



FHWA/FTA Review of Transportation Planning Process in Syracuse, NY

September 2005

comprehensive

documentation

Report on the Transportation Planning Process
undertaken by the Syracuse Metropolitan
Transportation Council in Addressing the
Transportation Planning Regulations

Prepared by: Federal Highway Administration, New York Division
And Federal Transit Administration, Region II Office

Syracuse, NY TMA

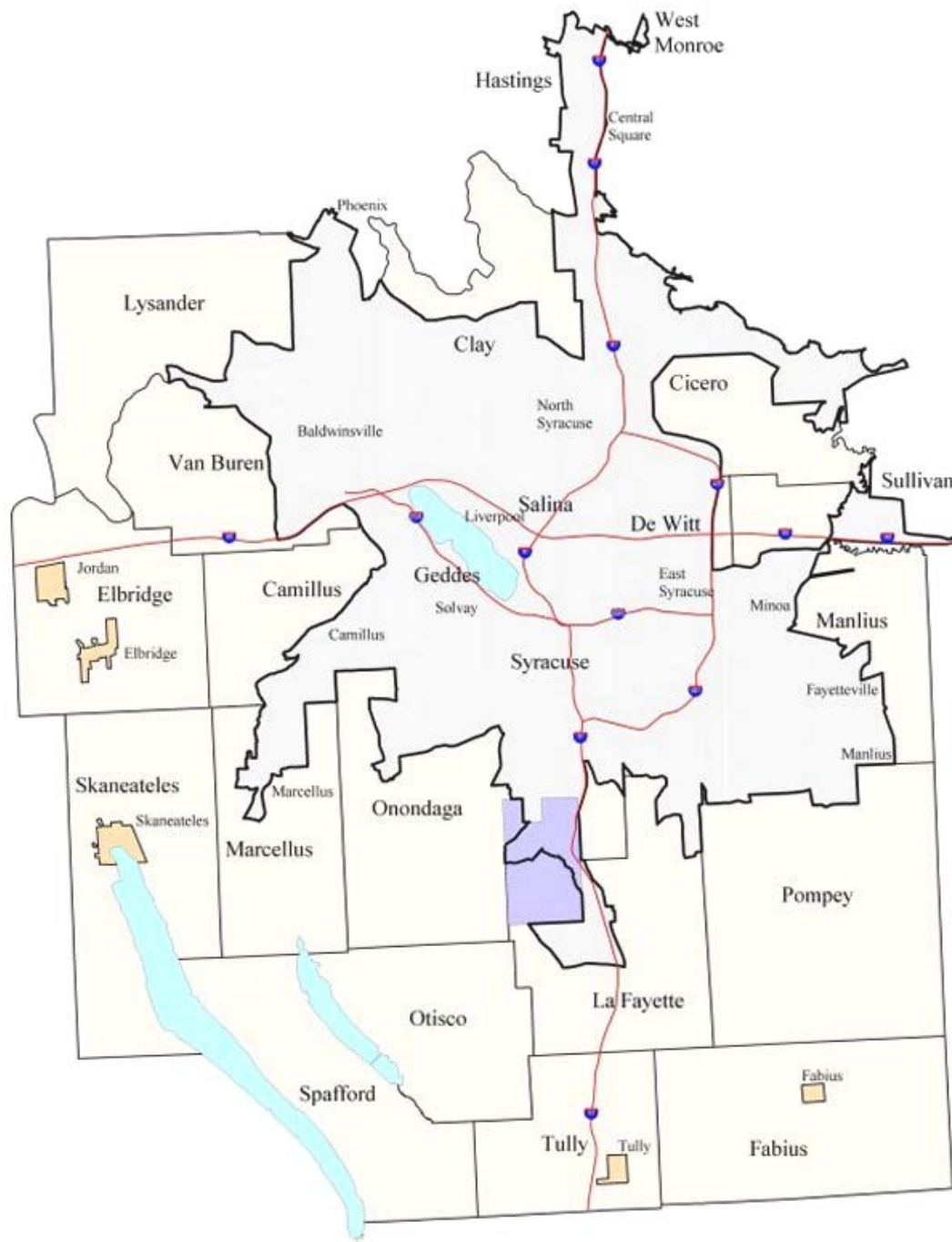
Transportation Certification Review

Certification Report: September 2005

On-site Review: June 22-24, 2005

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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 (TMA), an 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 the following statutory and regulatory requirements:

- 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 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 "Transportation 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 provision of Federal law.

Each urban area is required to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is the forum for cooperative transportation decisionmaking in the area. The Federal certification review evaluates a MPO's transportation planning process, identifies strengths and weaknesses (as appropriate), and makes recommendations for improvements. Following the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA can take one of four certification actions:

- Full certification of the transportation planning process: this allows federally funded programs and projects of any type to be approved in the Transportation Improvement Program over the next three years in accordance with the continuing planning process.
- Certification subject to specified corrective actions being taken: this 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: this allows only certain specified categories of program and project funding to move forward while corrective actions are being taken.
- Certification withheld: approval of funding in whole or in part for attributed FHWA and FTA funds that the metropolitan area receives is stopped until the deficiencies in the planning process are corrected.

On June 22-24, 2005, FHWA and FTA conducted an on-site certification review of the transportation planning process in the Syracuse, New York Transportation Management Area. This report documents the Federal review, recommendations and conclusions.

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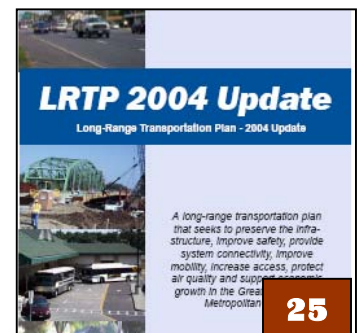
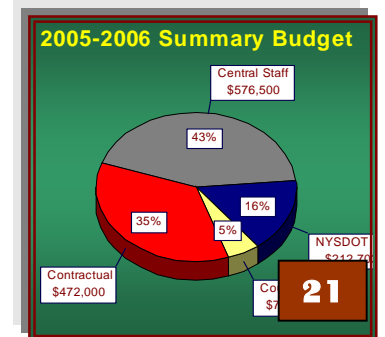
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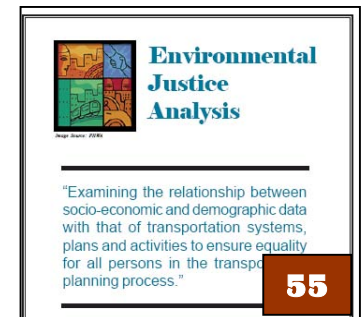
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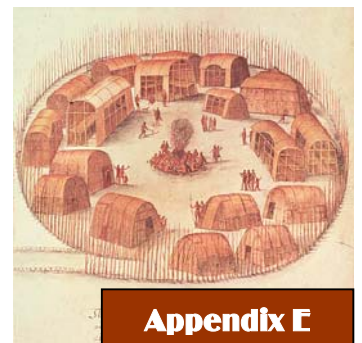
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Executive Summary

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 transportation planning process in the Syracuse, New York TMA 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 planning process is in accordance with federal regulations. The review included a desk-audit, site visits to the SMTC (June 22-24, 2005), discussions with the MPO Staff and member agencies, and a night meeting for public input.

Noteworthy Practices

There are many examples of good transportation planning practices by the Syracuse MPO. They include the TIP Guidebook, the Public Opinion Survey as part of the *2004 Plan Update*, the TIP development process, the development of the Vehicle Data Repository, the CMAQ documentation process, the freight planning activities, and the MPO's willingness to spearhead several statewide planning initiatives (e.g., Congestion Management System study.) We specifically commend the work of SMTC Staff Director Mary Rowlands for her leadership and the SMTC Staff for their professional capabilities.

Recommendations And Needed Actions

This report contains numerous commendations for existing practice, as well as recommendations for consideration in furthering program excellence.

Challenges

We foresee an intensive and challenging workload facing the MPOs in the immediate future – specifically the rising freight volumes on the major highway links, the capital needs of maintaining the transportation infrastructure, and the mandates of the new Federal transportation legislation. We also foresee an intensive and challenging workload facing the Central Staff and member agency staffs with the long-promised build-out of *DestiNY USA*. Should this occur, the pressure would mount on the SMTC to quickly 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.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Observations

Based on this 2005 certification review, FHWA and FTA find that the transportation planning processes of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council complies 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 excellent technical capabilities of the Central Staff and the member agencies.

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 TIP Guidebook, the Public Opinion Survey as part of the *2004 Plan Update*, the TIP development process, the

development of the Vehicle Data Repository, the CMAQ documentation process, the freight planning activities, and the MPO's willingness to spearhead several statewide planning initiatives (e.g., Congestion Management System study.)

We note that, subsequent to this review, the new Federal transportation legislation was passed: *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for User (SAFETEA_LU)*. This legislation places some additional requirements on the MPO planning process. These changes are not required to be part of the MPO process until July 1, 2007. The Federal agencies are now developing guidance on these new requirements.

We specifically commend Ms. Mary Rowlands, SMTC Central Staff Director, for her leadership.

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.

Organizational Structure (page 9-15)

- The MPOs should review its Operating Plan and update as necessary to reflect changes over the past several years (e.g.; non-voting memberships of Oswego and Madison Counties).
- The SMTC should continue its efforts to engage the Onondaga

Nation in the planning process, perhaps with a special emphasis on environmental issues.

MPO Central Staff (page 17-20)

- Once the impacts of the new federal transportation legislation are understood, we recommend that the MPOs evaluate its

Conclusions, Recommendations and Observations

staffing plan to ascertain if additional expertise is needed to address any new mandates.

Unified Planning Work Program
(page 21-24)

- SMTC should reconsider the use of the UPWP Tracking concept.
- The MPO should consider whether the use of visualization techniques in planning studies might be helpful in its process.

Long Range Transportation Plan
(page 25-32)

- The 2007 LRTP should have at least a horizon year of 2030.
- The SMTC should evaluate the desirability of exploring the concept of performance measures/evaluation of progress into the process.

Transportation Improvement Program
(page 33-37)

- 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 MPO should publish a list of projects for which Federal funds were obligated in the previous year. This may be done in the TIP itself.

Public Involvement (page 39-41)

- The SMTC should evaluate the benefits of restarting its quarterly newsletter, perhaps primarily as an Internet publication.
- SMTC will need to review the SAFETEA-LU legislation

regarding the requirements for some new groups to be specifically included in transportation planning process.

DestiNY USA Considerations
(page 43-48)

- The SMTC needs to thoroughly evaluate all new transportation proposals associated with *DestiNY USA*, and said projects must be included in an air quality conforming TIP and Plan prior to implementation.
- The members of the MPO may want to revisit the recommendations of the Phase I of the *Transportation Infrastructure Improvements to Syracuse Inner Harbor and Lakefront Development Area Planning Study* in an attempt to reach a consensus on recommended projects and their priorities.
- Should such projects be proposed for the TIP and Plan, the SMTC needs to evaluate the travel estimates prepared by others to ensure that they adequately reflect the proposed traffic to be generated by the *DestiNY* concept.
- The SMTC should consider a periodic briefing of the region's Congressional staff on its major transportation priorities – not in a lobbying fashion but for informational purposes.

Transit (page 49-54)

- The SMTC and CNYRTA should continue to explore more ways of working together to increase the transit planning capabilities in the region.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Observations

Title VI/Environmental Justice
(page 55-58)

- As a tool to analyze the extent of outreach to EJ communities, the MPO should overlay the addresses from mailing lists and comments received onto its GIS maps of EJ communities and TIP projects.

Intermodal Goods Movement
(page 59-63)

- The SMTC should continue to closely cooperate with the NYSDOT efforts to plan for the movement of freight.
- 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.

Security (page 81-86)

- SMTC should open a discussion with its members on its potential role in furthering the coordination and cooperation among member agencies on the security issue.
- SMTC should consider offering the GIS capabilities of its staff in emergency preparedness efforts.
- SMTC should evaluate the potential for UPWP studies addressing possible measures.

Observations

We offer several observations on transportation issues in the region as they pertain to the MPO's planning; specifically, we comment on the transportation impacts of *DestiNY USA*, Congressional earmarks, and the need for agreement on regional priorities.

Destiny USA

Assuming that *DestiNY USA* will eventually transition from a concept to a reality, the MPO – the member agencies and the Central Staff – will face the momentous challenge of accommodating the 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. The SMTC can play 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.

The travel modeling in the MPO's current Plan (2025 *Plan 2004 Update*) reflects the mall's projected traffic figures as contained in a 1998 EIS. However, these figures were based on a plan for the Lakefront area that is significantly less than the current *DestiNY USA* concept. We believe that these traffic projections probably underestimate the true impact of this development; we

Conclusions, Recommendations and Observations

refer the MPO to our discussion and recommendations contained in Section VII: DestiNY USA Considerations.

Congressional Earmarks

Congressional earmarks for specific construction projects have proliferated nationwide. There is a misconception that such earmarks are “extra” monies to a region; in reality, the total amount of FHWA funding that a State receives usually reflects earmarks, so the earmarking of funds towards lower priority projects takes away from an area’s ability to address the higher priority needs.

USDOT has never believed that such earmarks are the best use of funds, as the projects identified often are not acknowledged as among the highest transportation priorities of MPOs’ long range plans. For example, the “Syracuse Bridge Improvements to Auto Row”, while significant, is not the highest transportation priority for the region. Furthermore, the Congressional appropriation process has often not delivered the full funding amount for identified projects, the end result being

that the projects have languished as sponsors are sought to complete the funding picture. The SMTC should consider a periodic briefing of the region’s Congressional staff on its major transportation priorities – not for the purpose of lobbying but for informational purposes.

Consensus on Regional Priorities

The region needs to continue to strive for a consensus on priorities, especially when congressional earmarks are involved. The recommendations and priorities coming out of the Phase I of the earmarked study *Transportation Infrastructure Improvements to Syracuse Inner Harbor and Lakefront Development Area Planning Study* did not have a consensus of all members of the Task Force. This might have an unfortunate result wherein future earmarks for the area may not have the agreement of all members. We have made a recommendation herein that the MPO consider revisiting this issue.

We wish to express our gratitude to the courtesy extended to the Review Team during this review and extend our appreciation for the individuals who met with us and offered their observations on the planning process. We congratulate the SMTC for the cooperative nature and innovative approaches of its planning process, and the excellent technical capabilities of both the Central Staff and the staffs of the member agencies.

Finally, the retirement of NYSDOT’s Steve Vetter is noted. Steve had a distinguished planning career in Region 3. His devotion to his job and to the belief of government agencies should work for the good of the people has been exemplary. We wish him well.

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 U.S.C. 134(i)(5)(A)

Every urban area in the United States of more than 50,000 persons, as recognized by the Bureau of the Census, must have a designated **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** in order to qualify for Federal highway and transit funds. The MPO is to be the “the forum for cooperative transportation decisionmaking for the metropolitan planning area.”¹ Federal regulations further classify those urban areas with a population of 200,000 or more persons as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) 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.

2005 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 recommendations that result from the review hopefully improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning process. There are also broader benefits to the review, as the Federal reviewers identify good or innovative practices to share with other states and metropolitan planning organizations.

The previous certification review of the SMTC was May 4-6, 2002. Based on the findings of that review, FHWA and FTA fully certified the SMTC process on November 25, 2002, and we made several recommendations for consideration. The status of these recommendations is described in Appendix A.

The 2005 certification review officially began in April 2005 with a joint FHWA/FTA letter to SMTC informing the MPOs about the upcoming review, identifying the primary topics for the review, requesting a description of the status of recommendations from previous certification and also requesting a description of any techniques that the MPO uses to incorporate safety and security in the planning process. (Appendix B) The MPO staff subsequently provided this information in its May 27, 2005 response to our request.

The date of the site visit was previously coordinated with MPO staff. The New York State Department of

Transportation (NYSDOT), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) received individual copies of the letter. The staff of the MPO notified the principals about this review and their opportunity to attend and/or provide input. The MPO staff also notified the public about a special public meeting to receive any comments on the MPO process as well as a 30-day comment period for written comments. (Appendix C).

In preparation for the on-site visit, the FHWA and FTA carried out an internal desk audit of SMTC material in our files, including the self-certification statements, the existing and draft Unified Planning Work Programs, the existing and draft Transportation Improvement Programs, the existing Long Range Transportation Plan, and the MPO's response to our request for specific information.

Site Visits

The Federal Review Team conducted its site visit to the MPO occurred on June 22-24, 2005. The Federal Team consisted of Ms. Nina Chung (FTA, Region Two Office), and Mr. Joseph Rich (FHWA, NY Division Office).

The on-site review took place at the MPO office. Our detailed discussions were primarily with the SMTC Central Staff, NYSDOT Region 3 and NYSDOT Main Office. Unlike previous reviews, the City of Syracuse, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB), and the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) did not send representatives to the discussions. The agenda for the visit is shown in Appendix D.

Public Input

A public meeting was held between 6:00-7:00pm on June 23, 2005 at the SMTC office. The meeting was advertised in various media outreach. The opportunity for written comments was also advertised. No member of the public attended, nor were any written comments subsequently received.

Report Preparation

Over the several weeks following the site visits, the Review Team developed a draft version of the report. This was transmitted on July 22, 2005 to the MPO for review and comment. Comments were received from the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, the Metropolitan Development Association, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority, NYSDOT (Region 3 and Main Office), and the Central Staff. Modifications to the report were made as appropriate.

After the site visit, new Federal transportation legislation was passed – the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for User (SAFETEA_LU)*. This legislation adds some new requirement, expands upon others, and changes some of the existing requirement. The SMTC will have to expand upon some of their existing practices, but we see no new mandate as being an issue regarding this certification.

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 Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council 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 2005-2006 operating budget of \$689,917 plus \$519,500 for contractual services.

A coordinated transportation planning process began in the Syracuse area in 1966 with the establishment of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Study (SMATS). This effort was in response to the Federal Highway Act of 1962, which mandated that all urbanized areas with a population over 50,000 establish a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (referred to as "3C") planning process. The 1962 Act, however, did not mandate any particular form for that process.

The 1973 Highway Act was more specific, requiring each urbanized area to establish a “metropolitan planning organization”; the 1973 Act also 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 official changed the MPO’s name from *Study* to *Council* to better reflect its ongoing nature (studies are usually of 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 large local governmental entities in the SMTC planning 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.

Planning Area Boundaries

The Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA) is the primary setting within which an MPO’s planning efforts take place. The SMTC MPA is all of Onondaga County plus relatively small portions of Oswego and Madison Counties. Onondaga County is close to the geographical center of New York State; it has a land area of 793.5 square miles, approximately 35 miles in length and 30 miles in width. Onondaga County contains one city (Syracuse), nineteen towns, fifteen villages and eighteen school districts, and the Onondaga Nation Territory.



The MPA is determined by the MPO after two prerequisite boundaries have been defined:

♦ Census Urbanized Area (UZA).

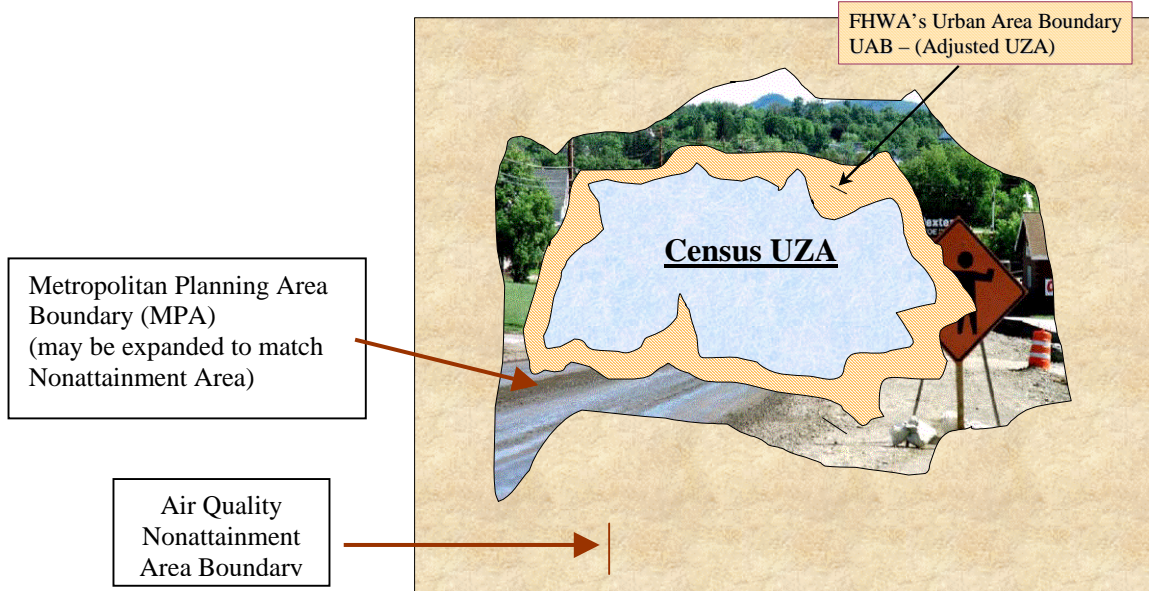
The basic boundary is the UZA, which is set by the Bureau of the Census after each decennial Census. The UZA is established for each urbanized area together with maps showing what communities (or parts thereof) compose the urbanized population. The UZA sets the urbanized area's population in the apportionment formulas for FHWA's STP-attributable and FTA's Section 5307 funds.

After the UZA is available, the MPO may adjust this boundary outwards for its own planning purposes. (Note: the population used in the Federal apportionment formulas does not change.)

