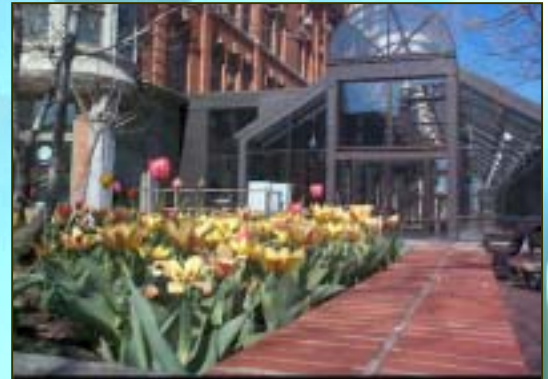


Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

FHWA/FTA Certification Review
November 2002



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Preface

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to review, evaluate, and certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in each Transportation Management Area (urbanized area of 200,000 population or more) at least every three years. The certification review is to assure that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area, and that the planning process is being conducted in accordance with:

- 1) Section 134 of Title 23, U.S.C., and sections 5303-5306 of Title 49;
- 2) Sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act;
- 3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State;
- 4) Section 1003(b) of ISTEA regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in the FHWA and FTA funded planning projects;
- 5) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and U.S. DOT regulations ATransportation for Individuals with Disabilities
- 6) Provisions of the Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101);
- 7) The provisions of 49 CFR part 20 regarding restrictions on influencing certain Federal activities; and
- 8) All other applicable provisions of Federal law.

The Federal certification process evaluates a Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPOs) process, identifies strengths and weaknesses (as appropriate), and makes recommendations for improvement. Following the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA can take one of four certification actions:

- Full certification of the transportation planning process - which allows federally funded programs and projects of any type to be approved in the TIP over the next three years in accordance with the continuing planning process.
- Certification subject to specified corrective actions being taken - which allows all projects to move forward in the process while corrective actions are taken; this option may take the form of a temporary certification for a certain number of months rather than the full three years.
- Limited certification - which allows only certain specified categories of program and project funding to move forward while corrective actions are being taken.
- Certification withheld - which means stopping approval of funding in whole or in part for attributed FTWA and FTA funds that the metropolitan area receives until the deficiencies in the planning process are corrected.

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Executive Summary

Main Conclusions

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's transportation planning process is a very credible endeavor and is hereby fully certified. The SMTC will be challenged in the coming months by the scale of anticipated private development in the area, the impacts upon the transportation system, and the inevitable pressure to make quick decisions so as not to hold up progress and schedules.

Background

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration reviewed the SMTC transportation planning process in accordance with the requirement of 23 CFR '450.334 that all urbanized areas over 200,000 be reviewed at least every three years to assure that the process is in accordance with federal regulations. The review included a desk-audit, a site visit (May 6-8, 2002), and a public meeting to receive comments.

Noteworthy Practices

Good examples of metropolitan transportation planning practices are evident in Syracuse. We specifically note the Unified Planning Work Program Tracking System, the Transportation Improvement Program Guidebook, public involvement practices, and the several management systems. We specifically commend the work of SMTC Staff Director Mary Rowlands for her leadership and the SMTC Staff for their professional capabilities.

Recommendations

This report contains numerous commendations for existing practice, as well as recommendations for consideration in furthering program excellence: Urban boundary changes due to the 2000 Census, 2-year Unified Planning Work programs, thorough evaluation of *DestiNY USA* travel estimates produced by others, freight transportation planning and security considerations, careful evaluation of proposals that will come from the TCSP grant associated with the Lakefront area, finalization of the City Truck Route Study, and evaluation of merits of Context Sensitive Solutions approach to transportation solutions in the South Side neighborhood.

Opportunities

We foresee an intensive and challenging workload facing the Central Staff and member agency staffs over the next 18 months – specifically regarding the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan. The potential impacts of the *DestiNY USA* development are monumental on Central New York. The pressure will mount on the SMTC as it has to react to events. The ability to maintain a professional process when being pressured for quick decisions is essential to the long-term wellbeing of the area.

Introduction

“The Secretary shall-- (i) ensure that the metropolitan planning process in each transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law; and (ii)... certify, not less often than once every 3 years, that the requirements of this paragraph are met with respect to the transportation management area.” 23 USC 134(i)(5)(A)

Every urban area in the United States of more than 50,000 persons must have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in order to qualify for Federal highway and transit funds. In addition, federal regulations classify any MPO area containing more than 200,000 persons as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) subject to additional Federal requirements and scrutiny. One of these additional requirements (23 CFR '450.334) is for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to specifically review and evaluate the MPO's transportation planning process at least every three years, and to certify that the MPO is (or is not) meeting said regulations.

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is the designated MPO for the Syracuse, New York urbanized area. According to the 2000 Census, the Syracuse urbanized area has a population of 402,627, and, therefore, it is a TMA and subject to a certification review.

Appendix A contains a discussion of the area's background (demographics, travel trends, economy) and history.

Certification Review

The primary purpose of the Federal Certification Review is to ensure that the MPO process is satisfactorily implementing the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303. The implementation of recommendations that result from the review hopefully will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning process. There are also broader benefits to the review. The Federal reviewers try to identify good or innovative practices to share with other states and metropolitan planning organizations.

The previous certification review and site visit of SMTC was May 4-6, 1999. The FHWA and FTA fully certified SMTC on August 12, 1999, and made several recommendations for consideration. The lone weakness identified in 1999 - the constant turnover in central staff directors - has been satisfactorily resolved.

The 2002 certification review began with a February 25, 2002 FHWA/FTA letter officially informing SMTC about the upcoming review. (Appendix B is the letter to Hon. William E. Sanford, Chair of SMTC). The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) also received copies. In the letter, the Federal Review Team requested information on specific issues relevant to the Federal certification process, and SMTC subsequently responded in writing on the identified issues

needing additional clarification. The SMTC Central Staff notified the SMTC member agencies and the public, scheduled the meetings, and hosted the public session.

Before the on-site visit, the Review Team conducted a desk audit of files, reviewed the Central Staff's written response providing additional information, and SMTC published reports.

Site Visit

On May 6-8, 2002, the Federal Review Team conducted the site visit. The Federal Team during the visit consisted of Donald Burns (FTA-Region Two Office), Joseph Rich and Joan Walters (FHWA-NY Division Office).

This year's approach to the site visit was different than the previous review. In 1999, we specifically requested to meet individually with many of the principals in the process (Mayor of Syracuse, County Executive, NYSDOT Regional Director, CNYRTA Chairman and CNYRTA Executive Director, and the MDA Executive Vice President). In 2002, we only specifically asked to meet with the Staff Director of the Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board, with whom we did not meet in 1999. However, we did extend the offer to meet individually with any of the SMTC principals who so desired, but none so indicated. Therefore, the on-site interviews were primarily with the Central Staff and the NYSDOT Region 3 Office representatives, with some involvement from both the City and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB.)

Public Meeting

On May 7, 2002, SMTC and the Review Team held a public meeting to elicit comments on SMTC process or on related transportation issues. SMTC advertised the meeting (6:00-8:00 p.m. at the SMTC office) in the *Directions* newsletter¹ and in a press release (Appendix C). SMTC informed the public that, if attendance were not possible, the Review Team would accept written comments during the next 30 days.

Each MPO has its own method of conducting public involvement. We were impressed with Ms. Rowlands' approach during the public meeting. There were professional visual displays around the room and a slide show. SMTC staff was available to answer any specific questions on the displays after the public comments. Overall, the atmosphere was definitely non-threatening, and it was very conducive to encouraging public input.

The public meeting began with introductory comments (Ms. Rowlands, Mr. Rich and Mr. Burns), followed by an invitation for comments from the audience (the meeting agenda is Appendix D). Four members of the public attended. A synopsis of the comments received at this public meeting is included in Appendix E. Subsequent to the meeting, we received three written comments (Appendix F). Mr. Donald Hughes, President of the Syracuse-Onondaga Cycling Coalition, commended the SMTC for its bicycling and pedestrian efforts. Mr. Robert Volk (Southeast University Neighborhood Association, Inc.) criticized the parking policies and committees looking into solutions around Syracuse University. Finally,

Ms. Cynthia Landis (Syracuse resident) complained about the inability to commute via public transit in a timely manner due to the difficulty of transferring between bus routes and the frequency of service. Ms. Landis was also concerned that alternate modes of transportation to the automobile were not being promoted to alleviate pollution, noise, and traffic congestion.

Conclusions and Recommendations

“Based on our review, we find that the SMTC transportation planning process is in overall compliance with the requirements of Sections 134 of 23 U.S.C., Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act, and Sections 174 and 176 of the Clean Air Act.” 2002 Certification Conclusion

Based on the 2002 certification review, we find that the SMTC transportation planning process is in overall compliance with the requirements of Section 134 of Title 23, Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act, Sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as well as the other sections of law mentioned in ' 450.334 (a). We congratulate the MPO for the cooperative nature of its process, as well as the technical capabilities.

SMTC Quality Effort

Overall, we found that the SMTC transportation planning process is a very credible endeavor. We have highlighted several examples of good planning practices in this report. They include the UPWP tracking system and concept, the TIP Guidebook, the Public Opinion Survey as part of the *2004 Plan Update*, the congestion and bridge/pavement management systems, and the freight planning activities. We specifically commend Ms. Mary Rowlands, SMTC Central Staff Director, for her leadership.

The area faces potentially momentous changes because of the potential impacts of DestiNY USA. The SMTC can fulfill a crucial role in shaping the area's transportation system of the 21st Century for the economic benefit of the region and the quality of life of its citizens, as well as that for the entire Central New York Region.

Our Concern

Our only concern relates to the SMTC's challenging workload over the next 18 months, and the additional uncertainties and demands of DestiNY USA's developments and impacts on the transportation system. Local decision makers will undoubtedly receive numerous suggestions and project proposals. The ability to maintain a professional process when being pressed for quick decisions will be essential to the long-term wellbeing of the area.

Recommendations

We offer a number of recommendations on elements of the SMTC planning process in a partnering effort to further improve the process. The respective sections of this report discuss these recommendations in further detail.

Organization and Structure of the SMTC

- Once NYSDOT finalizes its guidelines, the SMTC needs to revise the Urbanized Area Boundary (UAB) to include, as a minimum, the Census urbanized area.
- The SMTC needs to revise the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) to include all of Onondaga County, the UAB portions in Oswego and Madison Counties, and contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the twenty year forecast period covered by the transportation plan.
- Once the revised UAB is established, the SMTC needs to evaluate and functionally reclassify its highway network.
- The SMTC should reevaluate its coordination processes with Oswego and Madison Counties, and with the Onondaga Nation.

Staffing

- The SMTC should consider the possible benefits of using the 2-year UPWP format.
- The SMTC should assure itself that it is including the FHWA and FTA-funded activities respective to their areas that are contained in the Statewide Planning and Research Programs.

DestiNY USA Considerations

- The SMTC needs to thoroughly evaluate new transportation proposals coming out of the TCSP study (and other studies) associated with DestiNY USA.
- The SMTC needs to review the travel estimates prepared by others to ensure that they adequately reflective of the proposed traffic to be generated by the DestiNY concept.

Transportation Improvement Program

- The TIP should contain an additional table devoted to illustrating fiscal constraint by program year. The table would reflect federal amounts available versus programmed funds for each year.
- The SMTC should consider the possible public benefit of including GIS maps with the TIP projects located there.

Public Participation

- The SMTC should pursue its intention to offer a PDF version of the *Directions* newsletter via email to those with Internet access to save some printing and mailing cost savings.

Recommendations(continued)

Congestion Management System

- The SMTC should develop a stronger link between the output of the CMS analysis and the TIP/LRP efforts. We recommend that the Study Advisory Committee suggest possible remedial solutions to congested highway segments identified through the CMS analysis.

Preservation of Existing Infrastructure

- The SMTC should consider encouraging and explaining the potential benefits of the risk management concept during local project development and design.

Transit

- The SMTC and CNYRTA should explore more ways of working together in the planning process to continue to improve public transportation.

Intermodal Goods Movement & Rail Passenger Transportation

- The SMTC should closely cooperate with the NYSDOT efforts to develop a statewide freight plan and reflect any available pertinent information in the Long Range Plan Update.
- The SMTC should assure that security considerations for rail freight transportation be kept in the forefront of discussions on projects and developments that may affect it.
- The SMTC should coordinate and carefully evaluate truck and rail freight recommendations coming out of the TCSP project for the Lakefront.
- The SMTC should maintain its involvement in the various task forces and committees discussing High Speed Rail service in New York.

Title VI/Environmental Justice

- The City should finalize and adopt the Truck Route Study to help reduce thru-truck travel on neighborhood streets as much as possible.
- The SMTC should review the recommendations of its South Side study and evaluate progress toward resolution.
- The SMTC and/or the City should evaluate the merits of NYSDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions approach in developing transportation solutions in the South Side neighborhood.

Final Comments

We believe that the SMTC member agencies are committed to a transportation planning process that assures its customers -- those who live, work and travel in the greater Syracuse area -- a safe, efficient, balanced and environmentally sound transportation system.



Onondaga County

I. Organizational Structure

“23 U.S.C. and Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act ... require that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) be designated for each urbanized area and that the metropolitan area has a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes and supports metropolitan community development and social goals.”
23 CFR Section 450.300

The SMTC Policy Committee is the designated MPO for the Syracuse, New York urbanized area. The SMTC maintains a Central Staff of nine full time and several part time professionals, with a 2002-2003 staff budget of \$856,000.

The continuing, comprehensive and cooperative planning process (3-C process) in the Syracuse area began in 1966 with the establishment of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Study (SMATS). The Federal Highway Act of 1962 had required a 3-C transportation planning process in metropolitan areas, but it did not mandate any particular form for that process. The 1973 Highway Act, however, was more specific, requiring each urbanized area to establish a “metropolitan planning organization”, and the Act dedicated a small portion of each state’s funding from the Highway Trust Fund for the support of metropolitan planning (PL funds). In 1974, New York Governor Malcolm Wilson designated the SMATS Policy Committee as the MPO. In 1978, the member agencies changed the MPO’s title from *Study* to *Council* to better reflect its ongoing nature (studies are usually short duration), hence the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council.

With a 2000 Census population of 402,627, the SMTC urbanized area is the fifth largest MPO in New York. There are two major local governmental entities in the SMTC area: the City of Syracuse and the County of Onondaga. The City of Syracuse is located in Onondaga County; it is the fourth largest city in New York (147,306) and celebrated its Sesquicentennial (150th) Anniversary in 1998. The City’s population is approximately one-third of the total Onondaga County population (458,336), so a majority of the urbanized area population resides outside of the City limits.



Figure 1. City of Syracuse with Carrier Dome (Syracuse University) in the foreground.

The SMTC Planning Area Boundaries

The SMTC study area is Onondaga County plus a small portion of Oswego County (the Town of Schroepfel and the Village of Phoenix). Onondaga County, which is close to the geographical center of New York State, has a land area of 793.5 square miles,

approximately 35 miles in length and 30 miles in width. It contains one city (Syracuse), nineteen towns, fifteen villages and eighteen school districts, and the Onondaga Nation Territory.

The transportation planning process deals with three increasingly larger boundaries.

- 1) Census Urbanized Area Boundary (UAZ). After each decennial Census, the Bureau of the Census establishes a Census Boundary for each urbanized area and provides maps showing what communities (or parts thereof) compose the urbanized population. The UAZ sets the urbanized area's population for FHWA's STP-attributable and FTA's Section 5307 apportionments purposed. After the UAZ is available, the MPO must then consider two additional boundaries relating to its area:
- 2) Adjusted Urban Area Boundary (UAB) is the next boundary. Because the Census Boundary solely reflects population density, it often does not include major facilities (e.g., airports) or parks. Therefore, MPOs may adjust this boundary outward if agreed upon by "the responsible State and local officials in cooperation with each other."² The UAB must encompass, at a minimum, the entire UZA as mapped by the Bureau of the Census, but it may be larger with justification. The UAB is the official "urban/rural" boundary demarcation for FHWA purposes; it is important for highway functional classification, roadway design standards, FHWA eligibility for improvements, Emergency Relief funding eligibility, and outdoor advertising control.
- 3) Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) – this is the MPO's entire study area, sometimes also referred to as the Metropolitan Planning Area. The MAB encompasses the previous UAB (#2) plus any area that the MPO anticipates to become urbanized in 20 years.³ In air quality nonattainment/maintenance areas, the MAB must encompass the entire nonattainment area – all of Onondaga County in this case. The MPO and the Governor must agree on the MAB.⁴



Figure 2. 2000 Census Boundaries of the Syracuse Urbanized Area.

The 2000 Census shows the Syracuse urbanized population expanding in Onondaga County and Oswego County, plus it has now spilled over slightly into Madison County. The SMTC will now have to revise the UAB (to include, as a minimum, the 2000 Census urbanized area) and the MAB (all of Onondaga County plus the UAB portions of Oswego and Madison Counties plus the contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the twenty year forecast period covered by the transportation plan.

After it revises the UAB, the SMTC will need to begin a functional reclassification of the highway network. Functional classification is the process of grouping streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. FHWA is working with the NYSDOT Main Office to coordinate this reclassification .

Due to the expansion of the urbanized area in the 2000 Census, we recommend that the SMTC reevaluate its coordination with Oswego and Madison Counties. Given that the SMTC

urbanized area is expanding into these counties, a more formal mechanism for coordination may be appropriate. In addition, the 2000 Census Boundary now formally includes part of the Onondaga Nation Territory (the Territory is already included within the existing MAB for planning purposes). We recognize the SMTC's past difficulties in establishing working relationships with the Onondaga Nation (discussed in Section VI *Public Involvement*); we are optimistic that there may be some openness to new discussions on the part of the Onondagas and encourage this dialogue.

SMTC Structure

The SMTC organizational structure satisfies the metropolitan planning regulations⁵. It includes the appropriate local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area (including all transportation agencies included in the metropolitan planning organization as of June 1, 1991), and appropriate State officials.

The primary agreement that details the SMTC roles and responsibilities is the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).⁶ In 1993, the Policy Committee also approved an *Operations Plan* to further detail the process (there have been several modifications since then, March 2001 being the latest).

In accordance with the MOU, the ultimate authority for all the SMTC's actions rests with the **SMTC Policy Committee**. There are 13 voting and 2 nonvoting USDOT members on the Policy Committee, as shown in Table 1. The Policy Committee is required to meet at least three times a year. Voting is by consensus, which is defined as "unanimity of affected parties", with the Chairperson and

Secretary judging the extent to which members are affected by proposed actions and declaring consensus (or the lack thereof). At least eight primary members are required for the Committee to take any action. The present Chair is Hon. Matthew Driscoll (Mayor of Syracuse), with Hon. Nicholas Pirro (Onondaga County Executive) as Vice-Chair, and Mr. Jon Edinger (NYSDOT Region 3 Director) as Secretary.

Below the Policy Committee is the **Planning Committee**, which is composed of the administrative or technical representatives of public and private agencies that have responsibility for transportation planning or implementation. The Planning Committee, which meets at least on a quarterly basis, is primarily responsible for developing the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the draft Transportation Improvement Program

Table 1. Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

Entity	Representation
County (3)	Onondaga County Executive; Onondaga County Legislature (Chair); Onondaga County Planning Board (Chair)
City (3)	City of Syracuse (Mayor); Syracuse Common Council (President); Syracuse Planning Commission (Chair)
Regional Bodies (3)	Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Chair); Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (Chair); Metropolitan Development Association (President)
State Agencies (4)	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Empire State Development Corporation; NYS Department of Transportation; NYS Thruway Authority
Federal Agencies (2) (non-voting)	Federal Highway Administration; Federal Transit Administration

(TIP) for recommendation to the Policy Committee for approval. The present Chair is Mr. Bruce Trexler (Commissioner, Onondaga County DOT).

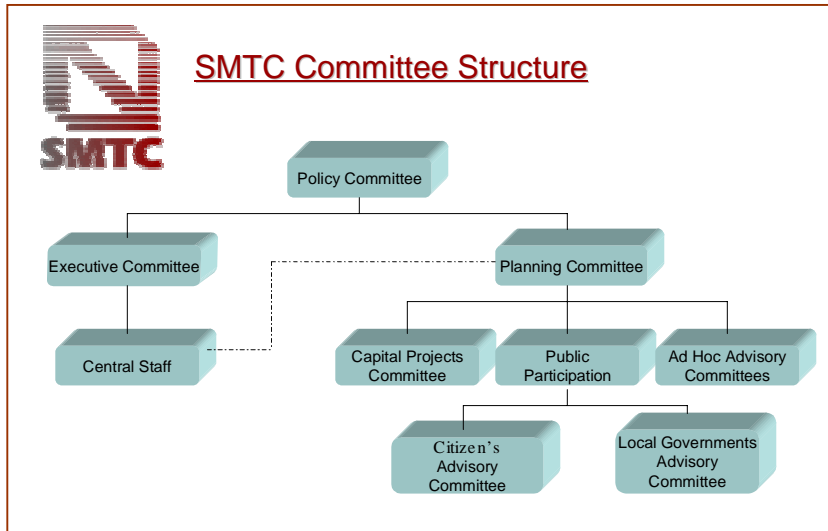


Figure 3. Committees within the SMTC.

Also below the Policy Committee is the **Executive Committee**, which provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Central Staff (financial management, personnel and administrative requirements) on behalf of the Policy Committee. The Executive Committee, which meets on a monthly basis, monitors UPWP progress and Central Staff performance on behalf of the Planning Committee. The Executive Committee is composed of Planning Committee representatives from the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, NYSDOT, CNYRTA, the CNY RPDB, and the Syracuse-

Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)⁷ – both the CNY RPDB and SOCPA are non-voting members. The present Chair of the Executive Committee is Mr. Frank Kobliski (Chief Operating Officer, CNYRTA).

