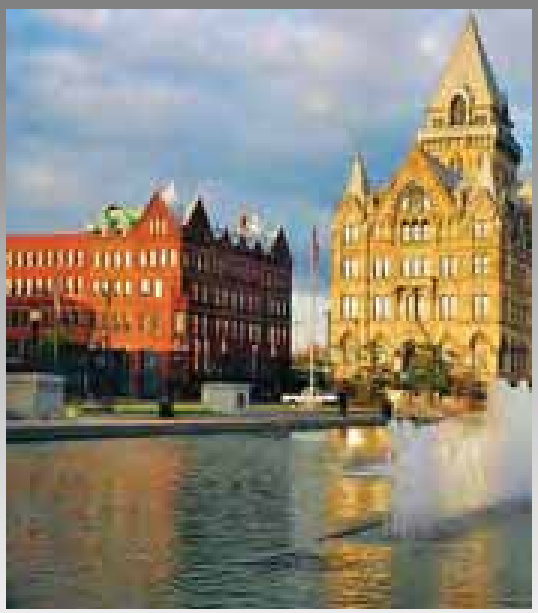

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

FHWA/FTA Certification Review 2010

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Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) Certification Review

February 2010

AUTHORS OF THE DOCUMENT:

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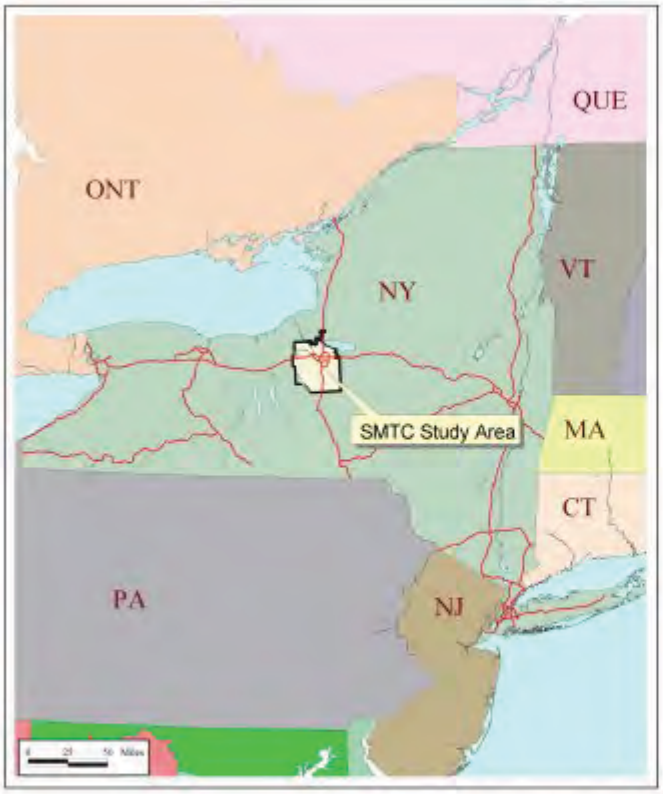

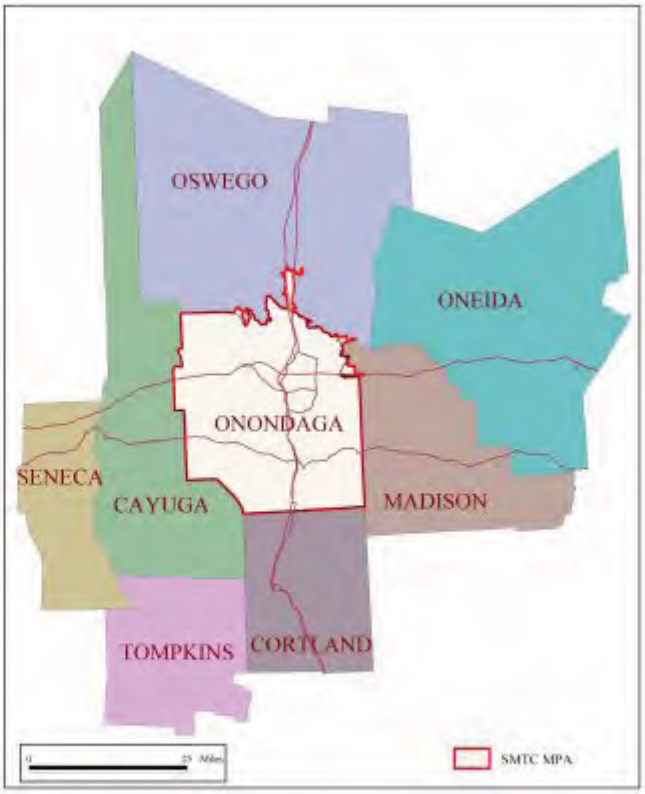

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SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area

Long-Range Transportation Plan 2004 Update

Map 1

N

Main Conclusions

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's transportation planning process is a very credible endeavor and is hereby certified with one corrective action. The SMTC will be challenged with the upcoming discussions on the future of I-81 and the potential for significant private development changes associated with *DestiNY USA.*

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 four years to assure that the planning process is in accordance with federal regulations.

Noteworthy Practices

There are many examples of good transportation planning practices by the Syracuse MPO. They include the quality of produced reports and presentations, effort being expended on the I-81 focus groups, consideration of Big Ticket Initiative concept in the Long Range Plan, employment practices on the Central Staff, public outreach, environmental justice considerations, and the quality of the MPO website.

Recommendations And Needed Actions

This report contains numerous commendations for existing practice, as well as recommendations for consideration in furthering program excellence and one corrective action. The latter includes the need for the MPO to update its Prospectus/Operating Procedures to include specific provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to roles and responsibilities in the planning process, the development of financial plans in the TIP development process, and the incorporation of *SAFETEA-LU* activities.

Table 1. Key Planning Products						
	Who Develops?	Who Approves?	Time Horizon	Content	Update requirements	Status
UPWP	MPO	MPO, FHWA & FTA	1-2 years	Planning Studies & Tasks	1-2 years	*2008-2010* *2009-2010 Amendment 2/25/09*
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	MPO	MPO	At least 20 years	Future Goals, Strategies & Projects	At least every 4 years in air quality nonattainment areas, every 5 elsewhere	*Long-Range Transportation Plan 2027, 2007 Update* 07/23/07*
TIP	MPO	MPO & Governor	At least 4 years	Transportation Investments	At least every 4 years	*TIP (2007-2012)* 07/23/07*
Congestion Management Process	MPO	MPO	---	Performance measures and strategies	Periodically	05/17/2005
Public Participation Plan	MPO	MPO	---	Process to provide reasonable opportunities to be involved	Periodically	May 2007
Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan	State DOT	FHWA & FTA	At least 4 years	Transportation Investments	At least every 4 years	Approved by USDOT 12/10/2007

(*) In air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, FHWA & FTA must approve air quality conformity determination before the Plan or TIP becomes valid. FHWA & FTA, in consultation of EPA, approved air quality analysis on the *2027 Long Range Transportation Plan (Plan) and the 2007-1012 TIP* on July 23, 2007.

FHWA/FTA
Certification review

Introduction

"In TMAs, the FHWA and the FTA jointly shall review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each TMA no less than once every four years to determine if the process meets the requirements of applicable provisions of Federal law and this subpart." 23 CFR § 450.334 (b)

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 monies. The MPO is to be the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making for the metropolitan planning area. Those areas with an urbanized population of 200,000 or more persons are classified as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) subject to additional Federal requirements and scrutiny. One of these additional requirements 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 four years, and to certify that the MPO is (or is not) meeting said regulations.[1]

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.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CERTIFICATION REVIEW

The intent of the statutory and regulatory requirements of 23 CFR 450 is to assure that an urbanized area is developing a transportation system that serves the mobility interests of people and freight through a multifaceted metropolitan planning process. The certification review itself is to assure that the MPO is addressing the major issues facing the area, and that the planning process is being conducted in accordance with:

1) *Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations*[2]
2) *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA)*[3]

3) *Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)*[4]
4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity
5) *Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)*[5]
6) Implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts[6]
7) *The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*[7]
8) *The Older Americans Act*, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance
9) *Section 324 of Title 23 U.S.C.* regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender
10) Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*[8] forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.

The Federal certification process evaluates an MPO's process, identifies strengths and weaknesses (as appropriate), and makes recommendations for improvement. The recommendations that result from the federal review is intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning process. There are also broader benefits to the review. The Federal reviewers try to identify good or innovative practices to share with other states and metropolitan planning organizations. Following the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA can take one of four certification actions:

- Full certification of the transportation planning process - which allows federally funded programs and projects of any type to be approved in the TIP over the next four years in accordance with the continuing planning process.
- Certification subject to specified corrective actions being taken - which allows all projects to move forward in the process while corrective actions are taken; this option may take the form of a temporary certification for a certain number of months rather than the full four years.
- Limited certification - which allows only certain specified categories of program and project funding to move forward while corrective actions are being taken.
- Certification withheld – the Secretary may withhold up to 20 percent of the funds attributable to the metropolitan planning area of the MPO for projects funded under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 in addition to

requiring corrective actions and enforcing funding restrictions.

The last Federal certification review occurred in 2005. At that time, the FHWA and FTA certified the SMTC as meeting the federal transportation planning requirements and made several recommendations for consideration.

2009 CERTIFICATION REVIEW

The 2009 certification review officially began in March 2009 with joint FHWA/FTA letter to Mr. William H Meyer, Jr., Onondaga County Legislature Chairman, informing the MPO of the upcoming review and identifying the primary topics for the review (Appendix A). The date of the site visit was previously coordinated with the 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 letters. The staff of the MPO notified the principals and the public about this review (Appendix B).

During the period between the previous review and this review, new Federal legislation was enacted: *SAFETEA-LU (The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users*). *SAFETEA-LU* introduced some additional requirements on the metropolitan planning process, including the consideration of Transportation Systems Security/Emergency Preparedness, development of a Public Participation Plan, increased use of visualization techniques, coordination with additional agencies, and the electronic publication of Metropolitan Transportation Plans and TIPs.

SAFETEA-LU also required that the statewide transportation planning process and the metropolitan planning process provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

Although *SAFETEA-LU* added new requirements, the MPO was already in compliance with most of the regulation and has made modifications to its processes in response to said legislation.

In preparation for the on-site visit, the FHWA and FTA conducted an internal desk audit of the SMTC material in our files, the material transmitted by the MPO in response to our letter, the self-certification statement required in conjunction with the submittal of Transportation Improvement Program[9], the existing Unified Planning Work Program, the existing Transportation Improvement Program and the existing Long Range Plan.

Site Visit

On June 22-24, 2009, the Federal Review Team conducted the site visit. The Federal Team consisted of James Goveia (FTA-Region 2 Office), and Joseph Rich, Karen Rosenberger and Jacqueline Keller (FHWA-NY Division Office). The on-site review took place at the MPO office. The detailed discussions were primarily with the staff of the MPO, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority, the City of Syracuse, and NYSDOT Region 3 and Main Office staff. The agenda for the site visit is shown in Appendix C. All MPO member agencies were welcome to attend.

PUBLIC INPUT

In conducting a certification review, the FHWA and the FTA are required to provide opportunities for public involvement within the metropolitan planning area under review. The FHWA and the FTA must consider the public input received in arriving at a decision on a certification action.[10] To this desirable end, a public meeting was held on Tuesday, June 23, 2009 from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the SMTC office. The meeting was publicized in various media outreach and on the SMTC websites. The opportunity for written comments was also advertised. No members of the public attended the meeting nor were any written comments subsequently received.

Report Preparation

Following the site visits, the Review Team developed a draft version of the report. This was shared with the MPOs, NYSDOT Region 3 and NYSDOT Main Office staff for comment. The comments received are reflected herein.

Conclusions and Recommendations

"As stated in the Certification Report, the overall transportation planning process of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) meets the requirements mentioned in 23 CFR Section 450.334 and 49 USC 5303. Therefore, it is our pleasure to inform you that the SMTC's planning process is hereby fully certified."

FHWA/FTA Certification of SMTC, September 2005

SIMILAR to our 2005 conclusions above, we again find that the transportation planning processes in the Syracuse New York TMA is generally in compliance with the requirements of Section 134 of Title 23, Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act, Sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as well as the other sections of law mentioned in 23 CFR §450.334 (a). We again congratulate the MPO for the cooperative nature of its processes and the technical capabilities that the central staff and member agencies have developed.

During the 2005 certification review, FHWA and FTA made several recommendations for the MPO's consideration in enhancing their planning processes. The status of those recommendations is shown in Table 2.

In the interim between the 2005 review and today, new transportation legislation (*SAFETEA-LU)* was enacted that contained additional transportation planning requirements; these requirements were incorporated into the *Statewide Transportation Planning/ Metropolitan Transportation Planning* final rule in 2007. Some of these new requirements have been addressed by MPOs, while other items need attention. Since these new requirements are in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), we have identified these areas of concern as needing "corrective action", although we recognize that these items are not longstanding deficiencies. We also offer a number of recommendations on elements of the MPO planning process that may be beneficial.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Organizational Structure

- SMTC needs to review its *Operating Plan* and either make the necessary revisions thereto or adopt new written agreements covering the roles and responsibilities for cooperative planning, planning roles and responsibilities, the development/sharing of financial information for TIPs and Long Range

Transportation Plans, and the development of the annual listing of obligated projects. This should be accomplished by May 1, 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Security Planning

- The MPO should open a discussion with its members on the MPO's appropriate role in furthering the coordination and cooperation among member agencies on the security issue.

Transportation Improvement Program

- We recommend that SMTC continue the approach whereby all member agencies agree to put all funds (NHS, CMAQ, STP) on the table and the best projects are selected according to SMTC's investment strategy, and then money is assigned. Thus, the transportation investment would be based on function and need, not facility ownership.

The Federal review team wishes to express our appreciation to the staff of the MPO for its hospitality during the on-site review.

