

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (SMTTC) • SPRING 2016



Skaneateles Lake

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

For several years there has been an on-going national conversation about the condition of roads, bridges, public transit assets and the investments necessary to make improvements. In December 2015, the first multi-year surface transportation authorization in over a decade was signed into law. The **Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act** provides long-term funding certainty that advances the planning and implementation of much needed improvements throughout the region, state and country. The FAST Act totals \$305 billion from 2016 through 2020, with \$225.2 billion for highways, \$48.7 billion for transit, \$7 billion for highway and motor carrier safety, and \$24 billion in general funds for mass transit, Amtrak and other passenger rail programs. Three overarching components of the FAST Act are:

- Improves mobility on America's highways
- Creates jobs and supports economic growth
- Accelerates project delivery and promotes innovation.

The FAST Act also continues the incorporation of performance goals, measures, and targets into the process of identifying needed transportation improvements and project selection. The SMTTC's **Long Range Transportation Plan**, (2050 Long Range Transportation Plan: Moving Towards a Greater Syracuse) adopted in September 2015, specifies a number of performance-based planning and programming items. The performance-based planning approach will be monitored and adjusted as additional information is released by the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT).

For more information on the FAST Act, please contact James D'Agostino, SMTTC Director, by phone at 315.422.5716 or via e-mail at jdagostino@smtcempo.org.

2016-2017 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM UNDERWAY

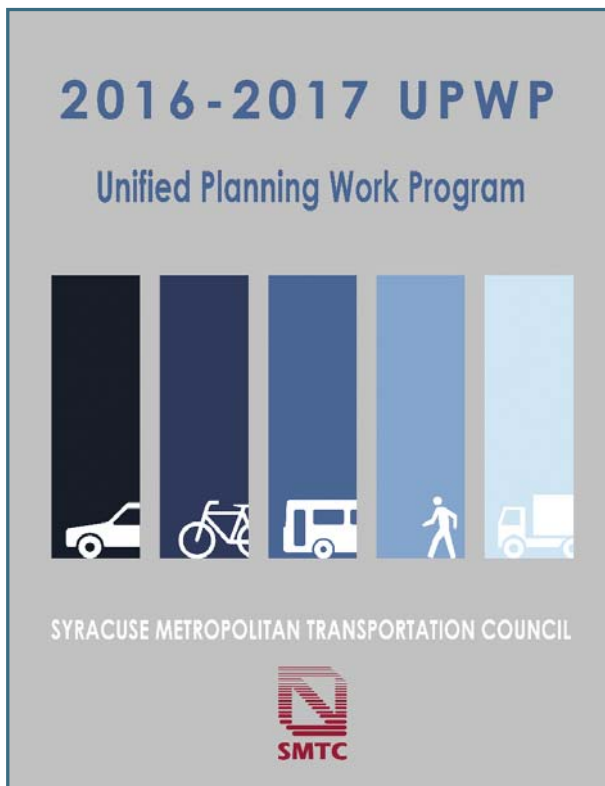
On February 23, 2016, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) Policy Committee met and adopted the **2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**. The document is intended to provide a mechanism for the coordination of transportation planning efforts by local, state and regional agencies through the SMTC. The UPWP incorporates into one document all transportation planning activities in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area that are conducted from April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the New York State Governor, the SMTC is responsible for carrying out the continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area.

Each year, staff efforts are focused on federally required items. Staff also work on carryover projects from the previous program year. On-going projects for 2016-2017 include the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit (SMART) Study Phase 1, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Outreach, Roundabout Feasibility Analysis, Erie Boulevard East Pedestrian Study, and Title VI/Environmental Justice/Ladders of Opportunity. The SMTC staff has continued their participation in the NYSDOT's I-81 project. Staff members attend meetings for various NYSDOT I-81 associated committees and provide Travel Demand Modeling assistance.

The 2016-2017 UPWP includes several new local projects. Staff is continuing to work on the federally required tasks which were included after the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issued Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) in April 2014.

SMTC Director, James D'Agostino, stated "this is the largest program staff has undertaken in my tenure at the agency." The new projects included in the 2016-2017 UPWP are described on page 3.