The SMTC has two permanent technical committees (Capital Projects Committee, and the Transportation/ Land Use Committee), and it uses ad hoc committees to review and assist in specific aspects of the process. An example of the ad-hoc arrangement is the Bicycle/Pedestrian Study Advisory Committee.

Metropolitan Development Association

Very few MPOs across the nation have private individuals or organizations as voting members. The SMTC, however, has the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York Inc. (MDA) as a voting member of the Policy Committee. MDA is the region's principal economic development and planning organization and the primary private-sector vehicle for the implementation of key development projects. Formed in 1959, its purpose is "... to take aggressive action to strengthen the economy and livability of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area."⁸ The MDA has been on the SMTC since the MPO's inception.

The MDA is comprised of the top 75 CEOs in the five-county Central New York Region (Onondaga, Cortland, Oswego, Madison and Cayuga)⁹. The MDA is a private, not-for-profit organization with its own professional staff, and it has several corporations/affiliates under its umbrella:

- Downtown Committee of Syracuse - formed in 1975 to promote, market and cause positive development in the central business district. A special

assessment levied on Downtown property owners funds the Downtown Committee's budget.

- University Hill Corporation - formed in 1962 to monitor, enhance, and assist the development of the University Hill area.
- Electronics Park, LLC - a not-for-profit basis corporation formed in 1998 as part of the effort to retain 2000 engineering and manufacturing jobs at Lockheed Martin and to revitalize the sprawling industrial complex in Salina formerly owned by General Electric Company.
- NYS Urban Council - formed in 1991 as a statewide not-for-profit organization to facilitate and encourage the revitalization and development of central business districts in cities, towns, and villages across New York State.
- Hancock Field Development Corporation established in cooperation with the County of Onondaga and other municipalities) - formed in 1986 to redevelop the former Hancock Field Air Base in North Syracuse, NY.
- Lakefront Development Corporation (nonprofit established in cooperation with the City of Syracuse) - formed in 1996 to help redevelop the New York State barge terminal at the south end of Onondaga Lake and 800 acres of adjoining land. This charge has significantly expanded over the past five years.

Recommendation

- Once NYSDOT finalizes its guidelines, the SMTC will need to revise the UAB to include, as a minimum, the Census urbanized area.
- The SMTC needs to revise the MAB to include all of Onondaga County, the portions of the UAB in Oswego and Madison Counties, and contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the twenty year forecast period covered by the transportation plan.
- Once the revised UAB is established, the SMTC needs to evaluate and functionally reclassify its highway network.
- The SMTC should reevaluate its coordination processes with Oswego and Madison Counties, and with the Onondaga Nation.

II. SMTC Staffing

“The host agency, on behalf of SMTC, shall continue in service, and/or select a permanent professional staff to be known as the Central Staff, to accomplish area wide transportation planning and to perform administrative, technical, and other services to SMTC.” SMTC 1993 Memorandum of Understanding

The SMTC carries out its transportation planning activities through a cooperative process involving a Central Staff and the staffs of member agencies. The Central Staff performs the bulk of the federally funded MPO planning activity. The contributing member agencies are NYSDOT, SOCPA, and CNYRTA. Consultants supplement the Staff's work (where appropriate).

The Central Staff

The SMTC's Central Staff ('Staff') is a professional transportation planning group located at 126 North Salina Street in downtown Syracuse. The current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) budget allots \$560,423 to the Central Staff, out of a UPWP total of \$1,210,356. Consultants will perform 38.6 percent of the UPWP activity during the 2002-2003 program year.

When the MPO Policy Committees were set up in New York in the mid-1970s, all MPOs agreed that their central staff had to be both professional and *independent*. This is necessary to assure the decision makers that the staff's recommendations were unbiased toward any member agency's viewpoint. At the same time, central staffs need "host agencies" to provide logistical support. The host agency functions primarily as a funnel for the money; it administratively houses the Staff, pays the salaries before federal reimbursement, and executes contracts on behalf of the staff. The central staffs in all New York MPOs receive direction from the Policy Committee and Planning Committee through the Staff Director; the host agency does not supervise the Staff.



Figure 4. SMTC Offices on Clinton Square. *Staff is located on the bottom floor.*

The SMTC established its Central Staff in 1974. Under a unique arrangement, Onondaga County hired the staff members as individual consultants, with individual contracts renewed annually. This contractual arrangement proved impractical, and Onondaga County agreed to have the SMTC staff members become County employees. The CNY RPDB, contracting with Onondaga County, now administratively houses the Central Staff under a five-year contract.

On March 22, 2001, the SMTC Policy Committee adopted a *Central Staff Five-Year Staffing Plan*. The Staff currently consists of nine full time positions: Staff Director, Administrative Assistant, Secretary/Receptionist, Program Manager, and six professional planning positions. In

addition, the Staff includes one half-time position (Communications/Public Information Specialist), and one ¼ time position (Communications Assistant). The CNY RPDB and SMTC share the two latter positions (the half time and ¼ time positions). Currently, all staff positions are filled.

The 1999 Certification Report cited the reoccurring turnover in Central Staff Directors as a weakness.¹⁰ This weakness has been satisfactorily resolved. The SMTC hired Ms. Mary M. Rowlands as Staff Director on September 13, 1999. Ms. Rowlands is performing very admirably; she has brought a sense of stability to the staff by her professionalism and management skills. Ms. Rowlands previously held the position of Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Transportation in the City of Syracuse's Department of Public Works.

Unified Planning Work Program

The MPOs are required to develop Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) as a basis and condition for all FHWA and FTA funding assistance for transportation planning within their boundaries. UPWPs describe all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1- or 2-year period, regardless of funding source. MPOs develop these documents in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies. The degree of detail in the UPWPs understandably differs according to the type of area, with the TMA areas' UPWPs required to have significantly more detail than non-TMA areas.

The two sources of federal funding supporting UPWP activities are FHWA's Section 104(f) Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds and FTA's Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP) funds. In FFY 2002/2003, SMTC received \$722,299 in PL funding and \$169,412 in MPP funding.

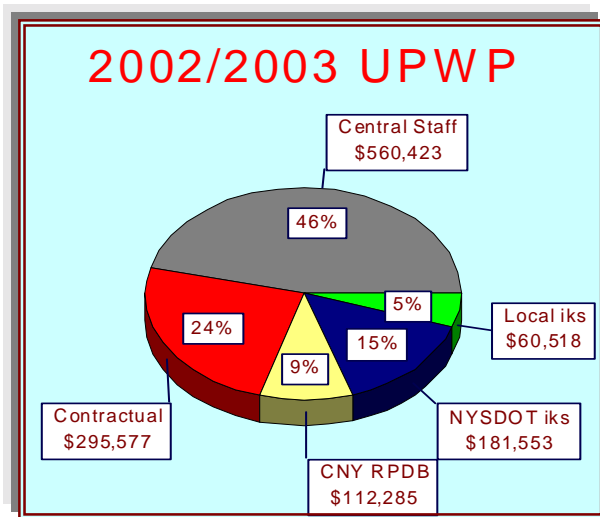


Figure 5. 2002-2003 Unified Planning Work Program.
Financial breakdown by organization.

The SMTC adopted its 2002-2003 UPWP on March 5, 2002. The UPWP covers the period of April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003, and it reflects the goals and objectives of SMTC's Long Range Plan. The UPWP total (\$1,210,356) is composed of funds from FHWA (\$768,873), FTA (\$199,412), plus matching funds from the State and County. The Central Staff solicits UPWP candidate studies/activities through a call letter to member agencies and numerous other local officials. The Staff develops a draft document that goes to the Planning Committee for the final selection of projects, and eventually to the Policy Committee for approval. The selection process is not politically driven. Once the Policy Committee approves the UPWP, the Executive Committee reviews the planning activities monthly.

The 2002-2003 UPWP is a very ambitious document. The major work effort will be in the following activities:

- ☐ Compile and Analyze 2000 Census Data
- ☐ Long Range Transportation Plan Update

- ☐ Begin process of updating transportation forecasting model
- ☐ Accident Surveillance Program
- ☐ Updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, plus publication of an existing conditions Bike Map
- ☐ Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System Report
- ☐ Support of the efforts of the Clean Communities of Central New York
- ☐ I-481 Industrial Corridor Transportation Study
- ☐ Public Participation
- ☐ Environmental Justice Analysis
- ☐ Rail/Truck and Transit Planning
- ☐ Industrial Park Study, Town of Clay
- ☐ University Hill Comprehensive Transportation Study
- ☐ GIS maintenance
- ☐ TIP Administration and TIP Guidebook
- ☐ UPWP Administration

In addition to the UPWP tasks, the SMTC staff also participates with the other NY MPOs on several Shared Cost Initiative (SCI) Projects (example is the establishment of the Reebie Freight Data Training course). In the SCI projects, MPOs pool some of their FHWA planning funds to conduct studies/projects that benefit all NY MPOs. By pooling these efforts, the MPOs save on time, expenses, and oversight responsibility, rather than each MPO doing these studies independently.

For the most part, the Central Staff or SMTC-managed consultants do the UPWP studies, rather than the municipalities themselves. The SMTC has not yet required local buy-in (local matching funds) to support UPWP studies within the affected municipalities (e.g., Town of Clay).



Figure 6. SMTC Website. *The website is an example of good practice.*

The SMTC's UPWP, similar to other UPWPs across the State, does not normally reflect the planning activities funded in NYSDOT's Statewide Planning and Research Program (SPR) - somewhat like a UPWP for NYSDOT's statewide planning activities. However, the metropolitan planning regulations require that UPWPs document all planning activities performed with FHWA and FTA planning funds.¹¹ Since FHWA and FTA planning funds the Main Office SPR program, future SMTC UPWPs should reflect any SPR funded activities that may be underway in the SMTC area.

The UPWPs can be either 1- or 2-year documents. In New York, the 1-year format is the norm. We recommend that the SMTC consider switching to a 2-year format as a way to reduce UPWP development staff workload.

UPWP Tracking System

A prime example of good practice is the UPWP Tracking System. In the 2002/03 UPWP, Mary Rowlands has initiated a task that will create and implement a computerized system to track the results and recommendations of MPO activities. The member agencies will provide information on the progress and status of SMTC staff's recommendations for planning, capital, and other projects. The Central Staff will electronically track the information and publish the results in a database report. In this way, the SMTC can ascertain which agencies are actually using the recommendations of the UPWP studies.

Staff will expand this effort to include tracking of recommendations made in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. The SMTC can thereby comprehensively and coherently measure the level of achievement of meeting certain stated goals of the LRTP.

This will be the first time the SMTC will examine the status of recommendations on an ongoing basis. The goal is to view the utility of those recommendations to the various agencies in the MPO area and to assist in identifying areas in the region that may be in need of planning resources. A major outcome of this effort is a tighter correlation among the TIP, the Plan, and the UPWP.

Central Staff Capabilities

As discussed throughout this document, the Staff continually turns out very professional and readable products (e.g., CMS, infrastructure management, GIS maps and displays, public outreach, TIP, UPWP, freight/intermodal planning). The capabilities of the Staff are readily apparent in computer networking, public outreach, and intermodal freight planning.

The SMTC's current travel demand forecasting model is TMODEL. Over the next several years, the SMTC intends on switching to a new model platform; the Staff is commendably spearheading an effort to research and coordinate a similar switch among other MPOs in the State¹².

One of our recommendations during the 1999 Certification Review was that the Central Staff obtain the equipment and software needed to establish a Local Area Network (LAN) using an independent application server. The SMTC acted on the recommendation and is now fully operating on a LAN with an independent application server. While the SMTC still shares the LAN with the host agency (CNY RPDB) for fiscal reasons, it has the responsibility for data management and technical support.

We also had recommended that the Central Staff develop an independent web site for the SMTC. The MPO now has, in our opinion, one the best MPO web sites in New York.

<http://www.smtcmpo.org>

Member Agency Staffs

As noted previously, the Central Staff and the staffs of the member agencies share the MPO work. The SMTC is fortunate in that the member agencies have staffs with very capable individuals who also have long institutional memories. In particular, we note Steve Vetter (NYSDOT Region 3's Regional Planning and Program Manager), Gary Hayes and Benjamin Manton (CNY RPDB), Karen Kitney (SOCPA), Frank Kobliski (CNYRTA), Charles Everett (City of Syracuse), and Bruce Trexler (Onondaga County).

Comments

We foresee an intensive and challenging workload facing the Central Staff over the next 18 months – specifically regarding the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan. As discussed in sections III (*Long Range Transportation Plan*) and V (*DestiNY USA*) of this report, the potential impacts of the DestiNY USA development are monumental on Central New York. The pressure will mount on the Central Staff and member agencies' staffs as they have to react to the quick-breaking events. The ability to maintain a professional process when being pressured for quick decisions will be crucial to the area's long-term wellbeing.

Recommendation

- The SMTC consider the possible benefits of using the 2-year UPWP format.
- The SMTC should assure itself that it is including the FHWA and FTA-funded activities respective to their areas that are contained in the Statewide Planning and Research Programs.

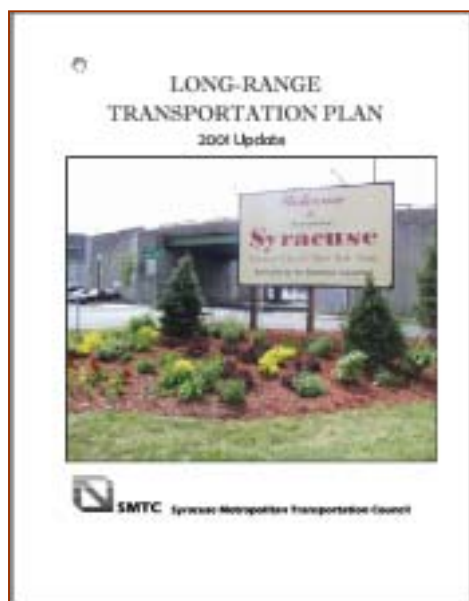
III. Long Range Transportation Plan

“(The planning process shall explicitly consider)...The likely effect of transportation policy decisions on land use and development and the consistency of transportation plans and programs with the provisions of all applicable short- and long-term land use and development plans.” 23 CFR 450.316(a)

The MPO’s initial transportation plan was the *1995 Comprehensive Transportation Plan*, adopted by the SMTC in July 1971. The SMTC updated the highway element of the plan in 1984 (*Long Range Highway Plan*). SMTC subsequently adopted the *2020 Long Range Transportation Plan* in January 1995.

The SMTC’s current regional transportation plan is the *2020 Long-Range Transportation Plan – 2001 Update*, which the Policy Committee adopted on March 14, 2001. This Plan is the second update of the *2020 Plan* (the first being in 1998) to satisfy the federal requirement that air quality nonattainment MPOs review and update (as appropriate) these plans every three years. In the two updates, SMTC followed the requirements of 23 CFR 450.322 in evaluating the Plan’s consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends.

The *2001 Update* is fiscally constrained, and it received a positive FHWA/FTA air quality conformity determination on July 14, 2001. The *Plan’s* horizon year is 2021.



The SMTC is now working on the *Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2004 Update*. The SMTC anticipated beginning a major Plan development effort in 2001; however, the magnitude of the looming private development in the area caused the SMTC to reconsider its approach to the Plan evaluation effort. We discuss this issue at the end of this section.

Structure of Existing Plan

The approved Plan is a composite of the 1995-adopted Plan plus the two subsequent updates, rather than a stand along document. The *2020 Plan* contains 6 goals, 23 objectives, and 46 recommended action plans. The goals and objectives are:

Goal #1: Community Safety - To enhance the safety of the people using the transportation system.

Objectives

- To annually identify the ten highest accident locations in the SMTC area and initiate remediation measures that, within five years, will reduce the accident rate at these locations by an average 25%.
- To periodically identify the five highest intermodal accident locations (vehicle/pedestrian, transit/pedestrian, rail/vehicle, bicycle/vehicle etc.), and to encourage remediation measures that will reduce intermodal conflict.

- To assist local planning officials and developers in accommodating travel when new developments are planned.

Goal #2: Community Mobility - To improve the mobility options for people within the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Area.

Objectives:

- To provide fixed-route or demand-responsive transit service to all areas with urban population densities (approximately 1000 persons or more per square mile) and to all major activity centers. This service should accommodate both work trip and non-work travel (shopping, medical etc.) for both able-bodied and mobility impaired citizens.
- To improve the level-of-service (LOS) of at least half of the ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020.
- By 2020, to reverse the decline in the share of trips made by modes other than the single occupant vehicle by 2000 and to increase the share of trips made by high occupancy vehicles (including fixed and demand-responsive transit), bicycle and walking by 25% collectively.
- Transportation facilities should be accessible to all people. All improvements to the transportation system should comply with ADA.
- To encourage greater utilization of electronic communication with the workplace and for conducting personal business (shopping, etc.).

Goal #3: Community Environment - To provide a clean and environmentally sound transportation system for current and future residents.

Objectives:

- To implement programs that lead to improvement in the region's air and environmental quality.
- To reduce the total daily carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from mobile sources by at least 60% from 1991-2003.
- To reduce the overall use of road salt through more efficient application on roadways by 2020.

Goal #4: Community Economy - To enhance the area's economic competitiveness, thereby increasing opportunities for employment.

Objectives:

- To place particular emphasis on the allocation of funding resources to support access to economic development projects, thereby encouraging job creation/retention.
- To place particular emphasis on maintaining an adequate condition and operation standard (maximizing predictability and reliability) on principal arterials, the facilities most heavily used by both freight and passenger vehicles.
- To increase the amount of employer-centered coordination of employee travel by 50%, including coordination of car/vanpooling, employer coordinated linkages to transit, employer transit subsidy and guaranteed ride home.

Goal #5: Community Land Use - To promote the development of an efficient urban area and a sense of community through transportation planning.

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 for projects involving improved street capacity, are related to municipal land use regulations which are supportive of mobility protection.
- To support development patterns, densities and design options conducive to transit service, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Goal #6: Community Facilities - To provide safe, clean, well maintained and efficient transportation infrastructure.

Objectives:

- To increase the percentage of bridges with condition ratings of >5 to 80 percent, and to increase the deck area of bridges with condition ratings >5 to 83 percent of the total number of bridges by 2020.
- To stabilize pavement conditions at or above the following levels for all medium and high volume roads (greater than 2500 AADT): 11 percent poor; 26% fair and average condition rating of 7.0 for all medium and high volume roads by 2020.
- To rebuild the sidewalks and other pedestrian or bicycle facilities most used by cyclists and pedestrians.
- To maintain transit system facilities, providing safe and reliable service through 2020.
- To ensure connections between transportation modes for passenger travel and goods movement, through facility location and design

Land Use Considerations

The SMTC area exhibits the common demographic trends observable in most northern urbanized areas. The land use pattern that has existed for several decades has led to expansion in the suburban towns and a mixed pattern of stability, decline and redevelopment in the City of Syracuse. The northern towns of Onondaga County are the most developed, the eastern and western towns less, and the southern towns have remained stable.

The SMTC *2020 Transportation Plan* bases land use/transportation decisions on the land use policies contained in Onondaga County's *2010 Development Guide* and MDA's *2010 Vision* (both are discussed in the next section).

The *2020 Plan* characterized land uses in the study area according to five major types. These consist of:

- (1) the City of Syracuse Urban Core
- (2) Towns and Villages
- (3) Agricultural Land
- (4) Shoreline

(5) Random Development.

Since 1995, there have been no major changes in land use patterns, although the gradual suburbanization of rural lands is evident. Suburban sprawl continues to characterize residential development, and this urban growth pattern is projected to continue.

The major development activity since 1995 - essentially in-fill in nature - has occurred in the Syracuse Urban Core and along the shoreline of Onondaga Lake. SMTC has responded to these changes by assessing the individual and collective impacts on the core-area transportation infrastructure, and then reflecting these changes in the triennial update of the Plan. The major activity in the Core has been:



Central New York Regional Market: The Regional Market, serving both wholesale and retail buyers, is the oldest and largest farmers' market in New York State. The Market Authority recently completed an \$8.4 million upgrade to their entire site. Plans call for a total revitalization of each of the eighteen buildings located at the Market.

P&C Stadium: P&C Stadium is a \$32 million, 11,000-seat sports facility which is home to the Syracuse SkyChiefs baseball team - a Triple A affiliate of the Toronto Bluejays. The Stadium opened in 1997, and it annually hosts more than 100 other sporting, entertainment, and cultural events.

Figure 8. P&C Stadium.

William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center: The Intermodal Transportation Center opened in 1998. The \$21 million facility serves both rail and bus passengers, with space for a general passenger waiting area serving Amtrak, Ontrack, Greyhound and Trailways, ticket sales, food vendors, package express services, general information, airport shuttle service to Hancock International Airport and ground transportation services.



Inner Harbor: In 1988, the City of Syracuse began a \$1 billion reclamation and redevelopment of 800 acres separating downtown from the Onondaga Lake waterfront. Since then, over \$550 million in private investment, leveraged by \$30 million in public improvements, has transformed the former fuel tank storage area known as "Oil City" into a redevelopment area. A major facet of the overall redevelopment plan is the Inner Harbor, which will serve as a tourism destination and a catalyst for surrounding private development. The Inner Harbor project is an adaptive reuse of a barge canal terminal and maintenance facility, aimed at creating a waterfront attraction and amenity within an inland urban center. Construction is now underway on the \$36 million project including: a marina and charter boat operation, restaurants and retail stores, infrastructure improvements and a promenade and public parking.

Clinton Square: In the heart of Downtown Syracuse, the City made a major renovation to Clinton Square. The City created a large public space by closing one block of Erie Boulevard, which now makes the square suitable for a wide range of community functions. These activities include summer concerts, winter ice-skating, the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, and other activities.

Carousel Center Expansion: The largest retail center in Central New York, the Carousel Center is currently attracting more than 15 million visitors annually and offers 1.5 million square feet of retail and entertainment space on four levels of shops, restaurants, movie theaters and parking facilities. The planned expansion of the Carousel Mall, called DestiNY USA, is the private development that gave SMTC pause in its approach to the current Plan development effort (see Section V *DestiNY USA*).

