

5 LAND USE

5.1 GOAL

- To promote the development of an efficient urban area and a sense of community through transportation planning.

5.1.1 LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- To protect/enhance the visual and functional condition of streets and highways by encouraging well-planned residential, and industrial development.
- To educate and encourage municipalities to develop land use, zoning regulations and circulation plans which are supportive of transportation planning objectives including mobility protection.
- To ensure that funding decisions, particularly projects that improve street capacity for highway improvements, are related to municipal land use regulations that are supportive of mobility protection.
- To support development patterns, densities and design options that are conducive to transit service, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

5.2 LAND USE TRENDS

The 1995 SMTc LRTP and subsequent updates identified five general types of land use prevalent in the SMTc Study Area, including a moderately dense urban core; suburban towns, villages and hamlets; farmland; shoreline; and scattered development. These types remain indicative of present conditions, though the trend towards suburbanization and outward growth of the metropolitan area is beginning to affect the distinction between urban and rural landscapes and are creating new patterns of development in the County. Several economic development projects both planned and underway may have impacts on future development patterns as well.

Suburban Development (“Suburbanization”)

Not unlike other municipal areas across the United States and the northeast, the SMTc MPA has experienced an increase in suburban development while overall MPA population numbers remain relatively constant. Suburbanization typically occurs in rural fringe areas with development patterns often consisting of segregated, low density uses. Land use planners refer to unmanaged, low density development patterns that lack a sustainable environmental, economic, and social balance as “suburban sprawl”. The term “suburban sprawl” may consist of residential and nonresidential development patterns.

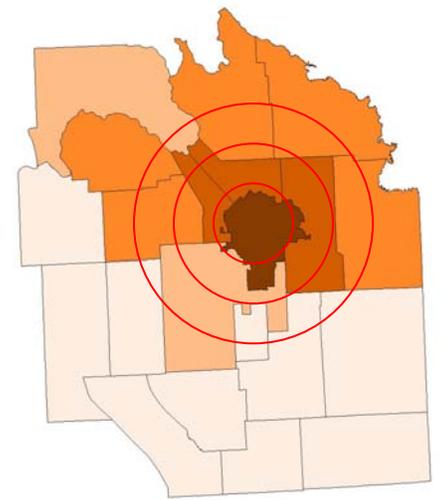
Transportation and land use planners acknowledge the need to manage (not prohibit) suburban development patterns to prevent sprawl from occurring to ensure sustainable use of environmental, land, and transportation resources. Suburban sprawl involves building on undeveloped land that may have formerly been used as farmland or functioned as wildlife habitat. Associated impacts include loss of agricultural production and natural habitat loss. Managing land use to support sustainable development patterns also means that the associated development can afford service and

infrastructure maintenance costs, which include, among other things, roads, bridges, air, rail, and waterway facilities.

Many factors contribute to suburban sprawl development patterns – and many of these factors are not within the control of local governmental agencies. For example, the interstate highway system opened speedy access to rural fringe areas. Home mortgage insurance policies also made the “American Dream” of owning your own home within reach of millions of Americans. Other factors also contribute to suburban development patterns including consumer preferences for low density single family homes over higher density multiple family properties. Examples of factors that are in the control of the local municipality include having a well established comprehensive plan or administering an updated zoning ordinance.

Effects of Suburbanization in Onondaga County

By 1970, Onondaga County had seen decades of population growth, and projected continued growth into the future. Accordingly, transportation, water and sewer infrastructure was expanded into the suburbs with significant capacities to accommodate a need for new housing for an expanding population. However, population since 1970 has instead remained relatively stable and the population growth anticipated has not materialized. The infrastructure, which was upgraded to accommodate new population, is serving a similar number of total county residents. Those residents have relocated from the inner core in favor of newer housing in towns surrounding Syracuse, and taking advantage of these available resources.



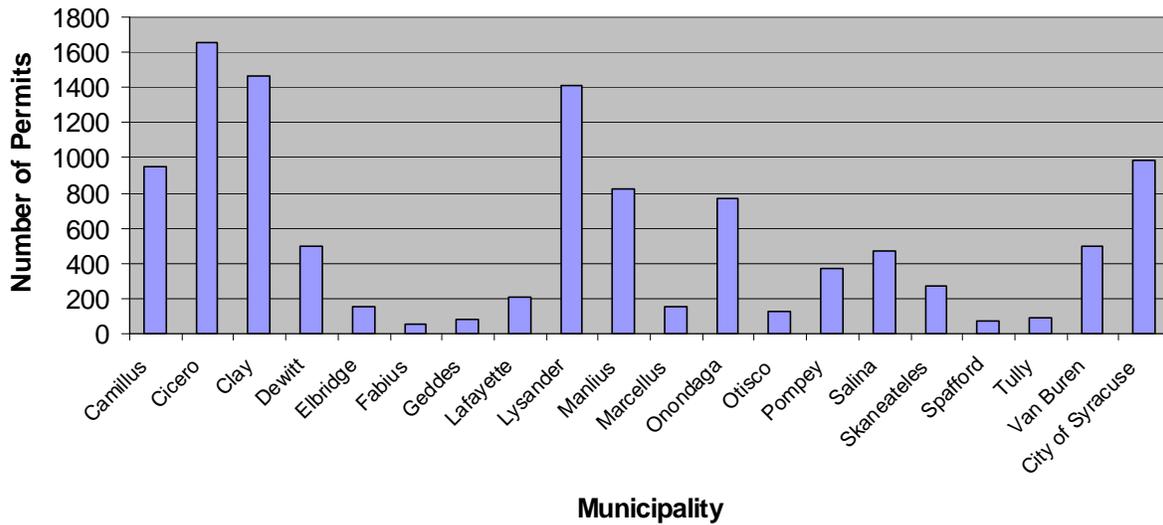
Suburbanization of Onondaga County
 ■ Original Urban Core
 ■ Suburbanized Before 1950
 ■ Suburbanized Between 1951-1970
 ■ Suburbanized Between 1971-2000
 ■ Rural Municipalities