The 2016-2017 UPWP is available for viewing at the SMTC offices at 126 N. Salina Street, Syracuse; at the main branch of the Onondaga County Public Library, The Galleries, 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse; or on the SMTC web site – www.smtcmpo.org.



DIRECTIONS

DIRECTIONS is a publication of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). Formed in 1966 as a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, the SMTC serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Syracuse metropolitan area, and provides a forum for cooperative decision making in developing transportation plans and programs. Its committees are comprised of elected and appointed officials, representing local, state and federal governments or agencies (member agencies) having an interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming.

Editor: **Patricia A. Wortley**

AN OVERVIEW OF NEW PROJECTS ON THE 2016-2017 UPWP

As part of the **2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** development process, the SMTC sent a call-letter to all member agencies and municipalities within the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) in October 2015. In response to the call letter, a variety of project proposals were submitted from member agencies and municipalities. Brief project descriptions are contained below. For further details on all projects, please refer to the 2016-2017 UPWP.

ROW Data Collection and Inventory

Sponsor: SMTC

Staff will conduct outreach to various municipalities and utility owners to obtain Right-of-Way (ROW) information for use in future bicycle, pedestrian, road, and freight planning activities.

Work Link

Sponsor: City of Syracuse and Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)

Staff will begin comprehensive and collective discussions with member agencies, transportation providers, businesses, and non-profit organizations on the feasibility and establishment of transportation to work services for low-income residents.

Town of Camillus - Connections to Township 5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment

Sponsor: Town of Camillus

The intent of this project is to complete an assessment and review of potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the Township 5 area in the Town of Camillus.



Township 5, Camillus

CCEO Inland Port Modeling and Analysis Technical Assistance

Sponsor: CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is seeking staff assistance to provide travel demand modeling assistance for proposed inland port sites in Onondaga County.



CSX freight train

Centro Rider and Non-Rider Survey

Sponsor: Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA - Centro)

Staff will conduct a survey and analysis of persons who use the Centro system and those who do not.



Passengers at a bus stop - photo courtesy of Centro

Centro Employer Survey

Sponsor: CNYRTA - Centro

Staff will conduct a survey and analysis of various employers whose employees may or may not use the Centro system.

Carrier Park Mobility Plan

Sponsor: Town of DeWitt

Staff will assist the Town in providing/identifying more bicycle and pedestrian facilities to connect destinations throughout the hotel districts/Carrier Park Complex.



Jamesville Road, DeWitt

Central DeWitt Bike/Ped Mobility Plan

Sponsor: Town of DeWitt

Staff will assist the Town in providing/identifying more bicycle and pedestrian facilities to connect destinations throughout the town.

Cont. on back page

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ASSISTANCE BLOCK SCOPE OF WORK APPROVED!

The Planning Committee approved the first new Scope of Work under the 2016-2017 UPWP. The **Comprehensive Plan Assistance Block**, which was requested by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, (SOCPA) will allow the SMTC to provide technical transportation planning assistance to municipalities that are updating their Comprehensive Plans or other municipal plans.

The SMTC intends to provide assistance to up to three municipalities within this program year. The approved Scope of Work identifies potential tasks that staff may complete, including: inventory of transportation facilities and features (such as road ownership, pavement ratings, etc.); traffic counts; accident data analysis; intersection capacity analysis; travel demand assessment; and pedestrian demand assessment. SOCPA will identify municipalities to receive assistance under this item, and specific tasks will be detailed for each municipality.

To date, the SMTC has agreed to assist the Town of DeWitt with the development of a master plan for the Jamesville Hamlet area. The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) is working on the development of this plan for the Town of DeWitt, and the SMTC staff will work closely with CNY RPDB staff to assist with the transportation-related elements.



Seneca Turnpike at North Street, Jamesville

Through this Comprehensive Plan Assistance Block, the SMTC hopes to spread awareness of transportation and land use planning principles and strengthen our relationships with municipalities in our region.

SMTC COMMITTEES ELECT OFFICERS

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is pleased to announce the following individuals were selected as committee officers through March 31, 2018:

Policy Committee:

Chair: **Ms. Kathleen Rapp**, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board; and
Vice Chair: **Mr. Andrew Maxwell**, City of Syracuse – Director of Policy and Innovation.