UPWP Corridor and Subarea Studies

The SMTC uses UPWP studies to fill out the Plan's transportation strategies within subareas and along transportation corridors. Often, the STMC staff (with occasional consultant assistance) conducts the studies. Examples of such studies are:

- James Street Corridor Traffic Study
- Seneca Turnpike Corridor Traffic Study
- South Salina Street Corridor Study
- DeWitt/Manlius I-481 Industrial Corridor Study
- University Hill Comprehensive Transportation Study
- Town of Clay – Industrial Park Study

The study reports, when finalized, are available on the SMTC website. The quality of the finished products is high, as attested by SMTC's receipt in 2000 of an award from the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) for its *University Hill – Special Events Transportation Study*. APA gives these awards for exceptional achievements that advance the art and science of planning.

Since 1995, the SMTC has placed increasing emphasis on quality of life improvements for the area. These include significant activities involving bicycle and pedestrian facilities planning, such as the Onondaga Lake Circumferential Trail and Canalway Trail, and the redevelopment of Clinton Square. Other issues that are currently receiving more attention include roadside maintenance and periodic clean-up in order to improve the visual attractiveness of the area, as well as enhancements that make transportation facilities more accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

L RTP 2025 Plan Update Strategy

The scope of the DestiNY USA development, and its anticipated local and regional impacts, caused the SMTC to change its approach to the next Plan development effort. The SMTC had initially planned on a full replacement plan in 2001/2002 using a comprehensive visioning exercise, wherein the SMTC and the public would take a step back and have a new look at what the Syracuse area wants

itself to be in the year 2025, and then estimate the financial resources and transportation system necessary to achieve the vision.

Because the private development plans are so out of the ordinary in potential impacts to the area, the SMTC properly reasoned that a comprehensive visioning exercise to get to where they *want to be* in 2025 could only start after they know where they *are* in 2003/4. Therefore, the SMTC decided to develop another Update – albeit more comprehensive than the previous ones and which also will contain a modified visioning process – that will consider the potential impacts of the development projects, and then pursue the comprehensive remake of the Plan within the next several years. The FHWA and FTA have agreed to this modified approach.

The *L RTP 2004 Update* is scheduled for completion in 2004. It will combine: (1) travel estimates/impacts from normal travel growth, and (2) scenarios of potential impacts resulting from DestiNY. The 2004 Plan will project on what is expected to happen, given the normal development of the region and the transportation system therein, as well as examining the impacts of a full build-out of the Lakefront Development District – primarily the potential impacts of DestiNY USA. Some illustrative projects and concepts that may occur as part of the full build-out will also be included. While the *2004 Plan* will be fiscally constrained for the projects recommended to address normal growth, it will also contain estimates of additional resources needed to pursue any of the illustrative projects. The entire Planning Committee is the SAC on the Plan Update.

The SMTC is actively encouraging enhanced public participation in the *2004 Update* process. The *Update* will have an enhanced public involvement element. SMTC a *L RTP Update – Public Opinion Survey* regarding transportation in the area, and has a specific web site on the *Update* (www.smtcmpr.org/lrtp2004). Both are examples of good planning practice.

IV. Land Use Planning

“The likely effect of transportation policy decisions on land use and development and the consistency of transportation plans and programs with the provisions of all applicable short- and long-term land use and development plans.”
23 CFR ' 450.316(a))

Federal planning requirements place considerable importance on the link between transportation planning and land use planning, though there are no federal laws mandating specific actions. Historically, the SMTC assesses the likely effects of transportation policy decisions on land use and development patterns. Many MPOs approach the issue of transportation and land use from the standpoint that the transportation system must react to land use decisions that are often uncoordinated and haphazard. This region has chosen to develop a vision of what development patterns it wants, and then use transportation system in ways that support this vision. In the Syracuse area, there are three major Plans that mutually support this effort: SMTC=s *2020 Long Range Plan*, the Onondaga County=s *Settlement Plan*, and the MDA=s *2010 Vision*.

Almost everyone agrees that, for the overall benefit to a region, municipalities need to view development patterns from the regional perspective.



Agreeing to work cooperatively, however, remains a local decision. Even the Congress, when it was creating the federal transportation planning regulations, considered - but rejected - requiring land use planning as part of the transportation planning process per se. Instead, the regulatory language mandates consideration and “consistency” with the local land use and development decisions, thereby allowing the MPO to decide whether, or to what extent, it should consider land use in the planning process.

People sometimes complain that the ability to control urban sprawl in New York is very limited. Under AHome Rule[®], the State of New York has delegated¹³ the power to establish land use control to local government. Local governments, who are not required to plan in any prescribed manner or coordinate with any other local government, decide on the nature and form of those land use development controls. Furthermore, sprawl can mean different things to different people, and rural communities may desire the new shopping mall or

housing development, even if it is a migration from other parts of the Region. Onondaga County, however, actively encourages a regional look at the sprawl issue.

Figure 10. The five county CNY RPDB planning area..

Onondaga County Settlement Plan

Onondaga County is actively bridging the gap between coordinated regional planning and independent municipal planning. In 1991, the Onondaga County Legislature and the Board of SOCPA¹⁴ adopted the *2010 Development Guide and Framework for Growth for Onondaga County*. The *Guide's* overall thrust was to encourage in-fill development and discourage urban sprawl. The County chose to encourage controlled growth and discourage sprawl through its allocation of County funds for infrastructure improvements. Since the existing infrastructure in the urban area was able to accommodate the anticipated growth over the next 15 years, the County decided to actively encourage (permit process, use of transportation budget, etc) development in areas that already had the infrastructure. The desired development would be either infilling of vacant areas or the redevelopment of existing areas that do not need major investments in new infrastructure. Significant growth in new urban land was to be discouraged.

The *Guide's* land use vision recommended against the creation of new urban land until there was substantial growth in employment and population. The County's capital improvement program gave priority to the maintenance of the existing infrastructure; it would make investments in new capacity and service area extensions only when required for economic growth or new communities.



Figure 11. Urban Sprawl. *The Wynkoop House at corner of West Genesee and Geddes Streets. Built in the late 1840s, it was torn down in 1930 to accommodate urban development.*

When municipalities tried to put the *Guide* into practice, however, many discovered that their current plans and zoning did not encourage, or in some cases even allow, the kind of mixed-use, neighborhood-based, human-scale development the *Guide* recommended. Thus, the County needed some mechanism to move the intentions and policies of the *Guide* into concrete action.

The tool is the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*. The Plan grew out of a series of lectures in 1999 featuring Andres Duany, a leading proponent of *New Urbanism* and land use planning. The *Onondaga County Settlement Plan* was developed by the consultant firm of Duany Plater-Zybeck & Company. The County's intention was to "create a document that would encourage and enable the thirty-five municipalities of Onondaga County to improve their residents' quality of

life through a renewed emphasis on neighborhoods."¹⁵ The County would specifically help limit suburban sprawl by providing planning and zoning tools to foster a renewal of the more traditional neighborhood model of growth.

One of the tools provided in the *Settlement Plan* is the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Code. The TND Code is a set of recommendations, first created over a decade ago by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co., that is designed to replace traditional zoning and to regulate land uses based on design rather than by use. Critical elements of the new TND Code include the focused

design of the public realm, a mix of supportable land uses, a density that encourages pedestrian activity and the easy use mass transit, and built-in predictability of future development based on a regulating plan.

The *Settlement Plan* addresses transportation with a series of policies to guide County's investments in the transportation system to improve the quality of life and walkability of neighborhoods. At the regional level, the *Plan* emphasizes intermodal balance, protection of transportation corridors, and the importance of transit. At the local level, the *Plan* emphasizes the preservation of neighborhood structure, the importance of block size, a viable local street network, the role of traffic calming, bicycling, and parking.

Being an outgrowth of the *2010 Development Guide*, the *Settlement Plan's* vision is very compatible with the SMTC *2020 Long-Range Transportation Plan's* objectives to support development patterns, densities and design options, which are conducive to establishing efficient transit service and supporting pedestrian and bicycle travel.

The MDA Plan

There is a third plan in the region that guides land use, economic development, and transportation: the MDA's *Vision 2010 - An Economic Strategy for the Central New York Region*. The MDA contracted with the Stanford Research Institute to analyze the Central New York Region's global economic competitiveness. In 1996, the MDA published *Vision 2010* as a "blueprint" for regional economic development, and both the City and the County endorse it.

The goals of *Vision 2010* are: bringing 50,000 jobs to the region; a 15 percent growth in wages; and an annual 1 percent growth in population - all while enhancing the quality of life in Central New York. A foundational precept of the *Vision* is that the region must think globally.

Vision 2010 encourages that Central New York increase its attractiveness by building upon and strengthening "strategic foundations":

- Superior Educational System
- Entrepreneurial Development - including an Investment Fund to support entrepreneurial initiatives, establish regional entrepreneurs' forum, establish multi-tenant facility for software and environmental equipment development companies
- Regional Marketing and Promotion - develop a strategic communications plan for region, form a media sub-committee to launch image campaign, identify marketing needs
- Retention and Expansion Network (target businesses within industrial clusters, actively encourage expansion, advise and coordinate the use of economic development incentives)
- Transportation and Infrastructure - improve passenger airline service (fares, schedules and equipment); upgrade telecommunications infrastructure to accommodate needs of business; work with local industry to address impacts of Onondaga Lake Municipal Compliance Plan;

visually embrace and upgrade key gateways to Syracuse; integrate *Vision 2010* with Onondaga's 2010 Development Guide and other regional initiatives; manage and develop special parks and facilities

- Government Policies (taxation, utility and workers compensation costs. Become competitive in Northeast and Midwest
- Assessment - assessing the success of the plan

With these three mutually supporting plans - Onondaga County's *Settlement Plan*, SMTC's *2020 Long Range Transportation Plan*, and the MDA's *Vision 2010* - the region is moving forward in a commendable fashion.



Figure 12. Downtown Redevelopment.

City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

Soon, there will be a fourth major plan in the area – the City of Syracuse's Comprehensive Plan. On August 8, 2001, Mayor Driscoll announced that the City of Syracuse is starting on the Comprehensive Plan that will provide a vision for Syracuse over the next 20 years. The last time that the City engaged in a complete and comprehensive plan was in 1919.

Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT)¹⁶ is the City's official process for citizen participation and involvement in municipal affairs. Citizens plan for their neighborhoods and bring concerns to the City during monthly meetings in each of the eight TNT Planning Areas. The Comprehensive Plan will interweave the TNT neighborhood plans of with the Downtown Committee Plan, the Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative Neighborhood Plans, the community vision of FOCUS Greater Syracuse, and other local and regional plans. The City hopes that

the comprehensive plan will build consensus on a future vision, establish City policies to guide official actions toward that vision, and to inform the public and investors about the vision.¹⁷

Given that the City is supportive of the County *Settlement Plan*, the MDA's *New Visions*, and the SMTC Long Range Plan, we expect that the Comprehensive Plan will fit in nicely.

Special Efforts in Land Use Education

The County intends to make extensive educational efforts to encourage municipalities to adopt the *Settlement Plan's* model design and zoning recommendations. The SMTC desires to assist the County in its educational efforts to municipalities regarding the relationship between land use planning and transportation systems.

The SMTC has already taken a proactive approach to land use education. In 1995, the SMTC formed its Transportation/Land Use Subcommittee. This Subcommittee guides the Central Staff efforts to achieve the Land Use goal identified in the *2020 Plan*; it consists of representation from the Onondaga County Legislature, SOCPA, CNY RPDB, and NYSDOT. One outcome of this activity was SMTC's *Transportation and Land Use Planning Program*, the purpose of which is to provide help to Onondaga County's municipalities related to land use and transportation issues. The SMTC offers guidance and advice, assistance in identifying choices, assistance in forming decisions, and direct technical assistance in preparing transportation/land use plans. The SMTC has also established a lending library of resources (books, periodicals, technical journals) on transportation and land use management.

The Subcommittee has published two brochures. The first brochure, *You Can Create a Nice Place to Live*, was in 1997. The second, in March 1998, is entitled *Can We Create a Nice Place to Live?*; the intention was that this brochure would act as the focal point of an educational campaign to be directed at municipalities in Onondaga County. The level of Central Staff activity on this educational outreach declined in the current UPWP (from \$45,000 in 1999/2000 to \$5,000 in 2002/2003) because of the level of staff activity required by other tasks (e.g., Long Range Plan development).

V. DestiNY USA Considerations

“The likely effect of transportation policy decisions on land use and development and the consistency of transportation plans and programs with the provisions of all applicable short- and long-term land use and development plans.”
23 CFR '450.316(a))

The Central New York Region may soon undergo a significant change; some are saying that the change will be as significant as any in the past 100 years, perhaps even as great as the opening of the Erie Canal. The reason for the change is the emergence of the DestiNY USA concept.

Near the shore of Onondaga Lake, on top of land that was an Oil Depot, is the Carousel Center Mall in the City of Syracuse. Carousel, already the largest retail mall in Central New York, has planned for a major expansion for several years now. However, on November 2, 2001, Pyramid Companies¹⁸ (owners of Carousel Center) announced a much larger vision for the expanded Center - “DestiNY USA.” The name implies a national destination.

To appreciate the magnitude of events in the area, one should understand that DestiNY USA is the major development, but not the only one, located in the City’s Lakefront Development Area.

Lakefront Development Area

The Syracuse Lakefront Development Area is an 800 acre section of the City of Syracuse that had been an industrial brownfield separating downtown Syracuse from the shores of Onondaga Lake. The initial revitalization of the Lakefront area began with the opening of Carousel Center in 1990 and the transformation of the Franklin Square Historic District from an abandoned industrial center to an upscale location for offices, apartments, and condominiums.



Figure 13. Lakefront Development Area. *Carousel Center Mall is located on shore of Onondaga Lake.*

The Lakefront Development Corporation (LDC) facilitates the overall redevelopment of the Lakefront Area. Formed in 1996 by the City of Syracuse and the MDA, the LDC is a 501(c)4 not-for-profit corporation with an 11-member board of directors made up of local business leaders and community stakeholders. Its purpose is the \$2 billion reclamation and redevelopment of the area between downtown Syracuse and the Onondaga Lake waterfront.¹⁹ The redevelopment guide for the area is the *Syracuse Lakefront Area Master Plan*, which the LDC Board of Directors, the Syracuse Planning Commission, and Syracuse Common Council adopted.

The existing zoning in the Lakefront area is a mix of old industrial zoning and patches of recent zoning changes that favor residential and mixed use developments. The zoning is outdated and, in some cases, in direct conflict with the goals and objectives of the Lakefront Master Plan. In partnership with SOCPA, the LDC is preparing for significant changes to these zoning regulations. Building on the concepts of New Urbanism contained in the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, the Syracuse Lakefront is developing a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Code for several development districts within the Lakefront.

As a part of the Lakefront Development initiative, the City of Syracuse is also constructing a \$20 million project to turn a little used New York State Barge Canal Terminal into the Syracuse Inner Harbor - an active marina, recreation, and tourism destination that will serve as a hub of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor²⁰. The Lakefront area around Carousel Center also contains: the Stadium Market Center, the P&C Stadium, the Central New York Regional Market, and the William F. Walsh Regional Intermodal Transportation Center.

There are several roadway reconstruction projects envisioned within the Lakefront. In addition, construction will soon begin on extensions to the Lakefront's Onondaga Creekwalk trail system, which will provide an attractive urban recreational corridor along Onondaga Creek from Onondaga Lake all the way to Downtown Syracuse.

The DestiNY of Syracuse?

When asked as to what is the chief landmark of the Syracuse area, respondents to a poll²¹ taken on Syracuse.com listed the following places:

Carrier Dome (Syracuse University)	49.8%
Carousel Mall	16.3
Dinosaur BBQ	15.9
Armory	10.1
Clinton Square	7.8

DestiNY USA would surely change this. As Minnesota's Mall of America did to Bloomington, Syracuse will be "the City with The Mall", with all other landmarks a distant second.

DestiNY USA will be a major expansion of Carousel Center Mall - 4 million additional square feet, representing a \$2 billion private sector investment and a multi-million federal supporting commitment. DestiNY will house over 400 retail shops, excellent entertainment, recreation, dining, and hospitality attractions. The developer states that it will be the largest retail and entertainment center in the United States, even larger than the Mall of America.

DestiNY's impact, however, will be more than shopping and dining. The developer's vision is that DestiNY will be a national, and perhaps international, *destination* for tourism and shopping - as its name suggests. To this end, the



Figure 14. 1909 Carousel from which *Carousel Center Mall* takes its name.

DestiNY USA complex will also include:

- 90,000-square-foot saltwater aquarium
- 500,000-square-foot multi-field indoor sport and recreation complex
- 65-acre park under a Biosphere-like dome
- Five story high rock- and ice- climbing mountain
- 20-screen movie complex
- 15,000-seat concert hall
- Two Broadway-style theaters
- 1,500-foot long replica of the Erie Canal
- 4,000 hotel rooms



downtown Syracuse, and a multitude of other attractions). The \$30 million annual budget will come from sales tax revenue collected at DestiNY. Syracuse has a seven percent sales tax; four of every seven cents collected normally goes to the State. Instead, the State's share of sales tax collected at DestiNY will go into the tourism promotion fund. The goal is to make the entire Upstate New York region into a national and international tourist destination.

Figure 15. DestiNY USA Logo from media
recourses section of DestiNY's website
(www.destinyusa.com).

The project will proceed in phases, with a projected opening date in 2005 and a total completion in 2006. The Pyramid Corporation estimates that DestiNY will attract 50 million visitors annually.

Pyramid's founder, Robert Congel, also has other ideas for the Lakefront Area. There is a proposal to create a \$500 million center for clean-energy research and manufacturing nearby. The 368-acre technology park (with possibly 600 acres more) would be located a few hundred yards north of DestiNY, on land east of Interstate 81 in Salina. The park – "Petroleum Addiction Rehabilitation Park" (PARP)- would house companies developing technologies to help reduce the nation's dependence on oil-based energy. It would employ 5,000 to 10,000 people in high paying engineering, scientific, and manufacturing fields. Mr. Congel also has proposed a new 500,000-square-foot Syracuse convention center (four times bigger than the existing one. There are also plans for turning the polluted land on the southern and western shores of Onondaga Lake into three golf courses to complement the DestiNY project.

Taken together with the other improvements within the Lakefront area, Central New York is poised for significant change.

Region's Analysis of Impacts

In his 2002 State of the County address, Onondaga County Executive Nicholas Pirro stated:

“DestiNY USA has the potential to provide an economic rebirth of Onondaga County and all of Central New York.”

If the estimate of 50 million visitors annually is relatively accurate, DestiNY will attract more visitors than San Francisco, New Orleans, and even Disneyland. As the NY Times noted in ‘Syracuse Dreams of a Mall to Rival a Magic Kingdom’, “Comparisons between Syracuse and San Francisco have never before seemed necessary.”²²

Economic Impacts

Projections are that the project will create thousands of local jobs and generate \$93 million a year in new sales and hotel occupancy taxes for the County. Pyramid Companies projects that DestiNY will create 9,000 permanent jobs. The City's economic analysis predicts a \$2.2 billion annual economic impact. DestiNY can potentially have annual revenue of \$6 billion, and it may help to create 122,000 jobs across Upstate New York.

There may be a significant residential and business immigration into the region. The project will likely affect the other malls in Central New York, but perhaps not as much as one may think. Using the Mall of America as an example, there were predictions that downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul retailing would suffer. This turned out to be half-true. Several of the older malls and other shopping venues – already on the brink of closing – did close, and retailing in St. Paul and Minneapolis suffered. Cause and effect, however, was anything but clear from statistics compiled for the Star Tribune by the Minnesota Department of Economic Security.²³ Some of the stronger suburban malls responded by supersizing themselves. By wooing ‘big box’ retailers, such as Target, Best Buy, and Home Depot, these suburban malls continue to flourish.²⁴

In 2002, Mayor Driscoll and County Executive Pirro formed the DestiNY USA Benefit Maximization Committee. The Committee is 50-60 people (government and non-government) large. Its purpose is to examine ways to achieve the greatest benefits resulting from the DestiNY USA project. Both the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County Industrial Development Agencies have provided financial support to the Committee. The two main objectives are to (1) identify opportunities available to communities, businesses and organizations in Onondaga County resulting from the DestiNY USA project; and (2) identify actions appropriate to realize these opportunities. The Benefits Maximization Committee has several subcommittees, one of which is Infrastructure (the SMTC Staff Director Mary Rowlands is the chairperson).

Transportation Impacts

Most of the travel to DestiNY will be via the highway network – nearly 80 million people live within a one-day drive of Syracuse. DestiNY will act as a hub for the bus excursion market, encouraging other regional attractions, but those trips will also be via highways. Of the 35 million annual visitors, 12 million will arrive from

out-of state. The Syracuse Hancock International Airport has the capability of accommodating approximately 3.5 million passengers annually, which is more than triple its current load.²⁵ Still, that would leave 10+ million out-of-state visitors via the highway network.

Is the area adequately evaluating the transportation network's capacity to handle this traffic? Yes (probably), but there are some uncertainties that warrant SMTC's caution. In 2002, the Syracuse Industrial Development Authority (SIDA) determined that the 1998 Environmental Impact Analysis of Carousel Center's original expansion plan (before the DestiNY concept) does adequately consider all significant adverse environmental impacts likely to result from the DestiNY USA project, and therefore a supplemental/new EIS is not needed.²⁶ SIDA reasoned that since the DestiNY project would have the same gross leasable retail space (3.2 million square feet) as in the 1988 Carousel Center Expansion, they did not need a new analysis (water, air quality, and traffic). The SMTC's travel forecasting model reflects the mall's 1998-EIS traffic figures, so presumably the modeling and travel impact analysis done in SMTC's *2001 Plan Update* already reflect the DestiNY traffic.