Table 2: Syracuse, New York TMA Status of 2005 FHWA/FTA Recommendations		
Recommendation	**Status**	**√= OK**
Organization and Structure 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 MPO is in the process of updating its Operations Plan to conform to the SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding agreements and outreach efforts.	√
The SMTC should continue its efforts to engage the Onondaga Nation in the planning process, perhaps with a special emphasis on environmental issues.	Ongoing. Staff continues to send committee mailing agendas, press releases, flyers, etc. to the Onondaga Nation. The SMTC coordinates with NYSDOT and their tribal outreach coordinators whenever possible to engage the Nation.	√
MPO Staffing & Capabilities Once the impacts of the new federal transportation legislation are understood, we recommend that the MPO evaluate its staffing plan to ascertain if additional expertise is needed to address any new mandates.	The SMTC hired a new staff Director in March 2007. The staffing plan allows for some planners to work part-time, thus retaining expertise while enabling personal responsibilities to be addressed. Consultants are used as needed to supplement staff.	√
Unified Planning Work Programs SMTC should reconsider the use of the UPWP Tracking concept.	The SMTC re-evaluated the use of this concept and decided against it.	√
The MPO should consider whether the use of visualization techniques in planning studies might be helpful in its process.	SMTC utilizes GIS and mapping, as well as numerous charts and graphs, to aid with visualization. SMTC is researching and attempting to expand its visualization techniques in connection with the alternatives analysis phase of the I-81 study. In addition, the SMTC will engage in a proposed statewide Shared Cost Initiative program that will include training in visualization techniques for MPO staff.	√
Long Range Transportation Plan The *2007 LRTP* should have at least a horizon year of 2030.	The intent of the comment was to satisfy a FHWA Washington guidance[11] that any amendment to the Plan should require a 20-year horizon at the time of the MPO's action. This guidance was officially superseded by the 2/14/2007 regulations and the 20-yr horizon is required at the time of Plan adoption but not for an amendment thereto.	√
The SMTC should evaluate the desirability of exploring the concept of performance measures/evaluation of progress into the process.	The *2027 Plan (2007 Update)* included some performance measures in the Plan's objectives. The *2011 Plan* effort will evaluate progress towards the *2007 Plan* objectives with possible enhancements thereto.[12]	√

Table 2: Syracuse, New York TMA Status of 2005 FHWA/FTA Recommendations (Continued)		
Recommendation	**Status**	**√= OK**
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.	The SMTC uses the available funds as the programmed funds (SMTC's program funds equal available funds). The TIP was supplemented with a fiscal constraint table that is on the MPO website under TIP.	√
Title VI/Environmental Justice As a tool to analyze the extent of outreach to EJ communities, the MPOs should consider overlaying the addresses from mailing lists and comments received onto their maps of EJ communities and TIP projects.	Maps were developed in August 2006. UPWP task *Geographic Information Systems -SMTC* notes that GIS will be used for demographic analysis for the identification of specific locations within the MPO area in need of attention under the Environmental Justice initiative.	√
Intermodal Goods Movement The SMTC should continue to closely cooperate with the NYSDOT efforts to plan for the movement of freight.	SMTC participated in NYSDOT's efforts for the 2009 NYS Rail Plan. The 2009-10 UPWP contains a task entitled CSX Intermodal Transportation Study, which will complete a detailed land use and transportation plan that will provide for improved road service to the CSX intermodal facility and other commercial and industrial uses in the study area.	√
The SMTC should coordinate and carefully evaluate truck and rail freight recommendations coming out of the TCSP project for the Lakefront	Ongoing.	√
The SMTC should maintain its involvement in the various task forces and committees discussing High Speed Rail service in New York.	Staff participated in the NYS Senate Task Force for High Speed Rail.	√
Security 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 is working with NYSDOT Traffic Operations Working Group to develop detour routes for the Interstate System in Onondaga County.	√
SMTC should consider offering the GIS capabilities of its staff in emergency preparedness efforts.	SMTC provided GIS assistance to the above Working Group. SMTC has a standing GIS work program item - *Geographic Information Systems - Member Agency Assistance*.	√
SMTC should evaluate the potential for UPWP studies addressing possible measures.	SMTC has included a task entitled *Emergency Travel Routes* in its 2008-2009 UPWP; several preparatory meetings and discussions were held but the task was put on hold because of uncertainty of FHWA $.	√

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.[13] The SMTC maintains a Central Staff of 11 full time and part time staff members with a 2009-2010 UPWP operating budget of $873,080. An additional $738,500 is targeted for contractual services.

A coordinated transportation planning process began in the Syracuse area in 1966 with the establishment of the *Syracuse Metropolitan Area 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 officially 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 most populous 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. Onondaga County has a land area of 793.5 square miles, approximately 35 miles in length and 30 miles in width. It contains one city (Syracuse), nineteen towns, fifteen villages and eighteen school districts, and the Onondaga Nation Territory. The City of Syracuse 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.

MPO Structure and Membership

The SMTC organizational structure satisfies the composition requirements for MPOs in TMAs.[14] It includes the appropriate local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan planning area, and appropriate State transportation officials. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the ultimate authority for all the SMTC actions rests with the **SMTC Policy Committee**. There are thirteen voting and four nonvoting members on the Policy Committee, as shown in Table 3. 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.

Table 3. 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)

Below the Policy Committee is the **Planning Committee** composed of the administrative or technical representatives of public and private agencies. The Planning Committee has responsibility for developing the major products in transportation planning (Unified Planning Work Program) and implementation (Transportation Improvement Program), for submittal to the Policy Committee for approval. This Committee meets at least on a quarterly basis.

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, Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA), the Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (CNY RPDB), and the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)[15] – 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 individual planning studies conducted.

The 2000 Census resulted in a small increase in the Syracuse Census Urbanized Area in Oswego County and Madison County. Following the discussions on establishing new planning 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 non-voting status at that time 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.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

The geographic limit within which SMTC's planning efforts take place is called the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA). This includes all of Onondaga County plus relatively small portions of Oswego and Madison Counties. This MPA was determined by the MPO after two prerequisite boundaries were 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.

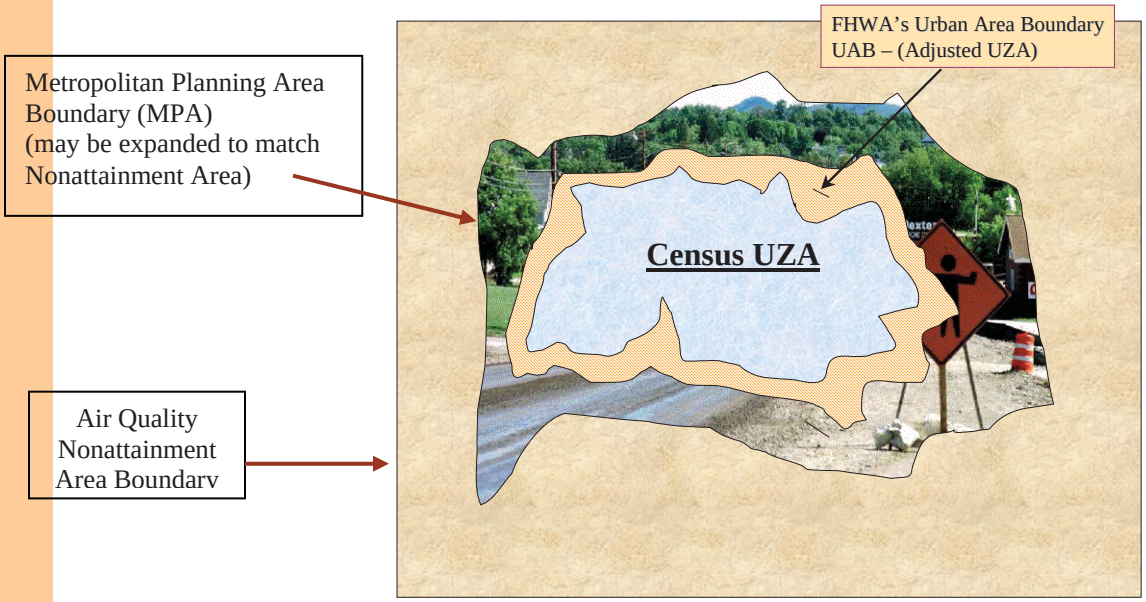
The MPO, using the UZA as the base, then establishes other boundaries (see below) for planning purposes. However, the population used in the Federal apportionment formulas does not change with these planning expansions.

- FHWA Urban Area Boundary (UAB)

The UAB, which is set by the MPO, 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 control[16]. The adjusted boundary must be approved by the Secretary of Transportation.

Using the Census UZA as a starting point, the MPO is allowed to smooth and adjust the boundary 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."[17]

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 UAB was approved by FHWA and FTA on July 15, 2003.



After the UAB is established, the MPO is required to update the Functional Classification of the 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. FHWA approved the submission on June 22, 2006.

♦ Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA)

The MPA boundary 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.[18] In addition, MPOs like SMTC that are in an air quality nonattainment or maintenance area must have the MPA boundary cover the entire nonattainment area – unless the Governor and the MPO agree otherwise.[19]

The SMTC set its MPA boundary to be all of Onondaga County plus the small portions of Oswego and Madison Counties that are within the UAB. Since SMTC's MPA boundary covers all of Onondaga County, which is the EPA designated boundary for the Carbon Monoxide maintenance area, the MPA satisfies the regulations. As required, the MPO and the Governor agreed on the MPA.[20]

AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

Federal legislation (23 USC 134) requires the MPO to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies to carry out 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. These relationships are to be specified in written agreements between the MPO, the State and the public transportation operator(s) – CENTRO in the case of SMTC.[21] The federal regulations require several agreements covering the following:

- Mutual responsibilities for planning: The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process.[22] This requirement has been in place since ISTEA.
- Development and sharing of financial information for TIPs and Plans: The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively develop and share information related to the development of financial plans that support the MPO's Plan and TIP.[23] This is a new requirement under the February 14, 2007 regulation.

- Development of the annual listing of obligated projects: The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall agree on the development of an "Annual Listing" of projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, for which federal transportation funds have been obligated in the preceding year, and the MPO must make this list available for public review by the MPO; the listing must be consistent with the funding categories identified in the TIP.[24]

Currently, the seminal agreement identifying the member agencies' cooperative roles and responsibilities within the SMTC process is the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).[25] These roles and responsibilities are further detailed in the 1993 *Operations Plan*, the latest modification thereto being March 2001. In addition, the member agencies, by virtue of their annual endorsement of the Unified Planning Work Program/Update, voice their endorsement of the specified working arrangements and emphasis areas. There is no agreement per se in place regarding either development and sharing of financial information for TIPs and Plans for the development of an annual listing of obligated projects – the latest of which being FFY 2008 and is published on the MPO website; both activities are done, but the specifics of how, when and by whom are not in writing.

In order to address the second and third types of agreements (financial information and obligate projects list) and to remove any uncertainty[26] about the adequacy of the documents in place regarding the first type of agreement, SMTC is considering an umbrella agreement covering all three agreements, perhaps using a document recently adopted by the Rochester MPO as a model.

Centerline Miles by Functional Classification in SMTC Area

	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Major/Urban Collectors	Minor Collector	Local	Total
NYSDOT	185.88	107.09	112.47	24.39	5.02	434.85
NYSTA	31.36	85.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	31.36
OCDOT	26.83	85.25	168.22	107.17	408.30	795.77
Oswego County	0.00	2.86	6.63	0.00	2.48	12.07
Madison County	0.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	1.89	10.89
City of Syracuse	20.34	64.76	32.32	0.00	306.89	424.31
Towns/Villages	0.00	8.48	42.67	3.37	1,579.02	1,633.54
Totals	264.41	268.54	371.31	134.93	2,303.60	3,342.79

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."[27] The MDA has been a voting member of 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)[28]. 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:

- Central Upstate Regional Alliance – a partnership of representatives from private businesses, colleges and universities, not-for-profits, and leading economic development organizations throughout upstate New York.
- 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 served as the contracting entity for an $8.4 million state grant 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 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.
- Advance Upstate NY - a coalition of business leadership organizations in Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, continues to fight for the economic revitalization of the upstate region.

ONONDAGA INDIAN NATION

We do not normally think of the City of Syracuse as bordering on another nation. However, the 7,300-acre Onondaga Nation Territory is located about five miles south of the City of Syracuse. The 2000 Census population shows 1,475 individuals.

The Onondaga[29] are one of the original five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy[30], 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)[31]. 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 York[32], 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.[33] The NYSDOT Region 3 Office[34] 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.[35]

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 when Onondaga officials ordered a stop.

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."[36]

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.

Corrective Action:

- SMTC needs to review its *Operating Plan* and either make the necessary revisions thereto or adopt new written agreements covering the roles and responsibilities for cooperative planning, outlining planning roles and responsibilities, the development/sharing of financial information for TIPs and Long Range Transportation Plans, and the development of the annual listing of obligated projects. This should be accomplished by May 1, 2010.

Recommendation:

- The SMTC should continue its efforts to engage the Onondaga Nation in the planning process, perhaps with a special emphasis on environmental issues.

Staffing Capabilities

"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 as needed.

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 2008-09 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) budget allots $873,080 to the Central Staff plus $738,500 for contractual services.[37]

On August 2, 2007, the SMTC Executive Committee approved a salary structure for a total of ten full-time positions (not including Interns), with a maximum of seven being for planning. The Staff currently consists of eleven individuals because some staff are permitted to work part-time in light of family responsibilities. This is a prudent practice in that it enables experienced individuals to remain engaged in the process. The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) administratively hosts the staff, but the SMTC staff salaries are not tied to the host. The Executive Director has the flexibility of implementing salary increases (up to 3%) for an individual following the annual performance rating; above that, the Director needs the approval of the Executive Committee.

Mr. James D'Agostino is the Executive Director of the SMTC staff, having been appointed in 2007. Mr. D'Agostino, who had joined the SMTC staff in September 2000 as the Program Manager, is providing very effective leadership that is readily evident by both the products produced and the introduction of more sophisticated planning approaches in areas such as long-range planning. The reviewers see a growing of credibility within the community because of the Staff's efforts.

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., CMP, GIS maps and displays, public outreach,

The SMTC Central Staff

Individual	Position	Email Address
Jim D'Agostino	Executive Director	**jdagostinoe@smtcmpo.org**
Mario Colone	Principal Transportation Planner	**mcolone@smtcmpo.org**
Jason Deshaies	Transportation Analyst	**jasondeshaise@smtcmpo.org**
Jen Deshaies	Senior Transportation Planner	**jdeshaies@smtcmpo.org**
Neil Donaldson	Senior Transportation Planner	**ndonaldson@smtcmpo.org**
Ahmed Ismail	Junior Transportation Planner	**aismail@smtcmpo.org**
Sherry Keytack	Administrative Assistant	**skeytack@smtcmpo.prg**
Danielle Krol	Senior Transportation Planner	**dkroll@smtcmpo.org**
Paul Salvatore Mercurio	Transportation Planner	**pmecurio@smtcmpo.org**
Megan Vitale	Senior Transportation Planner	**mvitale@smtcmpo.org**
Pat Wortley	Administrative/Communications Assistant	**pworthley@smtcmpo.org**

TIP, UPWP, bicycle maps, CMAQ analysis and documentation, University Hill study, etc.).