♦ FHWA Urban Area Boundary (UAB) is set by the MPO. Using the Census UZA as a starting point, the MPO may smooth and adjust the UZA outwards to better reflect area's transportation needs. Adjustments are

routinely necessary because the Census UZA boundaries solely reflect population density and thus do not usually include some significant non-residential facilities (e.g., airports) or parks. For an MPO to adjust the UZA boundary outward, there must be agreement among "the responsible State and local officials in cooperation with each other."² This adjusted boundary (UAB) serves many purposes. It is the official "urban/rural" boundary for FHWA purposes: it is used for highway functional classification, appropriate roadway design standards, FHWA eligibility for improvements, Emergency Relief funding eligibility, and outdoor advertising control³. The adjusted boundary is subject to approval by the Secretary of Transportation.

Following the release of the 2000 Census UZA, the SMTC reviewed its existing UAB and approved revisions thereto on March 5, 2003. The 2000 Census showed the Syracuse urbanized population expanding in Onondaga County and Oswego County, plus it has now spilled over slightly into Madison



County. The SMTC added some revisions in Onondaga County plus those portions of Oswego and Madison Counties. The Onondaga Indian Nation is now within the UAB.

The FHWA and FTA approved the new UAB on July 15, 2003.

♦ Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA) is established after the UAB is set. The MPA is the geographical area in which the main efforts of an MPO's transportation planning process are carried out. The MPA is to encompass the UAB area plus any other areas that the MPO anticipates will become urbanized in 20 years.⁴ The MPO and the Governor must agree on the MPA.⁵

The SMTC set its MPA boundary to be all of Onondaga County plus the Oswego and Madison Counties portions of the UAB. For those MPOs like SMTC that are in an air quality nonattainment or maintenance area, the MPA boundary must include the entire nonattainment area – unless the Governor and the MPO agree otherwise⁶. Since SMTC's MPA boundary covers all of Onondaga County, which is the EPA designated boundary for the CO maintenance area, the MPA satisfies the regulations.

Following revisions to the UABs, MPOs are required to update the Functional Classification of roadways within its jurisdiction. The SMTC and NYSDOT Region 3 were the first in New York State to complete their submission, having done so in March 2004. However, following some internal issues within NYSDOT, it was only in June 2005 that the Functional Classification package for SMTC was actually submitted to FHWA for review and approval. It is still outstanding today. We expect that FHWA will approve the revised Functional Classification by October.

Agreements and Contracts

Federal legislation (23 USC 134) requires the MPO to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carryout out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulation requires that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators.⁷

The primary agreement that details the SMTC roles and responsibilities is the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).⁸ 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).

Since some new non-voting members were added to various committees following the 2000 Census, we suggest that SMTC review the Operations Plan to assure that it is current.

MPO Structure

The SMTC organizational structure satisfies the metropolitan planning regulations⁹. 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.

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 4 nonvoting members on the Policy Committee, as shown in Table 1. 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 Policy Committee is required to meet at least three times a year.

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 (TIP) for recommendation to the Policy Committee for approval.

The **Executive Committee** 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 Committee is composed of Planning Committee representatives from the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County Department of Transportation, NYSDOT, CNYRTA, the CNY RPDB, and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)¹⁰ – both the CNY RPDB and SOCPA are non-voting members. The Executive Committee meets on a monthly basis, monitors UPWP progress and Central Staff performance.

The SMTC has one permanent technical committee, the Capital Projects Committee, which is responsible for developing the Draft Transportation Improvement Program and recommending it to the Planning Committee. The SMTC also uses ad hoc committees to review and assist in specific aspects of the planning process. One example of the ad-hoc arrangement is the development of project specific Study Advisory Committees for most planning studies conducted.

The 2000 Census resulted in small increases in the Urban Area in Oswego County, as well as the addition of a small piece in Madison County. Following the discussions on establishing new UAB and MPA boundaries for SMTC, the Chairman of the Oswego County Legislature wrote to the SMTC Policy Committee asking for consideration of its representation in the decision-making process of SMTC. The Executive Committee examined the options and reached consensus that the most appropriate option was to provide the additional members a

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
Non-Voting Agencies (4)	Madison County Board of Supervisors (Chairman); Oswego County Legislature (Chairman); Federal Highway Administration (NY Division Administrator); Federal Transit Administration (Region II Administrator)

non-voting status on both the Planning and Policy Committees. The Executive Committee's decision was in part due to the fact that the affected portions of the two counties were small, that both Counties were represented on the Policy Committee by the CNY RPDB (voting member), that Madison County is also represented by the Thruway Authority (voting member), and this representation would be similar to how Onondaga County provides representation for all of its small towns and villages. The Policy Committee concurred in this recommendation on March 4, 2004.

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 both the Policy and Planning Committee. The MDA is a private, not-for-profit organization with its own professional staff. Formed in 1959, its purpose is "... to take aggressive action to strengthen the economy and livability of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area."¹¹ The MDA has been on the SMTC since the MPO's inception.

The MDA is comprised of the top CEOs in the five-county Central New York Region (Onondaga, Cortland, Oswego, Madison and Cayuga)¹². MDA is the region's principal economic development and planning organization and the primary private-sector vehicle for the implementation of key development projects;. The MDA 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.
- Metropolitan Development Foundation - The MDF is a 501 (c) 3 public foundation that serves as the MDA's vehicle for the funding and implementation of projects of importance to the region. It was incorporated in 1981. One of the first projects of the MDF involved the purchase of the Clinton Square Post Office from the United States Postal Service in 1984. The MDF also recently served as the contracting entity for an \$8.4 million state grant that was used to renovate the Central New York Regional Market - the final element of the MDA-conceived Stadium Market Center project that included as one of its primary functions the design and construction of the region's new intermodal transportation center.
- 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 formerly owned by the General Electric Company. Electronics Park is a 181-acre office/industrial business park conveniently located in the Town of Salina, six miles north of downtown Syracuse.
- 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 - Hancock Airpark is a 425-acre industrial and office park located in the Town of Cicero, New

York, approximately five miles north of the City of Syracuse and immediately adjacent to the Hancock International Airport. The Corporation was established in cooperation with the County of Onondaga and other municipalities) in 1986 to redevelop the former Hancock Field Air Base.

- 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.

Onondaga Indian Nation

We do not normally think of the City of Syracuse as bordering on another country. However, the 7,300-acre Onondaga Nation Territory is located about five miles south of the City. (2000 Census population shows 1,475 individuals, but this number is very “soft”.)

The Onondagas¹³ are one of the Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy (Appendix E), and each nation considers itself as a separate nation, equal in status to Canada. The Onondagas are traditionally the Keepers of the Central Fire (or Council Fire) of the Six Nations. There are 14 Onondaga chiefs -- selected by clan mothers -- in the tribal government. There is also one head chief. There are no industries in the Territory, and employment figures are unavailable.

The Onondaga Nation Territory falls under the definition of “Indian Reservation” defined in 23 USC 101(a)¹⁴. 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; however, the Onondaga Nation is the least active in these relations.

Since the 1970s, there have been land claims against the State of New York by several of the Nations. Until recently, the Onondaga Nation had not shown much interest in participating in these land claims. Then, in March 2005, the Onondaga Indian Nation filed a federal lawsuit claiming 3.5 million acres of central New York. However, this claim is different from the other Indian claims – the Onondagas want to use their power over the territory to compel environmental cleanups and protection. They do not want to evict any landowners, do not seek any monetary damages, but they do want recognition that the land continues to belong to the Nation.

Because of the sensitivity resulting from various lawsuits by several Nations over land in New York¹⁵, 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.¹⁶ The NYSDOT Regional Office¹⁷ has developed 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.¹⁸ In order to further the communication, NYSDOT Region 3 uses one of its employees (an Onondaga) to act as a liaison with 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.

Over the years, the SMTC has 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. This lack of engagement has been evident since the beginning of SMTC; for example, FHWA funded a rural bus demonstration program run by Centro in the early 1980s; the program lasted less than one hour on the Nation until tribal officials order a stop.

Given the recent events regarding the Onondaga land claims based on the environmental "healing" of their traditional lands, perhaps there could be some opportunity for increased engagement. The Onondaga Nation has delegates who serve as representatives to the *Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force* (HETF), which has a working relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency. According the HETF's website, its mission is...

*"... to help Haudenosaunee Nations in their efforts to conserve, preserve, protect, and restore their environmental, natural, and cultural resources; to promote the health and survival of the sacred web of life for future generations; to support other Indigenous Nations working on environmental issues; and to fulfill our responsibilities to the natural world as our Creator instructed without jeopardizing peace, sovereignty, or treaty obligations. However, as Indigenous Nations, we realize that all things are interconnected and do not wish to limit our activities to those listed above."*¹⁹

Given that HETF's mission is environmentally oriented, the Onondaga

Nation may now be open to some contacts regarding transportation issues within their traditional territory.

Recommendation:

- The MPOs should review its Operating Plan and update as necessary to reflect changes over the past several years (e.g.; non-voting memberships of Oswego and Madison Counties).
- The SMTC should continue its efforts to engage the Onondaga Nation in the planning process, perhaps with a special emphasis on environmental issues.

II. MPO Central Staff

“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. Consultants supplement the Staff's work (where appropriate).

The SMTC Central Staff

The SMTC's Central Staff ('Staff') is a professional transportation planning group located at 126 North Salina Street in downtown Syracuse. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) budget for 2005-2006 allots \$1,149,417 to the Central Staff (including \$519,500 for contractual services).



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

On March 22, 2001, the SMTC Policy Committee adopted a *Central Staff Five-Year Staffing Plan* that identified 10 positions. The Staff currently consists of nine full time positions: Staff Director, Program

Manager, Administrative /Communications Assistant, and five professional planning positions. While the CNY RPDB administratively hosts the staff, the SMTC

staff salaries are not tied to the host. The Executive Director has the leeway to implement salary increases (up to 3%) for an individual after annual performance ratings; above that, the Director needs the approval of the Executive Committee.

Ms. Mary M. Rowland is the Executive Director of the SMTC staff. Mary was hired on September 13, 1999, and her six-year tenure is a welcome change when compared to that of some past directors.²⁰ Ms. Rowlands is performing commendably; 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.

Ms. Rowlands noted her intention to develop a new five-year staffing plan after the new Federal legislation. Mary noted that she is not intending to fill the existing vacant position until the new Federal funding amounts are available and the extent of any new Federally mandated activities is understood. At that time, a decision on whether or not to fill that position will be made.

Host Agency

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.

The SMTC established its Central Staff in 1974. Under a unique arrangement at that time, 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. Thus, the staff has essentially two hosts: the County is the financial host (1st instance funds) and the CNY RPDB is the administrative host.

Central Staff Capabilities

As discussed throughout this document, the Staff continually produces very professional and readable products (e.g., CMS, infrastructure management, GIS maps and displays, public outreach, TIP, UPWP, bicycle maps, freight/intermodal planning, CMAQ analysis and documentation, etc.).

The Staff show their confidence in their abilities by volunteering to spearhead several statewide initiatives of concern to New York MPOs. For example, they led the effort among MPOs to research and coordinate a change from outmoded travel demand forecasting models to newer models. The SMTC acted as the Consultant Project Manager on 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. They are now overseeing another Statewide effort - *Relevant Congestion Mitigation System (CMS) Best Practices* - that will highlight nationwide best practices in the area of CMS and eventually develop a compendium of innovative CMS practices (i.e.; toolbox) for the New York MPOs. SMTC also hosted FHWA's Freight Data Made Simple seminar in July 2005; FHWA's Resource Center and the Office of Freight Management and Operations offer this seminar to broaden the knowledge base and skills of freight transportation planners.

Website and Graphic Capabilities

With its many excellent planning practices and products, SMTC has a "story to tell", and one of the best mediums for that purpose is the website. SMTC uses its website (<http://www.smtcmpo.org>) to provide the public with a status of ongoing projects, a viewing of completed projects, the downloading of selective material, and occasionally an opportunity to provide comments on selective topics.

The SMTC has one the best MPO web sites in New York and we commend the MPO's efforts.

Now that new Federal transportation legislation has been signed, we recommend that the SMTC review the site to reflect any appropriate updates (e.g., requirements, staffing, committee memberships, etc.)



Travel Demand Modeling

The MPO is now in the process of switching to a “best practice” TransCAD-based travel demand forecasting model for air quality conformity purposes. Its existing model – TMODEL2 – did function adequately to meet federal and state requirements, but it was somewhat outdated and consultant dependant.

SMTC began the migration to TransCAD in 2004 with the help of \$400,000 approved within a FHWA earmark for the Syracuse Lakefront project.²¹ The new model is a traditional four-step model:

- 1) Trip generation
- 2) Trip distribution
- 3) Mode choice, and
- 4) Trip assignment

Given the extent of the possible development along the Lakefront, SMTC needed a more robust model to analyze possibilities and alternate scenarios. The new model will include a GIS interface and be more useful at both the macro and micro scale to allow travel modeling to be a more robust tool for use in both the Lakefront area as well as in the rest of the MPO area. We believe that this was a prudent decision.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

The SMTC staff makes extensive use of this computer-based tool that combines computer mapping and database technologies.²² SMTC uses ESRI’s *ArcView* and *ArcInfo* software, and the data are in shapefile format and coverage format; most of the relating databases are in Microsoft Access.

The primary use of the GIS is in the creation of maps that are displayed at public meetings, included in transportation studies, and also shown in major documents (TIPs, Plans, CMS reports, etc.). SMTC also uses GIS as an aid in the decision making process. For example, GIS technology was used in SMTC’s Environmental Justice Analysis process. Datasets at the Block Group level from the 2000 Census have been linked to the GIS. This data is then overlaid by the location of TIP and UPWP projects, and the staff can spatially examine the SMTC’s planning projects and their proximity to the population concentrations. The maps that resulted were included in the final report, and the content of the report was based on the analysis yielded in GIS.

The SMTC Central Staff		
Individual	Position	Email Address
Mary Rowlands	Executive Director	mrowlands@smtcmpo.org
Jim D’Agostino	Program Manager	jdagostino@smtcmpo.org
vacant	Principal Transportation Planner	
Charlie Poltenson	Senior Intermodal Planner	cpoltenson@smtcmpo.org
Danielle Krol	Senior Transportation Planner	dkroll@smtcmpo.org
Jen Deshaies	Transportation Planner	jdeshaies@smtcmpo.org
Sean Murphy	Transportation Analyst	smurphy@smtcmpo.org
Mario Colone	Junior Transportation Planner	mcolone@smtcmpo.org
Pat Wortley	Administrative/Communications Assistant	pworthley@smtcmpo.org
Mary Schneider	Administrative Assistant	mschneider@smtcmpo.org

The SMTC owns many of the files relating to Onondaga County and the Central New York area. Some files were created by SMTC, and others were acquired through other agencies. The GIS data created by SMTC is available for public use; the data derived from another agency (e.g. Onondaga County, NYSDOT, etc.) can be acquired from the appropriate agency.

Vehicle Data Repository

In 2003, SMTC completed work on the development of its Vehicle Data Repository. All traffic counts from the member agencies are now combined into one repository that is linked to the GIS. The SMTC receives traffic count data from a number of sources, such as NYSDOT, Onondaga County DOT (ODOT), the City's Department of Public Works, and from consultants working on SMTC funded projects. The Vehicle Data Repository is a useful product because it alleviates the vast amount of time spent on locating information. Updates to the repository are made as new data becomes available. For example, SMTC staff recently entered all NYSDOT 2004 traffic counts and 2004 OCTC traffic counts into the database and linked them to the GIS.

This activity is very commendable.

Statewide Efforts

The SMTC staff is an active participant in the New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (NYSMPOs). This coalition is working together on planning and research efforts of mutual benefit. The NYSMPOs has hired Sarah Siwek and Associates on a contractual basis to serve as the Association's staff (the contract is administered by the Capital District Transportation Committee, the MPO for Albany). The thirteen MPOs also pay annual dues to the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations;

funding for the dues is pooled by the MPOs and also administered by CDTC; the 2005/6 dues for SMTC are \$1,300.

The New York MPOs have for several years agreed to pool some of their PL resources into a program call the Shared Cost Initiatives (SCI). By pooling resources, the MPOs can undertake studies of topics of mutual interest that they individually might not have afforded. After a study is selected, the funds are administered by a single MPO on behalf of the group. As previously mentioned, SMTC is now administratively overseeing the SCI entitled **Relevant Congestion Mitigation System (CMS) Best Practices**. The purpose of the \$80,000 consultant study is to highlight nationwide best practices in the area of CMS and eventually develop a compendium of innovative CMS practices (i.e.; toolbox).

Recommendation:

- Once the impacts of the new federal transportation legislation are understood, we recommend that the MPOs evaluate its staffing plan to ascertain if additional expertise is needed to address any new mandates.

III. Unified Planning Work Program

“In TMAs, the MPO(s) in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit shall develop unified planning work programs (UPWPs) that meet the requirements of 23 CFR Part 420, subpart A and:

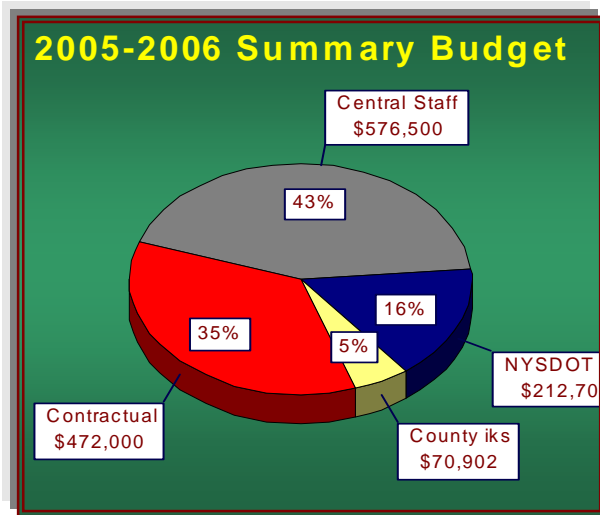
- (1) Discuss the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area and describe all metropolitan transportation and transportation-related air quality planning activities (including the corridor and subarea studies discussed in §450.318 of this part) anticipated within the area during the next one or two year period, regardless of funding sources or agencies conducting activities, in sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing it and the products that will be produced;*
- (2) Document planning activities to be performed with funds provided under title 23, U.S.C., and the Federal Transit Act.” § 450.314 (a)*

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.

Similar to other New York MPOs, SMTC's program year reflects the State's fiscal year: April 1 - March 31. The SMTC elected to try the two-year UPWP format in 2004, adopting its 2004/2006 UPWP on March 3, 2004. In 2005, SMTC approved an Amendment to update the document for the April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006 period based on updated information.

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.



2005-2006 UPWP Budget
Financial breakdown by organization.

The 2004/2006 UPWP is a very ambitious document. The major work effort will be in the following activities:

- ☐ Long Range Transportation Plan Update
- ☐ Air Quality, Conformity and Energy
- ☐ Travel Demand Modeling (transition to new model)
- ☐ Safety Improvement Analysis
- ☐ Updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, plus publication of an existing conditions Bike Map
- ☐ Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System Report
- ☐ Congestion Management System
- ☐ I-90 Corridor Planning
- ☐ Public Participation
- ☐ Environmental Justice & Title VI Report
- ☐ Rail/Truck and Transit Planning
- ☐ University Hill Comprehensive Transportation Study
- ☐ GIS maintenance
- ☐ Lakefront Area Planning
- ☐ UPWP Administration

In addition to the UPWP tasks, the SMTC staff also participates with the other NYSMPOs on several Shared Cost Initiative (SCI) Projects (example is the Congestion Management System activity). 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. Staff Director Mary Rowlands likes the two-year UPWP format. She commented that the expense associated with developing the 2005 Amendment was more than she originally

envisioned, but overall the administrative costs were less than developing a new UPWP.

UPWP Tracking System

In the 2002 certification Review, we cited SMTC's planned UPWP Tracking System as a prime example of good practice. This task was to create and implement a computerized system to track the results and recommendations of MPO activities. The member agencies would provide information on the progress and status of SMTC staff's recommendations for planning, capital, and other projects. The Central Staff would electronically track the information and publish the results in a database report. In this way, the SMTC could ascertain how the recommendations of the UPWP studies are being used by the various agencies.

We were disappointed to learn that this activity had been dropped from the new UPWP. It's not that such a consideration is not deemed important – indeed, SMTC's TIP Project Evaluation Criteria Checklist a category "Advance the recommendations of a specific plan(s) or study(s)? (e.g., Unified Planning Work Program Study...)". However, some member agencies were reluctant to be shown as not undertaking a recommended activity, when in reality their action was dependent on the action of others, which had not yet occurred. Ms. Rowlands is evaluating the possibility of restructuring the concept for MPO consideration, with perhaps retargeting the effort toward major studies only and asking questions on a broader basis (e.g., "What did you do in this corridor?" rather than "did you implement STOP Sign X?"). We support the continuation of the concept.

Fiscal Accounting

During the review, FHWA mentioned an upcoming scrutiny of all

MPOs regarding financial accounting practices. The new emphasis is the result of FHWA's Financial Integrity & Review and Evaluation program (FIRE), which is coming out of an internal audit of FHWA by Office of Inspector General. The goal is to assure better compliance with OMB accounting circulars. This effort is directed at many program areas, of which planning is included.

Single audits of MPO financial accounting practices often may not pick up issues of eligibility (audits sometimes only look at whether costs were approved and are documented). One type of accounting issue is "Indirect" vs. "Direct" costs. Often, MPOs have charged some activities as direct costs that might be more properly charged as indirect costs. For example, a general public participation task that is applicable across the spectrum of MPO activities probably should be an indirect cost, whereas public participation as part of a specific study may be more appropriately a direct cost. FHWA will be holding workshops in the next several months to discuss the accounting issues. We intend to have the questions resolved during this UPWP cycle so it can be in place by next April (2006). It is not our intention to look at old UPWPs regarding eligibility issues.

On the topic of accounting, we note that SMTC has begun to contract with CNY RPBD for a flat fee of \$50,000 for CNY RPDB services (website, payroll administration, etc). In 2004-05, such services individually totaled \$58,000, so it seems a bargain at the lower cost. However, such practices will be reviewed as part of the OMB circular requirements.