While the Onondaga County population has remained largely unchanged in recent years, changes in the geographic distribution of the County signify internal population shifts (see Chapter 2: Table 2-1, Onondaga County Population Trends 1950 – 2010; and Map 2-1, Regional Population Density. and Map 8 for County population). Population changes in recent history depict a population that is slowly migrating away from the urban core, first to an inner ring of older closer suburbs, and now even further to a new second and third ring of suburbs.

The trend toward suburbanization is shown graphically in the *Suburbanization of Onondaga County* map and in Tables 5-1 and 5-2. Residential construction in Onondaga County since 2000 has occurred largely in this outer ring – most notably in the towns of Camillus, Cicero, Clay, Lysander, Manlius, and Onondaga. Areas within the inner ring of suburbs, such as the towns of DeWitt, Salina and Geddes have seen a slowing of growth since 1980. And while building permits in the City of Syracuse are on the rise, between 2000 and 2010, the City of Syracuse has seen 2,772 residential demolitions. In this same time period, the number of demolitions in all of Onondaga County’s towns totals 381. The aging urban housing stock, available undeveloped land, affordable housing, water and sewer costs, access to transportation infrastructure and increased personal mobility have encouraged the expansion of housing into areas long vacant or farmed.

Table 5-1

**Building Permits by Municipality
Onondaga County
2000-2010**



Source: SOCPA

The expansion of SMTC’s MPA and Urban Area Boundary is indicative of these changing land use patterns. The gradual geographic expansion of residential and commercial development patterns has significant implications on community travel patterns and infrastructure costs.

Taking a closer look at Table 5-1, the numbers of households over the last several decades have continued to increase in the same outer ring towns where residential construction in Onondaga County occurred in the 1990s. From the travel demand modeling discussion included in Chapter 2, looking at the number of households forecasted to the year 2035, this trend continues – showing nearly all of the Towns with forecasted growth. The Town of Salina (part of the inner ring of suburbs) shows a decrease in the number of households for the year 2035. The City of Syracuse is also expected to continue to lose population into the future.

Table 5-2

City and Town Households, 1960 – 2010 and Households Forecasted to 2035 (from SMTTC’s Travel Demand Model)*							
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Forecasted to 2035
City of Syracuse	67,830	67,671	66,961	64,945	59,482	55,945***	50,565
Camillus	4,702	7,182	7,992	8,917	9,315	10,113	10,220
Cicero	4,028	5,960	7,401	9,014	10,538	12,399	12,838
Clay	4,641	10,162	17,299	21,095	22,294	23,202	24,476
DeWitt	6,375	8,422	9,211	9,729	10,068	10,318	10,527
Elbridge	1,328	1,642	2,011	2,228	2,322	2,341	2,627
Fabius	401	446	591	612	686	728	838
Geddes	5,647	6,389	6,669	6,889	7,262	7,269	7,469
LaFayette	876	1,186	1,476	1,724	1,826	1,997	2,472
Lysander	2,745	3,282	4,497	5,839	7,139	8,416	9,782
Manlius	5,242	7,242	9,633	11,481	12,553	13,373	14,865
Marcellus	1,268	1,664	2,061	2,311	2,378	2,465	2,725
Onondaga	3,513	4,513	5,961	6,557	7,679	8,498	10,009
Otisco	319	405	667	780	922	963	1,045
Pompey	904	1,178	1,370	1,827	2,154	2,509	2,605
Salina	9,006	11,352	13,370	14,166	14,401	14,999	14,163
Skaneateles	1,951	2,393	2,705	2,871	2,881	2,939	3,253
Spafford	257	313	510	572	631	669	808
Tully	488	563	802	886	1,030	1,071	1,209
Van Buren	2,375	3,157	4,322	5,234	5,288	5,737	5,746
Onondaga Nation Territory**	194	200	168	221	304	6***	(included in Towns of Lafayette and Onondaga)
Total Households	124,090	145,322	165,677	177,898	181,153	185,957	188,242

*Figures include respective villages

**Separate Native American Territory

Sources: US Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010; SMTTC Travel Demand Model (to 2035)

*** (2010 Census data not yet available for these areas - data are from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year estimate)