Planning Committee:

Chair: **Ms. Mary Robison**, City Engineer, City of Syracuse; and
Vice Chair: **Mr. Brian Donnelly**, Commissioner, Onondaga County Department of Transportation.

Executive Committee:

Chair: **Ms. Mary Robison**, City Engineer, City of Syracuse; and
Vice Chair: **Mr. Brian Donnelly**, Commissioner, Onondaga County Department of Transportation.

The SMTC **Policy Committee** provides overall policy direction and decision-making of the Central Staff; establishment of goals; adoption of transportation plans, programs, and projects undertaken by the Council; and adoption of transportation reports and recommendations. The SMTC **Planning Committee** functions as a forum to discuss and resolve relevant transportation issues; oversee the technical activities of the SMTC; and analyze and determine transportation funding priorities for the Metropolitan Planning Area. The SMTC **Executive Committee** provides oversight for the day-to-day operations of the SMTC, primarily for financial management, personnel and other administrative requirements.

STUDY EXAMINES PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY OPTIONS FOR WESTERN LIGHTS

When Syracuse’s Western Lights Shopping Plaza opened in 1967, a newspaper account specifically pointed out that, while there would be “throng of visitors”, no one should be concerned about accessibility because of the “kingsized space for autos”. Like a lot of residential and commercial developments built in the 1950s and 1960s, the Western Lights area was designed for the automobile: sidewalks are intermittent, roads are wide, and parking lots are plentiful.



Western Lights study area

In recent years, both developers and roadway designers have become increasingly aware of the need to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. New York State’s Complete Streets law took effect in 2012, ensuring that all roadway users, both those in cars and those on foot or on bikes, will be considered when state and federal funds are used to build or reconstruct a road. If the Western Lights area, sitting as it does on Syracuse’s western edge, were being built today, the roads around it would likely include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and landscaping.

The SMTC’s recently completed **Western Lights Pedestrian Access Study**, the second phase of the Sustainable Streets Project, examined this area and identified where pedestrian-friendly improvements could be added. Located in the Town of Geddes, the Western Lights area has been a major retail destination for residents in the Skunk City, Strathmore, Winkworth, and Tipperary Hill neighborhoods for decades. The combination of two full-service supermarkets (a Price Chopper in Western Lights Plaza and a Wegmans across the street) and a variety of smaller shops, restaurants, and offices draw shoppers and employees to this area throughout the day.

The SMTC’s pedestrian demand model (available online at <http://arccg.is/1VBXQG9>) identifies this area as a place where people are likely to be walking. Residential subdivisions and city neighborhoods ring the shopping centers, making this a natural destination for people on foot. A weekday count of pedestrians showed a pattern of people walking east-west along Onondaga Boulevard, the most direct route between the Western Lights area and Skunk City to the east. This count also indicated that many people make mid-block crossings across both Onondaga Boulevard and Velasko Road.

The **Western Lights Pedestrian Access Study** was an opportunity for the SMTC and its member agencies to brainstorm pedestrian improvements for the roads in this area. These ideas ranged in scale from “minor” to “major”. Examples of the former include adding crosswalks and pedestrian signals to all of the sidewalks in this area and relocating bus stops to take advantage of these signalized pedestrian crossings. Major improvements identified include adding a median island and mid-block crossing to Velasko Road (as pictured below) to make it possible for pedestrians to safely cross this busy road and reducing the length of the driveway frontage along Onondaga Boulevard.



Potential mid-block crossing on Velasko Road

For the complete list of possible improvements, take a look at the completed report, available on the SMTC’s web site, www.smtcmpo.org.

SMART 1 PROJECT UPDATE

On February 24, the SMTC held the first open house for the **Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (SMART 1)** project. The event took place at the SKY Armory in Downtown Syracuse and was attended by nearly 100 people. As the first introduction to the community at large, the meeting was structured to learn about the possibility of Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit along the Regional Transportation Center to Syracuse University and Eastwood to Onondaga Community College corridors. In addition to a presentation, a variety of interactive stations were available for attendees to walk through and speak with staff. Stations



focused on background information, project goals, existing conditions, and transit mode options. For those who could not attend the open house, all station display boards, a copy of the presentation, and listing of Frequently Asked Questions are available on the SMART 1 project web site at www.smtcmpo.org/SMART.