Planning Practice to Consider

During certification reviews, we occasionally note some planning practices of other MPOs that might be useful in the MPO under review. To this end, we wish to highlight the use of visualization techniques in planning studies by the Buffalo, NY MPO.

The Buffalo MPO made good use of computer graphics on a recent planning study in East Aurora, New York. The purpose of the study was fairly standard: to evaluate existing conditions within the Village of East Aurora and to identify locations ideal for system improvements. It would identify current and future transportation needs and make recommendations as to transportation system improvements along the corridor.



"Before" & "after" view of what the street would look like with a certain improvement.

The best practice aspect of the study was the Central Staff's use of the computer to help give the community a visual understanding of what the impacts of various choices would look like. The visual understanding was achieved by a "before" and "after" look at both the roadway and potential commercial development schemes. This helped with the approach: what

do you want and then design for it
versus what design do you want and
then develop several alternatives.

During the review, Ms. Rowlands noted that she has already been investigating the possible benefits of visualization techniques in the planning process and that she was looking into various software packages. Based on the discussion, she is going to contact the GBNRTC and discuss their approach and software used.

[Note: subsequent to the review, the new *SAFETEA-LU* legislation was passed that now requires visualization techniques as part of the Plan and TIP development²³. This provision must be met by July 1, 2007.]

Recommendation:

- SMTC should reconsider the use of the UPWP Tracking concept.
- The MPO should consider whether the use of visualization techniques in planning studies might be helpful in its process.

IV. 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.”

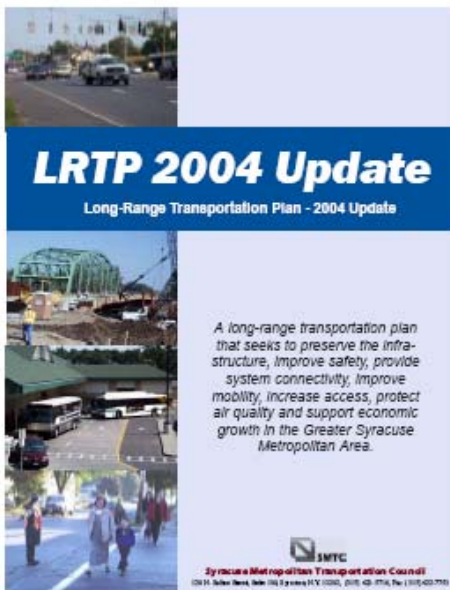
23 CFR 450.316(a))

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP or Plan) establishes the long-term (20-years minimum) transportation investment, service, and policy agenda for the region.

The Plan is required to be reviewed and updated as appropriate at least ever four years to reflect changing conditions and new planning principles and it is based on current projections of growth and travel demand coupled with financial assumptions.²⁴

impact of land development on the transportation system; highway traffic congestion; and maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

The Plan provides a central opportunity for the planning agencies to communicate the priorities, critical choices, and general directions for the region to a broad audience, including planning partners, other stakeholders, elected officials and the public.



Current Long Range Transportation Plan

The Plan should demonstrate that the federal regulations for its development have been met, as well as showing how locally expressed priorities, public involvement, and many other critical inputs to the planning process have been addressed. It specifically looks at major urban transportation planning concerns as environmental/air quality; complete access to transportation;

alternative transportation modes (especially bicycle and pedestrian), the

The Current Plan - 2025

SMTC's current Plan is the 2025 *Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2004 Update*, which was adopted by the MPO on June 30, 2004. This is the third update of the initial 1995 *Comprehensive Transportation Plan*.²⁵ Each update extended the Plan's horizon year out twenty years and updated the economic, demographic, travel and financial forecasts.²⁶ The 2025 *LRTP 2004 Update* is a composite of the 1995-adopted Plan plus the subsequent updates, rather than a stand-alone document.

It is unusual for an MPO to update a Plan, rather than develop a new Plan, more than once. Most MPOs choose the update option during the first cycle (now every four years), rather than starting the plan development process anew because of the

effort involved. The next update cycle usually results in a new Plan. However, the magnitude and continuing uncertainty of the looming private development in the area and its anticipated local and regional impacts, together with the otherwise stable conditions within the planning area, caused the SMTC to reconsider its approach to the Plan evaluation effort.

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 *were* in 2003/04. Therefore, the SMTC decided to develop another Update – albeit more comprehensive than the previous ones and which will also contained a modified visioning process. The Update considered the potential impacts of the development projects as best as the information allows, and then the MPO will pursue the comprehensive remake of the Plan within the next several years. The *2004 Update* confirmed the Plan's validity and its consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends, and the Plan's horizon year was extend to 2025. This course of action had the prior concurrence of the federal agencies.

The *2025 Plan Update 2004* 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 that 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

As noted earlier, the *2025 Plan 2004 Update* is not a stand-alone document; the Plan for the area relies on the 1995 Plan plus the three subsequent updates. We do note that the SMTC has placed more emphasis on quality of life improvements for the area. These improvements 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).

Land Use Considerations in the Plan

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.

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.

There are three land use development plans in the area: Onondaga County's *Settlement Plan*, the MDA's *2010 Vision*, and the City of Syracuse's *Comprehensive Plan 2025*. These plans are discussed in Appendix E. However, we wish to highlight the two areas of the City that have the greatest potential for change:

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.

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 VII *DestiNY USA*).

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

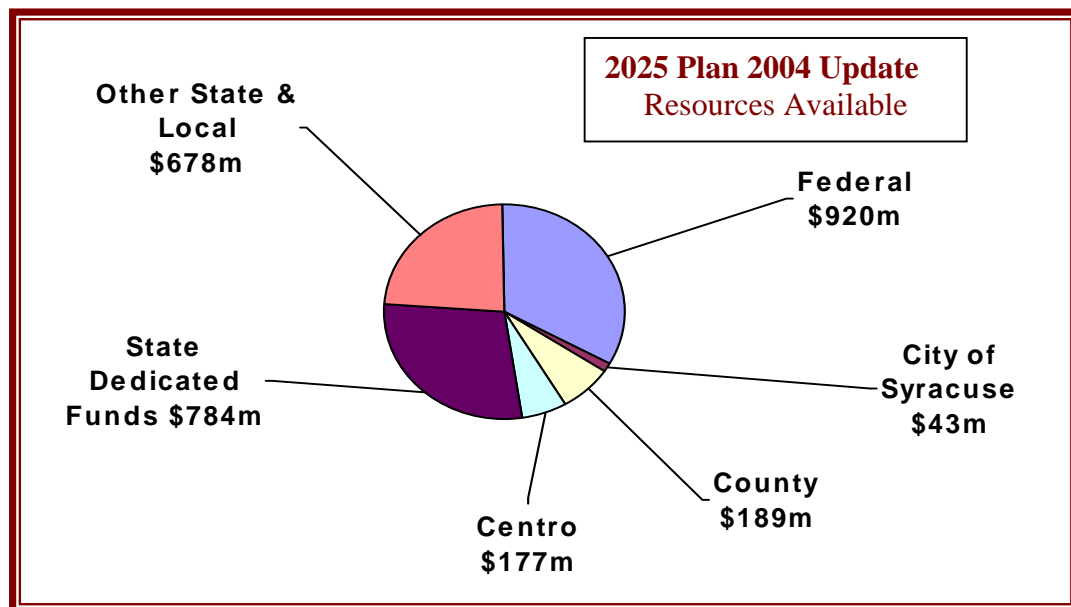
The study reports, when finalized, are available on the SMTC website. The quality of the finished products is high, as

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.

Financial Constraint

When a MPO is developing a list of projects and strategies to include in a Plan, it must consider financial constraint. This requires an MPO to estimate the future level of revenues that can reasonably be expected to be available to implement projects from the Plan.²⁷ Typically, the transportation "needs" will outstrip the estimated available resources.

The *2025 Plan 2004 Update* estimated a total of \$2.79 billion in funding would be available for transportation projects over the next 25 years. The major sources of this funding is shown in Chart below.



Financial constraint is especially important in air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas such as in the Syracuse, NY area CO maintenance area. Under the federal environmental process (*National Environmental Policy Act* - NEPA), the Federal agencies cannot issue a Record of Decision (ROD) on a nonexempt²⁸ project unless the project is included in an air quality analysis on the Plan. According to EPA conformity regulations, a project cannot be included in said analysis unless it is in the financially constrained portion of the Plan. This is done so that an MPO will not include vehicle emissions reductions in its conformity analysis for projects for which there are no funds to actually implement. Until the Federal agencies issue a ROD, subsequent work on a nonexempt project (final design, right-of-way actions, construction) cannot be included in the TIP. The bottom line is that a nonexempt project cannot advance beyond the environmental stage of its development until it is in the financially constrained portion of the Plan. This restriction applies whether the project is Federally funded or not.

The *2025 Plan 2004 Update* did receive a positive Federal conformity determination on July 26, 2004. We note that the Plan does not contain any major capacity expansion projects in the out years. Therefore, if any new such projects were to be proposed (e.g., major project coming through a new congressional earmark), the Plan would need to be updated and a new conformity determination made before that project can be put into the TIP.

The Next Plan

SMTC's has been planning to develop the next version of its Plan by July 26, 2007, in accordance with the three-

year update cycle required by Federal legislation. With the recent passage of SAFETEA_LU, the update cycle for Plans in nonattainment areas will be extended from three to four years from the date of the federal conformity determination.²⁹ However, SMTC will not be able to take advantage of this 4-year cycle until the next Plan meets the additional planning requirements of the SAFETEA_LU legislation.

The present indication is that the next version of the Plan will be another major Update rather than a new full-blown re-write. In April 2005, SMTC established a Study Advisory Committee to begin discussions on its next Plan. The Planning Committee agreed with the Staff's suggestion for an Update. This will be the fourth Update of the original 1995 Plan. As noted earlier, four updates of the same Plan are highly unusual. The principal reason for this approach is the continuing unknowns surrounding the *DestiNY USA* project.

The Planning Committee has developed a draft Public Involvement Plan for the 2007 Update. SMTC normally holds three formal public meetings during the specific stages of the planning process. With the 2007 Plan, SMTC intends to broaden the exposure and increase the outreach of the Plan effort by holding an indeterminate number of meetings, workshops and focus groups at which the Plan update process will be discussed. These meetings will involve municipalities, business groups, community organizations and the public. SMTC will establish a project web site to provide general information on the Update (e.g., meeting dates) and information on activities and the progress of the project. The public will have the opportunity to participate via the web site. SMTC is also considering publishing a newsletter dedicated solely to the LRTP Update.

We believe that these efforts are commendable. SMTC will have discussions

on how to handle this conceptual development in the 2007 Update.

Regarding the *2007 Plan's* horizon year, we recommend that 2030 be chosen as a minimum. The current regulations state that metropolitan long-range transportation plans shall address "at least a 20-year planning horizon."³⁰ This would require the Update to have a 2027 horizon date at a minimum. For FHWA and FTA actions on STIPs/TIPs and associated amendments or transportation conformity determinations without amending the current transportation plan, a long-range transportation plan initially adopted with a minimum 20-year planning horizon is sufficient. However, if the long-range transportation plan is amended to add, delete, or significantly change a regionally significant project, the transportation plan's horizon must be at least 20 years at the time of the MPO's action. Therefore, if a significant change to the Plan is proposed in 2008 or 2009, a 2027 horizon date would not satisfy the requirements of the transportation regulations nor of the conformity regulations for a the 20 year minimum at the time of amendment. Given the potential for new major projects in the area (e.g., Congressional earmarks associated with *DestiNY*), we recommend that a horizon date of 2030 be selected to span the intervening three-year time period before another Update of new Plan will be required.

SMTC's target date for the release of a Draft LRTP is January/February 2007, with its adoption by the Policy Committee in April 2007.

Enhancement to Consider

One of the new aspects in other MPO plans is the incorporation of **Performance Measures** into the transportation planning process. The purpose

of this effort is to measure progress toward the Plan's desired outcomes and to aid in investment decisions that impact thereon. An example of such measures is shown in the Table (next page) depicting the measures adopted by the Genesee Transportation Council (MPO for Rochester, New York).

We note that the *2025 Plan* does include some performance measures as Objectives under various Goals. For example,

Goal #4 Community Economy.

Objective: 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.

Performance measures in transportation plans are good tool for an MPO that wants to assess how well the area is doing in achieving its desired goals. We recommend that the SMTC evaluate the desirability of exploring this concept more fully. Perhaps all that is needed is to formally evaluate the progress towards meeting the stated Objectives in the Plan.

Recommendation:

- The *2007 LRTP* should have at least a horizon year or 2030.
- The SMTC should evaluate the desirability of exploring the concept of performance measures/evaluation of progress into the process.

GTC Plan Performance Measures	
Performance Measure	Plan Goals Addressed
Average travel time to work	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
Average travel time on major roads with above average traffic	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
Excess delay by highway link and system-wide	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
Volume/Capacity ratio	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Safety & Security
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
Accident rate	Increase Safety & Security
	Promote Efficiency
Emission Levels	Protect Community Character and Conserve Energy
% of Federal roadways with pavement conditions rated "fair" or better	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Safety & Security
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
% of low-income persons within ¼ mile of fixed route transit service	Support Economic Vitality
	Increase Accessibility & Mobility
	Promote Efficiency
energy usage	Protect Community Character and Conserve Energy
User Cost per Mile per Trip	Promote Efficiency

V. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

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

One of an MPO's most important responsibilities is the development of a multi-year program of transportation improvements that implement recommendations of the planning process, particularly those in the Long Range Transportation 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, and it estimates the effect upon regional air quality. 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 100% State funded projects (NYSDOT and New York State Thruway Authority) in the region.

There are certain federal requirements of the TIP document under *TEA-21*:

- Covers at least three years
- Updated at least every three 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

SAFETEA-LU extended the update cycle of TIPs to every four years and requires four years of projects³¹.



SMTC 2005-2010 TIP

The pending TIP is the *2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program*, which was approved by the SMTC Policy Committee on May 17, 2005; it will become effective on October 1, 2005. The existing TIP is the *2003-2006 TIP*, which received a positive FHWA/FTA conformity determination on July 26, 2004. This *2006-2010 TIP* is fiscally constrained by program year; it utilizes appropriate project selection procedures and it passed an air quality

conformity analysis by the MPO. As required, NYSDOT will incorporate the TIP projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) without modification.

The 2005-2010 TIP proposes \$179.6 million in highway and transit improvements (Federal + match funding). It includes \$3.48 million in Special FHWA Demonstration projects³² and \$1.488 million TEA-21 High Priority Project funding for the Hiawatha Boulevard corridor improvements.

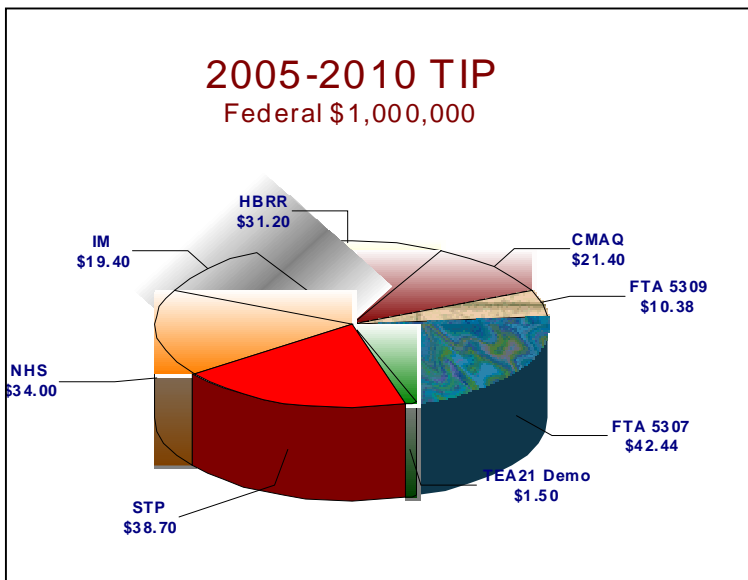
SMTC places a strong emphasis on maintaining the transportation infrastructure. In the 2025 Plan, the preservation of the infrastructure is the top ranked strategy, and it has the first claim on available resources. Investment in repair and renewal is thus a higher priority than investment in expanded capacity.

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.

SMTC, ITCTC (the Ithaca MPO), and Region3 have developed a *Transportation Improvement Program Guidebook*, the latest version of which is Fall 2004.³³ The Guidebook is a tool intended to help Project Applicants in completing the TIP application. We consider that this to be a good planning practice.

SMTC strives to have a new TIP available for public comment in the April-May timeframe, with an effective date of October 1 to coincide with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.³⁴ To begin the TIP process, the MPO sends a "Call for Projects" letter and a copy of the TIP Guidebook to the MPO member agencies and the appropriate officials of eligible counties, municipalities, and authorities in September/October, notifying the officials of the opportunity to submit project proposals. Letters may also be sent to private citizens or private sector organizations that have requested TIP notification. These groups may suggest



SMTC 2005-2010 TIP. Amounts reflect Federal funding; an additional local match is required, with the total project costs usually matched at an 80/20 Fed/Local ratio. .

project proposals provided a local government has formally agreed to sponsor and fund the proposed project. The application must come from a municipality or entity that can enter into a municipal agreement with the NYSDOT.³⁵

The project applicants must submit the request with a brief Cover Letter that includes a list of projects for which proposals are being submitted, and two copies of the completed *Initial Project Proposal (IPP)* for each new project and/or each previous TIP project with substantial project scope or funding need changes. A separate TIP IPP must be completed for each project for which federal funds are requested; and an 8 ½ x 11 photocopy-ready map illustrating project location and boundaries for each project. If an applicant needs help in completing the IPP, SMTC and/or NYSDOT staff is available to assist.

An important aspect of the IPP submission is reasonable cost estimates, and here we can point to another example of good practice: NYSDOT Region 3's development of its Generic Costs for Locally Administered Federal Air Projects. This information assists member agencies in the estimating the design, real estate and construction costs for new projects. The costs and schedules include a variety of bridge and highway projects, varying from maintenance type work to full reconstruction or replacement. The costs are estimated for the various phases of a project: Scoping, Preliminary/Final Design, Real estate, Construction and Construction Inspection. This is an extremely useful tool that enables the MPO members to develop a more realistic idea of the proposed projects would cost.

If the candidate project is requesting Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funding, SMTC also requires a supplemental application in addition to the submission of an IPP on each candidate project. The applicant must provide project descriptions and scopes, enable the determination of

CMAQ funding eligibility, calculate estimated emissions benefits (if any), and document the variables/basis for emissions estimates. Emissions estimates developed from the Supplementary Forms accompany each project's IPP where CMAQ funding is anticipated.

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 2005 Transportation Plan 2004 Update*. The Capital Projects Committee rank projects based on LRTP by plan goals and objectives as well as air quality benefit/cost.

Once the "science" of project evaluation is completed, the "art" of project programming begins. The 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 Planning Committee. After evaluating the public comments received during a 30-day public review period, the SMTC Policy Committee approves the new TIP (May 17, 2005).

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) 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.

Fiscal Constraint

Similar to the fiscal constraint requirement on long-range transportation plans, the metropolitan planning regulations state that the TIP must be fiscally constrained by year and include a financial plan that demonstrates which projects can be implemented using current revenue and which projects are to be implemented using proposed revenue (while the existing transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained).³⁶

The purpose of the financial plan is to demonstrate fiscal constraint. After close analysis of the draft *2006/2010 TIP*, we found that it is fiscally constrained by year and fund source. We believe that the document would be cleared in this regard if it contained a table summarizing this constraint, and we handed out a sample table at the review. To this end, we recommend that the TIP contain a specific table devoted to illustrating fiscal constrain by program year. The table should reflect federal amounts available versus programmed funds by year.

TIP Management

The SMTC has been approving a new TIP every two years (the new Federal legislation now requires an update only every four years). The SMTC manages the TIP during this period in accordance with its TIP Project Management Process.³⁷ 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.

Annual Listing of Implemented Projects

MPOs are required by Title 23 to annually publish the list of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year:

“Publication of annual listings of projects--An annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be published or otherwise made available by the metropolitan planning organization for public review. The listing shall be consistent with the categories identified in the transportation improvement program.”³⁸

The SMTC's TIP does provide the ability for the reader to conclude which projects have been funded during the previous year; however, the reader would have to be very knowledgeable about the TIP tables to ascertain this information. It is therefore recommended that the information be more

specifically put forth so that members of the public would more easily be able to review the list.

Air Quality Conformity Determination

Because Onondaga County is a CO maintenance area, the TIP must go through the air quality conformity process (see Section XI). The pending TIP is the *2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program*, which SMTC adopted on May 17, 2005 is now in the process of receiving the required FHWA/FTA conformity determination. The existing *2003-2006 TIP* received a positive FHWA/FTA conformity determination on July 26, 2004. The *2005-2010 TIP*, scheduled to become effective on October 1, 2005, is now undergoing its conformity review.

Inclusion of TIP Projects in the STIP

The metropolitan planning regulations require that after approval by the MPO and the Governor, the TIP shall be included without modification, directly or by

reference, in the STIP.³⁹ On August 4, 2004, SMTC staff director Rowlands certified the SMTC *2003/06 TIP* projects agreed with the list of projects in the proposed 2004/06 STIP.

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 MPO should publish a list of projects for which Federal funds were obligated in the previous year. This may be done in the TIP itself.

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 involvement is a mandated core MPO activity that supports the overall metropolitan area transportation planning process and development of all key MPO products – the UPWP, TIP, and LRP. The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316 (b)(1), which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process. The regulations require that MPOs provide timely information, reasonable public access to technical and policy information, adequate public notice of public involvement activities, explicit consideration and response to public input, and consideration of needs of those traditionally underserved by the transportation system. The SMTC satisfies this requirement by having a process in place and by conducting outreach through a variety of different methods, such as newsletters, websites, public meetings, specific study groups, press releases and surveys.



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. SMTC has also published a pamphlet entitled *A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning*. (Note: the *Guide*, developed in 1994, may warrant some updating.)