Even so, some at the local level thought it prudent to pursue a \$1.5 million FHWA Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program grant (TCSP) to assist in the analysis of DestiNY USA's impacts on the transportation system. This grant did not originate through the MPO process, but rather it was a congressional earmark in 2002 for the City of Syracuse. The TCSP study – *Transportation Infrastructure Improvements to Syracuse Inner Harbor and Lakefront Development Area Planning Study* - will make a comprehensive analysis of the existing transportation network within and affecting the Lakefront Development Area. It will assess its transportation system's adequacy, identify – and cost out - necessary transportation corridor improvements, as well as mass transit and alternative transit for accessing local attractions and destinations. The consultant-assisted study will address travel and impacts on:

- Local street network
- Highways
- Rail Freight
- Existing Transit Operations (Centro, tour buses, Ontrack, Finger Lakes Railway)
- Future Transit Options
- Bicycle/Pedestrian traffic
- Water transportation
- Terminal Issues (Auto Parking, local freight traffic/deliveries)
- Information/Communications
- Air Quality Analysis
- Regional Travel demand Model
- Airport Access

This effort would seem to indicate that we do not now fully understand the transportation impacts and resulting needs of the overall DestiNY project, which is much more than a mall expansion in its essence.

Comments

The Central New York Region – Syracuse and Onondaga County in particular – truly faces an enormous challenge in anticipating and accommodating the impacts of this development. The magnitude of the primary and secondary impacts of this development may warrant outside expertise. This is not a criticism of the planning professions in the area - there are many highly skilled individuals among the members - but rather recognition that this is not merely a mall expansion project, just at a bigger scale. If built as presently touted, it will be a monumental project with potentially momentous impacts.

The SMTC transportation planning process is metaphorically downstream of a dam that is about to burst. There will be pressure to react quickly to design proposals and changes; the wide-ranging TSCP study being conducted by the city of Syracuse is given a very short timeframe for recommendations in order to identify future earmarks in the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal transportation legislation. Events of private development, not public vision per se, are driving the plans of the region. This is not necessarily bad, as it is part of the American entrepreneurial spirit at work, and it may even be necessary to bring about significant improvements. However, when the public sector is constantly having to play “catch up”, this is a real possibility that some proposals will be adopted by the public sector under pressure not to hold up progress. An example of this is the recent suggestion of an 8-mile long Monorail from Hancock International Airport to the Mall and on to Syracuse University. We caution the SMTC about rushing into transportation decisions of this magnitude, even if “free” federal funds (earmarks) are available. There is the question of ongoing operating expenses, as evidenced in the \$10+ million annual deficit of the City of Buffalo’s light rail system.

Recommendation

- The SMTC needs to thoroughly evaluate new transportation proposals coming out of the TCSP study (and other studies) associated with DestiNY USA.
- The SMTC needs to review the travel estimates prepared by others to ensure that they adequately reflect the proposed traffic to be generated by the DestiNY concept.

VI. Public Involvement

Sections 134(g)(4), 134(h)(1)(B), 134(h)(4) of Title 23 and Section 5303(f)(4) and 5304(d) of Title 49, require a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The law states that the public shall have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Long Range Plan (Plan) and the transportation improvement program (TIP).

Public outreach in the transportation planning process is an explicit requirement in both Title 23 and 23 CFR 450. The requirements for public involvement are set forth in 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1). The process is to be:

- ✓ Proactive
- ✓ Early and continuing public involvement in developing Plans and Programs
- ✓ Timely public notice of activities and information about transportation issues and processes
- ✓ Full public access to key decisions and adequate time for public review and comments
- ✓ Explicit consideration and response to public input
- ✓ Consideration of the needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation
- ✓ Periodic review of public involvement effectiveness
- ✓ Coordination of metropolitan and statewide public involvement processes

The SMTC's public participation process is a wide-ranging and effective effort utilizing a mix of different mechanisms, such as specific studies it conducts, other agency studies/meetings, Council activities, newsletter, web site, and public meetings.

Standard Practices

The SMTC conducts the normal MPO outreach efforts for the TIP and Plan updates: press releases, legal notices, flyers, and presentations. The SMTC satisfies the 30-day public comment period on its documents. It maintains a Citizens Advisory Committee and a Local Governments Advisory Committee. SMTC publishes a pamphlet entitled *A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning*.

SMTC's Public Involvement Plans

For many of its activities (e.g., development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan), the SMTC goes beyond the normal MPO outreach effort and creates a Public Involvement Plans (PIP) tailored to the particular needs of the specific project. The PIP outlines the framework for the public participation activities throughout the study or project. The PIP often includes a Study Advisory Committee (SAC), which consists of representatives of affected organizations, local and state governments, and

selected community representatives that offer advice on managing projects. To assure that the PIP's do provide the proper public participation activities, the SMTC often reaches out to freight shippers, business developers, property owners, community leaders, social service agencies, public safety representatives, transit agency, and public. The PIP enables the SMTC to demonstrate that public participation is part of every project and planning study to the federal and state agencies that legislatively require public participation.

Communications

The SMTC Staff includes one half-time position (Communications/Public Information Specialist) and one ¼ time position (Communications Assistant), which it shares with CNY RPDB. This specialization allows the SMTC to bring concentrated effort to the public involvement process. The Communications/Public Information Specialist Media normally handles media inquiries and news releases (major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio).

There are several notable components of the SMTC's communication outreach efforts:

Directions - a quarterly newsletter is circulated to approximately 2000 constituents and provides information on recent SMTC activities, current, completed projects, and MPO publications.

Web site - The SMTC has received positive feedback for its new website design. The website (<http://www.smtcmpo.org>), a recommendation from the 1999 Federal certification review, provides a mechanism for those with Internet access to participate in the MPO process from their computer. The website offers basic information on the SMTC, documents including the LRP, UPWP and TIP, final reports, publications, meeting notices, and information on how the public can get involved in studies and projects. In fact, the SMTC receives many document requests from the website. The SMTC has also developed project-based web sites to provide additional information on specific project activities. For example, the recently completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan website offers general information, information on upcoming meetings, and the ability for public comments to be recorded.

Report Distribution - The SMTC gives copies of all finalized reports and studies to the Onondaga County Library, with specific reports given to the library in the project/study area. The SMTC has also saved mailing and printing costs by distributing studies and reports on CD-ROM's instead of paper.

Transportation "fairs" - The SMTC periodically attends public events (e.g., State Fair) with information on the planning process.

Mailing Lists - The SMTC also maintains a list of interested "stakeholders" - a broader group of interested individuals with significant interest in the process.

Recommendation

- The SMTC is encouraged to continue with its offering of a PDF version of the *Directions* newsletter via email to those with Internet access to save some printing and mailing cost savings.

The Onondaga Nation

We do not normally think of the City of Syracuse as bordering on another country. However, about one mile south of the City is the 7,300-acre Onondaga Nation Territory (2000 Census population of 1,475 individuals).

The Onondagas²⁷ are one of the Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, and each nation consider itself as a separate nation, equal in status to Canada. There are 14 Onondaga chiefs -- selected by clan mothers -- in the tribal government. There is also one head chief. The Onondagas are traditionally the Keepers of the Central Fire (or Council Fire). There are no industries in the Territory, and employment figures are unavailable.

The League of the Iroquois was the most powerful and influential Indian confederations in U.S. history. The *Haudenosaunee* (People of the Longhouse) are six blood-related Indian Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. Their historic influence was extensive.²⁸

The Onondaga Nation Territory falls under the definition of "Indian Reservation" defined in 23 USC 101(a)²⁹. However, the Nation Territory is not a "reservation" per se, since the land is owned outright in "fee simple", just as one can own a house. The Indian Nations are in trust relationship with the State of New York, not with the Federal Government. This means that the State, not the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), is responsible for the highway/transportation program on the reservations. Until recently, most Nations did not even want to recognize the BIA, as that would be tantamount in their minds to an admission they were not sovereign. However, each Nation is autonomous and may adopt its own position on how much outside relationships are appropriate. Of late, most Nations are pursuing such said relationships, as long as the relationships do not infringe upon sovereignty issues. The Seneca Nation is the most active in these relations and the Onondagas are currently the most inactive.



Because of the sensitivity resulting from various lawsuits by several Nations over land in New York³⁰, formal contact with the Nations officially takes place through the Governor's Office. However, specific transportation issues often require day-to-day project-related contact, and NYSDOT Regional Offices normally fulfill this responsibility.³¹

New York State has an agreement with the Indian Tribal governments, the BIA and FHWA, providing for a coordinated and streamlined process for addressing needs

and project scheduling and management within these sovereign nation boundaries. On highway issues, there is generally good consultation on project related issues and planning issues affecting the Indian nations. Continuing and detailed conversations routinely occur among NYSDOT, FHWA and the Indian Nations on any large federally funded projects proposed within a Nation's boundary.

As the traditional Keeper of the Central Fire, the Onondaga Nation hosts the Grand Council. The Territory today is much smaller than 200 years ago. The Onondagas sided with the British in the Revolutionary War, and the subsequent peace treaties and land sales reduced their land to an area of about 6,100 acres³² today. (Note: the Onondaga sided with the Americans in the War of 1812.)

Over the years, the SMTC has continually attempted to involve the Onondaga Nation in the planning process. The SMTC Newsletter, all project specific materials, and all press releases are mailed to the Nation; however, the Nation has yet to embrace the SMTC's outreach efforts. In the early 1980s, FHWA funded a rural bus demonstration program run by Centro; the program lasted less than one hour on the Nation until tribal officials order a stop. The NYSDOT Regional Office³³, however, is gradually developing a working relationship with the Onondaga; NYSDOT is keenly aware of the fact that an understanding of the culture is of utmost importance in this dialogue.³⁴ In order to further the communication, NYSDOT Region 3 uses an employee (an Onondaga) to act as a liaison between themselves and the Onondagas on Federally funded projects within the Nation.

We believe the NYSDOT's effort to further cooperation with the Onondaga with a local liaison is very commendable and prudent.

VII. Transportation Improvement Program

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include development of a transportation improvement program (TIP) for the metropolitan planning area by the MPO in conjunction with the State and public transit operators.” 23 CFR 450.324(a)

One of SMTC’s most important responsibilities is to develop a multi-year program of transportation improvements that implement recommendations of the planning process, particularly those in the *2020 Plan*. This program of projects is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP identifies the timing and funding of all highway, bridge, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation projects scheduled for implementation over a five-year period using FHWA or FTA funding. Federal regulations require that these projects be included on the TIP in order to be eligible for federal funding. The TIP also includes, for informational purposes, non-federally funded projects, including New York State Thruway Authority projects located in the region.

There are certain federal requirements of the TIP document:

- Covers at least three years
- Updated at least every two years
- Consistent with approved Transportation Plan
 - Conforms to air quality requirements
 - Identifies each project
 - Financially constrained by year; each project has an estimate of total costs and the amount of federal funds, state, and/or local matching funds
 - Identifies the responsible party for project implementation
 - Approved by MPO and Governor
 - Modifications during the year are subject to appropriate project selection procedures

Fortunately, transportation investment has broad support in the Syracuse area. It is largely a non-partisan issue with bi-partisan support, and there are usually no significant disagreements over project selections.

SMTC 2001-2006 TIP

The current TIP is the *2001-2006 Transportation Improvement Program*, which SMTC adopted on May 14, 2001. This TIP is fiscally constrained by program year; it utilizes appropriate project selection procedures, underwent an air quality conformity review, and received a positive determination by the Federal agencies on July 14, 2001. As

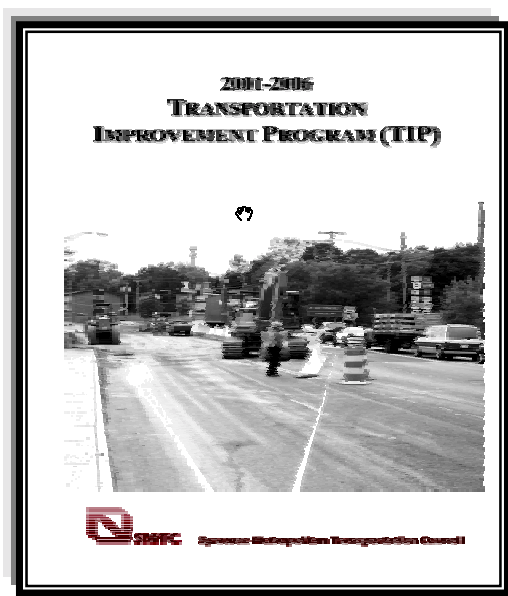


Figure 16. SMTC’s 2001-2006 Transportation Improvement Program cover page.

required, NYSDOT incorporated the TIP projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) without modification.

The five-year program proposes \$445 million in highway and transit improvements (\$236 million in Federal funding). It includes the \$13.1million TEA-21 High Priority Project funding (\$11.2 million for the Belgium Bridge and \$1.9 million for the Hiawatha Boulevard corridor improvements). The TIP was amended in 2002 to add \$1.5 million in Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program funds for planning activities to address both traffic and transit related improvements in concert with the DestiNY USA project and the redevelopment of the waterfront.³⁵

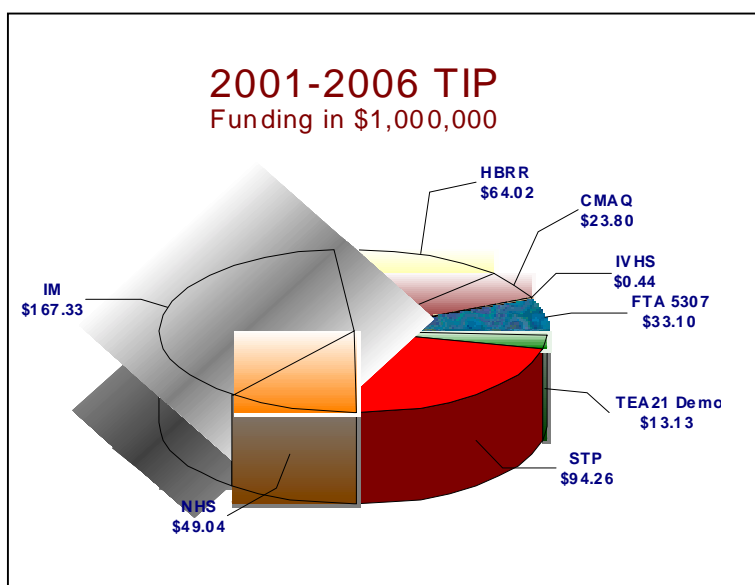


Figure 17. SMTC 2001-2006 TIP. Amounts reflect Federal funding plus matching funds, usually set at an 80/20 matching ratio.

SMTC places a strong emphasis on maintaining the transportation infrastructure, as can be seen in SMTC allocation of upwards of 65% of its TIP resources to infrastructure renewal. In the *2020 Plan*, the preservation of the infrastructure is the top ranked strategy, and it has the first claim on available resources. Investment in repair and renewal is thus a higher priority than investment in expanded capacity.

We found that the SMTC TIP is fiscally constrained by year and fund source. It would be useful, however, if the document contained a table summarizing this constraint. We will recommend that the next TIP contain a table devoted to illustrating fiscal constrain by program year. The table should reflect federal amounts available versus programmed funds by year.

TIP Development Process

The SMTC TIP development process is coordinated with the NYSDOT Region 3 Office's development of the NYSDOT Regional program of projects. The total Regional program of projects is a compilation of the programs in the urban and rural parts of the Region. Region 3 covers two MPOs (Syracuse and Ithaca) and four rural counties (Cayuga, Cortland, Oswego and Seneca). At the beginning of the program cycle, each NYSDOT Region receives a target-funding amount (Federal plus State funds) from the NYSDOT Main Office to clarify how much funding will be available. The Region subsequently informs the MPOs and counties of their individual targets, and it then coordinates with the MPOs and rural counties to identify the best mix of projects with funds available. Projects from MPO areas feed into the MPOs' TIPs and subsequently the STIP, while projects in rural counties go directly into the STIP.

The NYSDOT Regional program development goes through a parallel process. At the beginning of each TIP cycle, NYSDOT Region 3 convenes the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which consists of NYSDOT, representatives of municipalities and transit agencies, and the appropriate MPOs. To guide the project selection process, each Region has a NYSDOT-developed Goal Oriented Programming Criteria (GOP)³⁶ to evaluate and rank those candidate TIP/STIP projects submitted. The GOP Criteria reflect NYSDOT Regional priorities:

- Safety
- Bridge Condition
- Pavement and transit infrastructure
- Environmental initiatives
- Capacity/Mobility

The TAC refers the not-funded projects back to the MPO for evaluating and ranking.

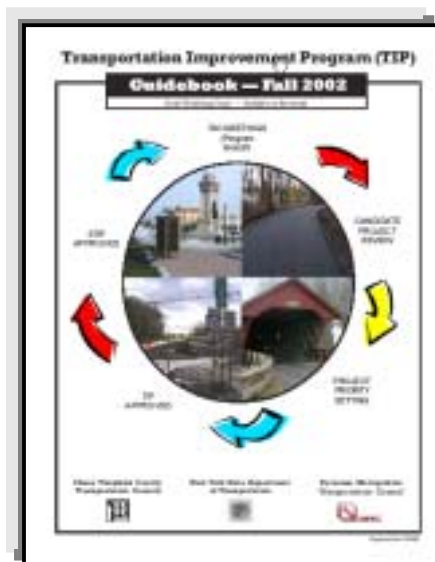


Figure 18. TIP Guidebook
*developed by the cooperative efforts of
NYSDOT Region 3 in conjunction with
the Syracuse and Ithaca MPOs.*

Putting the MPO TIP together is a little science and a little art. At the SMTC, the Central Staff initially screens its candidate projects using a matrix that compares how well the projects reflect the seven TEA-21 Planning Factors and the goals/objectives of the *SMTC 2020 Transportation Plan 2001 Update*³⁷. A recent addition to this evaluation process is giving extra credit to the candidate projects that proceed from a recommendation in a SMTC study (see *Staffing* section for a discussion of UPWP Tracking effort).

Once the “science” of project evaluation is completed, the “art” of project programming begins. The SMTC’s Capital Projects Committee reviews the existing TIP and all candidate projects and develops a draft TIP, making the best fit within overall funding constraints identified in the Regional Office’s targets. The SMTC staff then releases the draft TIP for public review and comment after so instructed by the Policy Committee. After evaluating the public comments received during a 30-day public review period, the SMTC Policy Committee approves the new TIP (May 14, 2001).

We note that the current UPWP contains a \$15,000 task to finalize and adopt a TIP Guidebook to outline the process for members and the public. We believe that this is a very worthwhile idea.

TIP Management

The SMTC approves a new TIP every two years³⁸, and there are numerous amendments thereto. The SMTC manages the TIP during this period in accordance with its TIP Project Management Process.³⁹ This process, which covers both project selection actions and amendment approvals, emphasizes flexibility. The Process guidelines help clarify when and under what circumstances the SMTC can invoke project selection. The process allows phases of a project in the second or third years of the TIP to advance forward without a TIP amendment. Amendments are required, however, for adding a new project or deleting an old project in its entirety (not just a phase), or advancing a phase from years four or five into the first three years. As members submit amendments, the SMTC maintains fiscal constraint of the TIP by

both fund source and year. NYSDOT commendably provides the SMTC with a monthly listing of actual federal obligations, and SMTC is thereby able to better track the progress of the TIP and available funding.

The SMTC's TIP management process is a commendable and workable process.

Recommendation

- The TIP should contain an additional table devoted to illustrating fiscal constrain by program year. The table would reflect federal amounts available versus programmed funds for each year.
- The SMTC should consider the possible public benefit of including GIS maps with the TIP projects located there.

VIII. Congestion Management System

“Within a transportation management area, the transportation planning process under this section shall include a congestion management system that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under this title and chapter 53 of title 49 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.” 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(3)

The level of congestion in the Syracuse area is generally acceptable today, except for short periods on a few routes during peak periods. As shown in Figure 19, the SMTC estimates⁴⁰ that vehicle miles of travel (VMT) will grow at a very modest 0.6 percent rate over the next 20 years. The automobile remains the overwhelming transportation choice for the work trip, with 87 percent of all work trips occurring by private automobile (including rideshare). Transit’s share of the Onondaga County work trip has dropped from 14.6 percent in 1960 to about 4.5 percent today.

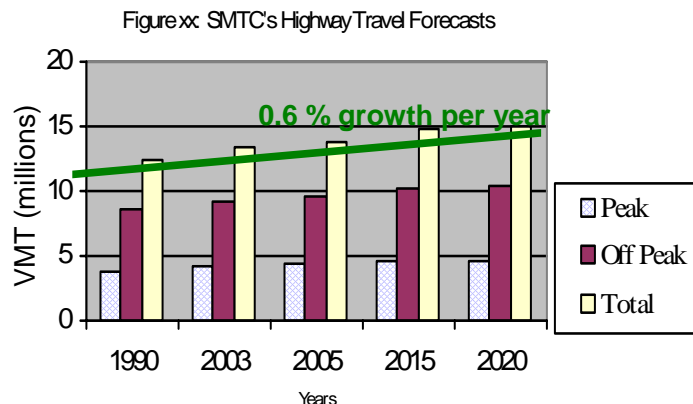


Figure 19. SMTC Travel Growth Trends. *The 0.6% growth rate is very modest.*

SMTC's Approach to Congestion Management

The SMTC adopted its Congestion Management System (CMS) on October 23, 1997. The CMS is actually a series of processes, broken down into several modules:

- Development of the methods and procedures.
- Definition of parameters to measure the extent of congestion.
- Establishment of program for data collection.
- Identification of CMS strategies.
- Evaluation of the anticipated performance and expected benefits of appropriate strategies.