Public meeting attendees view the display boards



The first public meeting for the SMART 1 project was held at the SKY Armory

In the next few months, staff will continue our public engagement efforts and data collection/analysis. You may see us at bus stops along the two corridors!

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to sign up for our SMART 1 stakeholder list, please send us an e-mail at contactus@smtcmpo.org.

SMTC RECEIVES PARTNERS FOR SAFETY AWARD

On April 15, 2016, Chuck DeWeese, Assistant Commissioner of the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), presented the SMTC a **Partners for Safety Award**.

The GTSC started the prestigious Partners for Safety awards program in 1996 to recognize voluntary contributions in the effort to prevent highway crashes and injuries, promote traffic safety, and make New York State a safer place to live.



GTSC Assistant Commissioner Chuck DeWeese with the SMTC staff

VILLAGE OF NORTH SYRACUSE CHURCH STREET STUDY COMPLETED

The Village of North Syracuse believes that providing the 100 block of Church Street with a second point of access will improve ‘last mile’ delivery truck movements and thus encourage properties to redevelop as an extension of the Village’s central business district.

Over the years, several residential properties along the 100 block have converted to commercial uses. Since the block does not have sufficient space to accommodate a cul-de-sac, delivery trucks that service these businesses do not have the ability to turn around and often back out onto Main Street (i.e., U.S. Route 11), a heavily trafficked commercial roadway. Recently, the Village developed two master plans that consider access alternatives to promote commercial redevelopment. The alternatives result in new connections within close proximity to existing intersections. As such, Village officials requested that the Syracuse Metropolitan

Transportation Council (SMTC) assess the potential impacts of the alternatives on the surrounding intersections.

To assess impacts, the SMTC generated 20-year trip estimates and redistributed them based on the various traffic patterns

permitted under each alternative. The SMTC assessed the level of service (LOS) at each intersection and found that the intersections are anticipated to operate within acceptable limits for each future scenario. The SMTC shared its findings with the community and built consensus for a preferred alternative.

Local merchants, residents, village officials agreed that they prefer to extend Church Street to South Bay Road, (Scenario 1A in the report) as long as the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) maintains the southbound

left from Route 11 onto Church Street. Under Scenario 1A, motorists and delivery trucks would not be allowed to make the westbound left from Church Street onto Route 11. However, the scenario allows for a new right-in, right-out only connection at South Bay Road to improve vehicle and truck access.



The full report may be viewed on the SMTC web site at www.smtcmpo.org. If you have any questions, please contact the project manager, Michael Alexander, at 315.422.5716 or by e-mail at malexander@smtcmpo.org.



Information courtesy of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

We can all play a part in being a *Roll Model* to decrease the risks of traffic crashes and preventable injuries and deaths.

Being A *Roll Model* Means: Riding and Driving Focused - never distracted Riding and Driving Prepared - always expect the unexpected Safety First - always wear a bicycle helmet when on a bicycle and a seat belt when in a car Rules of the Road - a bicyclist is considered a vehicle on the road with all the rights on the roadway and responsibilities of motorized traffic Sharing the Road - both motorist and bicyclist should look out for one another and show mutual respect.



THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



NEW UPWP PROJECTS *CONT. FROM PAGE 3*

Fayetteville Route 5 Buildout Analysis Assistance

Sponsor: Village of Fayetteville and SOCPA



Route 5/Genesee Street, Fayetteville

This study will analyze various scenario concepts for the buildout out of Route 5 with the Village limits.

OCDOT Traffic County Program

Sponsor: Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT)

The SMTC will develop a fully operational traffic count database and traffic count program for the OCDOT.

Local Comprehensive Plan Assistance

Sponsor: SOCPA

Staff will provide assistance to area municipalities completing

comprehensive plan updates. For further information on this process, see page 4.

Skaneateles Multi-Use Corridor

Sponsor: Town of Skaneateles



Mottville Trailhead of the Charlie Major Trail, Skaneateles

The SMTC will conduct a comprehensive analysis of connected trails, bike lanes and/or bike paths to create a continuous multi-use corridor from the Village of Skaneateles north to the Town of Elbridge.

Work commenced on the new UPWP projects on April 1 and Scopes of Work have been developed for some of the studies. For further information on any of the new projects, please contact the SMTC at 315.422.5716.