Public Involvement Plans

The SMTC provides a 30-day public comment period on the TIP and the LRP. In addition to this standard practice, the MPO tailors its public involvement approach to the needs of specific projects with its concept of Public Involvement Plans (PIP). The PIP is 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.

For example, the PIP for the Long-Range Transportation Plan 2007 Update included the formation of two groups – the Study Advisor Committee (SAC) and Stakeholders. The SAC consisted of the SMTC Planning Committee; they advise the MPO on technical content of the Update and provide input, as necessary. The Stakeholders include a broader group of interested individuals with significant relations and interest in the LRTP Update. They are sent study information, notified of all public meetings and encouraged to provide feedback and comment.

Communications

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

Web site – As noted earlier, SMTC's website (www.smtcmopo.org) is excellent. 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. 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.

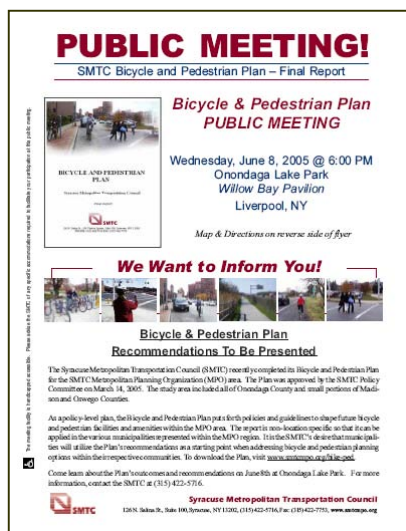
Transportation "fairs" – The SMTC periodically attends public events (e.g., State Fair) with information on the planning process.

Mailing Lists – The SMTC also maintains a list of interested "stakeholders" – a broader group of interested individuals with significant interest in the process. SMTC has a mailing list of over 1900 individuals and organizations as well as an electronic mailing list of 250.

SMTC Brochure: A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning - SMTC continues to distribute this very useful brochure (developed in 2001).

Newsletter – Up until 2004, SMTC had been publishing a very good quarterly newsletter entitled **Directions**, but this has been temporarily held due to some staffing changes. We recommend that SMTC consider republishing the newsletter.

Local Meetings - The MPO also participates in various community and local organizational meetings to hear local viewpoints and "raise the banner" of metropolitan transportation planning. One such local organization is "Tomorrow's Neighborhood Today" or TNT, a city initiative that ensures citizen participation and involvement in



municipal affairs. TNT groups the city into eight different geographic sectors. Each TNT sector conducts neighborhood planning and focuses on how they want their neighborhoods to look in the future. The SMTTC leverages these TNT meetings to present their TIP and LRP. Another such outreach is SMTTC's participation in the visioning efforts of the FOCUS (Forging Our Communities United Strength) program.

Recommendation

- The SMTTC should evaluate the benefits of restarting its quarterly newsletter, perhaps primarily as an Internet publication.
- SMTTC will need to review the *SAFETEA_LU* legislation regarding the requirements for some new groups to be specifically included in transportation planning process.

VII. 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)

For several years now, it has been said that the Central New York Region is poised to 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 potential 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 been awaiting a major expansion for the past seven years. However, on November 2, 2001, Pyramid Companies⁴⁰ (owners of Carousel Center) announced a much larger

vision for the expanded Center - “*DestiNY USA*.” The name implies a national destination.

To appreciate the potential 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.

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.⁴¹ The redevelopment guide for the area is the *Syracuse Lakefront Area Master Plan*, which the LDC Board of Directors, the Syracuse Planning



Lakefront Development Area. *Carousel Center Mall is located on Shore of Onondaga Lake.*

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 has invested more than \$20 million 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 Corridor⁴². Forty-two acres are designated for development. The Lakefront area around Carousel Center also contains: the Stadium Market Center, the Alliance 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 from Onondaga Lake all the way to Downtown Syracuse.

The Concept

What is *DestiNY USA*? This is somewhat difficult to say because the vision changes from year to year. As of the writing of this report, the concept includes

the proposed major expansion of the existing Carousel Center Mall into the largest entertainment complex in the country along Onondaga Lake, plus the development of a 300-acre site into a research and technology complex several miles to the north, in the town of Salina.

Expansion of Carousel Center Mall & Lakefront Development

DestiNY USA is to house over 400 retail shops, 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. The impact, however, will be much 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 *DestiNY USA* complex may 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
- 13,000 hotel rooms
- 20 acre artificial lake
- three golf courses
- Automated parking structure for 50,000 cars including Personal Rapid Transit

The mall expansion would potentially make the entire Upstate New York region into a national and international tourist destination.

Research & Development Park

The *DestiNY USA Research & Development Park* is a planned 300-acre development to be located in Salina at the crossroads of Interstate 81 and the New York State Thruway, which is just north east of Carousel Center Mall. The developer just announced plans to build a one million square foot research and development center as the signature building of the Park, and it will house firms involved in the design and development of technologies for use at *DestiNY USA* and for commercial ventures worldwide. The major areas of research are renewable energy, technology and security products.

The project(s) will proceed in phases, with a projected starting date in 2005 and a total completion in 2007 and beyond. The Pyramid Corporation estimates that *DestiNY USA* will attract 35 million visitors annually. Taken together with the other improvements within the Lakefront area, Central New York would be poised for significant change if *DestiNY USA* transitions from a vision to a reality.

Region 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 35 million visitors annually is relatively accurate, *DestiNY USA*

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.”⁴³

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 USA* will create 9,000 permanent jobs. The City’s economic analysis predicted a \$2.2 billion annual economic impact. *DestiNY USA* is said to potentially have annual revenue of \$6 billion and 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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

Planning for the Impact on Transportation Infrastructure

The actual amount of concrete information available to transportation planners to use in an impact analysis is surprisingly small. There are generalities

and claims of growth potential that can be gleaned from newspaper accounts⁴⁶, the developer's website⁴⁷, and other sources. But, for years now, every week seems to bring a new agreement and another setback. And the concept has changed multiple times over the past few years, which must be frustrating to local planners. For illustration, the *DestiNY USA Benefits Maximization Committee*⁴⁸, which was formed in 2002 by the Mayor of Syracuse and the Onondaga County Executive, it is no longer active because the plans keep changing.

Most of the travel to *DestiNY* would be via the highway network – nearly 80 million people live within a one-day drive of Syracuse. *DestiNY* would act as a hub for the bus excursion market, encouraging other regional attractions, but those trips would also be via automobiles. If the anticipated 35 million annual visitors is realized, 12 million would 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.⁴⁹ Still, that would leave 10+ million out-of-state visitors via the highway network.



<http://destinyusa.com>

Can the present transportation infrastructure adequately evaluate the transportation network's capacity to handle the additional traffic? Unclear, as are the actual traffic volumes and locations of proposed mall expansion highway

infrastructure improvements. In 2002, the Syracuse Industrial Development Authority (SIDA) determined that a 1998 Environmental Impact Analysis of Carousel Center's original expansion plan (before the *DestiNY* concept) was adequate in its consideration of all significant adverse environmental impacts likely to result from the *DestiNY USA* project, and therefore a supplemental/new EIS was not needed.⁵⁰ SIDA reasoned that since the *DestiNY* project would have essentially the same gross leasable retail space as in the 1988 Carousel Center Expansion (prior to the *DestiNY* concept), a new analysis (water, air quality, and traffic) was not needed.

This conclusion is perplexing because it is in effect stating that the expansion features beyond the retail space would not be attracting any additional visitors – but this is clearly the reason for these additional features of the *DestiNY USA* concept. Some at the local level did think it prudent to evaluate the adequacy of the transportation system to handle the potential impact of the Lakefront development, as evidenced by the fact that the City of Syracuse received funds outside of the MPO process for such an evaluation. A \$1.5 million FHWA Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP) grant was awarded in a Congressional earmark. The purpose of the *Transportation Infrastructure Improvements to Syracuse Inner Harbor and Lakefront Development Area Planning Study* was to make a comprehensive analysis of the existing transportation network within and affecting the Lakefront Development Area. It was to assess the transportation system's adequacy and to identify – and cost out - necessary transportation corridor improvements. The study was also to evaluate mass transit and alternative transit capabilities for accessing local attractions and destinations. The consultant-assisted study was to look at 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

At the study's commencement, a Task Force was formed to provide information, technical assistance relative to the direction of the study, and feedback on the preliminary results. The Task Force commendably included representation from the major transportation and governmental entities in the area (e.g., NYSDOT, City, County, SMTC, etc). Phase I of the study was completed in January 2003, but the recommendations for projects and priorities did not achieve consensus. Due to time constraints, the City was unable to convene a final Task Force meeting to discuss the ranking system. We recognize that the City did commendably try to address every comment received, but the time constraints did not allow every member's buy-in to be realized.

This situation is very troubling from the standpoint that recommendations for significant infrastructure improvements had to be rushed, resulting in the fact that a consensus was not achieved.

We are concerned that the estimate of *DestiNY USA*'s impact on traffic is not accurate. SMTC has modified its travel forecasting model to reflect the mall's traffic figures as contained in the 1998 EIS, so theoretically the modeling and travel impact analysis done in SMTC's 2004 *Update* adequately reflects the *DestiNY* traffic if the travel impact of destiny concept does not exceed that of the previous version of the mall's expansion. However, we are not yet convinced that this is the case.

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 (should it occur). 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, albeit at a bigger scale. If built as presently touted, *DestiNY USA* will be a monumental project with potentially far reaching impacts.

New transportation projects associated with the *DestiNY* concept will probably arise in the near future. They can be funded in several ways: 100% State/local/private monies, Federal funding from within normal resources, or special Congressional earmarks.

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 priorities from the TSCP study do not reflect the Task Force's priorities but may be funded in future earmarks in Federal transportation legislation. Events of private development, not public vision per se, are driving the plans of the region. Private enterprise and ingenuity is part of the American entrepreneurial spirit at work, and such uncertainties may be normal when considering such 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.

We caution the SMTC about rushing into transportation decisions of this magnitude, even if "free" funds (earmarks) are available. We note that the developer

has proposed a monorail linking the university to the airport via downtown, their proposed DestiNY Resort, the transportation center, and their proposed DestiNY Technology Park. The cost of such a line has been estimated at \$750 million. A local individual has proposed a gondola lift system, called Salt City Aerial Transit, to link the university to the transportation center using a similar route, with the first segment from SU to Downtown estimated to cost \$5 million. Whether extraordinary projects of such scale are proposed (with earmarks or even private funding), the MPO must realize that there will be the question of ongoing operating expenses. We note that the City of Buffalo has to make up the \$10+ million annual operating deficit on its light rail system because ridership has not lived up to projected levels.

A final note regarding earmarks: an new air quality nonexempt transportation project – or a Federal action on a non-federally funded project⁵¹ - that is proposed for addition to the TIP or Plan must be in accordance with the NEPA process prior to FHWA/FTA making a conformity determination on said addition. We must require a determination of the accuracy of projected travel induced by the *DestiNY* concept. Merely citing the traffic figures from an old – and possibly outdated - EIS will not be sufficient to evaluate the air quality impacts.

Recommendation

- The SMTC needs to thoroughly evaluate all new transportation proposals associated with *DestiNY USA*, and said projects must be included in an air quality conforming TIP and Plan prior to implementation.
- The members of the MPO may want to revisit the recommendations of the Phase I of the *Transportation Infrastructure Improvements to Syracuse Inner Harbor and Lakefront Development Area Planning Study* in an attempt to reach a consensus on recommended projects and their priorities.
- Should such projects be proposed for the TIP and Plan, the SMTC needs to evaluate the travel estimates prepared by others to ensure that they adequately reflect the proposed traffic to be generated by the *DestiNY* concept.
- The SMTC should to consider a periodic briefing of the region's Congressional staff on its major transportation priorities – not in a lobbying fashion but for informational purposes.

VIII. 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 U.S.C. 134(a)(2)

Coordination among the MPOs and the region’s public transit operators is paramount for the successful delivery of transit services that meet the needs of the region and also ensure the proper development of programs and/or projects that reflect the trip needs of an area.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) is the major public transit operator in Central New York. Its headquarters is the Warren H. Frank Center for Public Transportation in Syracuse.⁵² The American Public Transit Association recognized CNYRTA as the “best mid-size transit system in North America” in 1983. The Authority designed a wheelchair lift system in the 1980s known as “Syracuse Standard”; it was the first one rugged enough to operate in winter weather and still stands as an industry standard.



The Authority was created in 1970 by the New York State Legislature under the Public Authorities Law, and it 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).

CNYRTA is governed by an independent Board of members consisting of ten representatives appointed by the Governor of New York and confirmed by the New York State Senate. The makeup of the Board is five seats from Onondaga County, three from the City of Syracuse, one from

Oswego County and one from Cayuga County.

Cortland, Jefferson, Madison, and Oneida Counties can elect to join the district by vote of their respective county legislature. Oneida County Board of Legislature did vote to join CNYRTA and *Centro of Oneida County* was formed as a new subsidiary in 2005. Although the details of agreements between CNYRTA and Oneida County are still being discussed and impacts to CNYRTA have yet to be determined, CNYRTA began transit services in Oneida County in April 2005. Both Cayuga and Oneida Counties are outside the SMTC’s planning area.

CNYRTA operates a fixed route system with over 100 routes as well as a Call-A-Bus service to provide transportation options to those individuals who meet the criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 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 208 vehicles.

There are eight operating subsidiaries under CNYRTA:

- 1) CNY Centro, Inc. (CENTRO)
- 2) Centro of Cayuga⁵³
- 3) Centro of Oswego⁵⁴
- 4) Centro of Oneida County⁵⁵
- 5) Centro Call-A-Bus, Inc. (services for persons with disabilities)
- 6) Centro Parking, Inc. (parking lots along Route 81)

- 7) William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center Inc. (ITC, Inc.)
- 8) Designated Recipient Services, Inc. (serves as a pass-through for NYS funding for Bernie Bus in Onondaga County).

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.

Transit is afforded a significant share of the financial resources in the 2025 Plan. While it accounts for approximately 2.2% of all work trips in Onondaga County, the 2025 Plan allocates 23.8% (\$664 million) of the total resources to transit.

ReMAP Strategic Study

The primary structure of the Centro's operation was shaped by the Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP) study begun in 1997. The CNYRTA recognized that the significant demographic shifts and changing population dynamics in the community mandated a rethinking of how the transit system operated, and there was an obviously need for more city-to-suburb and suburb-to-suburb service. Up until that time, CENTRO's service was the traditional the "hub and spoke" structure with service within the city and from the city to the suburbs.

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 built 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:



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.

Regional Transportation Center/Carousel, Shoppingtown, and the Common Center in downtown Syracuse.

- 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.

In November 2002, Centro restructured their routes and schedules in response to changing demographics and travel patterns. The changes were also based on comments from transit riders, analysis of ridership activities, and Census data. The service changes included extending service hours and frequencies on routes with growth potential and a simplified route numbering system. Some changes have already resulted in greater-than anticipated ridership increases.

Recent improvements to Centro's have been focused on allowing increased service to several area businesses. For example, Centro recently started its daily first shift service to the Hancock Air Park on its Airport Express Route #250. The Air Park is experiencing growth as Gaylord

Brothers and ICM Controls continue their relocation projects to that location.

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 IX - 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 established 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 is 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, the Management Center can piggyback its mobility management software directly onto the CNYRTA's 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 the van services, deemed necessary because large areas of Onondaga, Cayuga, and Oswego Counties are agrarian or undeveloped open space. These areas 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.

Coordination Efforts

The CNYRTA was awarded the 2005 United We Ride Leadership Award. The leadership award recognizes communities that are fulfilling the United We Ride mission of exemplary work in human service transportation coordination. CNYRTA was recognized as one of the first transportation providers in the State to form partnerships with local employers, colleges, universities, and other community sectors when it implemented its Mobility Management Center in 1999. The Center provides individualized trip planning, directing individuals to lower cost fixed route services and computer assistance scheduling. Although there is no funding directly related to United We Ride, the JARC program has provided assistance to related coordination efforts.

Clean-air Technology 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. CNYRTA has a bus fleet of approximately 210 vehicles, of which over 120 are Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles. In the next several years, about 40 of CNYRTA's buses will need to be replaced, including some older CNG vehicles that will reach the end of their useful life. The CNYRTA is also looking into "hybrid" buses, specifically, those that combine diesel fuel and electricity. CNYRTA believes that diversifying the fleet is important as it

prevents the reliance on any single fuel source and would be more environmentally friendly. Centro plans to eventually replace nearly all of its diesel buses with clean-air buses.

In 2001, CNYRTA built an indoor state-of-the-art compressed natural gas refueling facility, which also included a public compressed natural gas fueling station to encourage 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.



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

Coordination of Planning Activities with MPO

All MPO member agencies, including transit operator, share responsibility for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. The ways in which transit operators participate in the planning process vary widely across the country. While voting

membership on the MPO Board for transit operators is not a Federal requirement, CNYRTA has full voting membership in the MPO's Board. This is the ideal situation. SMTC attends CNYRTA's monthly board meetings and CNYRTA is an active policy, planning and executive committee board member of the SMTC.

Federal regulation requires that the relationship between the MPO and the transit operator be specified in formal agreement(s).

"There shall be an agreement between the MPO and the operators of publicly owned transit services which specifies cooperative procedures for carrying out the transportation planning (including corridor and subarea studies) and programming as required by this subpart." 23 CFR 450.310 (b)

Having official written agreements among the parties in place helps to ensure that the 3C process is executed as intended. The most current agreement between the MPO and the transit operator is detailed in the SMTC's Operation Plan dated September 1993. Although the 1993 agreement is adequate in specifying the responsibilities of the transit operator and satisfies the referenced requirement, we recommend that the SMTC review the agreement and confirm whether or not the actual functioning of the MPO conforms to the provisions of the agreement in order to determine if the Plan should be refreshed.

We suggest that the CNYRTA and the MPO staff continue to explore additional ways to coordinate their planning operations. Currently, the SMTC staff provides assistance to CNYRTA for planning studies upon request. For example, at the request of CNYRTA, the MPO prepared their Title VI report and also conduct most of the GIS and other mapping activities associated with transit services; however, most transit planning is conducted by the transit operator. 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. CNYRTA conducts on-going planning and enhancements based on ridership and other data.

In our last Certification Report, we recommended that SMTC and the CNYRTA explore more ways of working together in the planning process to continue to improve public transportation. While some initial movement toward this coordination had begun, this working relationship has not advanced very far from the last review. We note that this coordination will have added momentum with the onset of SMTC's new TRANSCAD travel forecasting model, which will have to capacity for transit modeling, and we expect the coordination to greatly increase.

The FHWA and FTA again 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. It might be helpful if the two agencies exchanged staff members for several days to "shadow" their counterparts and hopefully gain more insight into the other's working circumstances and inputs.

Recommendation:

- The SMTC and CNYRTA continue to explore more ways of working together to increase the transit planning capabilities in the region.

IX. Title VI/Environmental Justice

“No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded in participation or be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

“Each federal agency shall ensure that their actions do not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect on minority populations and low income populations.” Executive Order 12898

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. In 1994, President Clinton issued the Executive Order on Environmental Justice, citing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VI as foundational pillars.⁵⁶ 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 “disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects”.⁵⁷



In 1999, FHWA and the FTA issued a memorandum *Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning* that gave a clear message that Title VI and Environmental Justice are integral throughout the

transportation planning process.⁵⁸ As part of the annual self-certification and in its adoption of the TIP, SMTC will certify that its planning process adheres to Title VI.

The Goal of Environmental Justice

The goal of Environmental Justice 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.

The types of communities and individuals that are of concern to Title VI and EJ largely

overlap, with a slight addition under EJ. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. The *DOT Order on Environmental Justice* and Executive Order 12898 address persons belonging to any of the following groups: African American, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and Low-Income. All Federal agencies are 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 disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects".⁵⁹

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).⁶⁰

One of the ways in which the City engages its citizens is through its Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT)⁶¹ 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 staff created demographic parameters based on Summary File 3 data from the 2000 United States Census. These parameters included threshold values that were assigned at the Block Group level with the purpose of identifying geographic areas with significant populations of minority persons, low-income persons, and senior citizens. Local demographic experts consulted with the SMTC staff to ensure that the parameters would adequately represent concentrations of the aforementioned populations.

EJ target populations (minority, low-income, elderly) were first identified using Census 2000 data and mapped using Geographic Information System (GIS). According to the 2000 Census, the total population of Onondaga County is 458,336, while the minority population is 74,694.⁶² This results in an average county minority concentration of 16 percent. Based on this median threshold, SMTC defined *Minority Concentration Concern Area* as those Census Block Groups with 16% to 31% minority population; *High Concern Area*: Block Groups with 32% or greater minority population. Note: the Onondaga Nation Territory is included in the designated *High Concern* area, although the data provided by the Census Bureau may include several inaccuracies.

When identifying low-income areas, SMTC chose to use the median household income rather than using the Department of Health and Human Services poverty thresholds. Block Groups with a median household income of less than 80

percent of the countywide median household income are be classified as *Concern* areas, while Block Groups with less than 50 percent of the county value would be considered *High Concern* areas. The median household income for Onondaga County is \$40,847; therefore, \$32,678 would represent 80 percent of this value and \$20,424 would represent 50 percent.

SMTC identified Senior Citizen Concentrations as areas that exceed the percentage of the Onondaga County that are 65 years or older. *Concern Areas* are Block Groups with 14% to 27% population aged 65 years or over; *High Concern Areas* are Block Groups with 28% or greater population aged 65 years or over.

Once the above areas of concern/high concern were mapped, UPWP activities and TIP project locations were also mapped and analyzed.

The SMTC issued its first Environmental Justice Analysis report in March 2004. This assessment showed that

SMTC's planning activities "are not known to have been disproportionately distributed amongst the designated target populations."

