two vehicle lanes, two bike lanes and a tree-lined median.

Parking and sidewalks will be improved, and seven traffic lights will be replaced with five roundabouts.

Modeled in part on a similar project in the Village of Hamburg in Erie County, the improvements are part of the city's "Walkable Olean" project.

"The project will help make the city more pedestrian-friendly and trigger business growth along Olean's commercial corridor, and I plan to continue working with the city to ensure that the project is executed successfully, and in a way that meets the local community's needs," said Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., who announced the grant along with Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand, D-N.Y.

Olean city leaders had been pushing for the grant, arguing that the transformation of North Union Street could boost the entire city.

“Improving the design of this street will enhance citizens’ quality of life, raise property values and encourage investment, as well as make the street easier and less costly to maintain,” the Walkable Olean project says on its website.

The city will receive the money under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program of the U.S. Department of Transportation, in which communities compete for funding for projects that have the potential for significant regional or national impact.

“This is an incredibly smart investment for the City of Olean,” Gillibrand said.

“When we invest in our transportation infrastructure, we set the foundation for economic growth, attract new businesses and new jobs for middle-class families right here where we need it most.”

Both senators wrote to then-Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in June to push for the project, saying it could alleviate traffic, improve pedestrian safety and encourage more people to visit the city’s commercial center.

The grant was one of 52, totaling \$474 million, that the Department of Transportation announced Thursday.

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