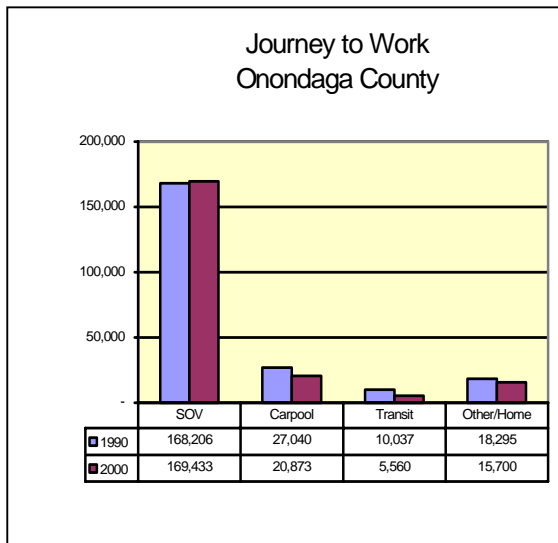


Figure 20. Census Journey to Work Data for Onondaga County. A slight increase in SOV usage from 1990 to 2000.

- Identification of an implementation schedule and agency responsibilities, including possible funding sources, for each strategy proposed for implementation.
- Implementation of a process for monitoring the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

The SMTC Central Staff has the lead responsibility for the CMS; a Working Group (City of Syracuse's Department of Public Works, Onondaga County Department of Transportation, SOCPA, CNYRTA, NYSDOT, and NYS Thruway Authority) contributes to the review of the performance evaluation and evaluation of alternative strategies

Data Gathering

When the SMTC started on the CMS process in 1997, the Working Group developed an initial list of locations needing traffic counts. The Group identified 100 road segments (sections of roadway between intersections) and 19 key intersections where, in their professional judgment, congestion was already occurring.

The traffic counts at the segment locations were 24-hour counts collected in one-hour intervals by direction. The traffic counts were converted to an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) base. The SMTC also collected 15-minute counts at approximately one-third of the locations during the peak periods (7-9 AM and 4-6 PM, respectively). As expected, the 15-minute counts showed higher AM and PM peak hour volumes than peak hour volumes from the twenty-four-hour counts. SMTC employed a consultant⁴¹ to count traffic at the 19 intersections during the morning and evening peak periods.

The Working Group, with Central Staff taking the lead, analyzed the count data, and SMTC released its formal CMS Report (CMS Final Report 2001-2002 UPWP) in April 2002.

Data Analysis

Congestion is often a subjective concept. The CMS regulations recognize that the definition of "congestion" usually differs from one MPO to another: A Congestion is the level at which transportation system performance is no longer acceptable due to traffic interference. The level of system performance deemed acceptable by State and local officials may vary by type of transportation facility, geographic location (metropolitan area, subarea, rural area), and/or time of day.⁴² Thus, a resident of Syracuse would have a different idea of acceptable congestion than a resident of

Manhattan. The SMTC defines congestion as a traffic situation where the volume on a segment of highway exceeds 90 percent of the roadway's calculated capacity. This corresponds to a Level of Service A-E in standard Highway Capacity Manual terms.⁴³

When raw AADT data is available, SMTC uses a two-tier analysis approach to identify congestion:

Tier 1: This Tier is the initial screening analysis. The SMTC calculates the basic volume/capacity (v/c) ratios of the highway segments at peak hour intervals; if a segment's v/c ratio exceeds 90 percent of the roadway's calculated capacity, the segment advances to the Tier 2 analysis. The April 2002 CMS Report identifies 27 locations that exceeded the PM peak threshold.⁴⁴

Tier 2: This second-level analysis involves a more detailed performance measure - *excess delay*. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) defines excess delay as "the amount of time spent at a given location that exceeds the maximum amount of time that is generally considered acceptable." (emphasis added)

The SMTC adopted the approach on excess delay analysis used by the Albany, New York MPO (Capital District Transportation Committee), as the Albany urbanized area is similar in size to Syracuse. In this analysis, separate excess delay thresholds (vehicles/lane by hourly direction) are set for five basic facility types (freeway, two-lane arterials, etc.). If a segment exceeds the threshold value for its facility type, staff then assigned it a value - "Magnitude of PM Peak Hour Excess Delay" - to indicate the *severity* of congestion.

Table 2: Magnitude of PM Peak Hour Excess Delay	
<u>Magnitude</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>
0	0.0 hours excess delay
1	0.01 – 29.9 hours
2	30.0 – 59.5 hours
3	60.0 – 199.9 hours
4	200+ hours
A value of 2 rates as significant	
A value of 3 or higher rates as critical	

Of the 27 locations that entered Tier 2, the analysis identified 3 locations experiencing excess delay. One location (I-81 between East Adams Street and I-690) had a magnitude of "2", while the other two magnitude "1".

Monitoring Congestion

NYSDOT collects traffic count data on the identified highway segments on a rotating, three-year basis (one-third of the segments are counted each year). Under the CMS protocol, SMTTC analyses the count data biennially. SMTTC originally intended to analyze the data on an annual basis and issue an annual CMS Report. However, due to the modest level of congestion in the area, the Working Group (now called a SAC) agreed to change the frequency of the CMS project to every other year. The Report will now be completed in “off-TIP” years, so that the analysis is input into the TIP development process. The SAC also resolved that they would discuss the use of additional measures of traffic congestion (including speed data) in future CMS reports, as well as reevaluating the monitoring sites.

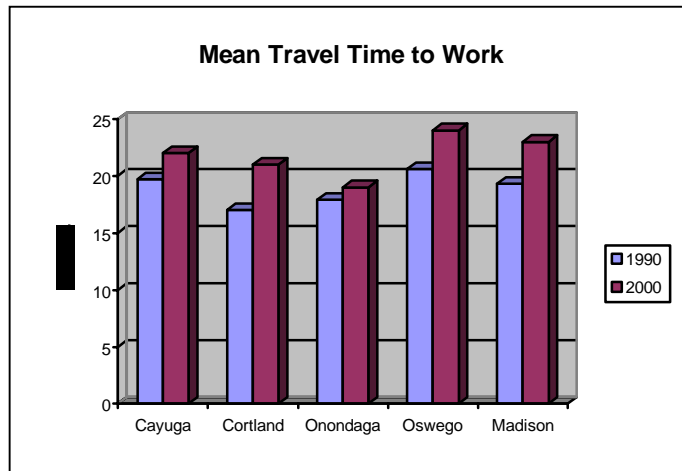


Figure 21. Mean Travel Time to Work. While travel time to work is increasing, the average commute in the area is minor compared to many urbanized areas.

Previous Recommendations

In the 1999 Certification Review, the Federal agencies made two recommendations to improve the CMS process. Both recommendations were accepted and acted thereon. The SMTTC revised the CMS procedures to make the process more understandable. The SMTTC is also considering the NYSDOT Main Office’s recommendation to include hourly speed as an indicator of excess delay.

Recommendation

- The SMTTC has done a very commendable job at revising the CMS process and in the analysis of data. A stronger link, however, between the output of the CMS analysis and the TIP/LRP efforts may be beneficial. We recommend that the SAC discuss linking the CMS analyses with possible remedial solutions.

IX. Preservation of Existing Infrastructure

“The metropolitan transportation planning process for a metropolitan area under this section shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will ... emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.” 23 U.S.C. 134(f)(1)(G)

The SMTC places a strong emphasis on maintaining the transportation infrastructure, as can be seen in SMTC allocation of upwards of 63 percent of its 2020 *Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP)* resources to infrastructure renewal. In the LRP, preservation of the infrastructure is one of the six community goals for the transportation system. In fact, SMTC identifies the preservation of the existing system and infrastructure as the MPO’s primary goal and it has the first claim on available resources.⁴⁵ The >Facilities Goal= has five objectives:

- To increase the bridges with condition ratings of > 5 to 80 percent and to increase the deck area of bridges with condition ratings of greater than 5 to 83 percent of the total number of bridges by 2020.
- To stabilize pavement conditions at or above the following levels for all medium and high volume roads: 11 percent poor; 26 percent fair and average condition rating of 7.0 for all medium and high volume roads by 2020.
- To rebuild sidewalks and other pedestrian or bicycle facilities most used by cyclists and pedestrians.
- To maintain transit system facilities, providing safe and reliable service through 2020.
- To ensure connections between transportation modes for passenger travel and goods movement, through facility location and design.



Figure 22. Restoration of Clinton Square.
Roadway and signalization aspects funded with CMAQ funds.

As mentioned previously, the SMTC based the land use assumptions in the 2020 *Transportation Plan* on the *Onondaga County 2010 Plan/Settlement Plan*’s land use policies that support a relatively compact urbanized area. The County’s capital improvement program gives priority to timely maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of existing facilities, and addressing evolving standards for highway safety and traffic system management.

Infrastructure Management Systems

Management systems are systematic methods of tracking condition and performance data. In the 1999 Certification Review, the federal agencies recommended that the SMTC consider reporting on pavement and bridge conditions on an annual or

biennial basis, and then reporting progress toward the LRP infrastructure goals.

In the 2001-2002 UPWP, the SMTC began an effort to develop a Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System (BPCMS). Rather than duplicating existing data collection efforts, however, the SMTC prudently decided to combine the data that the member agencies already collect into one overall management system. The NYSDOT already maintains a Bridge Management System, and NYSDOT, the City, and Onondaga County maintain Pavement Management Systems on their respective highways. The SMTC issued its initial BPMCS report in 2001, and it released the second annual report in March 2002.

The SMTC's BPCMS is an example of MPO good practice. The SMTC links the bridge and pavement database with the SMTC's Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The annual report has color displays of the data and routes, and it enables easy visual analysis thereof. This being the second year of data in the database, long-term trends are not yet available. In subsequent years, the SMTC intends to compare this benchmark data with future years' data and identify trends in subsequent reports.

Accident Surveillance Program

The SMTC conducts an Accident Surveillance Program on an annual basis as part of the UPWP. The program alternates on a yearly basis between the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, and analyzes 10 priority vehicular accident locations as identified by the sponsor. The SMTC then makes recommendations on improvements to the responsible agency, which may pursue corrective actions in the next TIP. In the 2001-2002 UPWP, the program addressed ten priority accident locations as determined by the Onondaga County Department of Transportation, and the 2002-2003 program will look at the City.

Risk Management

Because of the SMTC's historic and commendable approach of assuring that the basic needs of system preservation should be the top priority, infrastructure tends to eat up a significant portion of SMTC's capital resources. Risk management may be a very beneficial aspect of overall investment policy considerations.

The 1999 Certification Report recommended that the SMTC consider the merits of Risk Management. SMTC subsequently discussed using the concept during the TIP development process; however, the SMTC concluded that it was too early to effectively employ the concept because many of the projects in the TIP were in the early stages of development. The tradeoffs occur during the design stages of the project, and the SMTC noted that member agencies do look at alternate designs at that time. The point is valid. However, we offer this concept again for consideration, at least as a point of information for the SMTC to share with local governments.

The concept begins with the premise that significant physical highway capacity additions carried out in the context of major infrastructure renewal are only appropriate under certain conditions. Capacity and safety improvements and design

upgrades carried out in conjunction with facility renewal are considered separately as *discretionary* improvements, similar to stand-alone capacity, safety, or bike/pedestrian actions. This approach is different from that taken in most MPOs, where the primary goal is to *improve* the condition of the infrastructure; risk management seeks first to *preserve* existing infrastructure, and improvements are evaluated along with other types of objectives.

In the traditional approach to project development, an agency designs improvements to achieve a certain Level of Service in the future. For example, a bridge rehabilitation/replacement project (structure rated “poor”) may be presently uncongested but forecasted to have congestion in 25 years due to normal growth in traffic. The traditional approach involves designing to accommodate those future traffic projections. A risk management approach, however, examines the costs and benefits of alternative designs and makes capacity treatment an *explicit choice*. A risk assessment approach asks questions like: Do 20-year traffic projections justify widening the bridge now? What is the projected congestion risk of replacement in-kind? What would be the additional expense involved in providing the incremental capacity later? What is the projected congestion risk of replacement in-kind?

When considering various alternatives for improving a LOS E intersection, a risk assessment would evaluate the risk of providing for a future LOS D (because the intersection has a chance that it may not be congested in 2030) as opposed to improving the intersection to accommodate a LOS C (i.e.; the traditional approach). How much more does it cost to get a LOS of xyz in 2030? Do you invest funds solely based on peak hour VMT when the capacity is not needed during the rest of the day? Thus, the design approach reaches a determination of facility design through a risk assessment (tradeoff analysis) that focuses on the opportunity cost of selecting alternative designs. This trade-off frees resources to address current needs in other areas. Risk assessment means just that, however - there is a risk you might be wrong.

The traditional approach to congestion is based on the assumption that an *improved* LOS is the choice of the public. However, some MPOs have found through the public involvement process that congestion should not be the sole measure of whether or not a highway improvement is necessary. For example, during the survey of residents along the relatively congested Route 5 corridor in Albany, 79% said existing level of congestion along on Route 5 would be acceptable if other services were improved (transit, pedestrian, etc.). In other words, *maintaining* the existing level of congestion was acceptable.

To some extent, the concept of risk management is already evident in NYSDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) initiative.⁴⁶ CSS is an interactive process that attempts to develop a transportation solution that fits into its local context. CSS is not a separate process or set of standards, but rather a philosophical approach from the project-scoping phase through design and into construction and maintenance. The emphasis is on finding the project’s context – how it fits into the community and surroundings. The cornerstone of successful CSS is early, effective, and continuous public involvement. Under CSS, a proposed project has early and effective public involvement to identify community issues through continuous venues for exchanging ideas (workshops, committees). There is a strong effort to collaborate with local governments to deliver well-built projects that add value to the community with minimal disruption. NYSDOT then considers alternative solutions in order to benefit

a broad range of stakeholders, while at the same time recognizing the limited fiscal resources and eligibility constraints.

Recommendation

- The SMTC should consider encouraging and explaining the potential benefits of the risk management concept during local project development and design.

X. Transit

“Development of plans and programs -To accomplish the objective stated in paragraph (1), metropolitan planning organizations designated under subsection (b), in cooperation with the State and public transit operators, shall develop transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of the State.”
23 USC 134(a)(2)

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) is the public transit operator in Central New York. Created by the New York State Legislature under the Public Authorities Law in 1970, the Authority began operation in 1972. The CNYRTA is responsible for developing, maintaining, and improving public transportation within its Region (Onondaga, Cayuga, and Oswego Counties which contain 657,715 people); Cortland, Jefferson, Madison, and Oneida Counties may join the district by vote of their respective county legislature. The Authority serves approximately 13,316,428 annual passengers and 41,060 daily passengers. The CNYRTA has about 534 full- and part-time employees and has a fleet size of 207 vehicles. FHWA has transferred \$20.5 million for CNYRTA projects since 1997.



There are seven operating subsidiaries under CNYRTA:

- 1) CNY Centro, Inc. (CENTRO)
- 2) Centro of Cayuga⁴⁷
- 3) Centro of Oswego⁴⁸
- 4) Call-A-Bus Paratransit Services (services for persons with disabilities)
- 5) Centro Parking (parking lots along Route 81)
- 6) William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center (ITC, Inc.)
- 7) Coordinate Transportation Program (COORTRANS), started in 1975 to coordinate the transportation needs of social service agencies.

The Centro local transit services feature handicap accessible buses. The Call-A-Bus paratransit services meet the current ADA requirements and offers services for elderly, disabled, and rural residents. The Centro Parking program manages parking lots in downtown Syracuse, park and ride lots, and the Connections Program, which is a car pool matching service. Lastly, the CNYRTA operates inter-city bus services between the cities of Auburn, Skaneateles, Marcellus, Oswego, Fulton, Mexico, and Syracuse.

"The strengthening and improvement of transportation for all residents of the Central part of the State is a matter of vital importance....the provision of adequate and efficient transportation and related services....requires coordinated operation of mass transit services by a public transportation authority." - The purpose of the Central New York Transportation Authority from the CNYRTA website.

ReMAP Strategic Study

The CNYRTA recognized that the significant demographic shifts and changing population dynamics in the community mandated a rethinking of how the transit system operated. From the high of 144,000 riders in the 1950s, the daily ridership today is approximately 42,000. There was obviously a need for more city-to-suburb and suburb-to-suburb service, whereas CENTRO's service was the traditional the "hub and spoke" structure with service within the city and from the city to the suburbs. In 1997, a Strategic Planning Committee was appointed to develop a vision for public transportation for the next century. The result of that strategic planning process is the Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP).

ReMAP's goal was to develop a long-term transportation plan that includes innovative solutions to address the community's needs and shortcomings of the current system. The 'service performance and needs' portion of the study was conducted by the consultant firm Multisystems, with the 'market research' done by Eric Mower and Associates; technical input from a Technical Advisory Committee and Centro staff was provided throughout the process. After more than 70 community meetings, the results of the ReMAP study were unveiled at a public meeting in June 1999.

Proposed solutions included restructuring of the current system, and the coordination of private transportation services with public services. The ReMAP plan builds upon the existing Centro bus route network and transit centers. Three classes of focal points (transit centers or hubs) were established:

- Primary hubs (3) are located within or on the edge of the urban core area served by fixed bus route system. These hubs will function as transit centers where several urban and regional routes meet, and allow transfer between urban bus routes, regional bus routes, and suburban local services. Three existing transit centers are identified: Regional Transportation Center/Carousel, Shoppingtown, and the Common Center in downtown
- Major hubs (5) located primarily in suburban areas serving as the focal points for local suburban trips and facilitating transfers to fixed routes to downtown or other major hubs
- Minor hubs (7) will function at a lower level but will connect to major hubs.



The study made recommendations for local service options, wherein smaller vehicles can provide more flexible service in lower density areas and around hubs. The ReMAP study recognized that employers have an important role to play in facilitating work-trip and welfare-to-work transportation. In addition to the fixed route service, the ReMAP includes four additional types of direct employer involvement: shuttle service between employment sites and hubs, subscription bus service, vanpools and ride-matching service support. The Job Access Reverse Commute effort draws from the community data gathered in the ReMAP study.

Figure 23. William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center. This \$21 million facility, opened in 1998, serves both rail and bus passengers. It is operated by ITC, Inc., a subsidiary of CNYRTA.

ReMAP is an ongoing effort, and Centro intends to implement some significant changes to its regular route services in the very near future.

Job Access Reverse Commute Program

The CNYRTA Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program is funded through an FTA JARC grant (JARC is also discussed in *Section XIV Title VI & Environmental Justice* portion of this report). The major goal of the JARC program is to increase access to jobs for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities who are disproportionately represented among low-income groups. Employers have advanced the need for these services directly to the CNYRTA by the chief social service agencies in Onondaga, Cayuga, and Oswego Counties since the need for low-cost, unskilled labor has developed. In particular, employers in the Carrier Circle, East Syracuse, and Henry Clay Boulevard area have been active in seeking new employees through these agencies. While employers in these areas are supportive of the CNYRTA efforts, they feel that it is the responsibility of the employee or the public sector to expend resources for employee transportation. The JARC program was developed to try to fill this service gap.

The first part of the program consists of establishing a Mobility Management Center featuring a transportation mobility broker to be housed within or as a contract with the CNYRTA's COORTRANS office. The Mobility Management Center will be able to take advantage of other support functions already in place at the CNYRTA, such as accounts payable and receivable, payroll and grants management. Moreover, it will be possible to "piggyback" mobility management software directly onto the CNYRTA's newly upgraded computerized scheduling, dispatch and planning programs.

The Mobility Management Center pursues strategies for reducing costs and increasing efficiency in delivering specialized transportation services through:

- Shifting trips onto CNYRTA's fixed route system,
- Filling vehicles by grouping trips, developing more efficient routing of "subscription" riders, possibly by combining programs both within and between agencies,
- Procuring joint contracts with private operators or other public providers,
- Coordinating maintenance services for interested agencies, possibly by Centro, and eliminating duplicative administrative effort by centralizing functions such as reservations, procurement of vendors, driver supervision, billing and record keeping and grants administration.

The second JARC service is van services because large areas of Onondaga, Cayuga, and Oswego Counties are agrarian or undeveloped open space. However, they contain a significant number of people receiving public assistance. The CNYRTA purchased three vans to transport recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds, who could not be adequately served by the existing transit system either due to their geographic distribution or shift times of potential job opportunities. The vans are administered and dispatched through the Mobility Management Center. Van services are available in all three counties. The vans are capable of responding to the specific employment related transportation problems of TANF recipients.

The third JARC service involves additional public transit services through a comprehensive examination of both the CNYRTA's regular route transit system and has been undertaken as part of the ReMAP strategic planning process. ReMAP has identified job locations not presently served by public transit routes and gaps in service by time period and day of the week. New service is added to meet second and third shifts on weekdays and on Saturdays and Sundays where appropriate. New service to suburban employment locations is implemented through contract either with a private bus operator or directly by the CNYRTA. To the extent practical, these services will be coordinated with existing Centro services providing convenient timed transfers.

Alternative Fuel Leader

The CNYRTA, with the support of the USDOT and NYSDOT, is a leader in the testing and implementation of compressed natural gas as an alternative vehicle fuel. With a growing fleet of compressed natural gas busses, the agency needed a refueling station. Through interagency cooperation, public-private partnerships, and proactive public involvement, the team utilized FHWA's CMAQ funding sources to build an indoor state-of-the-art compressed natural gas refueling facility (also discussed in the



Figure 24. CNYRTA's CNG Refueling Station. *In 2001, CNYRTA received FHWA's Environmental Excellence Award for its commitment to CNG.*

Air Quality section of this report). The project also included a public compressed natural gas fueling station, which has encouraged more widespread public and private vehicle fleet conversion to compressed natural gas in the greater Syracuse-Onondaga County area. The refueling station has provided many benefits to the surrounding communities by reducing air pollutants from mobile sources and has helped to improve the region's air quality by minimizing congestion and providing the added benefit of public transportation.

In 2001, the CNYRTA received an Environmental Excellence Award from FHWA (only 13 awards nationally) for its commitment to compressed natural gas as a fuel source.