The Staff have shown confidence in its 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 oversaw *Relevant Congestion Mitigation System (CMS) Best Practices*, a consultant effort highlighted nationwide best practices in the area of CMS and developed a compendium of innovative CMS practices (i.e.; toolbox) for the New York MPOs.

Besides its normal full plate of planning activity, the Central Staff now has the responsibility for two components of NYSDOT's major I-81 Corridor Study: (a) I-81 Public Participation Project ($200,000) in which the staff will conduct public focus group meetings (perhaps as many as 40), and (b) I-81 Travel Demand Modeling Project ($100,000) which will evaluate different alternative scenarios to show traffic projections to both State and local streets using an enhanced version of the SMTC travel forecasting model. It is possible that the staff will have an additional staff position funded because of the volume of work associated with the I-81 study. The scope of the activity associated with I-81 is further discussed in Appendix E.

Overall, the staffing salary structure appears somewhat lower than that of comparable MPOs in New York. The MPO might want to evaluate the issue.

WEBSITE

An MPO's website is a necessary tool for making information available to the public and also providing an additional conduit for the public to provide input to the SMTC.[38] With its many excellent planning practices and products, SMTC has a "story to tell" and SMTC uses its website (**http://www.smtcmpo.org**) to good advantage. The site provides the public with a status of ongoing and completed planning activity, opportunity to download selective material and reports, an Interactive Traffic Count database, listing of public meetings with associated materials available for downloading, annual list of obligated projects, various GIS maps, and an opportunity to provide comments on selective topics. The SMTC has one the best MPO web sites in New York and we commend its efforts.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING

A major responsibility of transportation planning profession to forecast changes in travel demand that will happen - or may happen - due to alternative transportation and land use policies. Travel models are key tools for making the decisions that shape our transportation systems. Additionally, modeling plays an important role in analyzing emerging priorities such as road pricing, operations, freight, land use-transportation

integration, homeland security, safety and suppressed travel. Modeling can increase the power of scenario planning, visualization and communication of results to the public and elected officials.

The SMTC uses TransCAD as its travel demand-modeling platform for its forecasting activities. The model is a traditional four-step model:

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

The SMTC model was accepted for use in air quality conformity analyses by the NY Air Quality Interagency Consultation Group on December 27, 2006.

The travel demand model is use in many SMTC planning activities, such as the air quality conformity analysis, the CMP process, corridor studies and so on. The MPO staff will be using the model for the I-81 Travel Demand Modeling Project to evaluate different alternative planning scenarios for the I-81 Corridor in the MPO area with the goal being to demonstrate the traffic impacts/projections of those scenarios on both the state and local transportation systems. As part of this UPWP task, the consultant[39] will also refine the SMTC's model in order to improve its validity. Some of the objectives[40] of the I-81 Travel Demand Model Project are:

- Update housing, employment and network data to support new base and horizon years.
- Demonstrate the validity of modeled volumes and speeds on roadways throughout the study corridor, with particular attention to major routes that are important to this study.
- Rely on observed data as much as possible to inform important inputs for special generators and through travel.
- Confirm that the modeled trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice and assignment results are consistent with available data and local behavior.
- Enhance the mode choice model to be sensitive to congested travel times and ensure the model is capable of modeling premium transit in addition to local bus services.
- Post processing and results summary tools that allow more efficient summary and analysis of model results.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)

The SMTC staff makes extensive use of this computer-based tool that combines computer mapping and database technologies.[41] 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 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 other agencies (e.g. Onondaga County, NYSDOT, etc.) can be acquired from the appropriate agency. SMTC has used its GIS capabilities when working with NYSDOT's Traffic Operations Working Group, and it has a standard UPWP task to provide GIS assistance on any appropriate task to any member agency.[42]

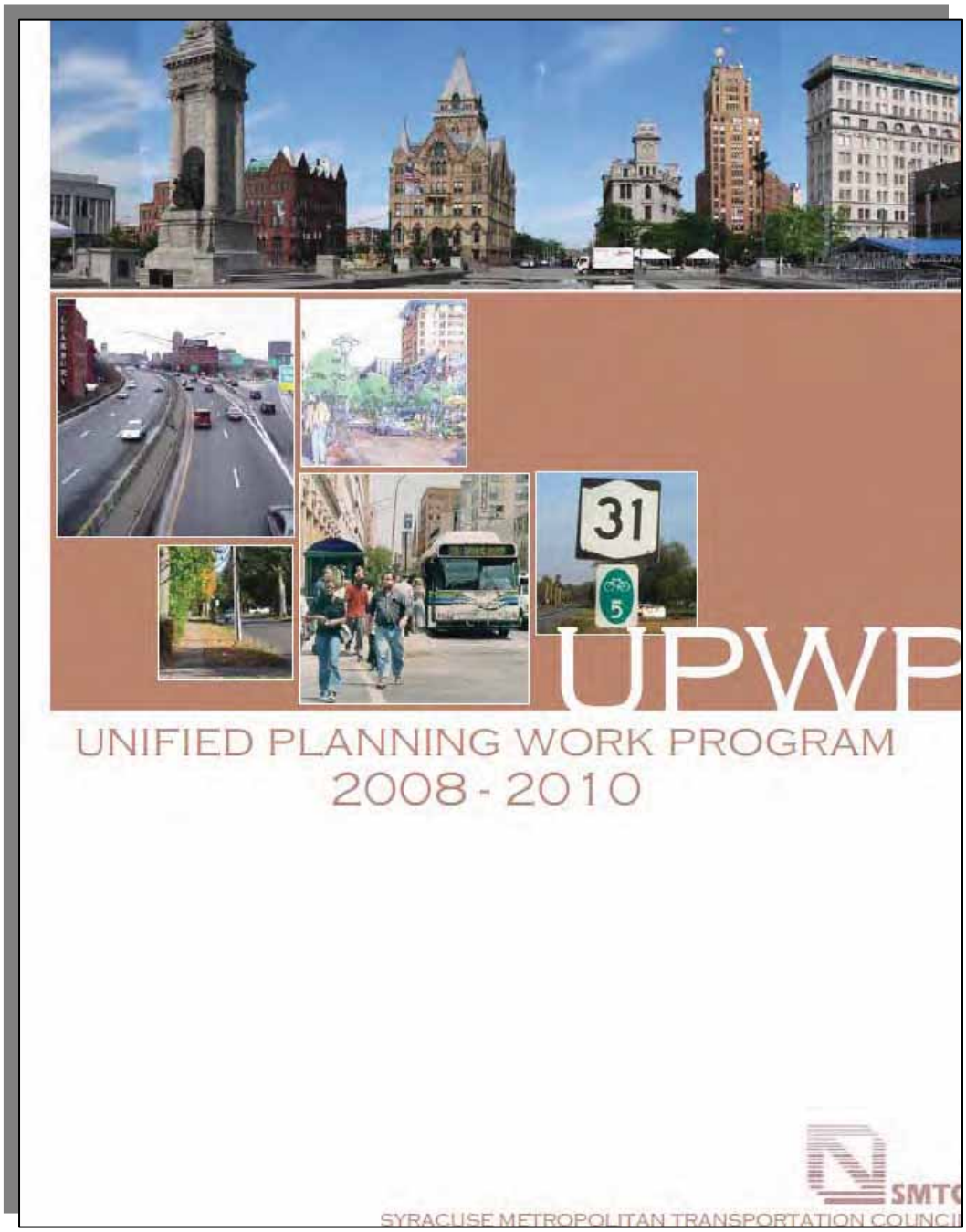
VEHICLE DATA REPOSITORY

In 2003, SMTC completed work on the development of its digital Vehicle Data Repository. All traffic count data and turning movement count data 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 of Syracuse's Department of Public Works, and traffic counts from consultants working on SMTC funded projects. The Vehicle Data Repository is a useful product because it significantly reduces the amount of time spent on locating information. Updates to the repository are made as new data becomes available.

SMTC maintains the traffic count data on an "Interactive Traffic Count "website accessed from the MPO's main website screen. The traffic count information is linked to the SMTC's GIS interface and a link has been provided for each municipality in the MPA where a traffic count is available.

STATEWIDE PLANNING 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.


UPWP
UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
2008 - 2010
31
5
SMTC
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

Unified Planning Work Program

"…..each MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and public transportation operator(s), shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of planning priorities facing the MPA. The UPWP shall identify work proposed for the next one- or two year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds" - 450.308 (c)

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 differs according to the type of area, with the TMA areas generally having more detail than non-TMA areas. SMTC's UPWP was approved March 10, 2008 and covered a two-year period from 2008-2010. A 2009-2010 amendment to the UPWP was approved on February 25, 2009.

The two main Federal funding sources for the UPWPs are the FHWA's Planning Funds (PL) and FTA's Section 5303 Funds. These monies are distributed to MPOs through a NYSDOT formula developed in consultation with the thirteen New York MPOs and approved by FHWA and FTA. The formula contains three components: a minimum amount, a share based on the MPO's relative percentage of urbanized area population, and an extra amount for being in a TMA area. In 2002, the NYSDOT developed new estimates based on the results of the 2002 urbanized area designations. The Federal PL and Section 5303 programs require a State/local 20% non-federal match. In the current UPWP, the NYSDOT provides 15% of the local match, and the county/City of Syracuse provide the other 5% of the local match.

The Planning Committee, which is composed of the professional/technical representatives of both the Policy Committee members and public agencies having direct or indirect responsibility for transportation planning and/or implementation, has the primary responsibility of monitoring all technical activities including the annual development of a draft UPWP and TIP for recommendation to the Policy Committee.

The Central Staff, on behalf of the Planning Committee, 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 tasks, 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 status of the planning activities monthly.

UPWP Corridor and Subarea Studies

The SMTC uses UPWP studies to fill out the Long Range Transportation 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 in the 2009-2010 UPWP work effort are:

- Clay/Cicero Rt. 31 Transportation Study
- CSX Intermodal Transportation Study
- University Hill Bike Network Project
- Downer Street Corridor Study
- I-81 Public Participation Project
- I-81 Travel Demand Modeling
- University Hill Transportation Study Phase II: Feasibility Study for Park and Ride Initiative
- University Hill Transportation Study Phase II: Feasibility Study for Short Term Transportation Recommendations
- Carrier Site Access Transportation Study
- OCDOT Signal Optimization
- SOCPA Development Guide Assistance
- Cicero Rt. 11 Corridor Study
- East Genesee Street Sidewalk Study
- Clay Three Rivers Access Study
- Prospect Hill Parking and Transportation Study
- James Street Road Diet

The study reports, when finalized, are available on the SMTC website. The quality of the finished products is high. In addition to the UPWP tasks, the SMTC staff continues to participate with the other NYSMPO's on several Shared Cost Initiative (SCI) Projects.

We note that a significant portion of UPWP funding is devoted to obtaining the services of consultants - $738,500 out of a total of $2,014,000. The UPWP shows that $265,000 of this is for specialized services on the I-81 tasks ad another $400,000 on other Long Range Planning tasks.

The 2005 certification review recommended that the MPO should reconsider the use of the UPWP tracking process. This task, initialed in 2001, would 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. However, some member agencies were reluctance 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. The SMTC members did reconsider the concept and again decided against it.

Some recent products of the UPWP are shown.

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council Long Range Transportation Plan 2007 Update Executive Summary

"The LRTP is a blueprint to guide the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's transportation development over a 20-year period. Updated every three years to reflect changing conditions and new planning principals, the LRTP is based on projections of growth and travel demand coupled with financial assumptions. The LRTP specifically looks at major urban transportation planning concerns such as environmental/air quality issues; comprehensive access to transportation; alternative transportation modes (especially transit and bicycle and pedestrian); the impact of land development on the transportation system; highway traffic congestion; and maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

The LRTP presents a vision of the transportation system and the projects that will bring that vision to reality over time. Central to that vision is the protection of the value of investments already made in developing the transportation system while providing resources to pursue innovative solutions to mobility constraints and enhancing travel choices available. Also central to the LRTP is the need to adjust the land development patterns and transportation system investments, where practical, to conform to existing development guidelines (i.e., Onondaga County's 2010 Development Guide, the Onondaga County Settlement Plan, and the City of Syracuse's Comprehensive Plan)." Page xiv

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

"The transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

23 CFR §450.322(b)

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 LRTP is a descriptive term interchangeable with the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan*, which is the new term used in the 2007 federal regulations.[43] 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.[44]

The MPO Plan should demonstrate that the federal regulations specified for its development have been met, as well as show how locally expressed priorities, public involvement, and many other critical inputs to the planning process have been addressed. It is to consider the major urban transportation planning concerns of environmental/air quality, access to transportation, alternative transportation modes (especially bicycle and pedestrian), the impact of land development on the transportation system, the extent of highway traffic congestion, and the area's ability to maintain the existing infrastructure.

The Plan provides an opportunity every four years for the planning agencies to reevaluate goals and objectives and to communicate critical choices and general directions for the region to a broad audience, including planning partners, other stakeholders, elected officials and the public. Each successive update of a Plan responds to trends and projected changes in the region's demographics, economy and transportation needs, thus providing a relevant, informative and dynamic long-range guide for transportation decision-making.

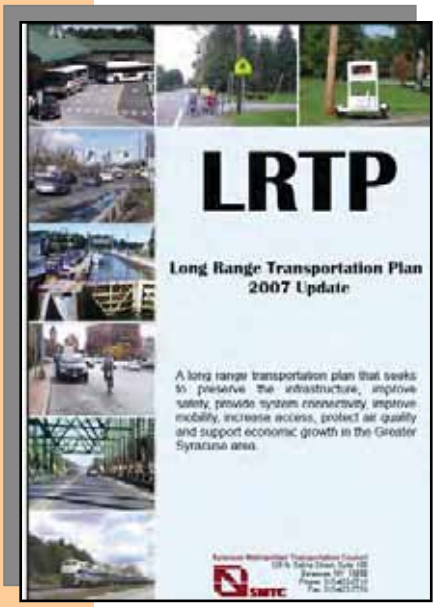
THE CURRENT PLAN – *THE 2007 UPDATE*

SMTC's current Plan is the *Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update*, which was adopted by the MPO on June 12, 2007 and which received a positive air quality conformity determination by FHWA and FTA on July 23, 2007. The horizon year of the Plan is 2027. This is the fourth update of the initial *1995 Comprehensive Transportation Plan*.[45] The *LRTP 2007 Update* is a composite of the 1995 Plan plus the subsequent updates, rather than a stand-alone document. This approach is continuing, as the MPO will progress another Update for the next Plan due in 2011.