Land Use and Transportation

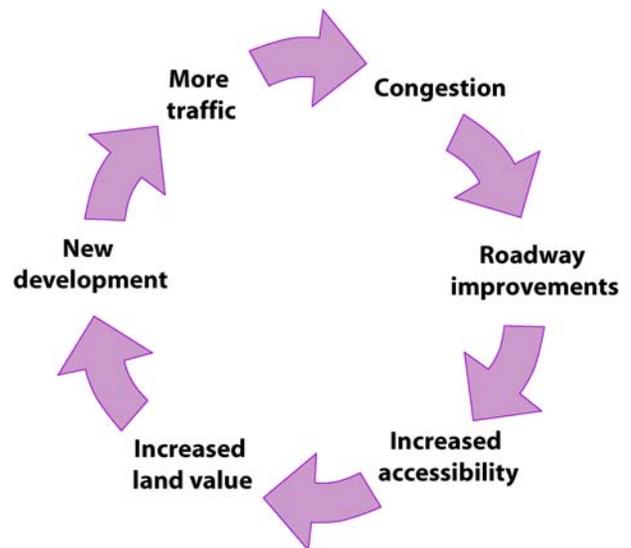
Land use planning and transportation planning are directly correlated and interdependent. Roadways, railroad corridors, airport locations, and waterways influence land development patterns, while the distribution and types of land uses affect transportation systems.

Many suburban town settlement patterns involve low density development with dispersed land uses often separated from each other. As such, people must rely extensively on personal vehicles to get them to various destinations. Often there are few alternative choices such as walking, biking, or taking a local shuttle service.

Traditional development patterns, such as those found in villages and urban centers, involve higher density development with mixed land uses located close to each other. Thus, in addition to using an automobile, people are afforded additional transportation choices such as walking, biking, and transit.

Suburban and traditional development patterns are both vital and serve important roles to help meet a community’s needs. However, it is important to maintain a balance of transportation and development patterns to ensure that the land uses can support the cost of infrastructure and that traffic patterns as well as the natural and social environment are not adversely affected. When the transportation-land use balance is not maintained traffic worsens; congestion increases; air and water pollution increases; more costly roads are built or widened; the young, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the lower income population segments often become immobilized and isolated; and opportunities for social interaction and the local economy falters.

A reactive trend referred to as the “transportation-land use cycle” occurs when the transportation-land use balance is not maintained. In developing communities, traffic congestion often leads people to ask for added highway capacity, which in turn will attract more development, which in turn creates more congestion, which in turn leads people to ask for added highway capacity, and so on and so on. As such, transportation planners contest that in many cases you cannot build your way out of congestion by adding additional travel lanes. Instead, transportation planners advocate for integrating land use planning and community design principles with transportation planning principles to effectively



The Transportation-Land Use Cycle

Acknowledging the important effects of land use on transportation, and vice-versa, the SMTC created an interactive CD entitled *Connecting Transportation and Land Use*. The CD includes information on how to strike a transportation-land use balance (please see Appendix C for a copy).

The SMTC has been involved in several activities and studies that examine land use alternatives as well as transportation system alternatives in its transportation planning activities. For example, the current University Hill Transportation Study prepared by the SMTC focused heavily on land use and transportation strategies to address the congestion and parking issues faced by students, residents and employees within the University Hill area.

In addition, the NYSDOT is also continuing to recognize the important linkage between land use and transportation. Introduced by the NYSDOT in 2000, and supported by the FHWA, *Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)* is “a philosophy wherein safe transportation solutions are designed in harmony with the community. CSS strives to balance environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic,

cultural, natural resources, community and transportation service needs.”¹ The CSS approach seeks to incorporate smart, aesthetic and accessible solutions into all phases of the transportation planning process. The process realizes the importance of quality of life and seeks to minimize the effects of major transportation infrastructure on the communities in which they are built, through creative and context-sensitive solutions.

Another initiative being undertaken by New York State is the Smart Growth Initiative, which has a mission to work with localities to use smart, sensible planning to create livable communities, protect our natural resources and promote economic growth.² New York State recently enacted the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act. As such, several State agencies including the NYSDOT are required to align construction of new or expanded infrastructure projects or the reconstruction of existing projects, to the extent practicable, with Smart Growth criteria. The overall approach of the NYSDOT is to build upon existing programs in the NYSDOT and integrate Smart Growth principles in existing federal and state mandated planning and project development processes.

The New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act defines the purpose as follows:

“...to augment the state’s environmental policy by declaring a fiscally prudent state policy of maximizing the social, economic and environmental benefits from public infrastructure development through minimizing unnecessary costs of sprawl development including environmental degradation, disinvestment in urban and suburban communities and loss of open space induced by the funding or development of new or expanded transportation, sewer and waste water treatment, water, education, housing and other publicly supported infrastructure inconsistent with smart growth infrastructure criteria.”

The SMTC is currently participating in various Smart Growth working groups with the NYSDOT and other NYS MPOs in an effort to assist with determining how smart growth requirements (as outlined in the new NYS law) should be addressed within MPO LRTPs, the NYSDOT Master Plan, planning studies and TIP project selection processes. As the Smart Growth law directly applies to State Infrastructure Agencies, the NYSDOT formed these working groups to address the requirements of this law.