Coordination of Planning Activities

The CNYTRA staff normally does transit planning in the area, with only minor assistance from the SMTC staff. The two staffs have worked successfully together on projects, such as the JARC plan, and the SMTC has developed technical expertise in the areas of data collection and analysis, public participation, and environmental justice that can be useful to the CNYRTA in its planning process. The FHWA and FTA encourage the CNYRTA and the SMTC to continue to work closely in the planning process to address the future needs of the Central New York region such as filling public transportation service gaps and the anticipated transportation affects that may arise from the DestiNY project.

Recommendation:

- The SMTC and the CNYRTA should explore more ways of working together in the planning process to continue to improve public transportation.

XI. Intermodal Goods Movement Rail Passenger Planning

“The metropolitan transportation planning process for a metropolitan area under this section shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will-- increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight; and ... enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.” 23 USC 134(f)(1)(C) & (E)

Due to the State’s central location to the population and activity centers in the eastern half of the U.S., New York presently serves as a major gateway for freight traffic between New England and the rest of the US, as well as between the eastern Canadian provinces and the eastern US. In addition, New York provides international gateways for port and airport freight traffic. Three of the State’s border crossings rank in the top eleven US/Canadian crossings in terms of imported tons, and more importantly, these three are in the top six in value of goods imported.

The capability to move freight efficiently and economically has historically been key to New York’s economic success. The Erie Canal, more than any other economic factor, was instrumental in propelling New York City into a world metropolis. The Canal also was directly responsible for the rapid growth of cities along its east-west alignment: Buffalo (flour-milling center processing grain from the Midwest), Rochester, Syracuse (salt), Rome, Utica, and Albany (lumber industry). When the railroad surpassed the Erie Canal in importance for the transport of freight, New York emerged as the linchpin in the Atlantic Coast’s seaboard rail system. Again, the Midwest-NYC flow was prominent in New York’s economy, and the economy continued to prosper as the transportation network kept pace.



Figure 25. Intermodal Freight Operations. *The CSX facility in Dewitt is a major intermodal transfer facility. Photo is from SMTC’s website.*

The emergence of the superhighway systems and the truck caused the railroads (and the common opinion about the importance of freight transportation) to shrink dramatically in influence. However, transportation officials are coming to realize that they cannot continue to overlook freight transportation planning.

The NYSDOT is presently gearing up for a major update of the statewide transportation master plan. The primary impetus for this update is Commissioner Boardman’s⁴⁹ desire to position the State so as it can benefit from, rather than being bypassed by, the changing world economy. Increasingly, the changing world economy is mandating a linked emphasis area - the implications of the dynamics within the new world economy upon the flow of goods from, into, and through New York State. Understanding how these changes will affect New York State, the Northeast Super Region, the nation and even the North American

continent is critical to an expanding economic role for the Northeast. The NYC-Midwest flow of freight is again in the forefront of economic vitality.

Syracuse Area

Syracuse is a strategic area for freight transportation; it is located at the junction of two Interstate routes, within six miles of Hancock International Airport, on the main rail trunk line between Chicago and New York City, and the location of a major CSX truck/rail intermodal facility. The Erie Canal System is still around but it now accommodates only a small percentage of the freight traffic via barges. The Syracuse Hancock International Airport, however, is a hub for air cargo movements, and it has experienced an increasing number of air cargo flights; a significant portion of these flights is the movement of small overnight packages by United Parcel Service (UPS), Federal Express, and the U.S. Postal Service.

Intermodal Rail Freight

There is one Class I railroad⁵⁰ in the SMTC region - CSX. In June 1999, CSX Transportation took over Conrail's Chicago Main Line through Syracuse, the primary route between New York City, Boston, and the Midwest. Local traffic has grown approximately three percent over the last several years (currently about 800 carloads of local traffic weekly). CSX also operates the Baldwinsville, Fulton, and Montreal Secondary lines to the north of Syracuse. The area also contains two shortline Class III railroads: the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad, and the Finger Lakes Railway.

A significant segment of the CSX rail freight operation is through the intermodal freight facility located at the DeWitt yard; this intermodal facility handles both containers and trailers. UPS constitutes a major portion of the intermodal traffic at DeWitt, since Syracuse serves as a hub for New York State. CSX handles approximately 50,000 containers annually at the DeWitt facility and this number will probably increase significantly. The DeWitt yard is a major intermodal connection serving the entire state and is the only terminal of its type between New York City and Buffalo. SMTC's *Conrail Intermodal Terminal Access Report* identified and addressed issues and alternatives relating to landside access to the rail/truck intermodal terminal.

Truck Freight



Trucks transport the majority of goods in the Syracuse area, and nearly 45 percent of the traffic on the highways is trucks. There are approximately 160 trucking companies that provide freight motor carrier service in the SMTC area.

The SMTC completed two noteworthy studies of truck movements in recent years. In the *City of Syracuse Truck Route Study* (May 2000), the SMTC developed a proposed truck route system for the City. Action by the

City is currently pending. In addition, the SMTC published the *Skaneateles Truck*

Study in 2000, which examined truck traffic through the village of Skaneateles in response to local complaints.

SMTC Freight Transportation Planning

The SMTC maintains a healthy dialogue with the freight community and takes proactive measures to incorporate intermodal goods movement and rail passenger transportation into its planning process. In fact, the SMTC was in the forefront among New York MPOs in this regard. As far back as 1993, Mr. Charles Everett, then Central Staff Director, insightfully recognized the value of having diverse, multimodal planning capabilities on his staff, and so he established a staff position that would be substantially devoted to intermodal transportation planning efforts. Today, the SMTC has significant resources in this area, notably in the person of Mr. Charles Poltenson, whose working relationship with key individuals in the trucking and railroad industry are a valuable asset to the Region. Given that most MPOs afford these issues only cursory attention, we commend the SMTC for its efforts.

The SMTC takes an active interest in freight in its area, as evidenced by the following activities:

- The SMTC sponsored a Statewide Shared Cost Initiative to educate and train in New York MPO and NYSDOT staffs on how to use Reebie data for analysis of freight movement within and through their respective regions. This project provides the necessary training to understand and evaluate the data to assist the staffs in better understanding the freight flows within their areas, the impacts on the economy, and on the transportation system. The SMTC Staff acted as Consultant Project Manager for this project.
- The SMTC performed an analysis of local road truck access to the CSX DeWitt facility.
- The SMTC's TIP selection criteria gives credit to candidate projects that address intermodal connectivity for freight.
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) data in the planning area require several freight related data inputs. The SMTC provided truck route data from the Towns and Villages, as well as data from the City of Syracuse Truck Route Study, and created a spreadsheet noting truck routes in the metropolitan area for the SMTC staff utilization. This information will be included in the GIS.
- The SMTC is now developing a Freight Facilities Inventory.

Rail Passenger Service

Syracuse is on the east-west route between Buffalo and Albany; this *Empire Service* presently runs four trains a day.

The Empire Corridor Rail Task Force was initiated as an outgrowth from the 1997 Central New York Rail Conference, co-sponsored by the CNY RPDB and the SMTC. The Task Force consists of County Legislative Chairs from across the Empire Corridor, from the Hudson to Lake Erie. Its purpose is to encourage the improvement



Figure 26. AMTRAK Service.

Amtrak serves the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center in Syracuse. NYSDOT is embarking on High Speed Rail in Amtrak's Empire Corridor.

and expansion of rail passenger and freight service. The Empire Corridor Rail Task Force has had significant input into the Governor's High Speed Rail (HSR) proposal, which is funded with Amtrak, State, and \$75 million of FHWA's CMAQ funds. Mr. William Sanford, Onondaga County Legislator and former SMTC Policy Committee Chairman, was the Chair of the Rail Task Force. Mr. Poltenson serves on the Technical Committee, the only Central Staff person among New York MPOs to do so.

Under the current scheduling of infrastructure improvement projects, the State's initial HSR service will be from Penn Station in New York City to Schenectady. The Schenectady-Syracuse-Buffalo leg will be sometime in the future (probably post 2008). The emergence of DestiNY USA, however, may be the impetus to accelerate the State's schedule. HSR service to Syracuse would be a viable alternative for tourists to consider, especially since the present AMTRAK station is within one mile of the Mall.

Rail Grade Crossing Inventory

In 2001, the SMTC published its *Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Inventory*. In this document, the SMTC Staff made significant improvements to its 1994-95 inventory in coordination with the FRA Office of Safety Analysis and NYSDOT Region 3. Besides updated accident and AADT information, color digital photographs are included, as well as information on roadway ownership, municipal jurisdiction and industrial trackage. This information is now included in the SMTC GIS database.

We note a commendable coordinative effort on the SMTC's part in making this product available to the Onondaga County 911 Communications Center for training before implementation of their GIS, and to the NYSDOT Main Office Grade Crossing Section for inclusion in their statewide grade crossing inventory.

Transportation Security and DestiNY Freight Planning

After September 11, the issue of security is being emphasized across the entire spectrum of transportation issues. Understanding how and where the transportation network may be vulnerable is an integral part of understanding and planning for freight movement. Redundancies in infrastructure, once shunned as not cost effective, are now seen as crucial to the availability of supplies and inventory, and the issue will feature prominently in transportation decisions in the future. Industry may have to rethink its current Just-in-Time delivery concept in light of the potential disruptive impact of terrorist activity on delivery ability. If a critical facility (e.g., bridge) closes for any length of time, inventory refill ability suffers.

In this regard, the CSX mainline through Syracuse is obviously a vulnerable facility, especially at its close approach to the Carousel Center Mall. If the Mall attains its DestiNY USA vision, this site will undoubtedly incur a much greater chance of a terrorist incident. The SMTC may want to evaluate possible compromises to this mainline that may occur, as well as any appropriate preparations that may be warranted.

We are concerned that the \$1.5 million TCSP project may not treat DestiNY's potential impact on freight movements in the area as thoroughly as warranted. The study will evaluate, in part, the demands on the freight network coming from the full buildout of the DestiNY complex. These demands will be significant and will require a careful approach to their solutions. However, the short duration of the TCSP study suggests that the analysis may not be as comprehensive as warranted in its treatment of this issue.

Recommendation

- The SMTC closely cooperate with the NYSDOT efforts to develop a statewide freight plan and reflect any available pertinent information in the Long Range Plan Update.
- The SMTC should assure that security considerations for rail freight transportation be kept in the forefront of discussions on projects and developments that may affect it.
- The SMTC should coordinate and carefully evaluate truck and rail freight recommendations coming out of the TCSP project for the Lakefront.
- The SMTC should maintain its involvement in the various task forces and committees discussing High Speed Rail service in New York.

XII. Air Quality

“In nonattainment and maintenance areas, projects included shall be specified in sufficient detail (design concept and scope) to permit air quality analysis in accordance with the U.S. EPA conformity requirements.” 23 CFR '450.324(h)

Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the EPA classified Onondaga County as Moderate Non-attainment area for Carbon Monoxide (CO). After several years of no monitored violations greater than allowable⁵¹, the EPA approved (September 29, 1993) the NYSDEC's request to redesignate Onondaga County to attainment of the CO air quality standard. At the same time, the EPA also approved a revision to New York's State Implementation Plan (SIP) to include the Syracuse CO Maintenance Plan. Since Onondaga County is presently a CO maintenance area, the SMTC's transportation plans and programs are required to conform to the air quality mandates of the Syracuse Maintenance SIP.

The SMTC 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan – 2001 Update and the 2001/2006 TIP received a positive Federal air quality conformity determination on July 14, 2001. MOBILE 5B was used to generate emissions estimates using the DMV's 1996 vehicle mix data. The SMTC employed its traffic forecasting model to develop travel and speed figures. The base year for the forecasting model is 1999. The future year CO emissions continue to be lower than SIP base year (1991)⁵² for the analysis years (2003, 2005, 2015 and 2020).

Maintenance Plan

When an area transitions from non-attainment to attainment designation, a maintenance plan must be developed that demonstrates that the area will remain in attainment for a minimum 10-year period following redesignation; the Maintenance Plan also identifies contingency measures that will be used in the event that the CO standard is again about to be exceeded. The EPA approved the Syracuse Maintenance Plan as part of the State's SIP in 1993.

The Syracuse Maintenance SIP contains a list of actions described as Transportation Control Measures (TCMs). The SMTC did not intend that the EPA recognize these actions as official TCM commitments^{per se}, because TCMs are not required for Moderate CO areas. Rather, these were TCM-type actions shown for informational purposes to demonstrate good faith. The EPA, however, regards these as commitments. In any event, the SMTC is following its good-faith promise and Table 3 shows the implementation status of these TCMs.

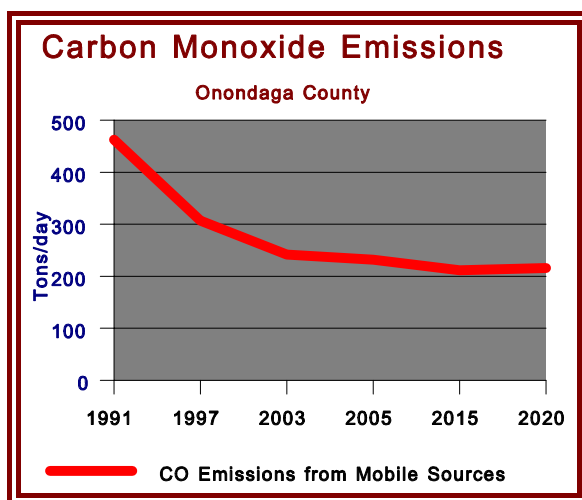


Figure 27. Carbon Monoxide Emissions in Onondaga County. *Onondaga County is maintaining its CO emissions at acceptable levels.*

The CO Maintenance SIP established a CO budget that the SMTC cannot exceed when it develops emissions estimates of draft Plans and TIPs. However, the budgets

in the Maintenance SIP are out-of-date. NYSDEC developed the budgets based on a now outdated version of EPA's emissions model (MOBILE 4.1- the current model is MOBILE 6). In addition, the SIP does not reflect some subsequently implemented the

NYSDEC emissions control programs (e.g., "gas-cap integrity check"). Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult today to compare the emissions estimates of today's TIP and Plan against the SIP budget because they were developed under different assumptions and air quality models. The NYSDEC is contemplating an update to the Maintenance SIP to reflect current models and control.

Transportation Control Measures	
Status as of 5/2001	
Project	Status
Rt. 57 Phase IV	Implemented
Rt. 635, Rt. 5 - Rt. 298	Implemented
Rt. 298, Syracuse to Carrier Circle	Slightly delayed
Harrison St. Traffic Signal Improvements	Implemented
Buckley Rd. Improvements at Bear Road	Implemented
Downtown Syracuse Signal Interconnect System	Implemented
OnCenter Signs	Implemented
Caravan Ridesharing Service	Implemented
AVL System	Implemented
Fare Collection System	Implemented
Shelter Schedule Panels	Implemented

Air Quality and Environmental Justice

Air quality became an Environmental Justice issue in Syracuse because of the location of the CO air sensor in downtown Syracuse. The sensor (the only one in Onondaga County that registered any violations) is located at the intersection of East Adams Street and Almond Street, under the Interstate 81 overpass. This site is in the midst of the Pioneer Homes complex, a low-income (mostly minority) development operated by the Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA). Pioneer Homes, bisected by Interstate 81, is the oldest federally assisted public housing development in New York State.

When Onondaga County became a CO nonattainment area, the air monitor was a daily reminder to the community that their air was a serious problem. Families living in the complex regarded the monitor as a stigma - they were breathing the worst air in the County. With a \$10,000 U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Justice grant, Clean Cities of Central New York (next section) and the SHA cooperated on a project to purchase/convert SHA's fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular emissions at the Pioneer Homes. This grant eased the physiological strain on the residents, especially when they

could see the logo APowered by Natural Gas® on the vehicles.

Table 3. Status of Transportation Control Measures in Syracuse's 1993 SIP.

Clean Cities

The DOE's Clean Cities program is a voluntary, locally based government/industry partnership to mobilize local stakeholders in an effort to expand the use of alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel, accelerate the deployment of Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV), and build a local AFV refueling infrastructure⁵³.

The Central New York area has a very dynamic and knowledgeable individual serving as facilitator of Clean Cities of Central New York (CCCNY) - Mr. Joseph

Barry. Functioning as an association manager, Mr. Barry benefits from being the former Onondaga County Commissioner of Health and the former Regional Health Director for New York State, so he already had intimate experience with local issues and working relationships. The CCCNY received the 1998 Legal Eagle Award from the DOE for efforts in expanding the Alternative Fuel (AF) infrastructure through the promotion of the recently enacted tax incentive legislation in NY State. (Note: Mr. Barry offered comments at the May 7, 2002 public meeting as part of this certification review.)

The CCCNY has helped develop a local AF infrastructure through its outreach activity. For example, the CNYRTA now has a \$4.3 million CNG fueling station (December 1998). The station has indoor fueling capabilities for Centro=s growing fleet of CNG buses, as well as an outdoor facility available to anyone who operates a natural gas vehicle. Developed through a private-public partnership between the CNYRTA, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the fueling station is the largest of its kind in upstate New York, with the capacity of fueling 175 buses in an 8-hour workday. The CNYRTA received \$3.9 million dollars in federal and state grants, and \$25,000 from the NYSERDA to build the facility.

The SMTC is a major supporter of the CCCNY, being one of the original eighteen stakeholders. The SMTC offices housed the CCCNY effort until recently (it now resides at Onondaga County Community College). The current UPWP includes \$55,000 for CCCNY support.

Alternative Fuels Program at OCC

The Applied Technology Center at Onondaga Community College (OCC) is an example of the partnership forged in the Central New York Region between business and the public sector. The Center is a central part of a new >Alliance= between the college and the Manufacturers= Association of Central New York. The Alliance helps to redefine the relationship between business and academia. Traditionally, creating new courses in college is a slow process; the interval between identifying a need and developing the appropriate curriculum normally takes six months or even years. The Alliance creates a framework for streamlining the process. A company can come to the college with a training need and a custom-designed program can be operating in a matter of weeks. The college is thereby adapting to real world needs. With technology advancing at an accelerating pace, a community that can provide good programs will have a big advantage. Through this partnership, economic development officials can make promises to employers that high-quality training for their workers will be available at affordable prices - which may be at least as important as tax incentives and low-power costs. The CCCNY sponsored this endeavor, a significant component of job creation initiative in the Region.

The SMTC approved \$1.3 million in CMAQ funds to help the Onondaga Community College develop a comprehensive alternative fuels vehicle conversion and maintenance education and training program for fleet vehicle technicians and engineers.

An AFV initiative arose in 1998 when the SMTC approved \$1.3 million in CMAQ funds to help the OCC develop a comprehensive alternative fuels vehicle conversion and maintenance education and training program for fleet vehicle technicians and engineers. The concept, sponsored by the CCCNY, allowed OCC to graft an Alternative Fuel Training Unit onto their Advanced Technical Training Center. The programs (credit and non-credit) are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary to support and sustain the conversion of the community=s vehicles to low and zero emissions vehicles.

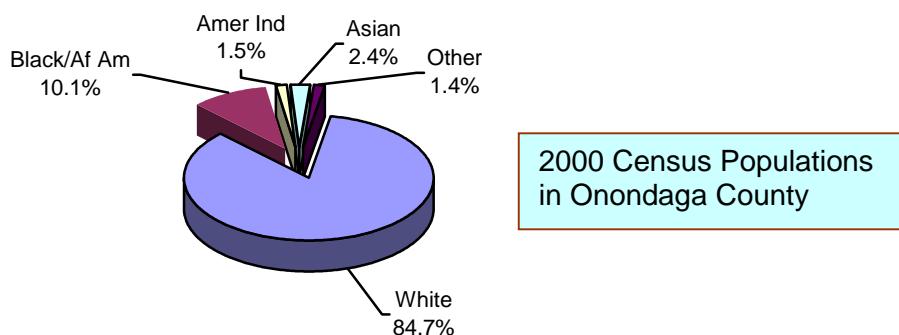
The availability of well-trained vehicle technicians and engineers is a critical element of the infrastructure necessary to expand the use of alternative fuels vehicles in Central New York=s public and commercial fleets. Fleet owners require trained technicians and specialists to convert, maintain, and repair a wide variety of vehicle types including transit buses, school buses, vans, trucks, and passenger vehicles. The CMAQ portion of the project involved the initial capital cost, including construction of a 6000 square foot building, equipment, and curriculum program development. Course fees and/or other funding sources cover long-term program costs. The University of West Virginia has certified OCC as part of the National Alternative Fuel Network, only one of two such sites recognized in New York State.

XIII. Title VI & Environmental Justice

“The State and the MPO shall annually certify to the FHWA and the FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of ... Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” 23 CFR ' 450.334(a)(3)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guarantees equal protection under law and prohibits intentional discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. In 1984, Federal regulations implementing Title VI were amended to prohibit recipients of Federal aid from carrying out any policy or program that has the *effect* of discriminating against individuals covered under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As part of the annual self-certification and in its adoption of the TIP, SMTC is required to certify its planning process adheres to Title VI.

Environmental Justice (EJ) is a relatively new term to transportation, specific Federal guidance on EJ has been slow in coming, and the State and MPOs have therefore proceeded tentatively. In 1994, President Clinton issued the Executive Order on Environmental Justice, citing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VI as foundational pillars.⁵⁴ The Executive Order directs all Federal agencies to incorporate, as part of their mission, the goal of achieving environmental justice by ensuring that federally funded policies and programs do not subject minority and low-income communities to Adisproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects”.⁵⁵



The USDOT issued its implementing instructions in the “Final Order on Environmental Justice” on April 15, 1997. The DOT Order calls for consideration of environmental justice principles throughout the planning and decision making process. Regarding transportation, this calls for a careful evaluation of the impacts of system changes to determine if there are obvious winners and losers in the transportation spending plans. The analysis must assess the nature, extent, and probable impacts, both favorable and adverse.