Using the Environmental Justice Analysis report's methodology, the SMTC and the CNYRTA approved the CNYRTA Title VI Final Report on said transit agency in August 2004 for submittal to FTA. CNYRTA, as a recipient of FTA funds, must develop said report addressing

twelve specific elements relating to its

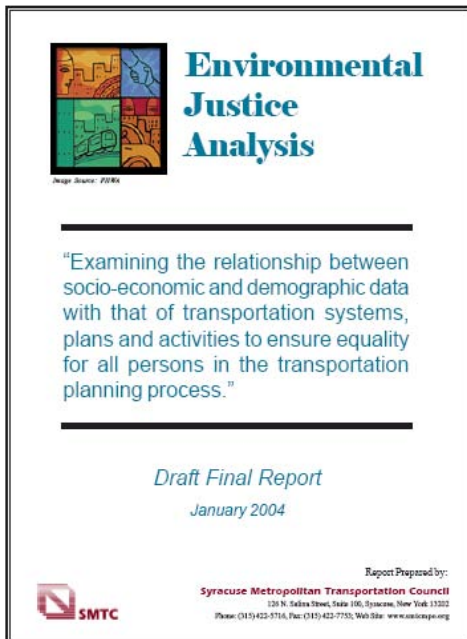
operations. The previous report had been approved in 2002.

SMTC plans to perform periodic assessments of its planning activities and their relevant implications. Future analyses will consider more advanced evaluation activities. This may include, but not be limited to, the formation of a Study Advisory Committee consisting of the SMTC's member agencies; coordination with other MPOs involved in similar processes; receipt of input from stakeholders, individual citizens or community groups; and research and updating of data sources that may prove useful to the 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 VIII *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 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.

Similar to other urbanized areas, minority and low-income populations are concentrated within the City. This population is more likely to rely on public transportation to commute to work and for general access and mobility. According to the analysis presented in the 2004 report, transit service operates frequently in priority EJ target areas. Additionally, the JARC Plan identified transportation service gaps between low-income individuals and employment areas. The Centro system now includes service to areas that were not served when the JARC Plan was compiled. The FTA recommends that the CNYRTA and SMTC update the data relied upon in the 2001 JARC Plan to reflect more current information, as it becomes available. The JARC Plan, similar to SMTC's other work products, are living documents that should be updated on a regular basis.

Recommendation:

- As a tool to analyze the extent of outreach to EJ communities, the MPO should overlaying the addresses from mailing lists and comments received onto its GIS maps of EJ communities and TIP projects.

X. Intermodal Goods Movement

“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.

The emergence of the superhighway systems and the truck caused the railroads 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 developing a major update of the statewide transportation master plan. The primary impetus for this update is former NYSDOT Commissioner Boardman’s⁶³ 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



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

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 functioning but it now accommodates only a small percentage of the freight traffic via barges; its main usage today is for tourism. 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 and Carload Rail Freight

There is one Class I railroad⁶⁴ in the SMTC region – CSX Transportation. 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 significantly over the last six (currently about 800 carloads of local traffic weekly). CSX also operates the Baldwinsville and Fulton Secondary lines, as well as the St. Lawrence subdivision 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, as more shippers switch from domestic trailers to domestic containers. 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.

The carload freight business has seen significant growth via the operational strategies of the shortline railroads. Finger Lakes Railway, as an example, has increased business from approximately 5600 carloads when the rail line started up in 1995 to nearly 17,000 carloads in 2005. Most of this growth has had air quality and highway maintenance benefits inside and outside the planning region. The NYS&W has also seen increased business handling not only their own traffic, but ferrying trains from the New York Metropolitan region to Syracuse to alleviate congestion on the CSXT River Line along the west shore of the Hudson River.

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. Although the Common Council did not formally approve the study's

recommendations, the City plans to have the study's recommendations completed through their signage revamp project this year. Action by the City is currently pending. The SMTC also published the *Skaneateles Truck Study* in 2000, which examined truck traffic through the village of Skaneateles in response to local complaints.



Truck Traffic on the NYS Thruway

The carload freight business has seen significant growth via the operational strategies of the shortline railroads. Finger Lakes Railway, as an example, has increased business from approximately 5600 carloads when the rail line started up in 1995 to nearly 17,000 carloads in 2005. Most of this growth has had air quality and highway maintenance benefits inside and outside the planning region. The NYS&W has also seen increased business handling not only their own traffic, but ferrying trains from the New York Metropolitan region to Syracuse to alleviate congestion on the CSXT River Line along the west shore of the Hudson River.

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. 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. His longtime active participation as a member of the Intermodal Freight Committee of the Transportation Research Board has also provided the SMTC visibility at national forums.

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

- SMTC developed a *Rail/Truck/Transit Planning Summary Report* (2004). As part of this report, staff conducted data collection including identification and assessing existing conditions and provided support for advisory committees and resources for multi-modal program development. The information was developed to provide a multi-modal perspective that may be considered during the development of all MPO transportation projects.
- 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.

Rail Passenger Service

Syracuse is on the east-west route between Buffalo and Albany; this *Empire Service* presently operates four trains a day in each direction and is operated by Amtrak.

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

The years 1999-2005 saw some activity on the rebuilding of several High Speed Rail trainsets but none of the rail infrastructure needed to allow the trainsets operate at higher speed. The Governor's High Speed Rail initiative is now essentially defunct due to Amtrak's financial constraints and issued with the refurbished equipment.



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.*

However, the issue of High Speed Rail in New York has had a recent interest. In 2005, the New York State Senate expressed interest in the High Speed rail issue and it has allocated \$5 million for further study of the issue.⁶⁵ An SMTC staff member has been appointed to the Advisory Panel of the Task Force established by the Majority Leader.⁶⁶ The emergence of *DestiNY USA* – if it happens - may provide an increased impetus to accelerate the implementation of such service. 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.

Lakefront Study Activity

In the previous Certification Report, we recommended that the SMTC coordinate and carefully evaluate truck and

rail freight recommendations coming out of the TCSP project for the Lakefront. The SMTC was involved in Phase I of the City's Lakefront Study; however, the continuation of the project has been on hold due to various uncertainties and modifications of the several proposed development projects in the Lakefront Area. When the City continues with the project, the SMTC intends to participate and pursue this recommendation as appropriate.

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.

Rail 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

In late 2003, SMTC released another valuable informational document entitled *2003 Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) Rail Corridor Inventory*. The Report updates the inventory of Central New York rail corridors published by the SMTC in 1996, and it provides information on the history, condition, current utilization, and future potential of the rail corridors in the region.

Recommendations

- The SMTC closely cooperate with the NYSDOT efforts to plan for the movement of freight.
- 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.

XI. 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)

The concept of transportation conformity was introduced in the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977 which included a provision to ensure that transportation investments conform to a state's air quality plan for meeting the Federal air quality standards. Conformity requirements were made substantially more rigorous in the CAA Amendments of 1990. This legislation has had a fundamental impact on air quality and transportation-related air quality. The transportation sector is now required to be an active participant in the work to achieve attainment of the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

subject to more stringent regulatory requirements.

Nonattainment Status

Under the 1977 Act, parts of the City of Syracuse were designated as nonattainment of the Carbon Monoxide (CO) NAAQS. In 1984, EPA established the size of the nonattainment area to be the CO hot-spot at the intersection of Almond and East Adams in the City of Syracuse. The hot-spot monitor recorded violations of the CO standard from 1983 to 1986, and then again in 1989.

After the passage of the 1990 CAAA, EPA continued the CO nonattainment designation for the area based on the 1989 data, and the boundary of the nonattainment area was expanded in 1991 to all of Onondaga County. Onondaga County was classified as a moderate CO nonattainment area.

After several years without any monitored violations greater than allowable⁶⁷, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (ENCON) submitted a proposed revision to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to EPA to obtain redesignation for the nonattainment area.⁶⁸ The revision included, among other items required, a plan for maintaining the NAAQS for ten years after being redesignated. EPA approved that SIP revision in 1993, and Onondaga County was subsequently redesignated as being in attainment of the CO standards. Ambient air monitoring data indicates that air quality in Onondaga County has been below the 8-hour CO



Nonattainment areas are those geographic regions that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates as not meeting one or more of the NAAQS due to monitored levels of pollutants. In 1990, ozone

(O₃), carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter under 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) were the primary transportation-related pollutants of concern. The CAAA90 set severity classifications of non-attainment based on monitored air quality concentrations. Each nonattainment area was given an attainment deadline depending on the severity of nonattainment; if an area monitored failure to meet the attainment date; it was “bumped up” to a higher severity and was

NAAQS since the county was redesignated to attainment.

In response to Onondaga County not meeting air quality standards in 1993, the City of Syracuse implemented the Signal Interconnect Design Project. This project flowed from a NYSDOT recommendation to install a computerized traffic signal system and optimizing the signal timing of 145 City intersections to help improve air quality. The study area included 37 of the City's 145 intersections, all located along five main arterials. The analysis involved comparison of simulation results representing conditions before and

after implementation of the coordinated signal timing. The Synchro™ software package was used to model the performance of the system before and after the improvement project. The cost of the computerized signal system was \$8,316,307, and construction activity was completed in 1998.

The City then established its Traffic Control Center 1999 to better coordinate the traffic flow in the Downtown and University areas. The 143 traffic signals in this system can be controlled remotely from the TCC.

Maintenance Plan

When an area transitions from a non-attainment to an 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 Onondaga County CO Maintenance Plan as part of the State's SIP in 1993.

The 1993 Maintenance SIP contained a list of eleven Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), which are considered to be commitments by EPA. The SMTC had not intended 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 included for informational purposes to demonstrate good faith. The EPA, however, regarded these as commitments. In any event, the SMTC has followed through on its "good faith" promise, as shown in Table 3.

After the initial ten-year maintenance plan expires, the regulations require an additional SIP revision to insure the continuance of attainment of the NAAQS for a second ten-year period.⁶⁹ NYSDEC submitted the 2nd ten-year maintenance

Transportation Control Measures	
Project	Status
Rt. 57 Phase IV	Implemented
Rt. 635, Rt. 5 - Rt. 298	Implemented
Rt. 298, Syracuse to Carrier Circle	Implemented
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

**Status of TCMs in the Onondaga County
CO Maintenance SIP.**

plan to EPA in March 2004. In the September 8, 2005 Federal Register, EPA approved the updated 10-year maintenance plan as a SIP revision.⁷⁰ Therefore, Onondaga County is presently a CO maintenance area, and SMTC's transportation plans and programs are required to conform to the air quality mandates of the Onondaga County Maintenance SIP.

Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets for Onondaga County

The Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets (MVEBs) for the purpose of transportation conformity is that portion of the total allowable emissions in the SIP emissions inventory that are allocated to on-road mobile sources.⁷¹ These MVEBs represent the maximum emissions allowable for the transportation plans, TIPs and projects. The on-road mobile source emissions budget applies as a ceiling for on-road mobile source emissions in the year for which it is defined and for all subsequent years until another year for which a different budget is defined, or until a SIP revision modifies the budget.

For the Onondaga County Maintenance Plan, the MVEB incorporates the "margin of safety" provisions of EPA's transportation conformity rule. The rule indicates that where projected emissions from all sources are less than the amount demonstrating attainment, the SIP may explicitly quantify the safety margin and include some or all of it in the MVEB for purposes of conformity. The safety margin is the difference between the attainment year total emissions and future year total emissions. Since 2003 represents the last year of the first 10-year maintenance plan and its total emission is lower than 1990 emission, the safety margin is conservatively calculated using the differences between 2003 emissions (654.69 tons per winter day) and future years total emissions.

The total safety margin allowable in each year is significant, and in order to allow for uncertainties and possible regional growth in non-mobile, area and stationary sources emissions, 100 tpyd of the safety margin is being retained as a safety margin and the balance applied to the MVEBs for 2009 and 2013.

Control measures in the SIP that are used to reduce CO emissions include the Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) program, the Low Enhanced Motor Vehicle inspection and maintenance (I/M) program, and the eleven TCMs.

Transportation Conformity Process

The transportation conformity regulations that detail implementation of the new requirements were first issued in November 1993, and have been revised numerous times since. The regulations detail the process for transportation agencies to demonstrate and ensure that air pollutant emissions from transportation sources are consistent with air quality goals.

The MPOs that cover designated nonattainment areas, such as SMTC, are subject to two sets of related regulations: the USDOT's Metropolitan Planning Regulations (23 C.F.R. Part 450) and EPA's transportation conformity regulations (40 C.F.R. Part 93). Basically, the transportation regulations require that projects proposed for funding with FHWA and FTA monies in nonattainment areas cannot proceed unless they come for an air quality "conforming" TIP and Plan. The EPA conformity regulation details how the conformity analysis is to be done.

An area's official attainment designation is based on the pollutant levels that are *physically* monitored by NYSDEC. Until it reaches attainment, the MPO must *theoretically* demonstrate that the implementation of projects and strategies in

the TIP and Plan meet the emission tests established in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to enable the area to reach attainment. This analysis process is known as the conformity process (i.e.; “conform” to the SIP). The analysis is based on “modeled” levels of pollutant emissions, using an MPO’s travel demand forecasting model and EPA’s latest MOBILE emissions model.

The FHWA and FTA jointly, in consultation with EPA, make the determination of whether or not a transportation plan and TIP is in conformance with the SIP. However, there are also two State agencies involved in reviewing the conformity analyses: NYSDOT and NYSDEC. In order to better coordinate the Federal, State and local reviews and discussions, *Interagency Consultation* procedures have been developed to ensure that all groups are appropriately involved. In New York, the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) is composed of five permanent members: FHWA (New York Division), FTA (Region II), NYSDOT, NYSDEC and EPA (Region II), with representation from an MPO when the subject matter directly pertains to said MPO. The ICG reviews the air quality analyses on draft TIPs and draft Plans before finalization so as to identify problems before the MPO formally acts on the TIP and/or Plan.

Nonattainment and Planning Boundaries

In air quality nonattainment/maintenance areas, the MPO’s planning area boundary (MPA) is required to encompass the entire nonattainment area – unless the Governor and the MPO agree otherwise.⁷² EPA designated all of Onondaga County as nonattainment for CO. Since the SMTC planning boundaries covers all of Onondaga County, this requirement is satisfied.

Conformity of the 2025 Plan and 2006-2010 TIP

SMTC’s 2025 *Long Range Transportation Plan, 2004 Update* received a positive conformity determination from FHWA/FTA on July 26, 2004. The air quality analysis in the upcoming TIP - 2006-2010 TIP - is based on the analysis in the 2025 Plan and that in the previously approved 2003-2006 TIP.⁷³

SMTC originally determined conformity for the *SMTC 2003-2006 TIP* on August 25, 2003; when SMTC adopted the new Plan in 2004, the 2003-2006 TIP was also checked to assure that it still met conformity regulations (it did). A conformity determination is good for three years, assuming nothing significant changes in the interim, so the Plan’s conformity is valid until July 26, 2007; however, the TIP is subject to a two-year update cycle, so SMTC needed a new TIP in 2005.

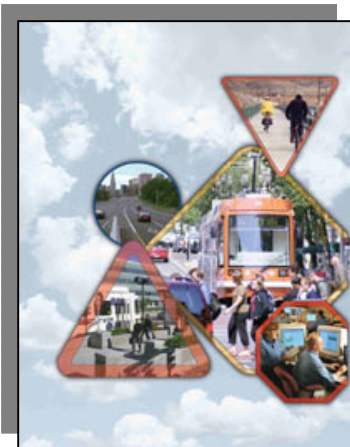
As noted previously, the air quality analysis in the 2006-2010 TIP relies on the air quality analysis of the 2025 Plan. SMTC has gotten agreement from the ICG to take advantage of the provisions of Section 93.122(g)(1) of the EPA conformity regulation, which allows an MPO to rely on the conformity analysis of an existing valid Plan in order to adopt a new TIP without a new emissions analysis. Certain tests are needed⁷⁴:

- The TIP contains all projects that must be started in the TIP’s timeframe in order to achieve the highway and transit system envisioned by the Plan.
- All TIP projects, which are regionally significant, are included in the Plan with design concept and scope adequate to determine their contribution to the Plan’s regional emissions at the time of the Plan’s conformity analysis.

- The design concept and scope of each regionally significant project in the TIP is not significantly different from that described in the Plan.
- The previous regional emissions analysis is consistent with the requirements of §§93.118 (including that conformity to all currently applicable budgets is demonstrated) and/or 93.119, as applicable.

After extensive discussions and review of projects in the proposed *2006-2010 TIP*, the ICG agreed that the *2006- 2010 TIP* did meet the above tests and that the TIP did not include any additional non-exempt projects or significant changes to previously adopted TIP. ICG therefore agreed that the SMTC could use the provision of Section 93.122(g) in order to adopt the *2005-2010 TIP*. The final conformity determination on the TIP is now in the process of approval by FHWA and FTA, in consultation with the EPA.

CMAQ Program



***CMAQ: Advancing
Mobility and Air Quality***
FHWA May 2003

The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* established the Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program (CMAQ) as a new FHWA funding category, the purpose of which is to help air quality nonattainment areas reach attainment. CMAQ funds come to the State (NYSDOT) in a lump sum determined by the relative population and severity of nonattainment in the nonattainment areas in the State versus other States. The State can choose to allocate the funds among nonattainment areas as it sees fit; however, NYSDOT

commendably allocates the CMAQ funds among its nonattainment areas in the same proportion as the federal formula. According to the formula, the SMTC annually gets approximately \$3 million in Federal CMAQ monies to spend in Onondaga County.

The SMTC ranks among the best in New York MPOs for its analysis process when considering candidate projects for CMAQ funding. As noted in the TIP section of this report, SMTC solicits candidate projects through a call letter. Applicants must make out and Initial Project Proposal for their project. In addition, those projects for which CMAQ funds are requested must also have a supplemental CMAQ application in addition to the IPP.

SMTC staff reviews the proposed CMAQ projects and does a detailed analysis to estimate potential emission benefits. If eligible, SMTC sends a letter advising the project sponsor. The Capital Projects Committee rank projects based on LRTP and CMAQ projects by plan goals and objectives as well as air quality benefit/cost.

After a project is deemed eligible, the next step in the authorization process is a "Completeness Determination" (CD) by the NYSDOT Environmental Analysis Bureau, Air Quality Section (NYSDOT EAB). A CD is a determination made by the NYSDOT EAB that the application for obligation of CMAQ funds is complete and the estimates defensible. This requires a current, complete IPP, an air quality analysis showing the air quality benefits and from where the calculations were derived, and a request by the SMTC for approval of the obligation based on environmental factors. For those projects that have been funded in a previous year with CMAQ funds and are requesting additional funding, the CD process must be initiated again. An air analysis is needed each year for each request utilizing current emission factors and documenting the

project/program's success. The CD packet is submitted to the NYSDOT EAB by the SMTC and a copy kept in the project files.

SMTC has - by far - the most complete documentation of a project's CMAQ eligibility of any New York MPO. This information is essential in maintaining the integrity of the CMAQ program (i.e.; Congressional intent) as well as positioning SMTC well for the anticipated reviews of the Federal aid programs as part of FHWA's stewardship verification in the coming years. We consider this effort to be a best practice. We congratulate the SMTC.

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 "Powered by Natural Gas" on the vehicles.

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 infrastructure⁷⁵.

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 enacted tax incentive legislation in NY State.

The CCCNY has helped develop a local AF infrastructure through its outreach activity. For example, the CNYRTA 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 one of the original eighteen stakeholders and, at one time, was a major supporter of CCCNY activities. The SMTC offices housed the CCCNY effort until CCCNY moved to Onondaga County Community College, and it provided funding through the UPWP to the effort. However, this coordination has discontinued of late.

Energy/Greenhouse Gas Analyses

In June 2003, a new *State Energy Plan* became law in New York. As part of that Energy Plan, MPOs are now required to perform energy and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) analyses on TIPs and Plans. The State goal is to hopefully reduce energy usage and GHG emissions by 5% below 1990 levels by 2010 and 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 through informed decision-making. The inclusion of energy and GHG calculations in Plans and TIPs is not a Federal requirement.

To help the MPOs meet the requirements of the Energy Plan, the NYSDOT Main Office's Environmental Analysis Bureau (EAB) developed guidelines on how the analyses should be done⁷⁶; this includes capturing both the direct energy (energy that will be used after the project is open) and the indirect energy (energy needed to build the project). A calculation of the generated GHGs is similarly required. These analyses were quite onerous when an MPO first does them, but subsequent updates are less time consuming. We have recommended to EAB that the analysis be simplified, and possibly eliminate the inclusion of Indirect Energy in the analysis.⁷⁷

SMTC's analyses concluded that the *2006-2010 TIP* and *2025 Plan* "build" scenarios would use less energy and emit less GHG than the "no-build". For the

direct energy/GHG calculations, SMTC based their approach on EAB's methodology to the extent that their model data permitted. For on-road vehicles, VMT and speeds from their travel demand model were used. SMTC calculated Indirect Energy by applying Construction Energy Factors to the output of the build scenario. GHG emissions were calculated from the energy calculations.

In these initial cycles of displaying energy and GHG usage, the information did not influence any decisions relating to the projects placed on the TIP or Plan. Rather, the information was mostly used for reporting by the NYSDOT Main Office on the Energy Plan. However, we do note that NYSDOT Main Office does closely evaluate the information, especially if the energy in the "build" scenarios is close to exceeding that of the "no build" scenario.

FHWA supports the State's efforts to conserve energy and reduce GHG emissions through voluntary measures. However, we also have expressed a concern over the potential amount of MPO staff time that this exercise might entail. The inclusion of energy and GHG data in the TIPs and Plans may be theoretically worthwhile in providing an additional tool for making transportation decisions, but it is not a federal requirement. Rather, this activity is an unfunded State mandate.

During this initial cycle of the analyses, FHWA has allowed the use of PL funds to support this activity. The purpose of PL funds, however, is to support the MPO in carrying out the federal requirements, and spending an inordinate amount of time on non-federally mandated activity will inevitably take away from the quality of mandated activities. FHWA may limit the PL eligibility of this activity to a nominal amount of time if these analyses become overly time-consuming to any MPO staff.