Because the effort involved, most MPOs choose the update option during the first cycle of the four year update rather than starting the plan development process anew;

with the following plan cycle usually resulting in a new Plan. For several cycles now, SMTC wanted to conduct a comprehensive visioning exercise to understand where they *want to be* in 20 years but realized that could only start after they knew where they *were* in the immediate future. SMTC faces the continuing uncertainty over the magnitude of the looming private development in the SMTC area (see Appendix D *DestiNY*); if it unfolds to the scale envisioned by the developer, there would be major local and regional economic and development impacts as a result; otherwise, the development patterns within the area have been relatively modest and stable. In addition, NYSDOT has recently initiated a major corridor study connected with I-81 in Syracuse (see Appendix E), and it was believed that the public would have a difficult time participating simultaneously in both this major corridor study and the new Plan development discussions.

Therefore, SMTC chose to reconsider its approach to the traditional Plan evaluation effort. Thus, the *2011 Plan* will be another Update, although it will be more comprehensive than the previous ones and will also contain a modified visioning process. FHWA and FTA accepted the continuation of the Update concept for one more cycle (*2011 Plan Update*) with the agreement from the MPO that a new Plan would be developed in 2015.



PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The present plan, *LRTP 2007 Update*, contains 6 goals and 23 objectives. 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 efficient, effective, fixed-route or demand-responsive transit service to areas with urban population densities (approximately 1,000 or greater

per square mile) and to 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.
- 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, by the year 2020.
- Transportation facilities should be accessible to all people. All improvements to the transportation system should comply with the ADA.
- To encourage greater utilization of electronic communication with the workplace and to conduct 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 better than 5 to 80 percent, and to increase the deck area of bridges with condition ratings greater than 5 to 83 percent of the total number of bridges by 2020.
- To stabilize pavement conditions at or above the following levels for all medium and high volume roads (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 *LRTP 2007 Update* is not a stand-alone document; the Plan for the area relies on the *1995 Plan* plus the four subsequent updates. We do note that the SMTC has in recent years 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 increased 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).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT

As it does for many of its significant activities, the MPO developed a project-specific Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that sets the framework for the public participation opportunities that would be available throughout the course of the *2027 Plan Update* development process. A Study Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed to provide input and guidance to the SMTC Project Manager, the study process, study documents, and public meetings. The SAC consisted of representatives from affected organizations, local governments, and community representatives that met several times throughout the Plan's development. SMTC also identified a Stakeholders group for the Update process; this group was a broader group of interested individuals with significant relations and interest in the LRTP Update process. Because of the impact the LRTP Update would have on the community, the entire SMTC database was be treated as the LRTP Update stakeholders group. The stakeholders were sent pertinent study information, made aware of significant study developments, and notified of all public meetings.

SMTC maintained a specific page on its website devoted to the Update process and distributed a *Public Opinion Survey* with eleven questions asking members of the public to share their thoughts about the current and future needs of transportation throughout the Greater Syracuse Metropolitan Area. The SMTC also issued news releases (announcing the details of all public meetings) to all major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio well in advance.

Additional Public Involvement Requirements under SAFETEA-LU

SAFETEA-LU established additional requirements for the public participation components of MPO LRTPs. It required an additional "consultation" mandate requiring the MPO to consult "with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate: (1) Comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or (2) Comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available."[46] This effectively requires involvement of these agencies in the long range planning process for the same reasons they are involved in project development work. SMTC accomplished this consultation outreach requirement commendably.

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PLAN

The SMTC area exhibits the common demographic trends observable in most northeastern urbanized areas. The 1995 SMTC LRTP and subsequent updates identified five general types of land use prevalent in the SMTC Study Area:

- moderately dense urban core
- suburban towns, villages and hamlets
- farmland
- shoreline, and

- scattered development.

These types still reflect the present conditions in the area, though the trend towards suburbanization and outward growth of the metropolitan area is beginning to affect the distinction between urban and rural landscapes. This outward growth is also creating new patterns of development in the County. The northern towns of Onondaga County are the most developed, the eastern and western towns less, and the southern towns have remained stable.

Suburban sprawl continues to characterize residential development in the area, and this urban growth pattern is projected to continue. The aging urban housing stock, available undeveloped land, affordable housing, water and sewer costs, access to transportation infrastructure and increased personal mobility have encouraged the expansion of housing into areas long vacant or farmed. Thus, residential construction in Onondaga County in the past several years has occurred largely in the outer ring – most notably in the towns of Cicero, Clay, Camillus Lysander, Manlius, and Onondaga. Areas within the inner ring of suburbs, such as the towns of DeWitt, Salina and Geddes, have experienced a slowing of growth since 1980.

When developing its LRTP, SMTC closely coordinates with the 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 have been in existence for a number of years (Appendix F) and are somewhat stale. SMTC is now participating in an effort to conduct a transportation-land use survey as part of the development of its next LRTP (due 2011) and to support the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency's (SOCPA) Development Guide Update (expected in summer 2010). In August 2009, SMTC released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant services to assist SMTC in gaining an accurate understanding of the public's current patterns, perceptions, and preferences as they relate to transportation and land use in the greater Syracuse area. The survey area will encompass all of Onondaga County, including the City of Syracuse. As this project is a "support project", a formal scope of work has not been created and no Study Advisory Committee is expected.

LRTP FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT

Transportation plans are required to be fiscally constrained. This means that the plan includes sufficient financial information to demonstrate that projects in the plan can be implemented using committed, available, or *reasonably available* revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is still being adequately operated and maintained.[47] Thus, fiscal constraint requires that Plans and TIPs reflect realistic assumptions about future revenues, project costs and operating expenses, rather than being lists of many more projects than could realistically be completed with available revenues. Given this basic purpose, compliance with the fiscal constraint requirements entails an analysis of revenues and costs. The basic question to be answered is: Will the revenues (Federal, State, local and private) identified in the Plan and TIP cover the anticipated costs of the projects included in the Plan or TIP, along with operation, maintenance and preservation of the existing system?

The *LRTP 2007 Update* anticipates a total of $3.034 billion in funding to be available from 2007 to 2027. The major sources of funding continues to be the federal government at 31.0% ($941 million) of the total, with the State Dedicated Fund at 26.4% ($802 million), Onondaga County at 6.4% ($193 million) and the City of Syracuse at 1.4% ($43 million). Centro operating revenue is projected at 6.8% ($206 million).

The first call on SMTC funding is asset management and infrastructure maintenance. This includes pavement maintenance, road reconstruction, bridge repair and improvements, transit maintenance and improvements; all together, this represents 84.7% of the Plan's anticipated funding. The remaining funds are allocated to safety (3.6%), transportation enhancements (3%), and congestion and ADA compliance (10.7%). Based on projected needs, a surplus of funds is not anticipated by 2027.

The *LRTP 2007 Update* is a policy level plan, which means that the Plan mostly identifies policies for transportation investment but does not usually identify funds devoted for any specific major project per se. However, there are four specific projects that have been identified for funding in the Plan:

- Bear Street Extension (privately funded)
- Third Lane of Frontage Road (Privately funded)
- Additional Travel Lane on NY 31
- North Salina Street Lane Reduction

Besides being good practice, fiscal constraint for an MPO in an air quality/maintenance area – like SMTC – also impacts air quality analysis. Said analysis cannot include actions or projects as "committed" if it is not reasonable to anticipate that revenues will be available to advance the actions or projects at the intended time. Under the federal environmental process (*National Environmental Policy Act* - NEPA), the Federal agencies cannot issue an environmental finding (e.g., Record of Decision or ROD) on a nonexempt[48] project unless the project is included in an air quality analysis on the Plan, and a project cannot be included in said analysis unless it is in the financially constrained portion of the Plan.[49] Until the Federal agencies issue a ROD or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), subsequent work on a nonexempt project (final design, right-of-way actions, construction) cannot be included in the TIP. Thus, 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 *LRTP 2007 Update* did receive a positive Federal conformity determination on July 23, 2007, and the four projects listed above were included in the analysis.

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

Environmental mitigation is the process of consistency of transportation planning with applicable federal, state and local energy conservation programs, environmental goals, and objectives.

> *"The metropolitan transportation plan shall… include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these*

> *activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation."*[50]

The SMTC's LRTP is essentially a policy level document that does not specifically contain many significant projects in the out-years for which potential mitigation activities would be appropriate. Specific mitigation measures are examined at the project phase via the NEPA process. Environmental mitigation is incorporated into the current LRTP's goals for establishing project priorities. Environmental considerations and mitigation activities are discussed in Chapter 2 of the LRTP.

THE NEXT PLAN

SMTC's is beginning its effort to develop the next version of its Plan due July 2011, in accordance with the previous four-year update cycle required by Federal legislation.[51] As stated earlier, this document will be another Update, with a full Plan effort being done for the 2015 period. As mentioned earlier, the MPO is beginning to improve its visioning approach. One prime example of the maturing of the planning approach is the Big ticket Initiative.

"Big Ticket" Initiatives

Similar to many recent MPO Plans, the *LRTP 2007 Update* makes no financial commitments to any new large scale projects in the out-years, and it is anticipated that the *2011 Update* will follow that trend. However, SMTC is planning an innovative approach to the consideration such large future expenditures.

The typical MPO approach is to include such large scale unfunded projects in the Plan for informational purposes, with comments to the effect that they "should" be considered for funding if they become feasible in the future, with feasibility being defined as either more money or higher population density than is currently the expected trend. Recently, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the MPO for the Albany, NY urbanized area, developed what it called its "Big Ticket Initiative", and SMTC is seriously considering a similar approach in the SMTC area.

The approach is to consider such large scale, unfunded new projects as part of a vision toward which the Region can strive. How is this different from what other MPOs call "illustrative" projects? It's different in that it gets a broader agreement on what constitutes the "trigger" to move forward. The traditional trigger is when the MPO's higher growth scenario that would support the Big Ticket Initiative is achieved. Under the new approach, the initiative can also be pursued – even under a normal trend growth - when the public supports the vision for other reasons and additional funding (non traditional sources of transportation funding) is provided. This key to whether or not Big

Ticket items should be pursued – and when – is the establishment of broad-based agreement on how the regional vision would be crafted.

The Albany MPO looked at how and why big initiatives in other metro areas came to be. Seventeen big initiatives were initially reviewed, with an additional in-depth review of six. The conclusion was that the following regional conditions appear to be pre-requisites for such initiatives:

- A *sense of urgency* is typically present.
- The initiative reflects the sensibilities and community values of the region, producing a strong *community consensus*.
- A *champion* is typically a critical element as catalyst and sustainer of the initiative.
- Commitment to a major initiative is as much related to a *subjective rationale* as to objective analysis.
- Funding is achieved through a combination of local sources and state or federal funds – reflecting a *willingness to pay*.
- In the absence of the conditions to support big initiatives, it is difficult to attain comparable impact through incremental changes.

These realizations are not often part of the transportation planning process. For example, a region or community may want to pursue an idea for *subjective* reasons, such as promoting economic growth, rather than purely *objective* criteria (e.g.; we can only purse light rail when a population density exists that would make it financially feasible). Subjective considerations are common when considering a new convention center or sports stadium; even though the existing financial conditions may not be immediately present, a community (*champion)* decides that the economic growth attracted by such a facility would be overall benefit to the region and thus is *willing to pay* for the facility. The same subjective consideration can be afforded transportation initiatives.

For this approach to succeed, the MPO has to gain widespread agreement on both the pre-requisites that need to be present in order to pursue individual big ticket initiatives and on the fact of whether those conditions presently exist. The MPO will continually monitor the conditions through ongoing community discussions in various venues to see if the conditions via-a-vie the pre-requisites are changing. The Big Ticket initiative approach solves a major problem in the traditional planning approach – it doesn't stifle consideration of concepts that for which funding is not presently identified. It crafts "permission" for ongoing discussions in the context of agreed-upon conditions that must be present before future consideration of any major project/idea. This approach creates a "safe" environment in which to discuss these large scale ideas as often as necessary.

SMTC is commended for considering such an innovative approach. The SMTC Plan with such "Big Ticket" initiative considerations would allow SMTC members and others to continually explore big ideas. This innovative approach of periodic review and discussion would ensure that the Syracuse area maintains its vision during periods of tight financial constraint.

Bartell Road over I-81 in Onondaga County
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
left too right: Congressman Dan Maffei, Superintendent of Vector Construction Tim Potter and NYSDOT Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee

Transportation Improvement Program

"The MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and any affected public transportation operator(s), shall develop a TIP for the metropolitan planning area"

23 CFR §450.324(a)

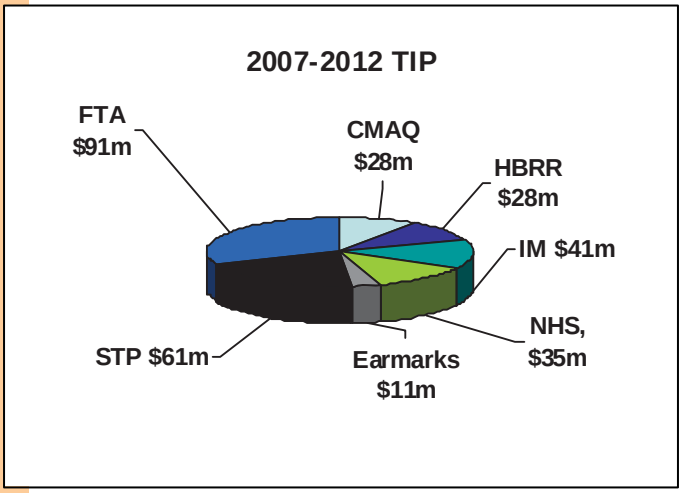
ONE of an MPO's most important responsibilities is the development of a multi-year program of transportation improvements that implement recommendations of the planning process, particularly those in the Long Range Transportation Plan. This program of projects is the Transportation Improvement Program (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 the air quality conformity analysis of the TIP and Plan estimates the effect of the proposed projects/strategies will have 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:

- Covers at least four years
- Updated at least every four years
- Consistent with the approved Long Range Transportation Plan
- Conforms to air quality requirements
- Identifies each project or a phase of a project for which federal transportation monies will be sought in the various years
- 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 procedures agreed to by the cooperating parties

SMTC states that *"The TIP also represents the translation of recommendations from the SMTC's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and UPWP into a short-term program of tangible transportation improvements. All TIP projects are evaluated to assure consistency with the community goals and objectives established in the LRTP."*

SMTC 2007-2012 TIP



The current TIP is the *2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program*, which was approved by the SMTC Policy Committee on June 12, 2007; it received a positive FHWA/FTA conformity determination on July 23, 2007 and became effective on October 1, 2007.