5.3 PLANNING EFFORTS

Several efforts are being undertaken to combat the environmental, fiscal and social implications of sprawl in Onondaga County. New land use patterns, focusing on mixed use, higher densities, infill and clustered development have been encouraged by Onondaga County, through its *2010 Development Guide: A Framework For Growth* (currently being updated as the *Onondaga County Sustainable Development Plan*), and the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, which outlines strategies to encourage New Urbanism development practices within Onondaga County.

¹ Source: NYSDOT web site: *Power Pt. Presentation on Context Sensitive Solutions*.

² Source: <http://smartgrowthny.org/index.asp>.

5.3.1 REGION-WIDE EFFORTS

2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County

The vision, goals and policies of SOCPA's *2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County* are intended to guide future individual government decisions on land use, transportation and infrastructure development, utilizing balanced goals that include economic growth, creating an attractive community, encouraging diversity and choice, and enhanced fiscal strength (SOCPA is in the process of developing the Onondaga County Sustainable Development Plan, which will serve as an update to the *2010 Development Guide for Onondaga County*).

In furthering those goals, Onondaga County's *Policies for Investment and Land Use*, as defined in the 2010 Plan, call for investment in existing communities, preservation of existing infrastructure and transportation assets, sustainable urban and suburban settlement patterns, and protection of the rural economy, agricultural land, and access to natural resources. The 2010 Plan encourages the public and private sector to make funding, permitting, and planning decisions utilizing these guiding principles, and to be cognizant of individual projects' effects on the quality of life of all residents.

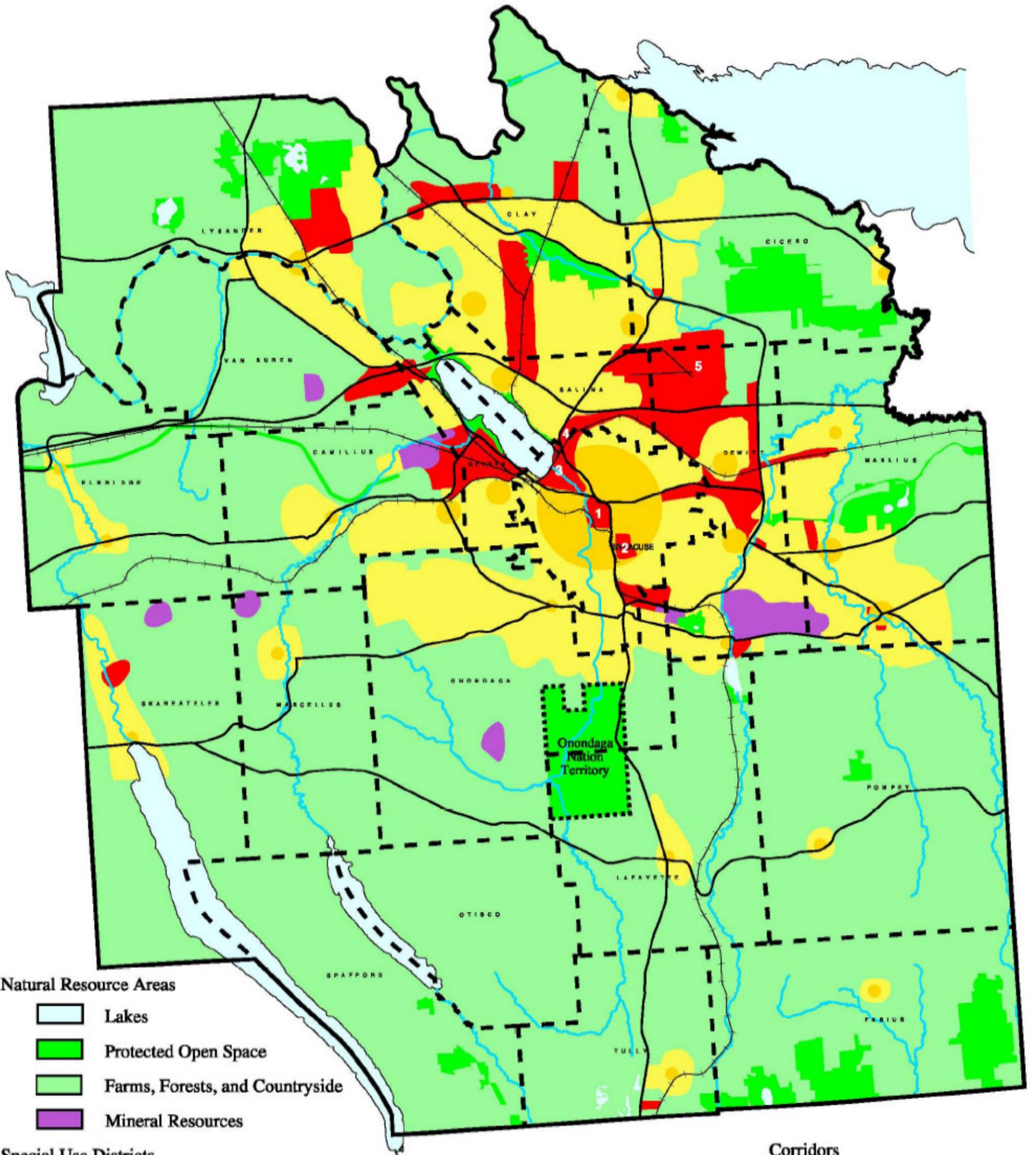
The *Land Use Vision* map (Map 5-1) graphically summarizes the goals, strategies and policies outlined in the 2010 Plan, with a Land Use Vision identifying areas designated for both protection or expansion, areas for industry versus neighborhoods, and areas for dense development or open spaces. Established corridors are already largely in place to provide mobility within the county, connect centers of activity and help define the urban and rural landscape between communities.