XII. Congestion Management System

“The need to relieve congestion and prevent congestion from occurring where it does not yet occur, including---in TMA’s, a congestion management system that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies in accordance with 450.320.”

23 CFR 450.316(a)(3)(ii)

Because of the designation of a TMA, the SMTC must have a Congestion Management System (CMS). The CMS is actually a process that is designed with the goals of providing the opportunity for the MPOs, the member agencies, and the general public, to measure existing and future regional congestion, quantify the effectiveness of proposed strategies on reducing congestion, and offer strategies in developing and implementing practical measures in managing congestion.

Importance of the CMS

There are several reasons why the CMS is important to the TMA. First is the regulatory reason: the SMTC is under a restriction applicable to all TMAs designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide: Federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles (a new general purpose highway on a new location or adding general purpose lanes, with the exception of safety improvements or the elimination of bottlenecks) unless the

project results from a CMS.⁷⁸ Thus, the MPO may add an additional lane only if that is the only feasible way to resolve a problem. Even then, the regulations require that such projects shall incorporate all reasonably available strategies to manage the SOV facility effectively (or to facilitate its management in the future).

The second reason why the CMS is important is that it can save drivers money. The Road Information Program (TRIP) estimates that New York’s roadways that lack desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions cost the state’s drivers nearly \$16 billion (\$15.7 billion) annually in the form of traffic accidents, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays. Congestion reduces mobility and accessibility to employment and other opportunities within the region. It also impacts travel times, fuel consumption, the emission of air pollutants, and goods movement costs.

While recognizing its importance, the CMS is still just one component – albeit a potentially important one - of the larger regional planning process. It is no a replacement for existing planning procedures, and congestion is not the only factor under consideration when determining the priority of transportation projects. The proper role of the CMS is as a sub-process that adds value to the planning process by providing agencies, the public and decision-makers with a tool by which congestion can be examined in greater detail.



SMTC's Approach to Congestion Management

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 estimates⁷⁹ 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.

The SMTC adopted its original Congestion Management System (CMS) approach on October 23, 1997. The CMS is composed of 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.
- 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 was formed (City of Syracuse's Department of Public Works, Onondaga County Department of Transportation, SOCPA, CNYRTA, NYSDOT, and NYS Thruway Authority) that contributed to the review of the performance evaluation and

evaluation of alternative strategies. This Working Group now is known as the CMS Study Advisory Committee (SAC).

SMTC released its formal CMS Report (CMS Final Report 2001-2002 UPWP) in April 2002; SMTC is poised to release a second report updating this activity this summer.

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. Initially, 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 consultant⁸⁰ to count traffic at the 19 intersections during the morning and evening peak periods. Since then, the SAC decided to discontinue the 15-minute counts, believing that hourly intervals were sufficient for the CMS analysis due to lack of congestion in the area.

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, SMTC analyses the count data biennially. SMTC 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 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.

Data Analysis

Congestion is often a subjective concept. The CMS regulations recognize that the definition of “congestion” usually differs from one MPO to another: “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.”⁸¹ Thus, a resident of Syracuse would have a different idea of acceptable congestion than a resident of Manhattan.

The degree of congestion of a certain vehicle flow is usually related to the capacity of the roadway. The *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) defines capacity as “the 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 are established in the HCM to evaluate operating conditions, ranging from a high Level-of-Service A (vehicles are free to maneuver within the traffic stream), down to Level-of-Service F (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).

Most MPOs measure congestion either by LOS or by travel time/delay in excess of that normally incurred under free-

flowing travel conditions. The SMTC uses both measures in a two-tiered analysis approach.

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 at all count locations; if a segment’s v/c ratio exceeds 90 percent of the roadway’s calculated capacity (i.e.; > 0.9), the segment is considered congested and advances to the Tier 2 analysis. This corresponds to a Level of Service “E” in standard Highway Capacity Manual terms.⁸²

Following the most recent analysis of available data, there were fifty-seven road segments identified as being congested in the PM peak hour, thus advancing to the Tier 2 analysis to determine the magnitude of the congestion.

SMTC uses a somewhat different approach in evaluating congestion at intersections. AM and PM peak counts are entered into either Highway Capacity Software (HCS) or Synchro traffic signal timing software to determine the existing Level of Service that each intersection was operating at. In evaluating intersections, a LOS “E” represents operating conditions are at capacity, and a LOS “F” indicates a breakdown in the flow of traffic (i.e., the intersection is failing). LOS “E” is an acceptable level of service for most intersections, but it can also indicate that an intersection is congested, and the SMTC view them as such. SMTC’s analysis showed that eight intersections were operating at a LOS of E. Seven other intersections were even worse, operating at a LOS F (failing). Thus, the CMS analysis identified thirteen intersections as congested, showing a LOS of E or F

Tier 2: This second-level analysis involves a more detailed performance measure of the congested roadway segments - *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.). SMTC applied an Excess Delay formula⁸³ to the fifty-seven roadway segments identified in Tier 1 to identify those segments that were experiencing excess delay.

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	

The latest CMS Report shows that the five roadway segments in the SMTC area with the highest level of congestion (excess delay) are:

- I-690 from Access West St. to Access I-81 southbound
- I-690 from Access I-81 eastbound to Access Teall Ave.
- I-81 from Junction E. Adams St. to Access I-690
- State Route 92 from End Route 5 Overlap to Woodchuck Hill Rd.

- State Route 936 C/D from Syracuse East City Line to Junction Route 930P

None of these roadway segments had a magnitude greater than “1”. Since a value of “2” rates as “significant”, the CMS does not identify any roadway segments as having significant congested.

Speed Data

Accurate speed data is a critical data need in the air quality conformity analyses, and it can be a significant indicator of congestion. SMTC has begun to compile hourly speed data so that it might better estimate excess delay in its CMS reports. NYSDOT has requested that this data be collected in cooperation with the NYSDOT, and preferably at the NYSDOT traffic count stations. As a starting point, speed counts at thirteen locations throughout the county were provided to the SMTC by the NYSDOT.

During the review, we offered the example of how the Baltimore MPO approached collecting speed data. In this case, the MPO used Global Positioning System (GPS) in the collection of such data. In addition, it created a a GIS-based application to aid in the processing, management, display and reporting of GPS speed data. This GPS/GIS application allows for the use of speed data for projects such as origin-destination studies, CMS reporting, emissions modeling, and validation and refinement of the travel demand model. SMTC staff did not think that this approach was worthwhile in the Syracuse area due to the lack of congestion. Since most highways operate at posted speeds, a GPS effort might be overkill.

Use of CMS Information

In the 2002 Certification Review, the Federal agencies made a recommendation that the SMTC consider a stronger link between the output of the CMS analysis and

the TIP/LRP efforts. In response, SMTC has gone to a two-year CMS to allow for its use more directly in TIP programming. The analyses will be completed in the non-TIP years so that the results of the CMS can be available to use in determining which potential TIP projects may help to alleviate congestion. We believe that this is a good approach.

Shared Cost Initiative

For some small and medium-sized MPOs like SMTC, the CMS has not developed a close fit with existing planning practices. Where congestion is a marginal or absent issue, the CMS appears to offer limited benefits which consuming significant staff resources.

Hoping to make the CMS more practicable in the area, SMTC is now leading the SCI study entitled **Relevant Congestion Mitigation System (CMS) Best Practices**. The purpose of the \$80,000 consultant study is to highlight nationwide best practices in the area of CMS and eventually develop a compendium of innovative CMS practices (i.e.; toolbox). SMTC is commended for leading this effort.

XIII. Safety

“In general, --The metropolitan transportation planning process for a metropolitan area under this section shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will--

(B) increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.” 23 USC 134 (f)(B)

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) added the above element to the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs and Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are required to address safety and security in the planning process. SAFETEA-LU breaks the two issues into separate elements.

Safety has been part of most MPO processes for quite some time, but little consideration has been given to security issues nationwide to date. This Section will discuss how SMTC is including the safety element in its planning process. For the purposes of this discussion, “safety” will evaluate how SMTC plans for the reduction of the number and severity of accidents (vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian). “Security” will look at how the area is planning for major disruptions (intended or not).

Safety Considerations

Community Safety is one of the six Goals in the Long Range Transportation Plan – significantly, it is mentioned first. Safety is a specific consideration in all SMTC planning products (LRTP, TIP, UPWP, etc.)

There are several venues through which that element receives attention in the process:

UPWP Activity

For several years, SMTC has been annually funding a task in its UPWP entitled Safety Improvement Analysis, the purpose of

which is to identify traffic safety locations, analyze the reasons for the incident occurrences and make recommendations for improvement. Recommendations are given to the sponsoring agency, which then has this information available for use during the TIP development process.

The largest portion of the effort was concentrated on Syracuse and Onondaga County roadways. Ten project locations, alternating by year between the City and the County, were analyzed each year. For the local municipalities, a call letter is sent out offering assistance on evaluating safety issues at individual intersections under local jurisdiction. The SMTC staff completed a detailed analysis of each location, including collision diagrams, timing and phasing plans, level of service analyses and recommendations for improvement. A detailed report containing the reasons why the accidents were occurring was issued. The responsible agency then has this information available during the TIP development process if it desires to sponsor a candidate TIP project.

In addition to the above analyses, the UPWP task provided funds for the SMTC staff to annually update the NYSDOT’s Centralized Local Accident Surveillance System (CLASS) data in the SMTC database.

However, the task was dropped in the 2005 Amendment to the 2006/06 UPWP. The reason for this action was the unavailability of the crash data. The NYSDMV is working on an electronic database, and most of the current data is not yet recoded into the database. Since SMTC needs three years of accident data to analyze



historic trends at locations, the task was not viable this year.

We believe that this activity provided a vital service to the area and recommend that it be restarted as soon as the accident data again become available.

Long Range Transportation Plan

As mentioned earlier, Community Safety is the first of six Goals established in the Plan. The Plan devotes a complete chapter to the issue. The main focus of the planning effort is on reducing accidents (as opposed to personal safety on buses, etc.)

TIP Project Development

SMTC's TIP Development Process requires an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of any proposed safety improvement as part of the PIP application for new projects. SMTC does not have – nor is it required to have – a point ranking technique for prioritizing projects for inclusion in TIP. SMTC does include “safety” as a specific consideration under six points of their TIP Project Evaluation Criteria Checklist when reviewing candidate TIP projects.⁸⁴

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

The SMTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (March 2005) addresses several aspects of safety. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Map was completed which identified and ranked various roadways according to their suitability for cycling, taking into account the terrain, geometry and safety of the roadways. In addition, the map highlights bicycle laws, including the local helmet law. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan project also identified the locations of both high vehicular/pedestrian and vehicular/bicycle collisions.

Onondaga County Traffic Safety Advisory Board

The SMTC staff actively participates on the OCTSAB, coordinating meetings and preparing meeting minutes. OCTSAB administers and is responsible for the oversight of monies received from the New York State Governors Traffic Safety Committee. Besides SMTC staff participation, the Office of the County Executive, the OCDOT and NYSTA, all of which are SMTC member agencies, hold a voting position on the OCTAB. The NYSDOT, Onondaga County Legislature, and the City of Syracuse DPW are stakeholders and also actively participate in OCTSAB activities. Ms. Patricia Wortley of the SMTC staff serves as Secretary of the OCTSAB.

From the consideration of safety in the transportation planning process, we believe that SMTC does a good job.

XIV. Security Considerations

“In genera. --The metropolitan transportation planning process for a metropolitan area under this section shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will--

(B) increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.” 23 USC 134 (f)(B)

Three years before the September 11th terrorist attack, the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) added the “safety and security” element to the metropolitan transportation planning process. *SAFETEA_LU* breaks Safety out as a separate element of the planning process.

Safety has been part of most MPO processes for quite some time, but little consideration has been given to security issues nationwide to date. Even our perception of what “security” means has changed since TEA-21. Prior to September 11th, the normal connotation of security was mostly focused at the personal level, such as person being secure from harassment when riding transit. Now, our perception is more global in nature. General Tommy Franks has characterized the September 11th attack and its aftermath as a “crease in history.”⁸⁵

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.

According to a recent NCHRP Study entitled *Incorporating Security into the Transportation Planning Process*, some of the reasons why little consideration has been given to security are the widespread confusion over that specifically security refers to, which level of government is responsible, where the funding for these initiatives will come from, and how federal legislation can be interpreted regarding the need to specifically address security as a core element of the required transportation planning process.⁸⁶

The following discussion looks at how SMTC is approaching the issue of security in its planning process. For the purposes of this discussion, “Security” will deal with significant disruptions to the transportation system, either long or short term, intentional or not.

Security Considerations in the SMTC Planning Process

Nationwide, the issue of security is not yet a significant part of the MPO planning processes, and SMTC is no exception. The SMTC planning process has not been yet



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

addressing the issue of security per se. We do note that some of the member agencies are addressing the topic individually. These measures include video surveillance cameras⁸⁷, photo IDs for employees, new fencing around facilities and so on.

In the *2025 Plan*, SMTC does notes that Homeland Security is an emerging issue:

“Since September 11, 2001, security has affected all levels of government in a substantial manner. Transportation is no exception. Most of the issues relating to security and transportation are outside of the purview of the MPO. The MPO can, however, act as a conduit to facilitate interagency cooperation to that end.”⁸⁸

The *Plan* goes on to state that future editions of the LRTP will address the issue further.

While security is not a formal category in SMTC’s planning process, there are several ongoing activities in which SMTC does relate to the issue. Foremost among those activities are those related to the Syracuse Intelligent Transportation System.

Intelligent Transportation Systems for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area

A significant component of security is the ability to quickly and effectively manage major disruptions in the transportation system, and the cornerstone of that ability is effective and coordinated communications. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) concept is central to this effort. It is the intelligent use of highway, transit, toll and communications technology in a coordinated fashion to make the existing transportation system more flexible to changing travel patterns.

A dynamic ITS program readily lends itself to the advancement of security on the transportation system. For example, it can:

- ◆ Enable the minimization of response time to incidents and accidents through the use of incident management programs
- ◆ Provide capability for real time traffic information to help motorists avoid congestion
- ◆ Reduce weather related traffic incidents by using Road-Weather Information Systems (RWIS) to sense and respond to snow and icing more quickly
- ◆ Improve emergency management communications and provides real-time information to improve emergency vehicle routing
- ◆ Improve on-time performance and security for transit users through the use of automatic vehicle locator systems.

In addition, ITS can promote inter-agency communication, cooperation and data distribution. Through ITS, different jurisdictions can work together to manage the regional transportation network as a seamless whole.

In the Syracuse area, the integration of ITS into the transportation planning, programming and operations process has occurred largely through the work of NYSDOT and the SMTC. The foundational document is the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategic Plan, which was released in 2003. The document, developed for NYSDOT by a consultant⁸⁹, had significant input from major ITS stakeholders in the region.⁹⁰ The NYSDOT Region 3 and Mary Rowlands of the SMTC staff participated at length in the Plan’s development. The Summary Report contained a conceptual plan, ITS regional architecture, and ITS Implementation Plan for the next 20 years.

The Syracuse ITS Plan attempts to coordinate and link the operational capabilities of agencies in the area. For example, there are a variety of agencies with

specific operational responsibility for the major transportation systems in the area.

Operational responsibility:

- NYSDOT and the Thruway are responsible for all freeway operations. The State owns and operates the traffic control devices on its arterials and freeways, and the New York State Police is responsible for law enforcement.
- The City of Syracuse is responsible for the operation of the City arterial network that handles most of the region's traffic. The City Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation and control of all traffic signals, and several traffic control and monitoring devices such as cameras on city arterials. The City established its Traffic Control Center 1999 to better coordinate the traffic flow in the Downtown and University areas. The 143 traffic signals in this system can be controlled remotely from the TCC. Enforcement within the city limits is the responsibility of the Syracuse City Police.
- Outside the city limits, Onondaga County owns, maintains and operates the county road network. The County Sheriff's Office is responsible for law enforcement in the County region. All emergency operations within the City and County limits are carried out from the E-911 Center that is responsible for all law enforcement and emergency response.

Communications:

- CNYRTA is currently in the process of deploying a Mobile Data Acquisition System that has the capacity of Automatic Vehicle Identification and two-way data and voice transmission.

- The Onondaga County 911 Emergency Communications Center operates 15 microwave links in the County. All emergency services and vehicles are dispatched through this telephone contact. It serves 57 fire departments, 19 police departments and 19 ambulance corps.
- The City's Downtown Interconnect Project includes a centralized signal system, a CCTV surveillance system and a fiber optic communication network. The data from various intersections is communicated to the city Traffic Operations Center.

An effective ITS must be able to effectively share information. At present, the stakeholder agencies in Syracuse are concentrating on building the Regional Information Sharing Network, which will be an electronic communication network among the agencies where regional construction activities, incidents and special events can be shared across boundaries. The Network, also known as the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transportation Network (SMARTNET), is the first early action project upon which to build the basis of all future integration and information sharing needs. NYSDOT has assumed the Champion role and will lead this effort on behalf of the region.

SMARTNET will be a multimodal, multi-agency system. The architecture of the SMARTNET system should provide for future integration with ITS systems as well as dissemination of real-time information among agencies. The integration is starting to take shape with the I-81 Freeway Management System in such a manner that real time traffic conditions can be collected along the I-81 corridor

Freeway Information Management System

The Syracuse Region is presently progressing two Freeway Incident Management System (FIMS) projects on I-81. A third FIMS

project on Route I-481 from Route I-690 to Route I-81 is in the scoping phase with an anticipated letting in 2006.

Phase I of the first I-81 project will monitor Route I-81 from the south interchange with Route I-481 north through the City of Syracuse to the north interchange with Route I-481, including access to Carousel Mall. FIMS components include closed-circuit television (CCTV), speed sensors, dynamic message signs (DMS), and a wireless communication system; completion scheduled for late 2005. Phase II of the FIMS (contract was let in January 2005) will monitor the Interstate portion of I-690 from the Van Vleck Blvd. Exit east through the City of Syracuse to the interchange with I-481. Phase II will employ many of the same components as Phase I and serve to extend the coverage area.

To be able to make use of the information from the FIMS, NYSDOT has established a Transportation Management Center (TMC) in the Syracuse State Office Building. The TMC is staffed by Department personnel and is operating on a full-time basis. The TMC staff now dispatches snow and ice operations for Onondaga County, operates the permanent and portable DMS in the Syracuse area, and keeps the SMARTNET database current. When construction is completed on Phases I and II of the Freeway Incident Management System, the TMC will begin operation of the CCTV cameras and new DMS installed on Routes I-81 and I-690. The TMC also piloted an automatic vehicle locator project on twelve snowplow trucks in Onondaga County.

The integration of real time traffic condition will be via a Data Interface and will provide data on the State facilities to other agencies. Upon further expansion of the freeway coverage (i.e., I-690, I-481, etc.), the Data Interface will share additional traffic conditions with the appropriate agencies.

Onondaga County Infrastructure Task Force

Work is underway to establish a common communication channel which would allow for the capability of shared camera use by all agencies, including the existing cameras on the interconnect system as well as any future cameras added by expansion projects. This would allow viewing of the NYSDOT owned cameras covering I-81 and eventually parts of I-481 and I-690.

NYSDOT Traffic Operations Working Group

Under the UPWP Task titled Operations and Integration, the SMTC staff is participating on a NYSDOT Traffic Operations Working Group (same players as the ITS Strategic Plan), which is addressing various aspects relating to operations on the interstate system and ITS. The initial assignment of this group is to develop pre-set detour routes to assist with incident management. The SMTC will perform a lot of the mapping associated with this activity.

CNYRTA Activities

As required under 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(d), a FTA Section 5307 grant recipient must use a minimum of one percent of its annual FTA Section 5307 apportionment for mass transportation security projects. Over the past several years CNYRTA has implemented measures to enhance security at their maintenance facility. They have installed a new camera surveillance system, fencing and gates around the perimeter of the facility, and a personnel door security system with controlled access to the rest of the facility.

For transit services, CNYRTA has carried out several security and security coordination measures. Off duty Onondaga Sheriffs deputies are employed by Centro on

Saturday evenings to provide security during the evenings and ride trips that had been experiencing gang-related activities. Syracuse Police Department generally does not generate accident reports if it does not meet the threshold of \$1000 in property damage or if injuries have occurred. This information becomes part of CNYRTA's "Collision/Safety and Security Database" which is used for trend analysis and training programs for bus operators. At the request of CNYRTA, the Police Department has agreed to generate a report for all accidents involving Centro vehicles regardless of injuries or damage.

Periodically, CNYRTA responds to requests from the American Red Cross, City and County Fire Departments, City and County Police Agencies, and the Onondaga County 911 Center to provide service for emergencies. For example, CNYRTA provided service for several apartment fires, a train derailment, and an accident involving an overturned bus. CNYRTA buses were used as sheltered rest areas for emergency personnel or to provide temporary shelter for displaced persons.

Road Weather Information Systems (RWIS)

In New York State, RWIS is a public / private partnership that combines technologies to gather data and then uses this data to develop information that will assist a variety of roadway-related decision makers. NYSDOT began evaluating Road Weather Information System technology in 1987; today there are RWIS systems statewide in the Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Corning, Long Island, Rochester, Utica, Syracuse and Watertown areas. These systems provide site-specific weather and pavement condition data for both current conditions and forecasted conditions.

The three elements of the RWIS are: environmental sensor systems to collect data, processing systems to develop forecasts and provide information, and dissemination platforms to display the analyzed

information. The environmental sensors are connected to a remote processing unit (RPU) on NYSDOT highways statewide, and the RPU. The RPU transmits the data to central servers that collect raw data, analyze it, communicate the results, distribute the "nowcasts" or forecasts and then archive the data.