The *2007-2012 TIP* proposes $251 million in highway and $90 million in transit improvements (Federal + match funding). The TIP was passed prior to the requirement deadline for the monies being shown in current dollars, and it was subsequently revised. The *2007-2012 TIP* is fiscally constrained by program year (constrained to the amount of monies the MPO was told was available); it utilizes appropriate project selection procedures and it passed an air quality conformity analysis by the MPO. As required, NYSDOT incorporated the TIP projects into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) without modification.[52]

SMTC places a strong emphasis on maintaining the transportation infrastructure. In the *2027 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.

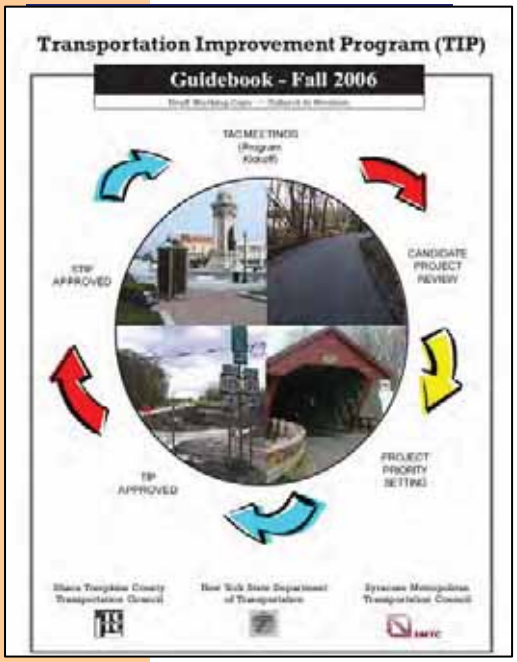
TIP Development Process

The TIP Development Process begins with the solicitation of new projects approximately eight months before the TIP's required approval date. The MPO issues a "call letter" to municipalities, participating agencies, contacts on the public information mailing list, and other interested parties. The letter announces the start of the TIP update process, and includes information on how municipalities and agencies can participate in the transportation planning process and propose specific transportation projects. It also provides a TIP adoption schedule and application.

The SMTC staff conducts an extensive screening process for all projects submitted for TIP funding. The SMTC staff evaluates the project proposals comparing the projects to federal Planning Factors and the SMTC Long-Range Transportation Plan's Goals and Objectives. In addition, projects submitted for Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funding are analyzed by the SMTC staff and must demonstrate a quantified reduction of emissions from Carbon Monoxide (CO) to meet eligibility requirements and be included in the TIP.

The SMTC TIP development process is coordinated with the development of the NYSDOT Region 3's *"Program of Projects"*. A Region's program of projects is a compilation of the programs in the urban and rural parts of the Region. NYSDOT Region 3 includes two MPOs (Syracuse and Ithaca) and four rural counties (Cayuga, Cortland, Oswego and Seneca). At the beginning of the program cycle, the NYSDOT Region receives a target-funding amount (Federal plus State funds) from the NYSDOT Main Office to identify 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 MPO TIPs and subsequently the STIP, while projects in rural counties go directly into the STIP.

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 STIP's targeted effective date. To begin the TIP process, the MPO sends a "Call for Projects" letter and a copy of the Transportation Improvement Program Guidebook. The Guidebook was developed by SMTC, ITCTC (the Ithaca MPO), and NYSDOT Region 3, the latest version of which is Fall 2006.[53] It is a tool to help Project Applicants in completing the TIP application. We consider that this to be a good planning practice.



The Call Letter is sent 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 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.[54]

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-Aid 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 to be estimated for the various phases of a project: Scoping, Preliminary/Final Design, Real Estate, Construction and Construction Inspection. The Generic Cost data is an extremely useful tool that

enables the MPO members to develop a more realistic idea of the proposed projects would cost.

There are separate IPP application forms for air quality, bike/ped, bridge, highway, safety, and public transit. 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 Planning Factors and the goals/objectives of the SMTC Transportation Plan 2007 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 and associated air quality conformity analysis for public review and comment after instructed by the Planning Committee to do so. The Staff posts the draft TIP and public meeting notice on its website and holds a public meeting to solicit comments. The Planning Committee reviews the public comments received during the 30-day public review period and makes recommendations to the Policy committee. The SMTC Policy Committee then takes appropriate action on the new TIP and its air quality conformity analysis.

FISCAL CONSTRAINT

The SMTC *2007-2012 TIP* is fiscally constrained for five years according to the information it had at the time of development. Subsequent to the adoption of the TIPs in all MPOs, it became apparent that the target amounts identified to its Regional Offices by the NYSDOT Main Office significantly exceeded the amount of monies actual available for programming in the years of the TIP. The amount of money (on the highway side) that can be programmed in any year is based on FHWA's obligational authority available for that year, which normally runs about 10% below the Federal authorized levels. Federal guidance is that the MPOs may use appropriation levels for the purpose of developing the TIP; a modest overprogramming of projects is acceptable because not all projects will proceed to implementation when expected for numerous reasons (e.g.; slippage in a project's schedule due to unforeseen design, right-of-way or environmental issues). However, we have found that the available funding amounts indicated to the Regions (i.e.; the amounts that MPOs use for TIP development purposes) have not been realistic of late.

In addition to the MPOs having used overly optimistic levels of available funding, "rollover" has complicated the fiscal picture. When TIPs are developed in April-May, MPOs have to estimate which projects in the then-current TIP will actually proceed to implementation by October 1st; those expected to progress are not included in the first year of the developing TIP. There will normally be projects that do not proceed as expected, and these projects are routinely "rolled-over" into the next TIP. The number of projects and costs in the new TIP has thus increased by the rollover amount – unless an MPO purposely pushes out projects to a future year to realign the funding balances to reflect the realistic amounts that are available for that year. Unless corrected, the accumulated difference between FHWA obligational authority – the level of funding that may actually be used in a year – and the funding levels shown in the TIP as expected to be available in that year grows each year.

The total amount of projects included on the current STIP (FFY 2008-2011) has become unbalanced when compared to the level of funding actually available to implement said projects. The 2008 year was actually 40% over-programmed even before considering rollover projects. When MPOs then ask to include the rollover projects on the new TIP, it's similar to pouring water into a barrel that is already overflowing. This certainly is inconsistent with the federal requirement that "*The TIP shall include a project, or a phase of a project, only if full funding can reasonably be anticipated to be available for the project within the time period contemplated for completion of the project."*[55] In air quality nonattainment areas like SMTC, there is even a stricter requirement: "*…projects included in the first two years of the TIP shall be limited to those for which funds are available or committed."*[56]

The NYSDOT Main Office, Regional Offices and MPOs are now aware of the problem and the Federal agencies have been assured that the next TIP's projection of available resources will be much more conservative and will address the rollover issue.

During the TIP's life, the SMTC staff monitors fiscal constraint by taking an active role where is uses its own process to select the best projects that compete for funds at the MPO table. Through this process only the actual funds that are available at the time can be allocated to various projects. Earmarks are not added to this 'pot of money' until a project sponsor has been identified.

The MPO relies on NYSDOT Main Office in the development of Year of Expenditure because they have significant experience with construction cost estimating and inflationary factors.

NON-JURISDICTIONALLY ORIENTED DECISION-MAKING

We commend the SMTC for the cooperative manner in which the projects to be funded with economic recovery dollars in 2009 were selected and encourage this type of process. In the past with 'regular' funding, project selection was occasionally influenced by facility ownership rather than on function and need. Federal fund type usually determined project selection (e.g., State-owned facilities compete usually against themselves for NHS funding, and the locally-owned facilities compete against each other for STP funding). Many MPOs follow this approach, consciously or not. Once a

member has a project included on the TIP, the member often presumes that it's entitled to that "money". Should a member's project be "bumped" into the next TIP year because of fiscal constraint or lack of progress toward implementation, the substituted project is usually from that same member rather than the MPO selecting the best of the candidate projects.

We recommend that SMTC continue the approach wherein all member agencies agree to put all funds (NHS, CMAQ, STP) on the table; the best projects are selected according to SMTC's investment strategy, and then money is assigned. Thus, the transportation investment would be based on function and need, not facility ownership, and thus be "jurisdictionally blind".

ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED 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."[57]

SMTC publishes its annual listing of obligated projects on its website.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

The February 14, 2007 *Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule* made a significant but often overlooked change regarding TIP amendment actions. The regulations now contain a definition of what constitutes an "Administrative modification" and an "Amendment".

- An *Administrative modification* means a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan or TIP that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously-included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does *not* require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

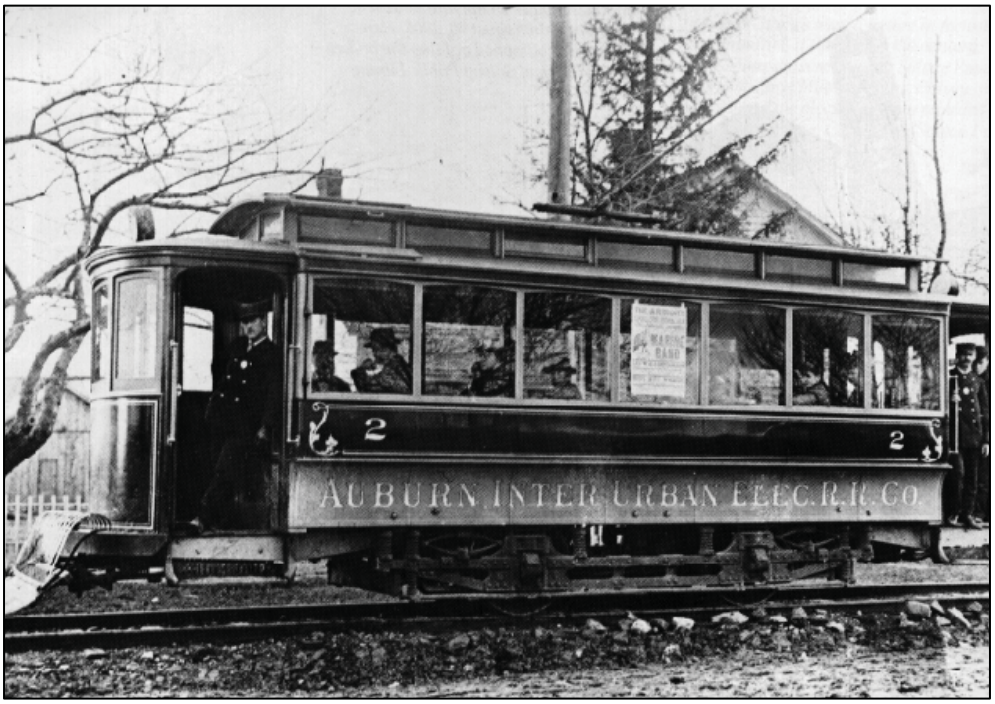
- *Amendment* means a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan or TIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). An amendment is a revision that *requires* public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity

> determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving ''non-exempt'' projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the State in accordance with its public involvement process."

In February 2009, SMTC revised its TIP amendment process according to the new federal definitions. This process is very clear for both understanding what constitutes an amendment and what is merely an administrative modification. The identification of what constitutes a major vs. minor scope change that could trigger either a modification or an amendment is left to a judgment call by the staff after consultation with the Planning Committee.

Recommendation

We recommend that SMTC continue the approach wherein all member agencies agree to put all FHWA funds (NHS, CMAQ, STP) on the table; the best projects are selected according to SMTC's investment strategy, and then money is assigned. Thus, the transportation investment would be based on function and need, not facility ownership, and thus be "jurisdictionally blind".



Interurbans *linked Syracuse with the surrounding countryside.*

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 the area.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA or CENTRO) is the major "public transit provider in Central New York. 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 15.3 million annual passengers and 42,000 daily passengers. The CNYRTA has about 675 full- and part-time employees and has a fleet size of 262 vehicles. According to its website http://www.centro.org, Centro is experiencing its sixth consecutive year of ridership growth. The increases are remarkable when considering the challenges presented in a flat Central New York economy, where there has been a loss of manufacturing jobs and a shrinking population. Over the past six years, Centro has seen a 20% increase in customers.

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, Oneida and Oswego Counties which contain 657,715 people). Both Cayuga and Oneida Counties are outside the SMTC's planning area. Three other counties - Cortland, Jefferson, and Madison - may join the Authority by votes of their respective county legislatures. 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.

There are seven operating subsidiaries under CNYRTA:

1) CNY Centro, Inc. (CENTRO)
2) Centro of Cayuga, Inc.[58]
3) Centro of Oswego, Inc.[59]
4) Centro of Oneida, Inc.[60]
5) Centro Call-A-Bus, Inc. (services for persons with disabilities)
6) Centro Parking, Inc.[61]

7) Intermodal Transportation Center, Inc. (ITC), which owns and operates the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center, Inc. (RTC, Inc.)

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 SMTC's *2027 Plan*. While transit accounts for approximately 2.2% of all work trips in Onondaga County, the *2027 Plan* allocates 23.7% of the total resources to transit.

As customary, Centro provided excellent shuttle service to and from parking lots for attendees at the New York State Fair in 2009. The service was reliable and courteous, based on a reviewer's personal experience spending two days at the Fair.

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 obvious need for more city-to-suburb and suburb-to-suburb service. Up until that time, CENTRO's service was the traditional "hub and spoke" structure with service within the city and from the city to the suburbs.

ReMAP's developed a long-term transportation plan that includes innovative solutions to address the community's needs and shortcomings of the current system. 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: 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 2008 *Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan* (see next page) draws from the community data gathered in the ReMAP study.

The SMTC staff is now assisting in a major examination of transit as part of the I-81 study effort. This will include looking at additional modes of mass transit for the area, particularly connecting University Hill with downtown. The Bus Rapid Transit and Fixed Rail options will be examined. This activity was originally planned under UPWP task Transit Initiative Study, but it will now be part of the I-81 effort.