The Land Use Vision does not replace planning by the City, towns and villages, but encompasses local plans within a countywide vision, and encourages coordinated implementation of programs and projects.

Growth is encouraged in areas currently served by infrastructure, especially transportation infrastructure. According to the Plan, premature extension of linear infrastructure creates a surplus of urban land that devalues public and private investments in existing communities and developments that have not been completed. Surplus urban land leads directly to the abandonment of the oldest community centers and neighborhoods and permanently destroys access to farmland and natural resources. City and suburban demographics analyzed in previous sections of this report illustrate these trends over the past several decades.

One action identified by the 2010 Plan that is necessary to facilitate the concepts identified in the plan is the modification of land use regulations within the respective city, towns and villages to allow for and encourage a renewed emphasis on mixed-use neighborhoods, higher-density developments, and preservation of open space. Existing zoning regulations tend to encourage strict separation of land uses, thus resulting in dependence on the automobile and de-densification of urban areas.

Land Use Vision



Natural Resource Areas

-  Lakes
-  Protected Open Space
-  Farms, Forests, and Countryside
-  Mineral Resources

Special Use Districts

-  1. Downtown
-  2. University Hill
-  3. Lakefront
-  4. Stadium/Market/Transportation Center
-  5. Airport
-  Industrial and Commercial Districts

Corridors

-  Neighborhoods
-  Community Centers
-  Major Highways
-  Streams
-  Railroads

Onondaga County
2010 Development Guide
Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

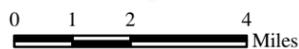


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Land Use Vision

Long-Range Transportation Plan 2011 Update

Map 5-1



This map is for presentation purposes only.
The SMTC does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map.



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Data Sources: SMTC, NYSDOT, 2001
Prepared by SMTC, 03/2011

Onondaga County Settlement Plan

To facilitate this change, the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency enlisted the services of the firm Duany Plater-Zyberk & Associates (DPZ) in 1999 to prepare the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*. Andres Duany of the DPZ firm is known to many in urban planning as one of the founders of the *New Urbanism* movement in planning, which celebrates traditional neighborhood development patterns from a century ago for their efficiency of land use, transportation opportunities, social interaction and mix of incomes.

The Settlement Plan for Onondaga County was designed to present a comprehensive “toolbox” of strategies to encourage the traditional neighborhood development patterns outlined by New Urbanism, as an alternative to conventional zoning and suburban development patterns which many deem an inefficient use of land and a burden on transportation facilities. The DPZ firm completed the Settlement Plan in four parts:

- Transect Based Zoning: The “Transect”, as coined by the DPZ firm, describes a style of zoning – not by use alone as in conventional zoning, but on the scaling, configuration and mass of buildings within its environment. The seven general Transect zoning districts range from gradations of rural to urban. Within each transect zone, a specific set of building specifications are detailed to foster desired patterns of growth, such as preservation of rural landscapes, or a dense, walkable urban center, and gradients in between. A model Transect Code was presented for Onondaga County’s towns and villages to utilize in changing their municipal zoning regulations.
- Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Guidelines: The TND Guidelines take the “transect” zoning to the next level of detail, providing a more descriptive illustration of TND concepts, as they relate to more fine-grained development specifications such as landscaping, architectural details, streetscaping, and parking lot design.
- Regional Plan/Transportation Policies: One of the most important concepts of the New Urbanism design philosophy is the creation of dense neighborhood centers that foster alternative transportation modes, such as walking or mass transit. The Settlement Plan presents a set of recommended municipal policies that would foster these concepts, especially creating walkable neighborhoods. Proposed policies include the restriction of high-speed roadways through neighborhoods, provision of intermodal opportunities in neighborhood centers, avoidance of cul-de-sacs to avoid overburdening collector roadways, and maximum block perimeters for increased walkability.
- Pilot Studies: To illustrate the concepts of the Settlement Plan and encourage usage of the new regulations, the study identified several “Pilot” study areas, where different elements of the plan were hypothetically put into action. For example, the largely abandoned Fayetteville Mall site was turned into a mixed-use village center, incorporating several design concepts to encourage transit usage, walkability and neighborhood scale facilities.

The first private residential development project based on the principles of New Urbanism, *Annesgrove*, began construction in 2000 in the Town of Camillus. Led by Onondaga County's *2010 Development Guide*, efforts are being made to discourage unnecessary creation of new infrastructure into un-urbanized areas until existing built infrastructure nears capacity. This policy is intended to assist in providing cost effective infrastructure investments and curbing suburban sprawl by focusing capital investments on maintaining existing urbanized areas rather than creating new ones. These efforts will be further refined within the *Onondaga County Sustainable Development Plan*.