Coordination with Non-Transportation Agencies

We note that NYSDOT Region 3 has met with representatives from Upstate Medical University to discuss sharing of a highway incident video to assist emergency room physicians in preparing for incoming patients.⁹¹ Upstate is the largest of the five Syracuse hospitals and houses a Level 1 Trauma Center. The video would include a wireless feed of the overall crash scene showing number of vehicles involved, severity of vehicle damage, and initial EMS treatment. Agreements on the extent of video to be sent and use of the video must be developed to ensure protection of personal identifier information. The Region has also met with other local agencies, including the Onondaga County 911 center as well as the local media in anticipation of further sharing of video information.

Observations

Syracuse has some high-profile facilities – most notably those on University Hill - that might be attractive to someone wanting to bring attention to a particular cause. If *DestiNY USA* becomes a reality, the area will undoubtedly incur a much greater chance of a terrorist incident. Even apart from a terrorist incident, an event that seriously impacts the transportation system doesn't have to be intentional (i.e., hazardous waste spill, accidental fire the compromises the structural integrity of highway or rail bridge, etc.)

The first reaction of many when discussing the security of the transportation system is prevention. Prevention attempts to limit access to assets that may be

compromised. These measures include access control systems, closed circuit television systems, and intrusion detection systems. Such efforts are usually employed at ports, transit facilities, and airports. In fewer instances, prevention measures are evaluated for major bridges and tunnels.

By and large, however, the free access to our transportation network of highways negates much of the prevention possibilities. The previously cited NCHRP notes, "While many safety programs focus on prevention measures through engineering or other means, prevention of terrorist or other serious events is, realistically, less feasible because of degree of system access. Focusing on response and recovery measures and system redundancy may be a better approach to terrorist events and acts of extreme violence than the development of prevention systems."⁹²

At this point in time, we agree that SMTC's best approach to transportation security is helping to facilitate discussion. However, it does have a very capable staff with some vital planning tools (modeling and GIS). These assets may be of use in emergency planning exercises, and the SMTC should consider offering these capabilities for use to the appropriate working groups and agencies. Also, the UPWP might accommodate a study(s) that can further the response to a major incident. Examples of possible UPWP studies are:

- Identification of potential traffic choke points on evacuation routes out of the

city in response to an incident downtown or on University Hill, and recommendations for measures (permanent and/or temporary) to address these points.

- Identification of possible measures to add capacity or reduce congestion along alternative routes during emergencies
- Expanded incident management efforts
- Alternatives to traffic signal control and surveillance capabilities should the City's Control Center or NYSDOT's TMC be compromised (e.g., computer hacker, bomb, etc.)

Recommendations

- SMTC should open a discussion with its members on its potential role in furthering the coordination and cooperation among member agencies on the security issue.
- SMTC should consider offering the GIS capabilities of its staff in emergency preparedness efforts.
- SMTC should evaluate the potential for UPWP studies addressing possible measures.

XVI. Preservation of Existing Infrastructure

“The transportation planning process shall explicitly consider... Preservation of existing transportation facilities and, where practical, ways to meet transportation needs by using existing transportation facilities more efficiently@ 23 CFR '450.316(a)(1)

The SMTC places a strong emphasis on maintaining the transportation infrastructure. Under the concept of preserving and maintaining the system, SMTC addresses the maintenance, repair and renewal of the existing highway and bridge system in a cost-effective manner. Appropriate investment in repair and renewal is said to be a higher priority than investment in expanded capacity. Public transit, sidewalks and bicycle facilities are included in the considerations.

SMTC's 2025 *Plan* identifies the preservation of the existing system and infrastructure as having the first claim on available resources.⁹³ Under 'Community Facilities', four objectives are shown⁹⁴:

- To stabilize pavement conditions at or above the following levels for all medium and high volume roads (greater than 2,500 Annual Average Daily Traffic): 11 percent poor; 26 percent fair and average condition rating of 7.0 for all medium and high volume roads by 2020.



Belgium Bridge Construction

- To maintain and/or 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.

One of the most effective ways in which to manage and assess the ongoing health of your pavement and bridge infrastructure is through the development of specific management systems. Such systems are well developed in the SMTC area.

Infrastructure Management Systems

A Bridge Management System is a method for tracking and addressing bridge conditions. Similarly, a Pavement Management System is a systematic method for tracking and addressing pavement conditions. A Bridge Management System exists for New York State, and individual Pavement Management Systems currently exist in the City of Syracuse (City), Onondaga County (County), and New York State. The goal of this project is to combine all of the data from the various jurisdictions into one management system that is linked to a Geographic Information System (GIS). By combining all of the condition ratings into a GIS format, data can be mapped, analyzed, presented and accessed in a most useful manner.

NYSDOT Bridge Management System

Onondaga County has 474 bridges on thruway, state, county and local roads. The NYSDOT maintains a Bridge Management System (BMS) for all of these bridges. The BMS rates the bridge deck, bearings and other structural elements on a weighted scoring system. Thruway, state and local bridges are rated by the NYSDOT on a scale of 1.0 to 7.0, with scores falling into three categories: Priority Deficient, Deficient, and Non-Deficient.

Bridges with a condition rating of less than 5.0 are deemed as being in a deficient condition. However, a deficient condition does not mean that the bridges are unsafe, but rather they are candidates for rehabilitation work, replacement or even perhaps closure. Priority deficient bridges are those which have a condition rating of less than 3.0, or a condition rating between 3.0 and less than 3.999 with an annual average daily traffic (AADT) of over 4,000 vehicles. Priority deficient bridges are given a priority for funding over those that are deficient.

State and local bridges are inspected every two years, regardless of condition rating. Many bridges with condition ratings of less than 3.0 have to be

closed to some or all traffic. All State and local bridges that are posted have a structural active or inactive red flag or active yellow flag are inspected every year.

The condition of bridges in the SMTC area has been a critical funding issue for a number of years. The large number of bridges and the percentage of bridges that are rated as Priority Deficient and Deficient combined with the limited amount of money available for funding improvements has made this a key improvement area noted by the NYSDOT and other SMTC member agencies.

Pavement Management Systems

The pavement condition data is collected annually by the City of Syracuse, the NYSDOT, the NYSTA, and the Onondaga County Department of Transportation for all federal aid eligible roads within their jurisdiction. The rating scale used for each of these jurisdictions is based on or converted to the NYSDOT scale.

Pavements have a varying life cycle dependent on many conditions. A Pavement Management System (PMS) allows agencies to determine the pavement rating relative to all other pavements in a jurisdiction. It also allows year-to-year monitoring of pavements and facilitates predictions of when to cost effectively overlay, rehabilitate or reconstruct a road. The NYSDOT PMS attempts to maximize the effectiveness of the limited dollars spent on maintaining pavements. The NYSDOT system uses a visual rating system with a scale of 1 to 10 for surface conditions, which are categorized into poor, fair, good, or excellent condition.

The Onondaga County
Department of Transportation

New York State Bridge Rating Chart		
Rating		Condition Description
1.0 – 2.999	Priority deficient	Bridge is given a priority for funding for rehabilitation or replacement
3.0 - 3.999 with AADT > 4,000	Priority deficient	Bridge is given a priority for funding for rehabilitation or replacement
3.0 - 3.999 with AADT < 4,000	Deficient	Bridge is a candidate for rehabilitation, replacement or perhaps closure.
4.0 – 4.999	Deficient	Bridge is a candidate for rehabilitation, replacement or perhaps closure.
5.0 – 7.0	Non Deficient	No bridge distress identified

(OCDOT) and the City of Syracuse also maintain pavement management systems. The City of Syracuse rates approximately half of the pavement each year in the City on a 1-10 scale, similar to the NYSDOT scale. Although the OCDOT rating system is not identical to the NYSDOT system, it is comparable since OCDOT also uses a 1-10 scale.

For non-City, non-County, or non-State federal aid eligible facilities, the NYSDOT has agreed to collect and provide the necessary data. The SMTC compiles the data and documents it in an annual report.

SMTC's BPMCS Annual Report includes: (1) comprehensive database of bridge and pavement conditions; (2) comparative database for individual road segments that shows condition by jurisdiction by year for all federal aid eligible roads; and (3) written report that contains the liberal use of maps, charts, and tables to show the current bridge and pavement conditions. 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. The SMTC's BPCMS is an example of MPO good practice.

New York State Pavement Condition Rating Chart		
Rating		Condition Description
U	Under Construction/No Data	Not rated due to ongoing work, or no data was available.
1-5	Poor	Distress is frequent and severe. These sections are flagged by the NYSDOT for further investigation and possible action.
6	Fair	Distress is clearly visible
7-8	Good	Distress symptoms are beginning to show.
9-10	Excellent	No pavement distress.

SMTC Coordination

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.

Funding for Infrastructure Maintenance

According to the *2025 Plan 2004 Update*, the largest share of the total resources available will be expended to maintain the existing transportation system. The maintenance of existing bridges and pavement is given \$1.64 billion (58.7% of the budget).⁹⁵

All agencies try to allocate TIP funds annually to address bridge and pavement maintenance needs in the most cost-effective way. For bridge needs, the deficiency rating is a major factor in the allocation of funds. The percentage of State-owned bridges in Onondaga County, in terms of the total number of bridges that are non-deficient, is 71.0%. The percentage of State-owned bridges, based on deck area of bridges that are non-deficient, is 70.5%. Since 1995, the Area has achieved its 2020 goal of 80% non-deficient by number and 83% by deck area. The percentage of deficient bridges in Onondaga County is lower than that of the entire six-county NYSDOT Region 3 area for State-owned bridges. The current condition for all local bridges in Onondaga County is 56.0% non-deficient.

Pavement condition, functional classification and traffic volumes are the major factors for fund allocation. From

1995 to 2000, the percentage of poor condition pavement for medium and high volume State roads has steadily decreased

and the area has met the 2025 Plan goals in this category.

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.

ATMS – Advanced Traffic Management System (ITS)

BMS – Bridge Management System

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.

Centro: the common name for CNYRTA

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.

CLASS – Centralized Local Accident Survey System

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

CNYRTA – Central New York regional Transportation Authority: the major transit operator in the SMTC area

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

CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide: the major greenhouse gas produced by transportation activity.

COE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

CSS – Context Sensitive Solutions

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement: a detailed statement required by the Environmental Policy Act of 1969 when applying for federal funds

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

FAA – Federal Aviation Administration

FFY – Federal Fiscal Year: October 1 to September 30

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration

FOCUS – Forging Our Community’s United Strength

FTA - Federal Transit Administration

GIS – Geographic Information System

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.

ICG - Interagency Consultation Group: agencies with oversight of transportation & air quality activities. It is composed of FHWA, FTA, NYSDOT, NYSDEC, and EPA, together with the impacted MPO.

IPP – Initial Project Proposal: Application needed for consideration of a candidate TIP project.

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.

LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan

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 – sometimes called the MPA.

MDA – Metropolitan Development Association

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.

MPA – Metropolitan Planning Area: the MPO's study area (see MAB)

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.

MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area: a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. Defined by the Office of Management and Budget

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.

NTD – National Transit Data

NYSDEC - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NYSDOT - NYS Department of Transportation

NYSERDA - NYS Energy Research & Development Authority

NYSMPOs – New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

NYSTA – New York State Thruway Authority

OCPN – Onondaga County Planning Board

OCDOT – Onondaga County Department of Transportation

OCIDA – Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency

PIN –Project Identification Number: identification number given by NYSDOT to each project.

PIP – Public Involvement Plan

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: matter may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, fumes, etc. PM-10, is particulate matter that is less than 10 microns in size. A micron is one millionth of a meter. Small particulate matter is too small to be filtered by the nose and lungs.

PM-2.5 - Particulate Matter with a diameter less than 2.5 micrometers (microns)

SAC – Study Advisory Committee

SAFETEA_LU – *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for User:* Federal law passed by Congress covering federally funded highway and transit programs for the period FFY 2005-2009.

SCI – Shared Cost Initiative

SEP – State Energy Plan

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.

SFY – State Fiscal Year: April 1 to March 30

SHPO - State Historic Preservation Officer

SIDA – Syracuse Industrial Development Agency

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).

SMTC – Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council: the existing name for the MPO for the Syracuse, NY urbanized area.

SOCPA – 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.

TAZ – Traffic Analysis Zone: The smallest geographical unit used in the travel-demand forecasting model.

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).

TCSPP - Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot 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.

TNT – Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today

TOA – NYS Transit Operating Assistance.

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

UAB – Urbanized Area Boundary: sometimes called the FHWA UAB. Boundary resulting from an MPO’s smoothing/adjusting of the Census UAZ

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

UZA – Urbanized Area Boundary: urbanized area boundary according to the Bureau of the Census.

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.

Status of the FHWA/FTA Certification Review Recommendations of November 2002

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.*
 - COMPLETED. SMTC staff worked with member agencies and local municipalities in a comprehensive effort to guide the process of revising the UAB. A revised UAB was devised and found acceptable to member agencies. The Urban Area Boundary was approved by the FHWA shortly after adoption by the SMTC Planning and Policy committees.

- *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.*
 - COMPLETED. As part of the above task, the MAB was revised simultaneously. A considerable outreach effort with undertaken with the municipalities in Oswego and Madison Counties that were to be added to the UAB and the MAB.

- *Once the revised UAB is established, the SMTC needs to evaluate and functionally reclassify its highway network.*
 - COMPLETED. Subsequently to completing the UAB expansion, the SMTC submitted its revised Functional Classification System to both NYSDOT and FHWA for the roads within the MPO area. The SMTC is still awaiting a response from the FHWA on this item.

- *The SMTC should reevaluate its coordination processes with Oswego and Madison Counties, and with the Onondaga Nation.*
 - ONGOING.

SMTC Staffing

- *The SMTC should consider the possible benefits of using the 2-year UPWP format.*
 - COMPLETED. The SMTC Policy Committee approved the first 2-year document, the 2004-2006 UPWP, on March 3, 2004 and the 2005-2006 UPWP Amendment was approved on March 14, 2005.

- *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.*
 - COMPLETED. The UPWP does include documentation of the appropriate projects

contained in the Statewide Planning and Research Program.

Long Range Transportation Plan

- None.

Land Use Planning

- None.

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.*

ONGOING. The staff as well as many individual member agencies are participating in the review of various DestiNY related proposals as necessary.

- *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.*

a. ONGOING. This is being accomplished via staff's and member agency reviews of the various proposals.

b. In addition, the SMTC's new TransCAD Travel Demand Model is nearly completed and will soon be able to provide assistance in evaluating this complex project.

Public Involvement

- *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 costs.*

COMPLETED. In the Winter 2002 issue of *Directions*, the SMTC's Newsletter, recipients were asked if they would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail. As of May 2005, 244 people receive the newsletter via e-mail and 1874 continue to receive via hard copy. Since that time, whenever a new contact is added to our database, they are also flagged to receive the newsletter via e-mail. The SMTC will continue its attempt to increase the number of electronic recipients.

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.*

COMPLETED. This recommendation was discussed with Region 3 of the New York State Department of Transportation and the TIP does indicate available

versus programmed in the sense that the projects are shown by fund source, by year, and the amount that is available is the amount that is programmed.

- *The SMTC should consider the possible public benefit of including GIS maps with the TIP projects located there.*

COMPLETED. The 2005-2010 TIP was approved by the Policy Committee approval on May 17, 2005 and does include GIS maps of the TP projects.

Congestion Management System

- *The SMTC 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 Study Advisory Committee (SAC) discuss linking the CMS analyses with possible remedial solutions.*

ONGOING. The SMTC has gone to a two-year CMS to allow for its use more directly in TIP Programming. Additionally, the locations analyzed were revised in 2003 to ensure that they were reflective of the current transportation issues in the area. In a related project, a statewide-shared cost initiative is being hosted by the SMTC to assist the NYS MPOS in developing a better CMS process and product. This effort, which is being conducted by a consultant, is seeking innovative examples of how other MPOs across the country have tied their CMS in with other programs and projects (such as the TIP). Because of the limited congestion that the SMTC experiences, the SMTC is particularly interested in getting the most out of our CMS product, so that it can be utilized to the fullest extent.

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.*

ONGOING. Traditionally, once a project has been approved for federal funding via the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) the SMTC has very little involvement and is usually not a participant in local development and design phases of a project. However, the member agencies are aware of the concepts and benefits of risk management are these being considered as appropriate.

Transit

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

ONGOING. The SMTC continues to work jointly with CNYRTA on a variety of transportation planning projects. Key staff members from CNYRTA sit on all of SMTC's

relevant transportation studies and provide valuable insight and ideas. Additionally, SMTC staff regularly attends CNYRTA monthly meetings to ensure that the MPO is kept apprised of key transit issues. Also, SMTC staff provides staff support to the CNTRTA on a variety of items such as their Title VI report, GIS mapping and analysis and other related items.

Intermodal Goods Movement & Rail Passenger Planning

- *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.*

PENDING. The SMTC has not yet been involved with the NYSDOT regarding the development of a statewide freight plan. If and when the NYSDOT does initiate said activities, the SMTC will cooperate and assist as necessary and appropriate, and will reflect said activities in the next update of or Long-Range Transportation Plan.

- *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.*

ONGOING. The SMTC area has several key and nationally significant and defense necessary critical rail line segments. The SMTC staff is knowledgeable about rail infrastructure security and alternate available routings. Staff communicates on a frequent basis with our regional rail partners including shortline and Class 1 carriers. There are no major projects in the region that currently impact rail security.

- *The SMTC should coordinate and carefully evaluate truck and rail freight recommendations coming out of the TCSP project for the Lakefront.*

PENDING. The SMTC was involved in Phase I of the City's Lakefront Study however; the continuation of the project has been on hold due to various uncertainties and modifications of the several proposed development projects in the Lakefront Area. When the City continues with the project, the SMTC will participate and pursue this recommendation as appropriate.

- *The SMTC should maintain its involvement in the various task forces and committees discussing High Speed Rail service in New York.*

ONGOING. To the best of my knowledge, no committees are currently meeting on this subject. However, active communication is maintained between various federal and state agencies and the SMTC staff on the existing program and future proposed initiatives.

Air Quality

- None.

Title VI & Environmental Justice

- *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 City plans to have the Truck Route Study recommendations completed through their signage revamp project by the fall of this year (2005).

- ***The SMTC should review the recommendations of its South Side study and evaluate progress toward implementation.***
 - a. Accomplishments include the installation of 3 new traffic signal cabinets and controllers between Matson and Dawes, which are fully actuated and synchronized. As a result, there are improved traffic and pedestrian movements. New ADA ramps have been installed at all intersections that have been part of a reconstruction project and others will be done in future projects. All pavement markings are repainted yearly. Any signage issues pertaining to parking regulations or pedestrian push button signage will be addressed in the signage revamp project, scheduled for this summer and fall. The City has also had Niagara Mohawk upgrade street lighting at many locations in the south side, including complete new lighting on S. State St. and many of the cross streets. The City of Syracuse also has two projects scheduled on the TIP pertaining to the South Side. The South Salina St.-Valley Plaza Corridor Improvements and the South Salina St. Paving Improvements Project, both scheduled to begin in 2007.
 - b. SMTC, at the request of the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, will be giving a presentation on relevant information from the South Salina Street Corridor Study in late May to the Southeast Gateway Business Association.
- ***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.***

ONGOING. The merits of CCS are being considered as appropriate.

The *Haudenosaunee*

When Europeans first arrived, there were two major groups of Indians in the northeast. The largest language group was the Algonquian, who were scattered from Canada to Virginia. This group included the Algonquin, Ottawa and Ojibwa peoples around the Great Lakes; the Delaware (also known as Lenapé or Unami), who were located in New Jersey and Delaware; the Abenaki-Penobscot of Maine; the Mahicans, (Mohicans⁹⁶), who were original natives on the banks of the Hudson River in present-day New York, but they were forced to leave their homelands by Dutch and British expansion and most resettled in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where they came to be known as Stockbridge Indians; and the Miami and Illinois to the West.

Iroquoian is the other major American Indian language group in the east. These include the Seneca, Tuscarora, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Cherokee, Huron (Wyandot), and Mingo. The first six Nations of the group formed the Iroquois League (Confederacy), which became the most powerful and influential Indian confederations in North American history. Most of this group prefers the name

Haudenosaunee (People building an extended Longhouse)⁹⁷. The name *Iroquois* is often shunned, as it was the name given to them by their enemies (Algonquin name for “rattlesnake” *Iroqu* + the suffix *ois* from the French).

History

The Haudenosaunee were originally part of the Huron race and resided in the

vicinity of Montreal. Subjugated by the Adirondack Indians (a branch of the Algonquin race), they rebelled but were defeated and fled south in approximately 1100 A.D. The Haudenosaunee who settled in present-day New York separated into what became the Five Nations, and they continually fought each other as a way of life. Warfare was a traditional way of gaining of prestige and honor. The warfare stopped with the founding of the Iroquois League or *Confederacy* in approximately 1500 AD. According to legend, Deganawidah founded the league by persuading the Five Nations to give up warring with each other. The prophet Hiawatha⁹⁸ (approximately 1530 AD) also traveled among the five Nations preaching unity. The Nations united in what proved to be a nearly invulnerable political alliance until its eventual collapse during the American Revolution. In 1715, the Tuscarora Nation migrated to upstate New York from North Carolina, fleeing a war with colonists; being an Iroquoian group, they were accepted into the confederacy, becoming the sixth Nation (although it had non-voting status).

Warfare and raiding against tribes outside the League afforded opportunities for young Iroquois warriors to earn prestige and honor. Initially, conquest and the gaining of economic and political advantages were of secondary importance. Eventually, however, in dealings with the British and French and, later, the British and the colonists, the league skillfully played off opposing parties against one another and subjugated neighboring tribes for both economic and territorial gains. Based in present day Upstate New York, the Iroquois Confederacy at its height (1680) 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,



The towns of Romigah and true form of their houses, covered and enclosed some in mats, and some in bark of pine. All arranged about in small poles stuck thick together in double file wall.