MPO AGREEMENTS

Federal legislation (23 USC 134) requires the MPO to work in cooperation with the State and "public transportation operator(s)" in order to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. In that Centro is the designated recipient of FTA funding, it is the "public transportation operator" according to the Federal definition[62]. CNYRTA is a full voting member of the SMTC Policy Committee and thus has an equal voice in how the vision for the region evolves.

The federal regulations require that the respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts are to be detailed in written agreements between the MPO, the State and the public transportation operator(s). As discussed in the *Organization* section, SMTC acknowledges that such a formal agreement is not in place. SMTC is now exploring how best to document the working relationship.

As noted earlier, FHWA and FTA is citing this issue as a corrective finding: SMTC needs to review its *Operating Plan* and either make the necessary revisions thereto or adopt new written agreements covering the roles and responsibilities for cooperative planning, outlining planning roles and responsibilities, the development/sharing of financial information for TIPs and Plans, and the development of the annual listing of obligated projects. This should be accomplished by May 1, 2010.

JARC AND NEW FREEDOM

SMTC completed its *Job Access and Reverse Commute Plan* report[63] in 2001. The JARC report was built on ReMAP (see *Transit* section) and specifically identified and addressed the unmet transportation needs of those moving from welfare to work and other low income workers in Onondaga County. The unmet needs were identified through a process of comparing the distribution of the workers in need of services to the potential job sites and existing transportation services.

CNYRTA is the designated recipient for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) funding from the FTA. CNYRTA continues to utilize the JARC funding to provide transportation services to low-income persons and underrepresented populations to jobs and job-related services. Using NF funding, CNYRTA continues to broaden its use of mobility mangers and is working to better assess the needs of the region and enable riders to travel more efficiently for their human service needs.

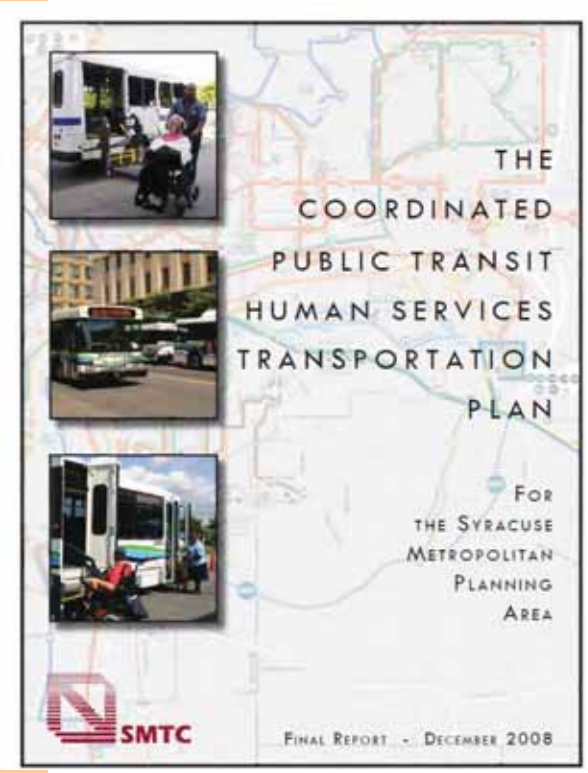
CLEAN-AIR TECHNOLOGY LEADER

Centro is one of the foremost transit entities in New York regarding use of alternate fuels. All Centro diesel buses are now operating on a 5% biodiesel fuel blend (B5) that produces fewer carbon dioxide ($C0_2$) emissions, unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Centro also presently operates 120 full-sized compressed natural gas (CNG) buses; first introduced in the area in 1994, CNG buses presently representing the majority of the full-sized fleet operated by CNY Centro in Onondaga County. In 2001, CNYRTA built an indoor state-of-the-art CNG 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. The CNG fueling station is open to the public.

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES PLANNING

CNYRTA in coordination with SMTC and various human service agencies completed the area's *Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan*[64] (Coordinated Plan) in December 2008. This Plan was in response to a SAFETEA-LU requirement that any project selected to receive Elderly Persons & Persons with Disabilities (Sect. 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Sect. 5316) or New Freedom (Sect. 5317) funds must be chosen from a competitive selection

process and the projects should be derived from the locally developed Coordinated Plan. These programs each target a specific at-need population: people with disabilities, low to moderate income (LMI) citizens, and the elderly community.



The Coordinated Plan is based on the earlier ReMAP document as well as the JARC plan. ReMAP identified many gaps in transportation services for underserved populations and provided a list of recommendations. The JARC plan focused on commuting patterns, especially those of low-income individuals. SMTC supplemented this information with additional information from SMTC's Environmental Justice Analysis and Title VI reports and from direct sources.

The Coordinated Plan addresses FTA's three mobility-management programs. It assesses the needs of the populations of each program, identifies strategies to address those needs, prioritizes those strategies, and plans for their implementation. This plan has been incorporated into much of the overall planning effort by the MPO. Service improvements are specific to Onondaga County and parts of Oswego and Madison Counties.

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

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Congestion Management Process

"(a) The transportation planning process in a TMA shall address congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies:

23 CFR 450.320(a)

BECAUSE of its designation as a TMA, the SMTC must develop a **Congestion Management Process (CMP).** The CMP is actually a systematic *process* required in TMAs and 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.

SAFETEA-LU expanded the scope of the concept from a "*system* that provides for effective management" to a "*process* that provides for effective management *and operation*".[65] Prior to SAFETEA-LU, the concept was named the "congestion management system" (CMS). The change in name (and acronym) was deliberate in order to achieve a change in perspective and practice, to address congestion management through a process that provides for effective management and operations, and to provide an enhanced linkage to the planning process and the environmental review process. The CMP is based on cooperatively developed travel demand reduction and operational management strategies as well as capacity increases.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CMP

Most of the major roadways in the Syracuse TMA are not congested, with a few exceptions during the pm peak hour, as people are traveling home from work, or at certain times on the weekends. The CMP identified congestion on roadways with a volume/capacity ratio of greater than 0.9. There are a handful of roadways in the MPO area that exceed this ratio.

Still, there are several reasons why the CMP is important to the TMA. First is regulatory: 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 CMP.[66] Thus, the MPO may program a project to 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 single occupant vehicle (SOV) facility effectively (or to facilitate its management in the future). Since the Syracuse, NY air quality nonattainment area includes all of Onondaga County, the CMP is essential to capital programming decisions.

The second reason why the CMP is important is that it can result in drivers saving money and fuel. 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 $15.7 billion annually in the form of traffic accidents, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays.

While recognizing its importance, the CMP is still just one component – albeit an important one - of the larger regional planning process. It is not 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 CMP 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. The SMTC estimates 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 90 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 2.6 percent today.[67]

Today, the MPO's approach to the CMP is basically the same as contained in its original Congestion Management System (CMS) adopted on October 23, 1997. It 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 CMP 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 CMP. The MPO formed a Working Group (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 CMP Study Advisory Committee (SAC). SMTC released its initial CMS Report (CMS Final Report 2001-2002 UPWP) in April 2002.

• *Data Gathering*

When the SMTC started on the CMP process in 1997, the Working Group developed an initial list of locations needing traffic counts. The 2004-2005 CMS identified 200 road segments (sections of roadway between intersections) and 30 key intersections where, in their professional judgment, congestion was already occurring. New traffic counts are collected every year for one third of all the locations

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 consultant to count traffic at the 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 CMP 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 CMP protocol, SMTC analyses the count data biennially. SMTC originally intended to analyze the data on an annual basis and issue an annual CMP Report. However, due to the modest level of congestion in the area, the SAC agreed to change the frequency of the CMP project to every other year. The Report is 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 CMP reports, as well as reevaluating the monitoring sites.

• *Data Analysis*

Congestion is often a subjective concept. The metropolitan planning 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."[68] Thus, a resident of Syracuse would have a different idea of acceptable congestion than a resident of Manhattan.

The degree of congestion given a certain vehicle volume 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 Level-of-Service "A" (vehicles are free to maneuver within the traffic stream) 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 the 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.[69]

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 CMP 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 formula[70] 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 4: Magnitude of PM Peak Hour Excess Delay

Magnitude	Qualifications
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 CMP 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 CMP does not identify any roadway segments as having significant congestion.

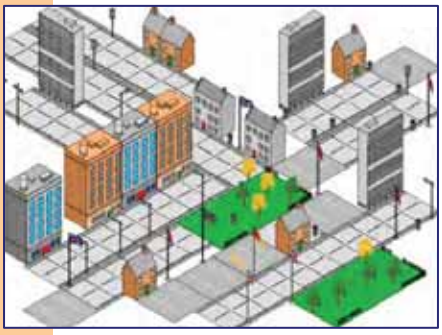
• Speed Data

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 CMP reports. SMTC 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 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, CMP 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 CMP Information

In the 2002 Certification Review, the Federal agencies made a recommendation that the SMTC consider a stronger link between the output of the CMP analysis and the TIP/LRP efforts. In response, SMTC has gone to a two-year CMP to allow for the consideration in TIP programming. The analyses are completed in the non-TIP years so that the results of the CMP can be available to use in determining which potential TIP projects may help to alleviate congestion. We believe that this is a good approach. However, recognizing that the existing level of congestion in the area is not overly stressful, the data does not contribute a great deal to a project's ranking.



Shared Cost Initiative

For many small and medium-sized MPOs like SMTC, the CMP has not developed a close fit with existing planning practices. Where congestion is a marginal or absent issue, the CMP appears to offer limited benefits which consume significant staff resources. Hoping to make the CMP more practicable in the area, SMTC hosted a collaborative effort with all of the New York MPOs to work with a consultant[71] and to examine CMSs. This Shared Cost Initiative (SCI) study was entitled **Relevant Congestion Mitigation System (CMP) Best Practices**. The $80,000 consultant study produced *Congestion Management Systems:Innovative Practices* ***Task 1 Report*** (August 2005), which highlighted nationwide best practices in the area of CMP.[72] Subsequently, *A Menu of Options – Final Report* was published in February 2006.

NEXT STEPS

The SAC reviewed the SCI material and decided to continue with its basic approach to CMP with some revisions. These include incorporating an excess delay factor into the analysis and examining a 0.7 v/c ratio as a screen.

Air Quality

" (c) The MPO shall review and update the transportation plan at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period to at least a 20-year planning horizon."

23 CFR §450.322(c)

PRESIDENT President George Herbert Walker Bush signed the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA90) on November 15, 1990. This legislation has had a fundamental impact on air quality and transportation-related air quality, as it related to the effect of transportation on air quality. The transportation sector was required to be an active participant in the work to achieve attainment of the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Nonattainment areas are those geographic regions that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates as not meeting one or more of the NAAQS based on monitored levels of pollutants. Ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}) were the primary transportation-related pollutants at the time. 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 failed to meet the attainment date; it was "bumped up" to a higher severity and was subject to more stringent regulatory requirements. Since that time, EPA changed the standard for O_3 twice and added a new NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$ (Particulate Matter with a diameter less than 2.5 micrometers).

Air Quality Nonattainment Status

In the late 1970s, a detailed study of the Syracuse area was conducted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to identify a sight where high traffic CO concentrations would likely to occur. NYSDEC placed a monitor at the intersection of Almond and East Adams in the City of Syracuse, and the hot-spot monitor recorded violations of the CO standard from 1983 to 1986, and then again in 1989. In 1984, EPA established the size of the nonattainment area to be the CO hot-spot location.

After the passage of the 1990 CAAA, EPA continued the CO nonattainment designation for the area based on the 1989 data. The 1990 Act presumed that the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area (in this case, Onondaga, Madison and Oswego Counties)

should be declared as nonattainment, but NYSDEC was able to convince EPA to limit the nonattainment designation to Onondaga County. Onondaga County was classified as a moderate CO nonattainment area in 1991.

Once an area is designated as nonattainment, EPA regulations require that the State adopt a plan that will bring the area back into attainment status by a specified date. This plan is called the State Implementation Plan or SIP. The SIP is an enforceable plan developed at the state level that explains how the state will comply with air quality standards according to the federal Clean Air Act. The initial SIP for Syracuse, which was approved by EPA in 1982, concentrated on the East Adams/ Almond Street intersection. It included a Special Events Management Plan to alleviate congestion and delay that impacted the readings at the location.[73]

After several years without any monitored violations greater than allowable[74], the NYSDEC submitted a proposed revision to the SIP to EPA to obtain redesignation of the area to attainment. EPA approved the redesignation of Onondaga County to attainment status on September 29, 1993. Ambient air monitoring data indicates that air quality in Onondaga County continues to be below the 8-hour CO NAAQS.

Redesignation to attainment status, however, does not bring immediate relief from EPA conformity analysis requirements, however. SMTC is now subject to Maintenance Plans.

AIR QUALITY MAINTENANCE PLANS

When an area transitions from a non-attainment to an attainment designation, it is subject to two 10-year maintenance plans that demonstrate that the area will remain in attainment for the 10-year periods of each plan.[75] Onondaga County's first maintenance plan was approved by EPA as a SIP revision by EPA in the September 29, 1993. The 1993 Maintenance SIP contained a list of eleven Transportation Control Measures (TCMs). 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 actions as commitments. SMTC has followed through on its "good faith" promise, as shown in Table 5.

The first ten-year Maintenance Plan expired in 2003. The 2nd ten-year maintenance plan was submitted to EPA in March 2004 and approved on September 8, 2005. This Plan includes a Motor vehicle Emissions Budget for the years 2009 and 2013, emission control measures (Low Emission Vehicle program, and the Low Enhanced Motor Vehicle inspection and maintenance program, the eleven TCMs contained in the first maintenance plan (already implemented), and "margin of safety" provisions of EPA's transportation conformity rule.[76]

Onondaga County will remain subject to the CO maintenance plan until the end of 2013. Until Onondaga County successfully finishes the second 10-year maintenance plan, the MPO is 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 cannot proceed unless they come for an air quality "conforming" TIP and Plan. The EPA conformity regulations detail *how* the conformity analysis is to be done.

Table 5:
Air Quality 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 CO Maintenance SIP

TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY PROCESS

What is transportation conformity? An area's official attainment designation is based on the level of pollutants that are *physically* monitored by NYSDEC's air quality monitor; conformity, on the other hand, is a process through which the MPO must *theoretically* demonstrate that the implementation of projects and strategies in the TIP and Plan meet the emission tests (limits) established in the SIP to enable the area to reach attainment. This analysis process is known as the conformity process (i.e.; Plans and projects must "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 "test" for conformity is a comparison of the theoretical emissions generated from Plans/projects against the allowable "budget" *on-road* mobile sources[77] (e.g.; automobiles and buses) for a given year.