The goal of EJ is to ensure that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, national origin, or income, and that they have access to meaningful participation. In transportation programs, this includes:

- ❑ Avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects (social and economic) on minority and low-income populations.
- ❑ Ensuring the full and fair participation in the transportation decision-making process by all potentially affected communities.
- ❑ Preventing the denial of, reduction in, or a significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

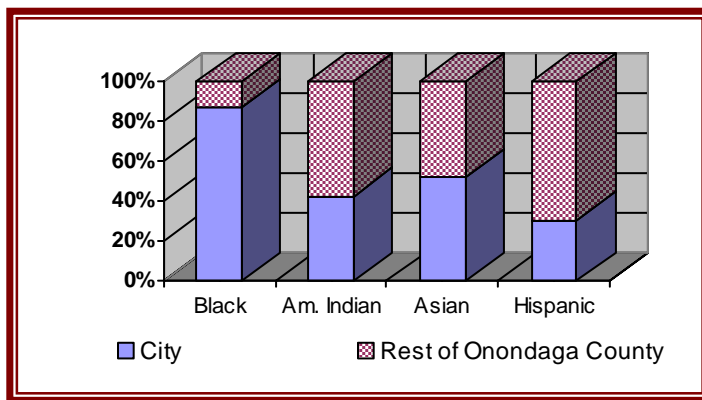


Figure 28. Minority Concentrations in the City of Syracuse. According to 2000 Census, the City has a significant concentration of minorities, especially of Black/African Americans.

City's Minority Concentrations

The City of Syracuse constitutes only about 33 percent of the Onondaga County population. However, as common to other upstate urbanized areas, the City has the highest concentration of minorities (outside of the Onondaga Territory). This is especially true for the Black/African American community. As noted in the *Transit* section of this report, the automobiles and trucks dominate the work trip in Onondaga County, with transit amounting to only 2.7 percent. However, a significant proportion of the minority community relies upon transit for the work trip (e.g., 13.4 percent of African Americans).⁵⁶

One of the ways in which the City engages its citizens is through its Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT)⁵⁷ process. TNT is the City's official process for citizen participation and involvement in municipal affairs. Citizens plan for their neighborhoods and bring concerns to the City during monthly meetings in each of the eight TNT Planning Areas. TNT is composed of eight Area Planning Councils: six neighborhood-based, one Downtown and one Lakefront. The six neighborhood-based areas are organized according to natural geographic boundaries, and include at least 1 business district, a city park, at least one city school, and 4-7 identifiable neighborhoods. The Southside TNT planning area helped to define the study area of the SMTC's *South Side Transportation Study*.

SMTC Analytical Activities

The SMTC has improved its ability to perform Title VI/EJ analysis by utilizing information it has gathered through initiatives such as Job Access Reverse Commute, corridor studies, census data, and public involvement efforts. Moreover, the SMTC has an Environmental Justice Analysis item to its 2002-2003 UPWP program year. The Environmental Justice Analysis item will address the following items:

- Define the populations and socio-economic/demographic conditions.
- Gather data from 2000 Census and other relevant data sets.
- Examine the existing transportation and transit system.
- Examine the location of future transportation projects.
- Create graphics, GIS maps, and charts to explain existing and potential future conditions.
- Create a summary report that documents the process and findings of this analysis.

Job Access Reverse Commute Program

Insufficient services exist in Onondaga County to meet the transportation needs of people moving from welfare to work, and other low-income people seeking employment. New transportation services are required to support their ability to get and keep jobs. SMTC Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan, February 2001

The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Plan is an excellent example of the SMTC at work by leading a collaborative effort of transportation and human service agencies to address regional issues (JARC is also discussed in Section XI Transit portion of this report). TEA-21 established FTA's JARC cooperative grant program. Job Access projects are targeted at developing new or expanded transportation services such as shuttles, vanpools, new bus routes, connector services to mass transit, and guaranteed ride home programs for welfare recipients and low income persons. Reverse Commute projects provide transportation services to suburban employment centers from urban, rural, and other suburban locations for all populations.

JARC projects come from a *Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan*, which results from a coordinated public transit/human services transportation planning process. In February 2001, the SMTC completed the JARC Plan to meet the Federal Transit Administration's requirement for the JARC

competitive grant program. The JARC study analyzed the mobility needs of people on welfare and other low-income residents as they make the transition into the job market. The purpose of the study was to plan for addressing the employment barriers created due to lack of available transportation and other socioeconomic issues.

The SMTC created a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) for the JARC Plan. The SAC was comprised of representatives from regional transportation and human service providers who provided technical assistance to the JARC planning process. In addition, the SMTC created a PIP for the JARC planning process

The JARC Plan identified the geographic location of and concentrations of low-income residents, and people receiving some form of government assistance. The CNYRTA used this information to identify

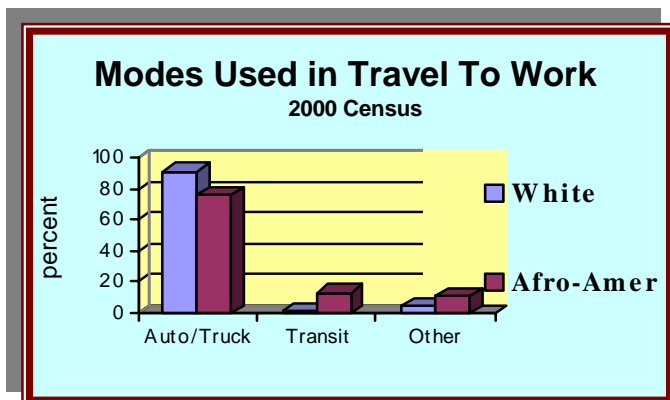


Figure 2-1. Travel Modes of White and African Americans in Getting to Work. While transit accounts for only 2.7 percent of all work trips in Onondaga County, it represents 13.4 percent of Black/African American work trips.

transportation gaps in existing services and devise strategies to meet the needs of residents living in these service gap areas. The strategies included transit system improvements, social service options, and use of a Mobility Manager at the CNYRTA to administer the transportation services.

Central New York region has several “firsts” in the womens’ rights arena. In 1849, the Syracuse Medical College became the first medical college to adopt co-education as a policy. Belva Lockwood, the first woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, was a Syracuse University graduate. The only woman to earn the Medal of Honor (Civil War) was Mary Edwards Walker, born in Oswego County.

SMTC’s South Side Transportation Study

As noted previously, Title VI has been part of the metropolitan planning process requirements for over 30 years, whereas EJ is a relatively new term to transportation. While specific Federal guidance on EJ has been slow in coming, and many MPOs have therefore proceeded tentatively, the SMTC was in the forefront of EJ initiatives with its South Side Transportation Study.

Based on public comments received during the 1996 Certification review, the SMTC decided that the best way of assessing the needs of the South Side area of the City was by a stand-alone study begun in 1998. This process has been the best example among all New York MPOs of how to approach the issue of environmental justice in transportation planning.

The South Side of the City is a socio-economically diverse environment, with a mix of residential, business, recreational, and educational uses. The South Side Transportation Study was a multi-modal investigation of the transportation needs of this area, including transit service, pavement and bridge infrastructure needs, and the safety deficiencies of the transportation network. It included an assessment of the residents’ ability to reach the desired destinations to meet educational, employment, medical, social, and recreational needs. The SMTC assessed existing conditions and identified multi-modal transportation issues under the South Side Transportation Study, and it developed and evaluated alternative strategies. The SMTC adopted the final report and implementation plan in 1999.

Based on those recommendations, the City has now reconstructed 10 streets and repaved 52 sections of streets in the community. The City has also applied for funding for streetscape improvements to the South Salina Street Corridor. The project would include: installation of concrete sidewalk, brick pavers, upgraded street lighting, streetscape tree planting, bicycle racks, and kiosks. The CNYRTA likewise has used the recommendations from the study to alter additional shopper services.

The South Side Transportation Study had several notable spinoff or related efforts:

- South Salina Street Corridor Study - This study was a follow up to information gained during the South Side Study. The Study identified a number of issues in this corridor (traffic volumes, high accident locations, poor pavement, excessive curb cuts, degradation of the livability and pedestrian nature of the community). Based on the information obtained, it was anticipated that conditions on South Salina Street will continue to degrade beyond the current unacceptable levels. Therefore, the SMTC initiated this corridor study to further identify

current and future transportation needs, evaluate alternative solutions, and recommend a schedule of improvements for implementation. The SMTC Policy Committee approved the final report in 2001.

- City of Syracuse Truck Route Study - The South Side study identified the problems posed by very confusing truck route designations in and through the area. The Truck Route Study for the entire City reviewed and recommended improvements to designated truck routes. The City's Common Council still needs to approve the recommendations.
- School Children & Pedestrian Safety Discussions. During the second public meeting of the South Side study (held at the Elmwood Elementary School), a number of residents voiced their concern regarding the City of Syracuse School District busing policy. State education law will not reimburse the City for busing students who live within a one and a half mile radius of the school for grades Kindergarten to eight, and within a two mile radius for grades nine through twelve. Without providing a resolution to the busing policy issue, the South Side study identified steps that can and should be taken to make walking within the vicinity of the school less hazardous (e.g., better sidewalk conditions, making transportation modifications to existing streets surrounding schools to decrease traffic speeds, increasing enforcement, and increasing security at bus stops). The South Side Study included a recommendation for the establishment of a committee of individuals to discuss traditional and non-traditional approaches to the distance requirements for transportation eligibility for city school children. Centro now contracts with the City School District to accept children on regular route buses at a discounted fair.

Recommendation

- The City needs to finalize and adopt the Truck Route Study to help reduce thru-truck travel on neighborhood streets as much as possible.
- The SMTC should review the recommendations of its South Side study and evaluate progress toward implementation.
- The SMTC and/or the City should evaluate the merits of NYSDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions approach in developing transportation solutions in the South Side neighborhood.

Glossary

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AADT - Average Annual Daily Traffic: Estimate of typical daily traffic on a road segment for all days of the week over a period of one year.

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act: Federal law designed to help provide transportation services for the elderly and handicapped.

BPM - Best Practices Model: NYMTC's new travel forecasting model, presently under development.

CAAA90 - Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990: Federal law which stresses the relationship of transportation and air quality and the attainment of national ambient air quality standards.

CBD - Central Business District: Core area of urban center where commercial activity is concentrated.

CFR - Code of Federal Regulations: a codification of the rules and guidance published in the Federal Register by the Executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Improvement Program: category of FHWA funds to help improve air quality in non-attainment and maintenance areas.

CMS - Congestion Management System: required management system in TMAs that addresses congestion on the highway system.

CNG - Compressed Natural Gas - one of the alternate fuels to gasoline.

CNY RPDB - Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board

CO - Carbon Monoxide: a criteria pollutant that is the product of incomplete fuel combustion.

COE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CSS – Context Sensitive Solutions:

DOE- U.S. Department of Energy

ED - Environmental Defense: Environmental group, formerly known as the Environmental Defense Fund

EJ - Environmental Justice: effort to assure that the planning and decision-making process does not have a disproportional high impact on minority and low-income populations.

EPA - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

ESTA - Empire State Transportation Alliance

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration

FTA - Federal Transit Administration

GOCP - Goal Oriented Capital Program: a NYSDOT document.

HBRR - Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program: category of FHWA funds.

HC - Hydrocarbons: gaseous compounds made of carbon and hydrogen (used interchangeably with VOC).

HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle: vehicle carrying a large number of passengers, such as buses, carpools, and vanpools.

ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991: federal law passed by

Congress covering federally funded highway and transit programs for the period 1992-1997.

ITS - Intelligent Transportation System: Development and use of technology to enhance ground travel, to improve safety and the environment. This includes the gathering and dissemination of traveler information, traffic management and vehicle management in an overall manner.

JARC – Job Access Reverse Commute: FTA grant program that assists states and localities in developing new or expanded transportation services that connect welfare recipients and other low income persons to jobs and other employment related services.

LOS - Level of Service: Traffic engineering term describing the operating conditions a driver experiences while traveling a particular street or highway.

MAB - Metropolitan Area Boundary: Federally approved transportation planning boundary of a MPO; the MAB covers the area presently urbanized and that area expected to be urbanized during the next 20 years.

MIS - Major Investment Study: Stand-alone analysis required under ISTEA for major corridor or subarea study. TEA-21 replaced the stand alone MIS requirement with the directive that the planning analyses be integrated with NEPA.

MPP - Metropolitan Planning Program: FTA=s planning funds supporting MPOs.

MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization: Federally mandated organization of coordinating transportation planning. Each urbanized area with a population of over 50,000 must have an MPO.

NAAQS - National Ambient Air Quality Standards: Emissions standards established under the CAAA90 and subsequent rulings by EPA.

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NHS - National Highway System: designated a priority system of highways; it is also a category of FHWA funds.

NO_x - Nitrogen Oxides: a collective term for all compounds of nitrogen and oxygen.

NYSDEC - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NYSDOT - NYS Department of Transportation

NYSERDA - NYS Energy Research & Development Authority

PIP – Public Involvement Plan: project-specific plan to gather public input.

PL - Metropolitan Planning Funds: a category of FHWA funds established specifically for metropolitan transportation planning purposes.

PM-10 - Particulate Matter with a diameter less than 10 micrometers: a criteria pollutant from many sources; diesel engines are a major contributor.

SAC – Study Advisory Committee

Section 3010 - FTA-funded discretionary program for New Starts.

Section 3037 - FTA-funded discretionary program supporting Access to Jobs initiatives.

Section 5303 - FTA-funded discretionary program supporting continuing planning activity and special transit studies.

Section 5307 - FTA-funded formula grant program for capital improvements and operating assistance to mass transit.

Section 5308 - FTA-funded discretionary program supporting Clean Fuels programs.

Section 5309 - FTA-funded discretionary program for capital improvements to mass transit.

Section 5310 - FTA-funded program for capital projects to meet the special needs of elderly and handicapped (formerly 106(b)(2)).

SEQRA - State Environmental Quality Review Act: Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Act.

SHPO - State Historic Preservation Officer

SIP - State Implementation Plan for air quality: A document required by CAAA90 to be produced and updated. The document details required levels of pollution emission reductions and sets deadlines to meet emission reduction targets.

SMATS - Syracuse Metropolitan Area Transportation Study: the original name for the MPO in Syracuse (1966).

SMTCC - Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council: the existing name for the MPO for the Syracuse, NY urbanized area.

SOCAPA - Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency

SOV - Single Occupant Vehicle: A vehicle occupied by one person, the driver.

STIP - Statewide Transportation Improvement Program: State document combining the federally funded highway and transit projects contained in all MPO TIPs plus those projects planned in rural areas of a State.

STP - Surface Transportation Program: a category of FHWA funds.

TANF - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families: US Department of Health and Human Services program that replaced the Aid to dependant Children and several other social aid programs.

TCM - Transportation Control Measure: Means established by ISTEA and CAAA90 to reduce single occupant vehicle use or total vehicle miles of travel (e.g., HOV lanes, new parking restrictions, tolls).

TCSP - Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program: FHWA demonstration program to help control urban sprawl.

TDM - Transportation Demand Management activities: Strategy designed to improve travel by reducing demand through techniques such as ridesharing.

TE - Transportation Enhancement: a subcategory of STP funding; set aside for strengthening the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the intermodal transportation system.

TEA-21 - Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century: Federal legislation June 1998; authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the six-year period 1998-2003.

TIP - Transportation Improvement Program: Five-year program of capital and operating projects, as required by federal regulation.

TITLE VI - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

TMA - Transportation Management Area: An urbanized area that contains over 200,000 population according to the Bureau of the Census.

TOA - NYS Transit Operating Assistance.

TSM - Transportation System Management: strategies to improve travel through low-cost techniques such as signalization and channelization.

UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program: The annual or biennial document that guides the federally funded transportation planning activities within the MPO area.

URA - Uniform Relocation Act: Federal regulations regarding land use and right-of-way matters.

USDOT - United States Department of Transportation

VHD - Vehicle Hours of Delay: Measure of delay indicating the number of hours the traffic stream is delayed.

VMT - Vehicle Miles of Travel: One vehicle traveling one mile.

VOC - Volatile Organic Compounds: gaseous compounds made of carbon and hydrogen (used interchangeably with HC).

4(f) - Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966: requires special effort to preserve public parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuge areas and historic sites.

Background on the Syracuse Area

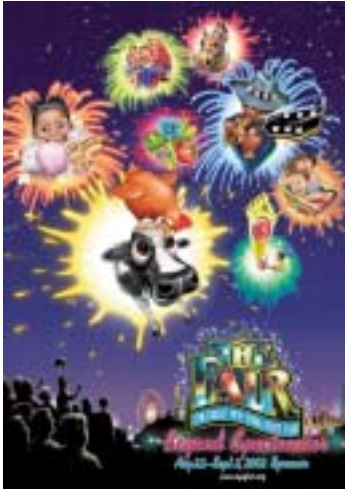


Figure 30. Poster from the NYS Fair

From the Dinosaur Bar-B-Que to Carousel Center, from coneys⁵⁸ to salt potatoes, from ASkinney Atlas Lite® beer at the Empire Brewing Company to the upside-down traffic signal on Tipperary Hill⁵⁹, Syracuse and Onondaga County are enjoyable places to live and work. However, it does have 112 inches of annual snowfall and the 24-degree average January temperature. Onondaga County website notes, "Syracuse enjoys a four-season continental climate with marked seasonal changes. Due to geographical location, cyclonic systems and cold air masses affect the Syracuse weather, making winters cold with snow. During the summer and parts of spring and autumn, temperatures customarily rise during the daytime to fall rapidly after sunset, so the nights are relatively cool and comfortable."

The local governments concentrate on quality of life, housing prices are relatively low, unemployment is low, and there is almost no congestion. It has affordable housing and ample recreational opportunities, a qualified workforce, a solid infrastructure, excellent health care facilities, it is friendly toward business, it has a Smart growth® plan, and it knows where it wants to be in 15-20 years. *Expansion Management* magazine⁶⁰ recently ranked Syracuse as one of America's 50 Hottest Cities when it comes to attracting businesses, the only municipality in the State of New York or in all New England to be so recognized. *Parenting Magazine* rated Syracuse one of the ten best family cities in the United States, and Rand McNally's *Places Rated Almanac* ranked it 20th out of 343 U.S. metropolitan areas for overall quality of life. In 1998, Renew America (a national environmental non-profit agency) selected the City of Syracuse for a National Award for Environmental Sustainability; the award was for City's Skaneateles Watershed Program.

With a 2000 Census population of 402,627, the SMTC urbanized area is the fifth largest MPO in New York. There are two major local governmental entities in the SMTC area: the City of Syracuse and the County of Onondaga. The County contains 1 city (Syracuse), 19 towns, 15 villages and 18 school districts, plus the Onondaga Nation Territory. The City of Syracuse is located in Onondaga County; it is the fourth largest city in New York (147,306) and celebrated its Sesquicentennial (150th) Anniversary in 1998. The City's population is approximately one-third of the total Onondaga County population (458,336), so a majority of the urbanized area population resides outside of the City limits.

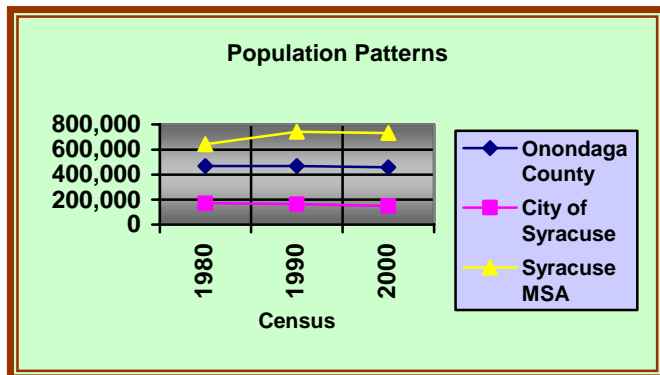
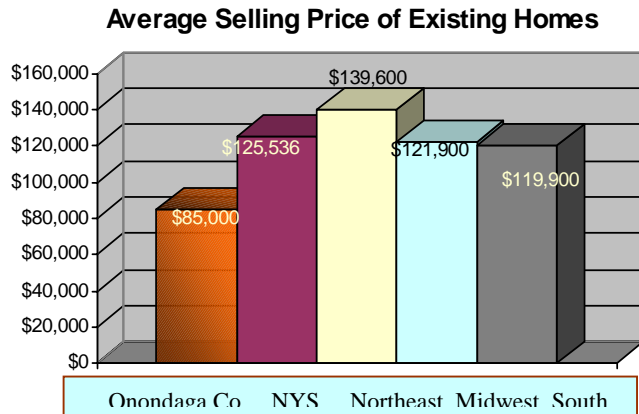


Figure 31. Population Trends in Onondaga County

Onondaga County's population has been relatively constant since 1970, decreasing slightly from 472,835 (1970), 468,973 (1990) and 458,336 (2002). The City's population peaked at 220,853 in 1950, and has steadily declines since. The older towns⁶¹ around Syracuse are also starting to decline in population, with the new growth occurring in the outer towns, especially in the Town of

Clay⁶². While the overall population of the study area remains steady, the number of households has grown rapidly, from 124,798 in 1960 to 181,153 in 2000. City households have actually declined from 67,839 in 1960 to 59,492 in 2000.

The Syracuse Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a 3,400 square mile land area composed of 4 counties: Cayuga, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego. The MSA population is 742,177. The 2001 Unemployment rate for Onondaga County was 4.8 percent, while the rate for the entire MSA was 5.3 percent.



Syracuse ranks as the fifth most affordable housing market in the Northeast and 26th in the nation according to the National Association of Home Builders Opportunity Index. Average Selling Price for existing homes is \$85,000, which is a bargain when compared to other areas.

The Central New York has a diversified economy, and it currently encompasses all types of industry and business interests. The City of Syracuse is one of only 33 areas in the nation whose industrial community encompasses all 20 standard industrial classifications. The unemployment rate for the region dropped to 3.6 percent in August 1999, a 10-year low.