Annesgrove, in the Town of Camillus

Preservation of Farmland and Open Space

Efforts are also being focused on preserving prime farmland and open space throughout the rural areas of Onondaga County. As discussed prior, new infrastructure, residential and commercial development is slowly entering traditionally farm-based communities. In order to preserve the unique soils important to farming, and to preserve large farm parcels and farm communities, new programs for farmland protection are being implemented. Most notably, the Town of Lysander received seed money to begin a *Transfer of Development Rights* program within the town, whereby building density allowable by zoning on one parcel is transferred to another parcel. Developers can buy the right through zoning to develop a piece of rural land, and ‘transfer’ those zoning rights to provide for higher densities to develop a different property in a more appropriate location. The costs of purchasing the easements are recovered from the developers who receive the building bonus. In developing this program, the Town of Lysander has developed maps of specific ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ areas for these transactions to occur, in order to properly locate lands for both development and farmland. As such, the TDR program is a process by which the Town can direct residential development in certain areas while protecting specific viable farmland and the Town’s rural character in others, thus reducing urban/rural conflicts in the town. Another similar program, entitled the *Purchase of Development Rights*, has also been utilized by the State to purchase the development rights on approximately 3,000 acres in Onondaga County, to date, in return for the owners keeping their farms free from residential or commercial development which would compromise the agricultural viability of the land.

The situation Onondaga County faces is not unique to this county, and is common to almost every urban area in the United States. Significant attention across the nation is now being centered on the “costs of sprawl,” and the economic and social benefits of reinvesting in existing city centers,

villages and hamlets. With current government fiscal constraints across New York State, out-migration, and limited economic growth projected in Central New York over the next several years, the costs of sprawl become more important. However, in this same economic climate, municipalities find it difficult to discourage new private development on the basis of sprawl, especially given the relatively large amount of undeveloped land within Onondaga County.

City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

As a basis for evaluating the City's assets and trends, and in an effort to prepare a collective vision for the future of the City's economy, community facilities, and services, in 2005 the City of Syracuse developed its Comprehensive Plan 2025.

The City wanted a plan that identified current needs and values of residents, businesses, and institutions as well as an evaluation of its heritage and cultural background. The implementation of the plan, starting with its adoption and proceeding with recommendations such as preparing a future land use plan and amending the City's zoning ordinance, will provide the legal authority to direct development in a prescribed manner. The City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025 should be viewed as a guiding document. Because it had been so long since the City had a comprehensive plan to guide its future, it is important to view the plan as a starting point to modern day planning. Many issues and recommendations will warrant further study and more input from the public to provide the necessary detail to move forward. The plan provides the framework for the City to make reasonable, informed decisions on how to address the issues and concerns that presently face public officials. Like many communities, the City of Syracuse does not have the necessary resources, financial or otherwise, to accomplish all of the actions recommended that address all of the problems. However, with a plan in place, a proactive mindset, and community consensus on the issues and actions, the City can begin to realize beneficial change and progress towards the future in a well thought out and orderly fashion.

The Plan included a public participation process, and an Advisory Committee was selected to oversee the process and to insure that appropriate conclusions were drawn from previous planning efforts. The advisory committee was comprised of representatives from City neighborhood groups, businesses, institutions and government agencies. The committee met periodically throughout the planning process to guide and review the preparation of this plan. Working Committees were also created to provide another level of community representation. Committees were formed to summarize the issues relative to topics of Work, People, Visitors, Play, Place, and Government. In addition, these committees assisted in drafting the Vision for the Future, and the policies, goals, and recommended actions. The general public was invited to meetings conducted during the planning process to provide additional input and to review the final draft of this plan.³

The City has since begun compiling information for the Land Use Plan which is anticipated to be adopted as a component of the Comprehensive Plan. Research for the plan began in 2006 and 2007. The land use plan is anticipated to be created in stages, using the Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today boundaries for each stage. Not only will this land use plan propose new land uses throughout the city, but it will also recommend zoning revisions and neighborhood design

³ http://www.syracuse.ny.us/Syracuse_Comprehensive_Plan_2025.aspx.

guidelines. This land use planning process will likely take two years. After this is completed, the City intends to revise the zoning ordinance based upon these recommendations. The City also plans to incorporate portions of the SMTC's University Hill Transportation Study land use section into portions of their Plan.

Consistent with the principles outlined in the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, the City of Syracuse adopted a change to its zoning code within its Lakefront Development area to encourage new high-density, mixed-use development. This zoning code may serve as a model for future revisions to antiquated zoning regulations throughout the City and County. Towns and villages are also revising ordinances and comprehensive plans to focus more attention on mixed-use development, form-based regulations, access management and corridor protection.

New York State's Transportation Master Plan

Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan for 2030 is the State's comprehensive statewide transportation master plan and serves as the federally recognized, long range transportation plan for the State of New York pursuant to Federal law and in accordance with State Transportation Law. Federal regulations require each State to prepare and periodically update a statewide, intermodal transportation plan that addresses specified factors, is developed involving extensive public outreach and covers a period of at least 20 years as a condition of receiving Federal transportation funds. The long range comprehensive statewide transportation master plan covers the period through 2030 and updates the State's 1996 Plan.