The FHWA and FTA, in consultation with EPA, jointly determine whether or not a transportation plan and TIP is in conformance with the SIP. The determination is made following discussions and reviews that occur as part of an *Interagency Consultation Process* involving the Federal agencies, NYSDOT and NYSDEC, and the MPO itself.

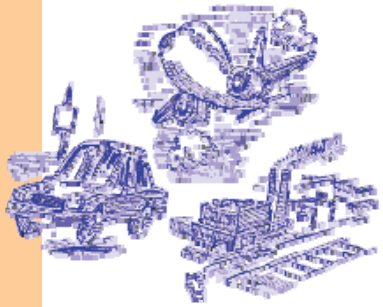
SMTC's current Plan[78] and TIP - the *2027 Long Range Transportation Plan: 2007 Update* and the *2007-2011 Transportation Improvement Program* - both received a positive conformity determination from FHWA/FTA on July 23, 2007.

CMAQ PROGRAM

The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* established the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) as a 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 (for ozone and carbon monoxide) 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; NYSDOT commendably allocates the CMAQ funds among its nonattainment areas based on the federal formula. According to the formula, the SMTC annually gets approximately $4 million in Federal CMAQ monies to spend in Onondaga County.

The SMTC ranks among the best MPOs in New York for its evaluation 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 additional 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 Plan 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 Science Bureau, Air Quality Section (ESB). A CD is a determination made by the ESB that the application for CMAQ funds is complete and the estimate of emission reductions is defendable. This requires a complete IPP with an additional air quality analysis showing the air quality benefits and calculations, and a request by the SMTC for approval of the obligation based on environmental factors. The CD packet is submitted to the ESB by the SMTC and a copy kept in the project files. SMTC's submissions are well done.

CMAQ projects funded by the SMTC in the 2007-2011 TIP include:

- Geddes/Genesee Signal Interconnect (signal upgrades and linking to signal interconnect system);
- Lodi/North Salina Street Signal Improvement (signal upgrades and linking to signal interconnect system);
- N, S, E, W Signal Interconnect Expansion;
- Replace CNG Transit Buses with Hybrids (CNG fleet replacement project with modern technology (diesel-electric hybrids));
- New York State Department of Transportation Freeway Incident Management System Phase 5 and 6; and
- New York State Thruway Authority ITS Implementation Project.

According to the CMAQ analysis, the combined first year benefit of these projects is roughly 116 tons/year in CO emissions.

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.

Public Outreach

"The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.". 23 USC 450.316(a)

SAFETEA-LU requires that MPOs develop and utilize a participation plan. A **Participation Plan** shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties and shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan [49 USC 5303(i)(5)(B)(i) & (ii) and 23 USC 134(i)(5)(B)(i) & (ii)].

The plan, at a minimum, needs to describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

- Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and TIP;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
- Making technical information and meeting notices available to the public in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the Internet;
- Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes; and
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

PLAN AND TIP OUTREACH REQUIREMENTS

The requirements pertaining to the Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.322) also include provisions addressing public outreach (450.322(f)(7) and (450.322 (g)) as follows:

- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.
- Consult as appropriate with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the Transportation Plan.

TIP Requirements [450.324(b)]:

- All interested parties shall have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by 450.316(a).
- In addition, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process; the circumstances of the public meeting should be addressed through the participation plan described in 450.316(a).

SMTC's Public Participation Plan

SMTC adopted its *Public Participation Plan* in 2007. 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, website, and public meetings. The SMTC provides a 30-day public comment period on the TIP and the LRP.

- **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*.

- **Public Involvement Plans**

The SMTC 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 Advisory 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:

Website – SMTC's website (**www.smtcmpo.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, addition of the I-81 Challenge information 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 2,700 individuals and organizations as well as an electronic mailing list of 500.

SMTC Brochure: *A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning* - SMTC continues to distribute this very useful brochure.

Newsletter – SMTC is again publishing a very good quarterly newsletter entitled *DIRECTIONS***.** The newsletter is graphically well designed and offers news about its transportation planning activities and specific studies. The newsletter is distributed to more than 3,200 individuals, some of whom include the media; local, State, and Federal agencies associated with the SMTC; municipal and elected officials; community agencies and representatives; and a large number of interested citizens.

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 SMTC leverages these TNT meetings to present their TIP and LRP. Another such outreach is SMTC's participation in the visioning efforts of the FOCUS (Forging Our Communities United Strength) program.

VISUALIZATION

The old adage is that "a picture is worth a thousand words". Visualization is the process of using pictures to convey the complex character of data or proposed projects and how they function. This tool strengthens public participation in the planning and project delivery process and aids the public in understanding proposed plans and TIPs. SAFETEA-LU requires both States and MPOs to use "*visualization techniques*" to the maximum extent possible in public involvement and planning programs.[79] The term is defined in the federal planning regulations as follows:

"methods used by States and MPOs in the development of transportation plans and programs with the public, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible format such as maps, pictures, and/or displays, to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs."[80]

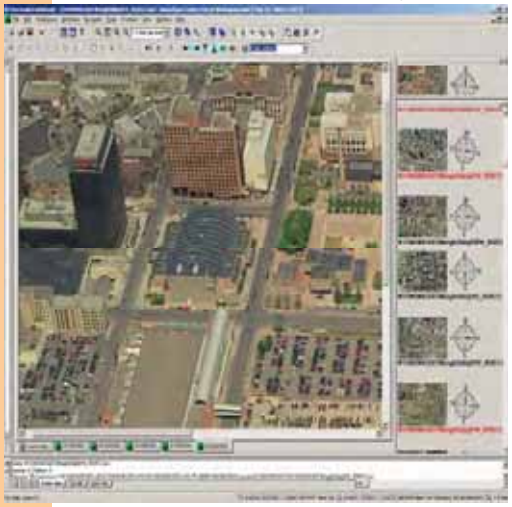
Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive GIS systems, GIS based scenario planning tools, photo manipulation and computer simulation.

Advances in computers allow a whole new group of three-dimensional (3-D) imagery and animation. There are many types of visualization products, from the simple to complex, from inexpensive to costly, and from quick to time-consuming. According to the AASHTO's *Visualization in Transportation*, "complex and costly" does not necessarily equate with improved understanding or effectiveness.[81] Also, what is complex and costly now might become commonplace in a couple of years, as graphics technology continues to evolve rapidly.

According to the literature, visualization techniques fall into several categories:

- **Two-Dimensional -** Two-dimensional (2-D) graphics portray a spatial relationship of an object using two of its three dimensions. 'Flat' pictures are two-dimensional, and usually portray horizontal and vertical references. 2-D images are representative but not necessarily accurate. Photographs portray the existing condition or a different location that is similar to what is being considered or proposed. Photos are shown from the ground level, from an elevated platform, or from an airplane, and often enlarged to show detail. An artist's rendering is another type of two-dimensional graphic. It can consist of a free-hand drawing, painting, or computer rendering of a proposed design or facility based on an interpretation of proposed planning and design information.
- **Three-Dimensional -** 'Depth' adds the third dimension, in addition to horizontal and vertical references. A walk-through or drive-through provides the ability to move through a virtual 3-D environment and to observe the content of that environment from a given eye-point or height above the ground. This ability may be the result of an animation sequence where the path, eye-point, and direction of gaze have all been pre-defined, or may be the result of the viewer's real-time control over those parameters.
- **Four-Dimensional -** 'Time' adds the fourth dimension, in addition to horizontal, vertical, and depth. Four-dimensional (4-D) graphics are animated simulations based on 3-D modeling, and include visualizations that apply simulated motion and incorporate a wide range of dynamic imagery in a series of 3-D images that are sequentially related in space and time.

SMTC presently employs two-dimensional visualization with good effect. The website, reports, plans, subarea studies and public presentations are well done. The Staff has recently installed *Pictometry* software[82] and images of their travel demand model base files; *Pictometry* ventures into the three-dimensional category of visualization, although the MPO has not yet used it for public presentations. They have found this capability very valuable for verifying base model attributes, such as the number of lanes and intersection geometry. The high resolution and oblique imagery allows the MPO to verify this information without having to complete time-consuming field investigations.



Should the MPO purchase and use specialized visualization software to advance further in the three or even the four dimension level? As noted previously, "complex and costly" doesn't necessarily equate with improved understanding or effectiveness. SMTC's techniques are very good right now. Perhaps SMTC will be able to profit from a near-term simulation effort to be done in conjunction with NYSDOT's revaluation of I-81 through the City. *SAFETEA-LU* legislation contains a $5 million earmark entitled *"Various transportation projects related to the DestiNY USA project".*[83] The eligibility of this earmark is

directly tied to SAFETEA-LU's Section 10210: Demonstration of Digital Project Simulation, which states:

> "To be eligible to receive funds made available for the project (NY459) referred to in paragraph (1), the project sponsor, including private entities working with the project sponsor on the project, and the State shall enter into an agreement to work cooperatively with the Secretary to use digital project simulation for such project and to evaluate the effectiveness of using such simulation."

According to Section10210, the term *"digital project simulation"* means computer-assisted three-dimensional technology and digital lifecycle management.

Thus, an agreement between NYSDOT and the Secretary (probably FHWA Washington Office) must be developed as a prerequisite to using the $5 million earmark under NY459. According to Section 10210, the digital simulation effort is to be used in the planning, design, and construction of the project with the intent of achieving savings and efficiency in investment planning, project delivery coordination, and facility management. In the construction phase, the project sponsor is to use digital lifecycle management techniques, including the use of embedded electronics and software, to monitor performance of the infrastructure and provide safety and security information.

Visualization Shared Cost Initiative

The New York MPOs are participating in a Shared Cost Initiative entitled **Software Standardization for Visualization and Desktop Publishing.** This project was initiated to help the MPOs in implementing the federal visualization requirement as well as explore the best available software and tools to enhance public outreach and project visualization. Available software such as *Community Viz*, which allows the user to compare land use scenarios side-by-side (2D or 3D) as well as the economic, social, and environmental impacts, is being reviewed; compatibility with ArcGIS is one assessment criteria. After the software is selected, it would be purchased and distributed to each MPO, and training sessions held. By standardizing with a software platform, MPOs can share ideas and resources effectively and similar to how the MPOs currently share GIS and modeling efforts. The Glens Falls, NY MPO is the "Host" for this activity, with SMTC charged with Project Management.

The SMTC continues through its normal MPO outreach efforts to meet the requirements in *SAFETEA-LU* for public involvement within the planning process. In an effort to help the general public understand the process each project and/or plan outreach effort with an explanation of what the MPO is and how it functions. The MPO has also worked to translate all of its relevant documents into Spanish text. As other projects unfold the MPO acknowledges that other languages will have to be included. Specifically as the I-81 project advances much of the material will have to be presented in an Asian language as this will represent some of the larger communities that will be affected.


Security Considerations

"The metropolitan transportation planning process shall be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors: … (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users." 23 CFR §450.306(a)(3)

IN 1998, the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) added an additional planning element to the requirements for the metropolitan planning process: "safety and security". Then came the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In August 2005, *SAFETEA-LU* separated Security out as a separate planning element in the MPO 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, security was typically focused at the personal level, such as person being secure from harassment when riding transit. Now, the perception is more global in nature. Retired General Tommy Franks characterized the September 11th attack and its aftermath as a "crease in history."[84]

SAFETEA-LU calls for the security of the transportation system to be a stand-alone planning factor, signaling a increase in importance from prior legislation, in which secrity was coupled with safety.[85] This change recognizes that planning has a role in critical elements of transportation security. Of course, the specific action or actions a particular State or MPO might consider depends on the circumstances unique to the state or region, the transportation system and the level of risk.

DEFINITION OF "SECURITY"

A common definition of "security" in the MPO planning context is challenging. Some MPOs seek a clear description of what "security planning" means, while others are comfortable with a vague definition. The FHWA and FTA generally define "security planning" as that related to an event that is beyond the ability of local authorities to handle and respond to and require outside resources assist. There is no checklist that defines "security" in the context of MPO planning. Rather, each MPO is encouraged to create a local definition that both fits local needs and addresses the SAFETEA-LU planning factor.

For the purposes of this certification review discussion, "Security" will deal with significant disruptions to the transportation system, either long or short-term, intentional or not.

THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF AN MPO

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

The role of the MPO in regional planning and decision-making will vary from one region to another. Some MPOs have a long history of strongly influencing operations strategies, regional vision and land use development. Other MPOs have very little authority or responsibility beyond that of developing the core required documents and activities. However, the degree of involvement of an MPO in security planning is not always commensurate with their involvement in other regional activities. MPOs located in regions prone to natural disasters (e.g.; hurricanes, tornados, etc.) tend to be more involved in security planning for reasons other than terrorist attacks. USDOT included language within the planning regulations to make clear that there are differences across regions and disasters; it did so to encourage development of an approach that fits locally specific needs. **"**Consideration of the planning factors…shall be reflected, as appropriate, in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The degree of consideration and analysis of the [planning] factors should be based on the scale and complexity of many issues…"[86]

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) has developed a technical paper on the range of roles for MPOs in planning for system operations.[87] The roles outlined in the paper are a good point of departure for the possible roles that MPOs could play in security/disaster planning, and are thus described in Table 6. There is tremendous variation among MPOs in their security planning roles, and it is critical for each MPO to determine its own value-added niche. For example, some MPOs might take on a data gathering and analysis role on behalf of the region's emergency response agencies, while others might take more of a leadership role by organizing meetings or discussions to facilitate better institutional coordination.

RESPONSE VS. RECOVERY

Table 6. Possible MPO Roles in Security Planning	
Traditional	The MPO incorporates system management and operations (M&O) role in its ongoing transportation planning activities. The focus would be on specific M&O projects that arise as part of the transportation planning process; but the primary responsibility for operations-type projects would rest elsewhere, most likely with the region's operations agencies.
Convener	The MPO acts as a forum where operations plans could be discussed and coordinated with other plans in the region. Regular meetings on operations issues are held, but the MPO would still not be responsible for developing a regional operations plan.
Champion	The MPO works aggressively to develop a regional consensus on operations planning. MPO planners work with operating agencies to create programs and projects that improve system performance. The MPO takes the lead in developing regional agreements on coordinated operations.
Developer	The MPO develops regional operations plans in addition to incorporating operations strategies into the transportation plan. System-oriented performance measures would be used to identify strategic operations gaps in the transportation system.
Operator	The MPO is responsible for implementing operations strategies that were developed as part of the MPO-led planning process.

