

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SMTC & SOCPA Seeking Public Input on Long Range Plans**

SYRACUSE, NY -- The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) have been working collaboratively on updates to important long-range planning documents and are seeking public input, including today's release of a public survey of residents in Onondaga County.

The SMTC is working on an update to the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's *Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*. The **LRTP 2011 Update** is a blueprint to guide the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's transportation development over a 25-year period. Updated every four years to reflect changing conditions and new planning principles, the plan update will look at major urban transportation planning issues such as environmental/air quality; complete access to transportation; alternative transportation modes (e.g., bicycle and pedestrian); the impact of land development on the transportation system; highway traffic congestion; and maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

SOCPA is creating a new *Onondaga County Sustainable Development Plan*, which will replace the County's current comprehensive plan, the *2010 Development Guide*. The new plan will promote social, environmental and economic sustainability at a regional scale, with a focus on existing and future land development patterns. The plan will examine the costs and impacts associated with our everyday decisions on land use, transportation, and distribution of resources and will guide County policy regarding our patterns of urbanization. "Onondaga County's diverse landscape is a tremendous asset and as a community we must decide how best to preserve it. At the same time, we pay some of the highest taxes in the country, due in part to having increased infrastructure without the population growth to support it. The result of this process will affect all of us and I am looking forward to hearing input from the community and to watching the process develop," said Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney.

To aid the SMTC and SOCPA in understanding residents' needs and values as they relate to these planning efforts, a survey of area residents will be conducted. The survey is intended to assess residents' values and attitudes toward land development and infrastructure investments, test acceptance of a variety of concepts in land use and

transportation planning, and understand residents' travel habits and desired improvements to the transportation system.

The SMTC and SOCPA have been working together to develop the survey, which will be administered two ways. The SMTC has retained the National Research Center, Inc. to administer a statistically valid survey that will be mailed to a random sample of households in Onondaga County over the next two weeks. To encourage additional public input, a similar survey is available online for anyone to take on the SMTC's web site at [www.smtcmpo.org/LRTPUpdate](http://www.smtcmpo.org/LRTPUpdate) and on SOCPA's web site at [www.ongov.net/planning/plan/survey.html](http://www.ongov.net/planning/plan/survey.html).

The SMTC and SOCPA are asking for the public's help in obtaining as many surveys from County residents as possible, since these responses will help shape the plans and future of Onondaga County. If residents do receive a mailed survey, they are strongly encouraged to complete and return it, as the results of the mailed survey will be tabulated separately from the public survey found online. All mailed and public survey responses will be kept anonymous and will be compiled and reported along with other respondents.

Since land use and transportation issues are integrally connected, the SMTC and SOCPA are working together as plans for the future of the region are developed. "The need to balance land use and transportation issues is key toward planning our region's future," states James D'Agostino, Director of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council.

For further information on the LRTP 2011 Update, the County Sustainable Development Plan or the survey, please contact the SMTC or SOCPA:

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The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council was formed in 1966 as a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962 and Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964. Serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, the SMTC provides the forum for cooperative decision-making in developing transportation plans and programs for Onondaga County. Its committees are comprised of elected and appointed officials, representing local, State and Federal governments or agencies (e.g., CNY Regional Transportation Authority, CNY Regional Planning and Development Board, City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York State Department of Transportation, etc.) having interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming.

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