The NYSDOT's Transportation Master Plan articulates a long-term, intermodal vision of the State's future transportation system and provides policy level guidance to achieve that vision. The Plan presents key transportation issues that must be addressed in the coming decades and identifies transportation strategies to efficiently serve the mobility needs of people and for the movement of freight. The Plan will serve as a framework for preparing future more project-specific transportation plans and programs including the federally required State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In addition, the Plan will guide the State's coordination of transportation plans, programs, and planning activities with related planning activities being undertaken within and outside of the 13 designated metropolitan planning areas within New York. The Plan is centered on New York State's transportation customers' expectations of the transportation system. These expectations are summarized in five distinct but interrelated priority result areas: Mobility and Reliability, Safety, Security, Environmental Sustainability and Economic Competitiveness. Performance will be measured with respect to each of the five priority result areas in order to effectively manage performance of the statewide transportation system.

As the Plan states, transportation is paramount to the quality of life and economic well being of New York. The Plan focuses on the ability of New York's transportation system to safely and efficiently meet the current and future mobility needs of residents, visitors, and businesses. The changing global economy, travel demands, and the needs of customers require new and innovative ways to provide transportation to its users. The New York State Department of Transportation is committed to meeting such challenges by implementing the strategies and recommendations of this

Plan in partnership with local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and other transportation operators statewide.⁴

5.3.2 PLANNING TOOLS

In an effort to better understand potential land use and transportation trends, the SMTC conducted a review of available community comprehensive plans and local waterfront redevelopment programs to better understand future land and transportation development opportunities. Following an initial discussion that outlines the importance of having a plan and what the plan should contain, a brief summary is presented of each available plan at the time of LRTP writing.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP) are developed by municipalities in partnership with New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) to address a variety of planning issues confronting their waterfront. Many communities within the MPA contain waterfront properties that provide transportation or recreational opportunities. The following excerpts describe LWRPs and are paraphrased from the New York Division of Coastal Resources web site (http://www.nyswaterfronts.com/aboutus_LWRP.asp).

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program is both a plan and a program. The term refers to both a planning document prepared by a community, as well as the program established to implement the plan. The Program may be comprehensive and address all issues that affect a community's entire waterfront or it may address the most critical issues facing a significant portion of its waterfront. As a planning document, a LWRP is a locally prepared land and water use plan and strategy for a community's natural, public, working, or developed waterfront through which critical issues are addressed. In partnership with the Division of Coastal Resources, a municipality develops community consensus regarding the future of its waterfront and refines State waterfront policies to reflect local conditions and circumstances. Once approved by the New York Secretary of State, the local program serves to coordinate State and federal actions needed to assist the community achieve its vision. As a program, a LWRP is the organizational structure, local laws, projects, and on-going partnerships that implement the planning document.

The LWRP may be comprehensive and address all issues that affect a waterfront community or it may address the most critical issues facing a significant portion of its waterfront. Communities with shared interests or resources are encouraged to cooperate or to prepare a common program.

A LWRP provides numerous benefits to communities who choose to become involved with the process. The LWRP reflects community consensus, establishes a clear vision, and can attract desired development opportunities. The process involves technical assistance from the state, which also helps to establish long term partnerships. The state and federal government is also required to consider LWRP recommendations when they make decisions to permit, fund, and undertake direct actions affecting the local community. Finally, an LWRP increases a community's chances to obtain public and private funding for projects. Communities within the MPA that have LWRPs as of the writing of this document include the City of Syracuse, Town of Clay, and Town of Geddes. Please see Appendix D for summaries of the LWRPs.

⁴ *Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan for 2030.*

Comprehensive Plan

According to the New York State Law⁵, “*A comprehensive plan consists of the materials written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of a municipality.*”

Generally speaking, a comprehensive plan is created using an extensive public engagement process that involves discussions among residents, business merchants, other community stakeholders, developers, political representatives, planners, engineers, architects, landscape architects, and any other interested group to develop a clear vision for the future growth and/or preservation of a community. As the planning process evolves, issues and opportunities are explored which ultimately lead to the establishment of focused goals and recommended actions designed to achieve the community’s vision for the future.

The term “comprehensive plan” is the officially recognized legal reference for plans adopted by a municipality. Although comprehensive plans are officially acknowledged by NYS legislation, a comprehensive plan itself is not a law or regulation, and therefore does not regulate land use or development. The comprehensive plan is simply a document that reflects a community’s vision for the future and identifies goals and recommendations that suggest ways of achieving the community’s future vision. Local laws such as ordinances (e.g., noise, lighting, signage, etc.) and a community’s zoning ordinance and map are laws that regulate land use or development. According to New York State law, zoning and land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. Thus, the comprehensive plan serves as a legal defense for a community’s land use regulations because it reflects a public consensus building process where issues are studied and recommendations are made.

Communities with recently adopted comprehensive plans are typically better positioned to achieve a higher quality of life for its residents, businesses, and visitors; ensure an efficient and sustainable use of its limited resources (financial, natural, etc.); maintain a stimulated, robust economy; protect the environment, and increase societal interaction. Because comprehensive plans involve a process of identifying issues and opportunities, communities typically make more informed decisions about development and preservation, resulting in secondary benefits such as lower taxes and more public engagement in the decision making process. A comprehensive plan also reflects the community’s consensus about its vision for the future and outlines strategies for community representatives, developers, politicians, etc. to work together to achieve that vision.