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 *Haudenosaunee* are a matriarchical society, and they were second to no other Native Americans in political organization, statecraft, and military prowess. They had the most organized political and social life of any Indians on the continent, far in advance of their neighbors including the white settlements in some respects. The League was modeled after family, clan, and community organizations; its aim was not only to unite its members through symbolic kinship relationships but to maintain the autonomy of individual tribal members. 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.

Being a matriarchal society, the most basic unit is the group of relatives who could trace their ancestry to a single woman. The eldest woman in this group was generally the head. Two or more such groups made up the *clan*. Each clan had its name a certain bird or animal (Turtle, Wolf, Bear, etc). Loyalty to the clan was at least as strong as loyalty to the Nation. For example, when two or more groups from several nations got together for a friendly game of lacrosse, clan membership decided what side you were on (example: the Wolf clan played the Bear clan). The clan structure was ingenious in stopping the intertribal warfare - if one Nation ever decided to attack another, it would be clan brother going against clan brother in addition to Nation against Nation. Women could vote and inherit property, the government was a



**Iroquois Longhouse
1600, NYS Museum**

rudimentary form of democracy, and the military organization was well developed.

The league's Grand Council consisted of 50 life-appointed male sachems, or peace chiefs, who were nominated by the headwoman of certain sachem-producing lineages in each clan. The Onondaga had 14 sachems, the Cayuga 10, the Oneida and Mohawk 9 each, and the Seneca 8. After lengthy ratification procedures, the council members became responsible for keeping the internal peace, representing the body of tribes to outsiders, and coordinating tribal activities in unified warfare against nonmembers. Major decisions were reached through unanimity, compensating for otherwise unequal tribal representation. An individual sachem could be deposed through impeachment proceedings initiated by his lineage's headwoman.

The *Haudenosaunee* were the longtime allies of the British, most likely as a reaction against earlier French-led incursions into their territory. The American Revolution saw the fracturing of the Iroquois Confederacy: the Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca and Onondaga Nations fought on the British side, while the Oneida sided with the colonists (as did the Tuscarora, who did not actively join in the fight). According to Houghton Mifflin's *Encyclopedia of American Indians*, "The Onondaga Nation was among the strongest voices supporting a position of neutrality that the confederacy generally followed during the wars between England and France in the eighteenth century. They were also solidly committed to neutrality as war between England and her American colonies unfolded, but at a critical moment their town was struck by a plague, which rendered them unable to host confederacy meetings. They were later attacked by Revolutionary forces whose leadership assumed the Onondaga Nation was supporting the British war effort."⁹⁹

In the summer of 1779, General George Washington sent three converging armies to devastate the enemy Iroquois'

homelands in Central New York. Crops and homes were destroyed, and the Confederacy never recovered. All six Nations fared badly following the Revolution. Many were relocated out of New York State, and the reservations were reduced in size over the years due to the sale of Indian land (now contested).

History of Land Claims Against the State of New York

In the last 35 years, the Nations of the *Haudenosaunee* have made legal efforts to regain sovereignty over their traditional lands that they believe was illegally taken from them. These claims are based on the fact that these Nations existed as sovereign nations with recognized borders before the United States or the State of New York came into existence. The Oneida Nation made the most significant land claim. The Oneidas actually sided with the colonists in the American Revolution, fought on the American side at the Battle of Oriskany in central New York, and even carried bushels of corn hundreds of miles to General Washington's troops at Valley Forge in 1777.

In 1783, the new U.S. government prohibited anyone but the federal government -- including the state governments -- from buying or taking land from Indian nations "without the express authority and directions of the United States in Congress assembled." In 1790, Congress passed the *Trade and Intercourse Act*¹⁰⁰, which confirmed that any purchases of Indian lands must have federal consent. All transactions involving land between Indians and anyone else, including state governments, must be approved and authorized by Congress. The U.S. government had recognized the Oneidas actions during the Revolution through several treaties, including the Treaty of Canandaigua in 1794, which confirmed that approximately 270,000 acres of land were reserved to the Oneidas to be their

property; and that the U.S. would never claim the same, nor disturb them. The Oneidas signed this treaty as an ally of the U.S. Between 1795 and 1846, however, New York State took most of their homeland through numerous treaties that were essentially imposed on the Oneidas. The Oneidas now argue that these treaties were in violation of the 1790 Act, since the President or the U.S. Senate did not approve these actions.

In 1970, the Oneida Nation filed a suit in federal court to establish the illegality of New York State's actions. Two lower federal courts ruled that they could not even address the merits of the Nation's claims. In 1974, the Supreme Court reversed those decisions and required the lower courts to hear the Oneidas' claim. In 1985, the Supreme Court again ruled in favor of the Oneida Nation and held that it had a valid claim to the land. Since then, numerous negotiations have occurred in an attempt to find a mutually satisfactory solution to proper compensation for the land.

Until recently, the Onondaga Nation had not shown much interest in participating in land claims against the New York State. Then, in March 2005, the Onondaga Indian Nation filed a federal lawsuit claiming 3.5 million acres of central New York.¹⁰¹ This involves a swath of land from the Canadian border to Pennsylvania, including land on which the cities of Watertown, Syracuse and Binghamton reside. However, this claim is different from the other Indian claims -- the Onondagas want to use their power over the territory to compel environmental cleanups and protection. They do not want to evict any landowners, do not seek any monetary damages, but they do want recognition that the land continues to belong to the Nation. Unlike other Nations with which the State has entered into and claim settlements, the Onondaga disdain gambling and do not want rights to a casino. The land claim does include the area in Syracuse, the proposed location of *DestinyUSA*; gaining title to that land would give the Onondaga a change to have a say in the project.

The Onondaga suit names as defendants the State of New York, the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, and five corporations who are named for environmental damage:

- Honeywell International, Inc., which owns several industrial properties along the southwest shore of Onondaga Lake
- Clark Concrete Company, and its subsidiary, Valley Realty Development, which own the Tully gravel mine that has degraded the headwaters of Onondaga Creek. The mining area also contains areas of significant archaeological and cultural sensitivity for the Onondaga Nation.
- Hansen Aggregates and its subsidiaries, which own the “Jamesville quarry” that sprawls across portions of the towns of DeWitt and Lafayette and is one of the largest open pit mines in New York State.
- Trigen Syracuse Energy Corporation, which owns an energy “cogeneration” plant in the Town of Geddes that burns a combination of coal and plastic/paper waste.

The Onondaga’s impetus is their belief that the State of New York and the Federal government do not have the ability to care for the land.

Land Use & Transportation

“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 four major Plans that mutually support this effort: SMTC’s *2025 Long Range Transportation Plan 2004 Update*, the Onondaga County’s *Settlement Plan*, the MDA’s *2010 Vision*, and the City of Syracuse’s *Comprehensive Plan 2025*.

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 Home Rule, the State of New York has delegated¹⁰² 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.



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 SOCPA¹⁰³ 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.

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."¹⁰⁴ 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.



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.*

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 *Settlement 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

The Essential New York Initiative

Guiding the work of the MDA is the Essential New York Initiative (ENYI)—a 12-county regional economic development strategy prepared in 2004 in partnership with two national consultants (Battelle Memorial Institute and Catalytix). The Essential New York Initiative is a direct outgrowth of an earlier economic development plan prepared by the MDA in the late 1990's—Vision 2010.

The overall objective of the Essential New York Initiative is to enhance the competitiveness of the Central Upstate New York region relative to its ability to create and retain high-wage, high-value jobs and attract the necessary high-skilled creative workforce required by regional employers; specifically those in technology and knowledge-based industries.

These objectives are to be accomplished by implementation of projects and programs

directed at the following six strategies that comprise the Essential New York Initiative:

1. Optimize key industry clusters
2. Leverage academic institutions
3. Grow emerging small and mid-size companies
4. Provide focused attention on regional entrepreneurs
5. Attract and retain talent
6. Execute on a super-regional basis

Projects within the Essential New York Initiative are implemented by the staff of the MDA, in cooperation with other economic development organizations within the region.

City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

The fourth major plan in the area is the City of Syracuse's *Comprehensive Plan 2025*, which was adopted by the City in 2004. Begun in 2001, the City of Syracuse produced a Comprehensive Plan in 2004 to provide a vision for Syracuse over the next 20 years. The last time that the City engaged in a complete and comprehensive plan was back in 1919.

Prior to the 2004 Plan, the City has relied on master plans prepared for specific areas of the City to provide direction for change. However, the City wanted to evaluate its assets and trends and prepare a collective vision for the future.

The City chose to adopt a Plan that is essentially a guidance document, rather than a prescriptive recipe of actions. A major factor for this approach is that it had been over 80 years since the City last had a comprehensive plan to guide its future. Thus, the City views the *Comprehensive Plan 2025* a starting point to modern day planning.

The Plan identifies five "Strategic Economic Areas" that support distinct economic

development opportunities and provides a vision for each. These areas are:

Lakefront Strategic Area: This area is located along the shores of Onondaga Lake, south to West Street, west to Interstate 690 and east to Interstate 81.

Downtown Strategic Area: This area encompasses the center of the Central Business District as well as the Historic Armory Square.

University Hill Strategic Area: This area is located east Route 81, south of Route 690 and west of the Town of DeWitt.

Interchange Strategic Area: This area surrounds the interchange involving Interstates 81 and 481 located within the southern portion of the City.

Erie Boulevard Strategic Area: This area extends along the Erie Boulevard corridor east of State Street to the City line.

In addition to the five strategic areas, the Plan also recognizes **Corridors**, which are those roadways, arterials, and waterways that are important connectors to the Strategic Economic Areas, neighborhoods, as well as the rest of the region impact the City. Four types of corridors are noted: Interstate Corridors, Regional Corridors, Local Corridors, Natural & Cultural Corridors

The Plan's policies, goals, and recommended actions are citywide in nature, addressing citywide issues, rather than being targeted at the neighborhood level. Specific neighborhood issues are to be addressed in much greater detail within the Tomorrow's Neighborhoods for Today (TNT) process.¹⁰⁵ The 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. 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.¹⁰⁶ It is hoped that all plans prepared at the neighborhood level will be compatible with the vision, policies, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Special MPO 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 undertook a proactive approach to land use education in 1995 with the formation of a Transportation/Land Use Subcommittee. This Subcommittee guided the Central Staff efforts to achieve the Land Use goal identified in the *2020 Plan*; it consisted 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 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 \$10,000 in 2005/2006) because of the level of staff activity required by other tasks (e.g., Long Range Plan development).

Notes

¹ 23 CFR § 450.104 **Definitions.**

² 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(37)

³ Visible advertising signs adjacent to the Interstate system and highways designated as part of the primary system on 6/1/91, as well as signs beyond 660 feet outside of urban area, are controlled. The section does not allow new sign permits beyond 660 feet of the right of way outside of the urban area. Changing the UAB, whether from growth or census definition, affects the number of billboards allowed along the freeways. If the boundary moves out, then new signs are allowed. If the boundary moves in, then FHWA and the States have the issue of whether to grandfather or remove existing signs. *See 23 CFR § 750.704*

⁴ 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(2)

⁵ 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(1)

⁶ 23 CFR 450.308(a)

⁷ 23 CFR 450.310

(a) The responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out transportation planning (including corridor and subarea studies) and programming shall be clearly identified in an agreement or memorandum of understanding between the State and the MPO.

(b) There shall be an agreement between the MPO and the operators of publicly owned transit services which specifies cooperative procedures for carrying out transportation planning (including corridor and subarea studies) and programming as required by this subpart.

⁸ SMTC approved the MOU on March 19, 1993.

⁹ 23 USC 134(b)(2)

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ *A Profile of Central New York*, 1996, MDA and CNY RPDB.

¹² The CNY RPDB planning area covers all of these counties.

¹³ *Onundagaono*, “people of the hills”

¹⁴ 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).

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.¹⁸ The Onondagas do not like the term "Iroquois", as that was the name given to them by their enemies (Algonquin name for "rattlesnake" plus *'ois'* from the French). The Onondaga do not like the term "Native Americans", and their Nation Territory is not a "reservation", since they own the land outright in "fee simple", just as one can own a house.

¹⁹ <http://www.hetfonline.org/>

²⁰ 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).

²¹ *Transportation & Community Systems Preservation Pilot*, 2003 award for the Syracuse Lakefront, \$1,400,000 awarded.

²² http://www.smtcmpt.org/gis_about.asp

²³ 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5)©(ii) as amended by *SAFETEA_LU* Section 6001

²⁴ The *SAFETEA_LU* legislation changed the Plan update cycle in nonattainment areas from three to four years.

²⁵ The SMTC'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. SMTC has since adopted three Updates to the 1995 Plan: 1998, 2001 and 2004.

²⁶ 23 CFR 450.322 requires the Update to be consistent with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends.

²⁷ 23 CFR §450.322(b)(11)

²⁸ The EPA conformity regulations attempt to capture the impacts of transportation projects that have a regional impact on emissions. Localized projects are classified as "exempt" – they are automatically considered to have small or negligible impacts on regional emissions (e.g., turning lanes, guardrail, resurfacing without widening, etc.). Any project not classified as exempt is considered as nonexempt. Typically, nonexempt are projects that add significant capacity to the transportation system and they must be specifically included in the air quality conformity analysis of the MPO's TIP and Plan.

²⁹ 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(1), as per *SAFETEA_LU*

³⁰ 23 CFR 450.322(a)

³¹ 23 U.S.C. 134 (j), as per *SAFETEA_LU*

³² #NY166 Syracuse Bridge Improvements on Auto Row (\$3,000,000)
#NY179 North Salina Street Corridor (\$490,000)

³³ June 2004.

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- ³⁴ The STIP is the NYSDOT's statewide, intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with the Statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan plans, TIPs and planning processes of all the MPOs in the State. Its begin on October 1, which coincides with the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year.
- ³⁵ TIP Guidebook, Chapter 2.
- ³⁶ 23 CFR 450.324(e)
- ³⁷ The Policy Committee approved the TIP Project Management Process on July 31, 2000.
- ³⁸ 23 USC 134(h)(7)(B)
- ³⁹ 23 CFR 450.328(a)
- ⁴⁰ Pyramid Companies is the owner of Carousel Center and 19 other shopping malls across the Northeast. The founder of Pyramid is Robert Congel
- ⁴¹ <http://www.mda-cny.com/Affiliates/LD/>
- ⁴² Designated by the National Park Service on December 21, 2000
- ⁴³ NY Times article 6/24/2002
- ⁴⁴ *Mall not alone in drawing shoppers, jobs* , Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 5, 2002.
- ⁴⁵ *10 years later, the Mall of America still stands alone*, Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 4, 2002.
- ⁴⁶ <http://www.syracuse.com/destinyusa/>
- ⁴⁷ <http://www.destinyusa.com/home/?page=home>
- ⁴⁸ The two main objectives were 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 had several subcommittees, one of which is Infrastructure (the SMTC Staff Director was the chairperson). However, the Committee is no longer active because the plans keep changing. There have been discussions of reconstituting the Committee.
- ⁴⁹ "Hancock Big Enough for Megamall, City Says", The Post-Standard, February 10, 2002.
- ⁵⁰ April 24, 2002.
- ⁵¹ Example: a break in access on the Interstate System triggers a Federal action, even if the project may be 100% privately funded, and thus is subject to the air quality conformity regulations.
- ⁵² The headquarters was so named on July 23, 2004 to honor Warren Frank, a former executive director.
- ⁵³ Centro assumed the operating lines of the Onondaga Coach Corporation in 1993.
- ⁵⁴ Centro assumed the operating lines of the Syracuse & Oswego Coach Lines (S&O) in 1993.
- ⁵⁵ On April 1, 2005, the CNYRTA assumed all operations of the former Utica Transit Authority (UTA) and marked the occasion with a Grand Opening at the Boehlert Center at Union Station in

Utica. The event was highlighted by the debut of the first newly refurbished UTA bus, signifying a new commitment to transportation in Oneida County.

⁵⁶ Executive Order 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations*, signed by President Clinton on February 1, 1994.

⁵⁷ 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.

⁵⁸ October 7, 1999.

⁵⁹ 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.

⁶⁰ 2000 Census of population and Housing Summary file 3 NYS Data center, P30.

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² When examining concentrations of minorities for Environmental Justice purposes, the guidelines define minorities as any populations self-identified as *non-white only*, with 2000 Census race classifications. Additionally, those who consider themselves to be Hispanic are also to be included as part of the analysis. However, *Hispanic* is not considered a race category according to the Census. Instead, it is listed as an ethnicity. Therefore, Hispanics who consider themselves to be included in the *white only* race category also need to be considered in this analysis. After consultations with the demographic analysts, it was determined that the SF3 population variable known as P7 (*Hispanic or Latino by Race*) would be used to calculate the population of all *non-white only* populations and the *Hispanic, white only* population. For the purposes of the SMTC Analysis, the word *minority* will also include Hispanics who consider themselves white only.

⁶³ Commissioner Boardman is the present chairman of AASHTO's Standing Committee on Rail Transportation

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ In June 2005, Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno announced the creation of the Senate Task Force on High Speed Rail, a panel that will study the best way to link New York's cities with high-speed trains. Senator Bruno named John Egan to head a feasibility study, funded by \$5 million secured by Senator Bruno in this year's budget, and to present the findings and recommendations to the task force by the end of this year.

⁶⁶ Mr. Charles Poltenson

⁶⁷ An area is allowed three exceedances over a three-year period.

⁶⁸ November 1992

⁶⁹ Section 175 of the Clean Air Act

⁷⁰ This rule is effective on November 7, 2005, without further notice, unless EPA receives adverse written comment by October 11, 2005. If EPA receives such comments, it will publish a timely withdrawal of the direct final rule in the **Federal Register** and inform the public that the rule will not take effect.

⁷¹ The SIP budgets are in four categories: on-road mobile, off-road mobile, stationary and area. Transportation conformity applies only to on-road mobile emissions.

⁷² 23 CFR 450.308(a)

⁷³ SMTC originally determined conformity for the *SMTC 2003-2006 TIP* on August 25, 2003. The regional emissions analysis was a 122(e) based on MOBILE5B. When SMTC adopted the new Plan (2004 Update), the 2003-2006 TIP was also checked to assume that it still met conformity regulations.

⁷⁴ The Final Rule for Air Quality Conformity (40 CFR Parts 51 and 93).

⁷⁵ Clean Cities Game Plan 1998/99, U. S. Department of Energy.

⁷⁶ *Development of Revised NYSDOT Energy Analysis Guidelines (Draft)*, June 21, 2002

⁷⁷ Since the same amount of money would be spent on transportation regardless of the plan scenario, it is generally reasonable to assume that the indirect energy impacts would be roughly the same (e.g.; if two miles of new roadway were not built, an MPO may instead choose 30 miles of resurfacing, using relatively the same amount of indirect energy).

⁷⁸ 23 CFR 450.320(b)

⁷⁹ Syracuse Intermodal Model (SIM), a multi-modal travel demand model based on TMODEL2.

⁸⁰ Clough, Harbor & Associates

⁸¹ 23 CFR 500.109

⁸² The *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) defines capacity as "the 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 "A" (vehicles are free to maneuver within the traffic stream), down to Level-of-Service "F" (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).

⁸³

$$ExcessDelay_{segment}^{**} = FreeflowTime * (1 + 0.15 * (\frac{DirectionalVolume}{DirectionalCapacity_{LOS-C}})^4 - 1.366)$$

⁸⁴ Existing Investment, Highway and Bridge Projects, Public Transportation Projects, Goods Movement Projects

⁸⁵ General Tommy Franks, American Soldier, HarperCollins Publishers, August 2004

⁸⁶ NCHRP Report 525: Surface Transportation Security Volume 3 - Incorporating Security into the Transportation Planning Process, Transportation Research Board, 2005.

⁸⁷ E.g., CNYRTA is installing a 32-camera surveillance system at the Courtland Avenue Garage, and \$250,000 to be spent for a new video surveillance system at the Intermodal Transportation Center,

⁸⁸ 2025 LRTP 2004 Update, page 106.

⁸⁹ PB Farradyne

⁹⁰ NYSDOT, NYSTA, SMTC, the City of Syracuse Department of Public Works (DPW), the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT), CNYRTA, the New York State Police (NYSP), the City of Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, the City of Syracuse Fire Department, and the Onondaga County Department of Emergency Communications, 911 Center

⁹¹ New York MOVES, ITS Program Status Report June 2005

⁹² NCHRP Report 525, p. 20.

⁹³ 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, 1995, page 6.

⁹⁴ 2025 Plan 2004 Update, Chapter 2, pg. 32

⁹⁵ The rest of the LRTP budget includes additional 23.8% (\$664 million) will be allocated to support the area transit system; 10.7% (\$298 million) will be used to improve congested locations, reduce single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance; and 3.9% (\$101 million) will be spent for efforts to increase safety at high incident locations.

⁹⁶ The **Mohegans** were not of the Iroquois lineage, as was intimated in James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohegans* novel. The Mohegans were of Algonquin lineage and were primarily located in Connecticut; the Mohegans' present day Reservation is located on the western bank of the Thames River, adjacent to the village of Uncasville in the town of Montville, Connecticut.

⁹⁷ *Longhouse* refers to the structure of the homes that housed many families; it symbolized the fact that all Iroquois people are one family.

⁹⁸ The historical Hiawatha should not be confused with the purely fictional hero of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha*.

⁹⁹ Houghton Mifflin's *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*
http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_026400_onondaga.htm

¹⁰⁰ *An Act to Regulate Trade and Intercourse With the Indian Tribes*, Statute II, Section 4, July 22, 1790

¹⁰¹ Federal District Court on March 11, 2005. Onondaga Nation versus the State of New York, the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County and five private entities.

¹⁰² Article 9 of the NYS Constitution, plus the Municipal Home Rule Law and the Statute of Local Governments.

¹⁰³ The Board is composed of City Planning Commission and the County Planning Board, both voting members of the SMTC Policy Committee.

¹⁰⁴ *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, Executive Summary

¹⁰⁵ 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.

¹⁰⁶ City of Syracuse press release, August 8, 2001.