The **Places Rated Almanac** rates Syracuse as the 32nd best place to live. The survey ranks the 354 MSA'S in 9 different categories. Parenting Magazine lists Syracuse as one of the top ten small cities to raise a child. Four Central New York colleges and universities make the U.S. News and World Report's annual survey of the nation's best institutions of higher learning.

Table 4: Major Employers in Onondaga County	
Employer	Employees
SUNY Upstate Medical University	5,425
Syracuse University	5,300
Carrier Corporation	3,855
Wegmans	3,780
St. Joseph Hospital Health Center	3,500
New Process Gear	3,300

Featured Attractions: Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Zoo, Everson Museum, The Salt Museum, Erie Canal Museum, Onondaga County Historical Association, Sainte Marie Among the Iroquois Living History Museum, Museum of Automobile Technology, Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science and Technology (M.O.S.T.), the ONCENTER Complex, Carousel Mall, and the New York State Fair⁶³ (the oldest fair in the United States).

Cultural Opportunities: Syracuse Area Landmark Theatre, Syracuse Opera, Syracuse Stage, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Salt City Center for Performing Arts, Syracuse University Drama Department, Syracuse Urban Cultural Park, Syracuse Jazz Festival, Skaneateles Festival (annual series of 12 chamber music concerts).

Higher Education within Onondaga County: Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, Onondaga Community College, New York State College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, and the SUNY Health Science Center

Sports: Syracuse Skychiefs (Class AAA team for Toronto Blue Jays); Syracuse Crunch (AHL affiliate of Vancouver Canucks); Syracuse University sports teams



Figure 33. Seal of the City of Syracuse illustrates the City's three main formative influences: salt, Erie Canal and railroads.

Brief History of Area

In approximately 1570 AD, Iroquois Confederacy was founded on the shores of Onondaga Lake (near Carousel Center Mall today). The Confederacy was the result of Deganawidah (the Great Peacemaker) and Onondaga Chief Hayenwatha (Hiawatha) persuading the Five Nations⁶⁴ of the Iroquois people to make peace. Living in upstate New York, the Iroquois Confederacy was the most influential Indian coalition in the history of North American. In fact, this report is written in English instead of French only because the Iroquois opposed the French⁶⁵. Without provocation, Samuel de Champlain, the Governor of New France (Canada), had allied with his main trading partners - the Canadian Algonquian tribes – and invaded Iroquois territory in 1609. The Onondaga Nation, then as now, is the Keeper of the Central Fire. The Iroquois sided with the British during the French and Indian War, and they (except for the Oneida and Tuscarora) again sided with the British during the American Revolutionary War. If the League had remained neutral, it probably could have survived, but it splintered apart following the British defeat. Under the treaty of 1788, the Onondagas ceded all their lands to the State of New York - except the Onondaga reservation and fishing and hunting rights.

Shortly thereafter, New York State held its first lottery. New York State set aside large pieces of land in Central New York (the Military Tract) as bounties to the New York State war veterans. The name of each veteran was written on a slip of paper and put into a box. The names of the mile-square lots were written on another slip of paper and these were matched with the veteran's name as they were pulled from the boxes. Veterans received Letters of Patent, with the stipulation that they must settle the land within seven years and pay certain fees (e.g., surveying costs).

In the end, the veterans settled only a minor part of the land; because of the time that it took for the state to get clear title of the land, many became impatient and sold their rights to land speculators.



Onondaga chief John Big Tree's profile appeared on the Indian Head five-cent piece (Buffalo nickel)

Salt

Excluded from the Military Tract was the area around Onondaga Lake. This land was not very hospitable location for settlers because of the thick cedar forests and almost impenetrable swampland. However, New York State retained the land and its swamps because of its economic value. High in salt content, one might easily obtain a large quantity of salt by just boiling away the swamp water. The State retained

control over the salt lands, called the Salt Springs Reservation, for the Acommon benefit@ of all New Yorkers. Motivated by the salt trade, small settlements sprang up around the Lake: Webster=s Landing, Onondaga Hollow, Liverpool, Geddes, and Salina. Still, the area was essentially wilderness. One Salina resident wrote: >So common were wolves and bears at this time, that it was not unusual for these animals to be seen passing along the path from Cicero to Onondaga, as fearless and unconcerned as if entirely among the wild beasts of the forests, or completely domesticated. And from the frequency of these recurrences, these paths were named the bear and wolf paths, and two streets running north from Main Street ... are now called Wolf and Bear streets.@⁶⁶

The need to get the salt to market prompted road improvements. The first road across the area was Aconstructed@ in 1791, extending from Whitestown to Canandaigua. This road, little more than an opening cleared through dense woodland, would eventually become >the old State Road=, and later as >the Great Genesee Road=. The State Legislature supported the development of privately owned roads, and turnpikes became the principal means of land transportation across New York until the advent of the Erie Canal. Today, the Great Genesee Road makes up much of New York Route 5; the Cherry Valley Turnpike is now part of US Route 20; and the Seneca Turnpike is now NY Rt. 173.



Salt Boiling Blocks, 1880

Onondaga County broke off from Herkimer County on March 5, 1794 to form a separate entity. Onondaga County, twenty-first of New York State's present sixty-two counties, originally contained over 1- $\frac{3}{4}$ million acres – approximately one sixteenth of the total land area of New York State. Over the next several decades, the County's size declined when other counties split off; today it has a land area of 793.5 square miles (35 miles long and 30 miles wide).

There was no real interest in settlement on the site of the future village of Syracuse until 1804; the land was extremely swampy (scores of salt workers died of malaria), plus the site was still State-owned land. In 1804, however, the State legislature decided to sell 250 acres of the Salt Reservation, the proceeds of which would go to improving the Genesee Turnpike. This land, purchased by Abraham Walton, eventually became the heart of Syracuse⁶⁷. As the new settlement grew, it went through a series of names: >South Salina=, >Bogardus Corners=, >Cossit=s Corners=, >Milan=, and then >Corinth=. By 1820, the settlement contained about 250 people, large enough for the U.S. Postmaster to recognize it. As auspicious as this occasion was, the name >Corinth= was not acceptable to the Government; a municipality in New York already had that name, and the Postal Service would not allow two post offices in the same state with the same name. John Wilkerson, the village=s first postmaster, suggested the name >Syracuse=, because the countryside surrounding the village sounded similar to that of the Sicilian city as described in the poem ASyracuse.@⁶⁸ The name stuck.

Erie Canal & Growth of Syracuse



Figure 35. The Erie Canal

The opening of the Erie Canal - America's first superhighway - secured Syracuse's future. The low, swampy land around Syracuse was ideal for canal construction, and the commissioners decided to build the Canal's middle section first, running 100 miles from just west of Little Falls to Onondaga Lake, because it required no locks. This middle section opened in 1817, and Syracuse had immediate benefits. The swampland, however, was less than beneficial for many canal workers; in August 1819 alone, more than a thousand died of malaria, and construction stopped until the September frosts killed the mosquitoes. The entire Canal opened in 1825, and the village of Syracuse's dominance over nearby villages was now established.

The unhealthy swamps in downtown Syracuse and along the shore of Onondaga Lake were eventually drained, freeing up thousands of acres for settlement. In 1846, the first plank road in the United States was built along the sixteen and one-half miles from the community of Central Square to Syracuse. On January 3, 1848, the villages of Syracuse, Salina, and Lodi merged to become the City of Syracuse. The City continued to grow, centered on Clinton Square at the intersection of the Erie Canal and the Genesee Turnpike. The Civil War slowed growth somewhat, with approximately twelve thousand from Onondaga County serving in the Union forces. Before the War, many of the region's citizens actively participated in the Underground Railway; Harriet Tubman, a fugitive slave who led over 300 other fugitives to freedom, settled in Cayuga County.

The City annexed the village of Geddes in 1886.

Vanity Fair once described Syracuse's chief attractions as being A...salt, political conventions and pretty girls.⁶⁹ However, the prominence of the salt industry was in decline by 1880. The focus of Central New York's economy, like that of the entire country, shifted from agricultural to industrial, and the area diversified. William Cogswell, a chemist, recognized the potential for mixing salt and limestone to produce soda ash, and he established the Solvay Process Company west of Syracuse. Other major industries developed: brewing⁷⁰, cigar manufacturing, shoes, candlemaking⁷¹, typewriters, china, steel, and automobile manufacturing⁷². Syracuse merchants developed the world's first traffic light system in 1897.

Railroads

The coming of the railroad signaled the demise of the Erie Canal era, but it added to Syracuse's competitive advantage. The Auburn and Syracuse Railroad ran their first train down Washington Street in 1839, and the Syracuse & Utica Railroad soon followed. Over the next 20 years, small railroads gradually linked together, forming the New York Central in 1853



Figure 37. Railroads in Downtown Syracuse.
Upwards of 100 trains per day ran at street level through the City.

connecting Albany with Buffalo. The New York State Barge Canal replaced the >old= Erie Canal

in 1918 by relocating the barge traffic to the river system at the north end of Onondaga County. Canal boats soon were relegated to carrying bulk cargo, while the railroad engines constantly improved, enabling the railroads to comfortably handle passengers, freight, and mail quickly and in relative comfort at competitive rates. In the 1920s, the right-of-way through Syracuse, which had been a central feature of Clinton Square for a century, was filled in and paved for automobile traffic. Today, it is Erie Boulevard.



Figure 36. Clinton Square & Erie Canal filled in to provide automobile parking.

While the railroads brought prosperity, they also gave Syracuse the dubious distinction of being known as “the city with trains running in the streets.” New York State=s main east-west railroad route passed at grade level through the middle of downtown, and upwards of 100 trains per day crisscrossed the streets. This caused numerous problems as the city grew and traffic became more congested.



Figure 38. Interurbans linked Syracuse with the surrounding countryside.

Transit in the Syracuse area has been around for over 140 years. Syracuse obtained its first horse-drawn street railway in 1860 (Peoples Railroad Company). In 1888, the electric trolley began to replace the horse cars, with the last horse car was retired in 1900. The electric trolley eventually became the mainstay of local transit in Syracuse until buses in turn replaced it in the 1941.

While electric trolleys served travel within Syracuse, the interurbans linked Syracuse with the countryside. Interurban were suburban railways with rights-of-way for higher speed traffic. The Syracuse and Suburban Railroad line to Manlius was the first to be built, with the initial run moving along the Genesee Street track to Fayetteville in 1898, and the Syracuse, Lakeside & Baldwinsville railway came shortly thereafter. Interurbans meant that Manlius,

Fayetteville, Lakeland, and Baldwinsville were no longer solely farming communities - you could live in the suburbs and work in Syracuse. It was a short-lived phenomenon, however, lasting just over 30 years. Six interurban railways operated from Syracuse, the first line built in 1898, and the last line completed to Oswego in 1911. However, by the summer of 1932, every bit of the interurban rail had been removed and the entire era was over. The automobile and the bus became the modes of choice for commuting to and from the suburbs.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Syracuse elevated its mainline railroad tracks, giving the automobile control of the streets. The automobile eventually required even more room. The railroad lines were again relocated, and today, Interstate 690 incorporates this elevated right-of-way.



Figure 39. Construction of I-81 and I-690 in the late 1960s.

The railroads gave Syracuse the ability to make things and ship them out cheaply to faraway markets. In the early 20th century, Syracuse was famous for production of Smith Corona typewriters, Syracuse China, Nettleton shoes, bicycles, wax candles, and the Franklin, an ahead-of-its-time automobile with an air-cooled engine. In the 1940s, General Electric opened the first of several factories around Syracuse that, at their peak, employed 17,000 workers. Syracuse hosted a team in the newly formed National Basketball Association (1949) – the Syracuse Nationals (who actually won the NBA Championship in 1955; the team moved to Philadelphia in 1963 and became the Philadelphia 76ers). Back in the 1879, Syracuse had a baseball team – the Syracuse Stars – in the National League; the team moved to the American league in 1890.

Syracuse's competitive transportation advantage (railroads) declined with the construction of superhighways around the country. Syracuse's population topped out at 221,000 in 1950, and major companies began to cut back their operations or relocate to other parts of the country with lower taxes and warmer weather. Smith Corona moved; Allied Chemical and General Motors closed large plants; General Electric began shrinking defense manufacturing. Some new companies have moved into the area - Lockheed-Martin, New Process Gear, Crouse-Heins – but it has not yet been enough to transform the economy. The area is now poised for growth.

Endnotes

¹ *Directions* newsletter was first issued by SMTC in Summer of 1981.

² 23 USC 101(a)(37)

³ 23 USC 134(c)(2)

⁴ 23 USC 134(c)(1)

⁵ 23 USC 134(b)(2)

⁶ SMTC approved the MOU on March 19, 1993.

⁷ SOCPA is the staff that carries out the planning activities of two SMTC member agencies – the Syracuse Planning Commission and the Onondaga County planning Board.

⁸ *A Profile of Central New York*, 1996, MDA and CNY RPDB.

⁹ The CNY RPDB planning area covers all of these counties.

¹⁰ The Central Staff has seen a series of directors since its inception: William Meadows (resigned), Lawrence Volpe (died in office), Neal Denno (resigned to work for National Transit Institute), Charles Everett (resigned to work for City), Richard Landerkin (resigned to work for CNYRTA), and Jeffery Perry (resigned to enter the private sector).

¹¹ 23 CFR 459.314 (a) (2)

¹² The Albany, Buffalo, and New York City MPOs have recently adopted new models and are not part of this effort.

¹³ Article 9 of the NYS Constitution, plus the Municipal Home Rule Law and the Statute of Local Governments.

¹⁴ The Board is composed of City Planning Commission and the County Planning Board, both voting members of the SMTC Policy Committee.

¹⁵ *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, Executive Summary

¹⁶ TNT is composed of eight Area Planning Councils: six neighborhood-based, one Downtown and one Lakefront. The six neighborhood-based areas are organized according to natural geographic boundaries,

and include at least 1 business district, a city park, at least one city school, and 4-7 identifiable neighborhoods.

¹⁷ City of Syracuse press release, August 8, 2001.

¹⁸ Pyramid Companies is the owner of Carousel Center and 19 other shopping malls across the Northeast. The founder of Pyramid is Robert Congel

¹⁹ <http://www.mda-cny.com/Affiliates/LD/>

²⁰ Designated by the National Park Service on December 21, 2000

²¹ July 26, 2002.

²² NY Times article 6/24/2002

²³ *Mall not alone in drawing shoppers, jobs*, Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 5, 2002.

²⁴ *10 years later, the Mall of America still stands alone*, Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 4, 2002.

²⁵ "Hancock Big Enough for Megamall, City Says", The Post-Standard, February 10, 2002.

²⁶ April 24, 2002.

²⁷ *Onundagaono*, Apeople of the hills@

²⁸ The Iroquois were a matriarchical society, and they were second to no other Native Americans in political organization, statecraft, and military prowess. At its height in the 18th century, the Five Nations dominated, either through direct conquest, or fear thereof, virtually the entire area from the Atlantic Ocean west as far as the Mississippi River, and from the St. Lawrence River as far south as Tennessee. Their homeland remained in central and western New York, as Central New York's Finger Lakes were considered holy in Iroquois mythology; the Lakes' unique form was evidence that the Great Spirit left his handprint in the land to indicate that they were chosen people.

The longhouse family was the basic unit of Iroquois society. Households, or blood lineages, were projected into clans, clans into moieties (half tribes), moieties into tribes or nations, and nations into confederacies.

During the American Revolution, four of the six Nations chose to honor their treaties made with the British during the French and Indian War, and they fought against the colonists. Following the War, all six nations, not just

those on the losing side, lost most of their land through either forfeiture or negotiation.

²⁹ On June 29, 1976, the Secretary of Interior recognized the six Iroquois Nations as falling under the definition of "Indian Reservation" as contained in 23 USC 101(a).

³⁰ The purchases of land from the Indians by New York State were, according to the 1985 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, void. A 1790 law -- the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act -- enacted by Congress, and designed to protect the Indians from land-grabbers, required federal approval of all such transactions. New York never got these approvals.

³¹ Example: To further communication, NYSDOT Regional Office is using a Native American from its staff to act as a liaison between themselves and the Onondaga on three Federally funded bridge projects within the Nation.

³² Similar to the lawsuit filed by the Oneida Nation, the Onondagas are now considering a lawsuit to recover some of the land taken Aillegally= by the State of New York. The basis of the Oneida lawsuit, with which the U.S. Supreme Court agreed in 1985, is that any treaty with an Iroquois Nation was valid only if approved by the U.S. Government, and the various treaties with the State of New York were not so ratified.

³³ The Iroquois Nations are in trust relationship with the State of New York, not with the Federal Government. This means that the State is responsible for the highway/transportation program on the reservations, rather than the U.S. Department of Interior.

³⁴ For example, referring to the Nation as a *tribe* (e.g., Onondaga >tribe=) merely indicates to them that the person is ignorant of their history.³⁴ The Onondagas do not like the term AIroquois@, as that was the name given to them by their enemies (Algonquin name for Arattlesnake@ plus *Aois*= from the French). The Onondaga do not like the term ANative Americans@, and their Nation Territory is not a Areservation@, since they own the land outright in Afee simple@, just as one can own a house.

³⁵ TSCP funding for this specific project was included in the FFY 2002 Transportation Appropriations bill.

³⁶ The latest Regional GOP criterion is December 2000.

³⁷ As discussed in the Long Range Plan section of this report, the 2020 Plan actually has a 2021 horizon date.

³⁸ 23 CFR 450.324(b).

³⁹ The Policy Committee approved the TIP Project Management Process on July 31, 2000.

⁴⁰ Syracuse Intermodal Model (SIM), a multi-modal travel demand model based on TMODEL2.

⁴¹ Clough, Harbor & Associates

⁴² 23 CFR 500.109

⁴³ The *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) defines capacity as Athe maximum rate of (traffic) flow that can reasonably be expected to pass a point or uniform section of a lane or roadway under prevailing roadway traffic and control conditions.@ Level of Service (LOS) standards to evaluate operating conditions, ranging from a high Level-of-Service AA@ (vehicles are free to maneuver within the traffic stream), down to Level-of-Service FF@ (the number of vehicles arriving at a point is greater than the number of vehicles that can traverse it - traffic demand exceeds the capacity of that location).

⁴⁴ SMTC used the PM peak hour instead of the AM peak hour because a majority of the locations had higher traffic volumes during the PM peak hour.

⁴⁵ 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, 1995, page 6.

⁴⁶ <http://www.dot.state.ny.us/design/css/css.html>.

⁴⁷ Centro assumed the operating lines of the Onondaga Coach Corporation in 1993.

⁴⁸ Centro assumed the operating lines of the Syracuse & Oswego Coach Lines (S&O) in 1993.

⁴⁹ Commissioner Boardman is the present chairman of AASHTO's Standing Committee on Rail Transportation

⁵⁰ Railroads are designated as Class I, Class II, or Class III. A Class I carrier is defined as one that has an annual revenue greater than \$250 million. Class II carriers have annual revenue between \$20 million and \$200 million. Class III carriers, which includes most short line railroads, have annual revenue of less than \$20 million.

⁵¹ An area is allowed three exceedances over a three year period.

⁵² Per the Clean Air Act, the "base year" is either 1990 or another year as established by the SIP; for Onondaga County, it is 1991.

⁵³ Clean Cities Game Plan 1998/99, U. S. Department of Energy.

⁵⁴ Executive Order 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations*, signed by President Clinton on February 1, 1994.

⁵⁵ EJ is concerned with issues as they impact both the individuals in the Title VI identified categories, plus the low-income sector, which was not covered by Title VI.

⁵⁶ 2000 Census of population and Housing Summary file 3 NYS Data center, P30.

⁵⁷ TNT is composed of eight Area Planning Councils: six neighborhood-based, one Downtown and one Lakefront. The six neighborhood-based areas are organized according to natural geographic boundaries, and include at least one business district, a city park, at least one city school, and 4-7 identifiable neighborhoods.

⁵⁸ Special white hotdogs, originally made famous at Heids of Liverpool

⁵⁹ When traffic lights were first being installed, this Irish neighborhood strenuously objected to the installation of a traffic light that put Acruel English red@ over Irish green.

⁶⁰ January 1999

⁶¹ Geddes, DeWitt, Salina and Camillus

⁶² In March 1999, the Town of Clay imposed a six-month moratorium on zoning changes and site plans on key sections of Routes 31 and 57. SOCPA and the SMTC will evaluate the traffic and development patterns along these roads.

⁶³ First held in 1841 on North Salina Street.

⁶⁴ From west to east: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. A Sixth nation, the Tuscaroras from North Carolina, migrated to New York joined the confederation in approximately 1713.

⁶⁵ The Onondagas did allow French Jesuit missionaries, most notably Fr. Simon LeMoyné, to establish a small mission on the shore of Onondaga Lake (*Gannentaha*). The mission was named >Notre Dame de Gannentaha=, now recreated in the Sainte Marie Among the Iroquois Living History Museum, Liverpool, NY

⁶⁶ AHistory of the Town of Salina@, submitted by Sue Goodfellow; Source: Past and Present of Syracuse and Onondaga County, by The Rev. William M. Beauchamp. NY: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1908, pp. 416-421. {Bear Street is now State Route 298, and Wolf Street is US Route 11.}

⁶⁷ The area around Armory Square Historical District

⁶⁸ Poem written by Edward Stanley.

⁶⁹ *Vanity Fair*, October 12, 1861, page 177.

⁷⁰ Supposedly, it was John Greenway, owner of the Greenway Brewery, who suggested that the City of Syracuse import water from Lake Skaneateles, which continues to supply the City=s water today; up to that time, the beer was made with water drawn from the canal.

⁷¹ In 1851, Syracuse had the reputation of being the candle capital of the world because of the Will & Baumer candle empire; Syracuse supplied most of the beeswax candles to the Roman Catholic Church.

⁷² From 1902 to 1934, the H. H. Franklin factory in Syracuse produced America=s most successful line of air-cooled automobiles.