Communities with comprehensive plans are more likely to be awarded public and private grants, funding, and other sources of financial assistance to make their projects a reality. SMTC encourages municipalities within its MPA to create or maintain current comprehensive plans. Communities and entities within the MPA that have comprehensive plans as of the writing of this document include (summaries of the documents can be found in Appendix D):

⁵ NYS Chapter 418 of the Laws of 1995 amending General City Law Section 28-1, Town Law Section 272-a, Village Law Section 7-722, and General Municipal Law Section 119-u)

- City of Syracuse
- Onondaga County
- New York State Department of Transportation
- Towns of Camillus, Cicero, Clay, DeWitt, Hastings, Lysander, Skaneateles, and Van Buren.
- Villages of Central Square, Fayetteville, Liverpool, Manlius, Marcellus, North Syracuse, Phoenix, and Skaneateles.

Recommended Content for Comprehensive Plans & LWRPs

There is one incorporated city - the City of Syracuse, 22 incorporated towns, and 18 incorporated villages within the MPA. Not all of communities within the MPA have comprehensive plans or LWRPs. Moreover, communities that do have these documents often went through different planning processes, identified different issues, and created customized documents that addressed their specific needs. Thus, planning documents come in a variety of forms and address a variety of issues. In some cases, these documents contain specific transportation and land use recommendations, while others do not.

The SMTC encourages municipalities to develop planning documents that contain land use and transportation elements and can offer technical assistance when completing a plan review. When developing a transportation element, the SMTC offers the following considerations to municipalities looking to develop or update their comprehensive plan or LWRP:

- Provide an inventory of:
 - state, county, and local roads and bridges
 - railroad corridors, water routes, and airports
 - bike routes, pedestrian routes, and trails
 - ATV and snowmobile trails
 - parking conditions and needs
- Identify any significant issues and opportunities for existing transportation assets
- Identify future transportation needs based on anticipated development patterns
- Identify a vision for transportation elements and support with policies, goals and objectives
- Develop recommendations for infrastructure studies and improvements.

5.3.3 MEMBER AGENCY ACTION PLANS FOR LAND USE

The SMTC and its member agencies continue to work towards the achievement of the LRTP's land use goals and objectives. As such, the following action plans have either been implemented or are being implemented by member agencies:

Action Plans Implemented:

1. Onondaga County has prepared transportation plans, land use/site design recommendations and/or development suggestions, for the villages, towns and the City of Syracuse. The plans encourage municipalities to utilize techniques and concepts that are supportive of the SMTC 2020 LRTP and Onondaga County's 2010 Plan.
2. The Onondaga County Settlement Plan exists as a development guideline for local municipalities.
3. The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency is creating a Sustainable Development Plan, which will include public education, land use visioning, and policies and projects intended to foster smart growth practices and land development patterns, including protecting natural resources, transit- and pedestrian friendly development, investment in existing built communities and ensuring sustainable, cost-efficient infrastructure investments, including the transportation network.
4. The Onondaga County Planning Federation is a not-for profit organization with a focus on educating its members on a variety of local and regional planning topics and promoting community and inter-municipal planning within Onondaga County. Well-trained Planning and Zoning Boards help ensure that informed local land use decisions are being made, which leads to more livable and attractive communities for residents. The SMTC facilitated a session on it's Transportation-Land Use Connection CD at the January 2009 symposium, and conducted a session on *The I-81 Challenge* in March 2009. (annual, ongoing project)
5. The SMTC is implementing the guidelines contained in the brochure, *Best Practices In Arterial Management*, prepared by the NYSDOT in cooperation with the New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (NYSAMPO) and others.
6. While Centro recently updated its routing system to better serve emerging markets, the dispersal of population to less densely developed suburban and exurban areas makes provision of efficient, effective mass transportation a continual challenge. Centro must continually react to changing land use and demographic conditions with a budget that has not grown commensurately over the years.
7. The Lakefront Zoning plan was adopted in January 2004.
8. The City of Syracuse Comprehensive Land Use Plan and other local municipal plans are being completed.

9. The City of Syracuse has implemented the following community land use action plans:

- City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025 – This plan, completed in January 2005, includes an analysis of the physical place which includes transportation networks; public spaces; parks; schools; libraries; historic preservation; urban design; natural and cultural resources; land use; and neighborhood plans.
- Lakefront Area Planning Study – The Lakefront Area Planning Study was undertaken to focus on all modes of transportation to determine the overall needs of the greater Syracuse area over a 20-year planning horizon. All modes of transportation including highway and local roadways, rail freight (CSX, New York Susquehanna & Western, and Finger Lakes Railway), transit (OnTrack, Amtrak, bus traffic, Centro), pedestrian, bicycle, water transportation (the Canal and Onondaga Lake/Creek corridor), airport access and truck freight, needed to be evaluated on a local and regional basis. A Task Force was established consisting of many agencies within the region and Phase I of the study has been completed. Phase I on this project evaluated the transportation system, identified regional deficiencies, and a selected and prioritized list of desired projects.