Understanding and addressing the distinction between planning for disaster response and planning for disaster recovery is important. Many believe that the MPO process holds great potential for facilitating disaster recovery efforts. For example, if a

bridge were to be destroyed in a natural or man-made disaster, federal recovery funds typically would be subject to "limits of eligibility" and thus be allocated for the sole purpose of replacing that bridge. However, if the MPO had already identified this bridge as a potential route for transit expansion, it would be an ideal time to reconstruct the bridge with this capacity. But, enhanced capacity may not be a desirable outcome. Making this decision in the context of a regional vision is the hallmark of MPO investment principles. Evaluation of traditional design parameters, risk assessment and tradeoffs in the context of a regional vision is a significant strength in the MPO process. If the MPOs have the flexibility to allocate recovery funds in keeping with their investment principles, the security planning process would be significantly enhanced and the recovery-related funding can further the Plan's goals and vision.

SMTC'S PRESENT ROLE IN SECURITY PLANNING

The SMTC recognizes that consideration of security in the transportation planning process is a requirement under the new federal regulations. The current role of the SMTC, according to the Table 6, is essentially "Traditional". The MPO is not directly involved in security operations per se, but it does have direct communication and interaction with key security agencies incorporating them into the regional planning process (NYSDOT, Onondaga County, CENTRO and the Thruway Authority). To date, its role in addressing the issue of security has been one of voicing support, although it has

become more involved through participation in the NYSDOT Traffic Operations Working Group.

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 System**

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 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 consultant[88], had significant input from major ITS stakeholders in the region.[89] The Summary Report contained a conceptual plan, ITS regional architecture, and ITS Implementation Plan for the next 20 years.

The 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 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 City of Syracuse Police Department.
- 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's Traffic Operations Center.

• SMARTNET

An effective ITS must be able to successfully share information. Many of the stakeholder agencies in Syracuse are involved in building the Regional Information Sharing Network, which is an electronic communication network that will share information about regional construction activities, incidents and special events. The Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transportation Network (SMARTNET) is an "early action project" in the overall ITS Implementation Plan upon which to build the basis of all future integration and information sharing needs. NYSDOT has assumed the Champion role on behalf of the region. SMARTNET is not yet active in Region 3.

• Transportation Management Center

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. The TMC will operate CCTV cameras and

new DMS installed on Routes I-81 and I-690. Currently, the only cameras in Region 3 that are active are along I-690 on the west side of Syracuse. Access to the cameras is available though the 511 website and through www.trafficland.com.

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- **Traffic Operations Working Group**

NYSDOT-Region 3 has established a Traffic Operations Working Group to support the new TMC. The group has very strong participation by public safety agencies and personnel. It is focusing on topics such as detour routes off of I-81 and also incident management. Many of the same people who had participated on the SMTC planning committee are involved in this working group. The SMTC staff provides GIS assistance to the Working Group as appropriate and requested.

- **511 Traveler Information**

511NY is New York State's official traffic and travel info source that includes travel information within NYSDOT Region 3. Information on traffic conditions, highway construction, weather updates and alternative transportation information (carpools, vanpools, ride-sharing, buses, trains, ferries, bicycling, etc.) is available on the NY511 website[90] and via landline and cellular phones (511 is the national three-digit phone number reserved for travel information). The phone service is an interactive voice system reachable by landline and cellular phones and driven by a user's voice or phone keys. A personalized TransAlert subscription service provides notifications of major incidents and can be customized to give alerts by region and travel corridor. 511 NY can help to reduce overall traffic congestion, air pollution and energy use.

NYSTA & NYSDOT provide the highway information in the Region 3 area.

- **Emergency Travel Routes task**

This SMTC $75,000 study effort was envisioned as a multi-year effort to prepare and disseminate information to effectively coordinate travel demand-related communications during natural or other community disasters in the County. It was to be a collaborative effort among the SMTC member agencies and the NY State Emergency Management Office, as well as targeted participation for public, private and non-profit departments and agencies with responsibilities for traffic management and public health and safety during emergencies in Onondaga County. The study would have produced GIS databases of the transportation system and transit resources and routes tailored to needs of first responders

and emergency management and communications authorities. It would have included plans and implementation strategies and necessary capital improvements.

SMTC began the study during the 2007-2008 program year, but the study has since been put on hold. There was a kick-off working group meeting held to determine the direction of the project, a Scope of Work developed and approved, a SAC formed, and a Request for Information/Qualifications mailed to several consulting firms. Because of uncertainty surrounding the potential federal planning funding rescission for FY 2009 and the County's ongoing effort to develop a County All-Hazard Plan (see below), the SAC determined that the final RFP should be delayed. The fate of the Emergency Travel Routes study currently is unknown.

- **Onondaga County All-Hazard Plan**

Onondaga County is currently in the process of developing a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). SOCPA is the lead agency for this effort that will hopefully culminate in a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional hazards-mitigation plan for the County and its municipalities. The goal is for a plan that identifies projects that can reduce damages from future natural hazards. The plan will include a risk assessment and a hazard-mitigation strategy. The primary hazard in Onondaga County is flooding, but other potential hazards to be analyzed include severe winter storms, landslides, and wildfire. The study will focus on existing and future buildings, and infrastructure and critical facilities that might be impacted. Infrastructure includes power-generation facilities, water utilities, roadways, railroads and communication systems.

It is expected that the County's Plan will probably take another year to complete. The SMTC has been involved in working groups and is identified as an "interested party".

ADDITIONAL ROLE FOR SMTC?

According to a NCHRP Study entitled *Incorporating Security into the Transportation Planning Process*, some of the reasons why little consideration has been given to security in the MPO process are 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.[91]

Finding the MPO niche within an already well-established security network is a recurring topic of conversation among MPOs nationwide. Many believe that the most effective role an MPO can play is as a forum for collaboration between agencies, rather than imposing itself on already well-established security planning functions. Still, there is a great deal of apprehension among MPOs regarding well-established plans and systems. Some believe that the best place to begin is for an MPO to clarify for itself the existing roles that other agencies are filling and determine the "gaps" in the network. These gaps would then serve as a starting place for defining the role of the MPO. It is generally agreed that it is not advisable to re-invent what is already well-functioning.

New York MPOs have not been included in security planning issues, as illustrated as follows: New York State's general responsibility for preparing for disasters is vested in the New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission. Its responsibilities include the preparation of State disaster plans; the direction of State disaster operations and coordination with local government operations; and the coordination of federal, State and private recovery efforts. The Commission is made up of the commissioners, directors or chairpersons of 23 State agencies and one volunteer organization - the American Red Cross. The State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) is a member. While some MPO voting member agencies are on the Commission (e.g.; NYSDOT and the New York State Thruway Authority), it is revealing that of the 65 web links listed on the SEMO "related links" web page, not one is a NY MPO.[92]

Can the SMTC in its role as the MPO do more regarding this issue? Possibly – SMTC's participation in the Traffic Operations Working Group is a significant step. We note that SMTC intends to lend its GIS expertise toward identifying evacuation routes and toward an evaluation of the adequacy of these routes to carry the necessary amount of traffic in the event of an incident or emergency. We believe that SMTC should open a discussion as to its proper role in security planning and emergency preparedness. Congress evidently thought that MPOs should be more involved than they traditionally were, as indicated by listing security as its own required planning element. But to be involved, one has to be part of the discussion! Is the lack of information available to the MPOs because the MPOs are not considered as units of government? Perhaps - perhaps the issue just needs to be raised in the MPO forum.

Rather than waiting for others to approach SMTC, it is recommended that the MPO be proactive and build support for their security planning mission by continuing to demonstrate how their work adds value to the region's emergency response and recovery capacity. To further this end, SMTC should reopen a discussion among its members on its appropriate role in furthering the coordination and cooperation among member agencies on the security issue. The relative priority of the Emergency Travel Routes study should also be reevaluated.

To Be Involved, One Has to First be Part of the Discussion in Order to Participate

RECOMMENDATION

- The SMTC should reopen a discussion with its members on its potential role in furthering the coordination and cooperation among member agencies on the security issue.
- The MPO should reevaluate the relative priority of the Emergency Travel Routes study.

Title VI & Environmental Justice

"… the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements including… (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d–1) and 49 CFR part 21; (4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity;"
23 CFR 450.334(a)(3) & (4)

TITLE VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guarantees equal protection under the 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 (Executive Order 12898), citing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VI as foundational pillars.[93] 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".[94]

Executive Order 12898 was created to bring federal attention to the environmental and human health conditions in low-income and minority communities with the goal of achieving Environmental Justice (EJ). The goal of EJ is to ensure that any adverse human health or environmental effects of government activities do not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations. EJ does not intend to provide preferential treatment to these populations, but rather fair treatment to all populations. As it relates to transportation, Executive Order 12898 was issued to ensure that all Federally-funded transportation-related programs, policies, and activities that have the potential to cause adverse affects, specifically consider the effects on minority and low-income populations.

Title VI and Environmental Justice Apply to All Transportation Decisions

The recipients of Federal-aid have been required to certify and the U.S. DOT must ensure nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and many other laws, regulations, and policies. In 1997, the Department issued its *DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* to summarize and expand upon the requirements of Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. As part of its self-certification and in its adoption of the TIP, each MPO certifies that its planning process adheres to Title VI.

Concern for environmental justice needs be integrated into every transportation decision - from the first thought about a transportation plan to post-construction operations and maintenance. The *U.S. DOT Order* applies to all policies, programs, and other activities that are undertaken, funded, or approved by the FHWA and FTA in:

- Policy Decisions
- Systems Planning
- Metropolitan and Statewide Planning
- Project Development and Environmental Review under NEPA
- Preliminary Design
- Final Design Engineering
- Right-of-Way
- Construction
- Operations and Maintenance

MPOs serve as the primary forum where State DOTs, transit providers, local agencies, and the public develop local transportation plans and programs that address a metropolitan area's needs. MPOs can help local public officials understand how Title VI and EJ requirements improve planning and decision making.

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, 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

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 all people have access to meaningful participation. In transportation programs, this includes:

- ❑ Avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects (including social and economic effects) on minority and low-income populations.
- ❑ Ensuring 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 Title VI regulations and the Executive Order do not prescribe the specific methods and processes for ensuring environmental justice in transportation planning. State and local transportation agencies are free to explore and devise their analytical techniques and public involvement approaches to integrate EJ considerations in transportation decision-making.

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 Nation 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).[95]

One of the ways in which the City engages its citizens is through its Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT)[96] 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 community groups: 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.

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.[97] This results in an average county minority concentration of 16 percent.

- Minority Concentrations: Based on the above 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.
- 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 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.

- Elderly: 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.
- Disabled: The US Census Bureau defines the term disability as a "long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition". Based on the Census data, 16 percent is the mean percentage of the population in the MPO area that has some type of disability that could require the use of transportation services. SMTC has classified C*oncentration Areas* to be Block Groups with 17% to 31% of the MPO area's disabled population. *High Concentration Areas* are Block Groups with 32% or greater of the MPO area's disabled population.

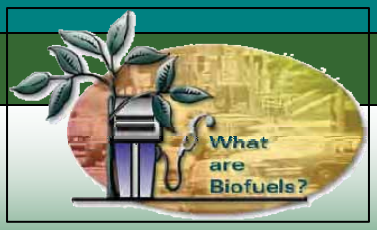
SMTC uses its GIS to visually display the data, which helps in the identification of geographic areas of "special concern" (e.g., low income and minority geographic areas).

The SMTC issued its initial *Environmental Justice Analysis* report in March 2004. The goal of the report was to see if the MPO's planning efforts were being performed disproportionately within the MPO's boundaries. This assessment showed that SMTC's planning activities "are not known to have been disproportionately distributed amongst the designated target populations." The latest EJ Analysis report is dated March 2006 and it continued to show that transportation planning activities (e.g.; TIP, UPWP, Corridor Studies) and projects (TIP) were not found to be disproportionately distributed regarding the target populations under EJ. Using the *Environmental Justice Analysis* report's methodology, the SMTC and the CNYRTA have adopted several CNYRTA Title VI Reports.

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN

As discussed in the *Transit* section of this report, SMTC drew on information from the ReMAP and JARC studies and additional information from the *Environmental Justice Analysis* report and the *Title VI Report* to develop the analyses and recommendations in the 2008 *Coordinated Public Transit – Human services Transportation Plan*.

SMTC is now in the initial stages of developing a new Environmental Justice Analysis report to meet its reevaluation and update standards.



Energy & the Climate

"The metropolitan transportation planning process shall be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors: … Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns" 23 CFR §450.306(a)(5)

THE metropolitan planning regulations require MPOs to promote energy conservation during its deliberative processes. Consideration of climate change in the transportation planning process is not a mandated Federal requirement at this point, although it is an eligible UPWP item under certain circumstances. This issue, together with the issue of energy conservation, is lending heightened scrutiny and attention to the coordination of transportation and land use planning.

Energy Considerations

The New York State MPOs perform energy and greenhouse gas analyses in TIPs and Plan documents, a practice that makes them almost unique in the country in their inclusion thereof. These analyses were a recommendation contained within the 2002 State Energy Plan. Governor Patterson's goal is that by 2050, the State of New York would reduce current GHG emissions from all sources within the State eighty percent (80%) below levels emitted in 1990.

The 2002 State Energy Plan recommended that the State (and MPOs):

- Include consideration of CO_2 production in State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) analyses and in Statewide planning processes.
- Work with regional and local planning organizations (e.g., MPOs) to analyze energy and emissions from transportation plans and programs (i.e. Plan and TIPs).
- Commit to Statewide GHG emissions targets with near term (2010), mid-term (2020) and long-term (2050) stages.
- Provide additional information to justify any TIP, Plan or project that shows an increase in the use of energy or an increase in GHG emissions.

After the adoption of the Energy Plan, NYSDOT issued guidance entitled *Energy Analysis Guidelines for TIPs and Plans* to help MPOs perform the energy and GHG analyses

on TIPs and Plans. Initially, there was significant confusion and some resistance among the MPOs to implementing the guidance, but the activity has now become generally routine.

MPOs' TIP and Plan Analyses

The NYSDOT's Environmental Services Bureau (ESB)'s guidelines[98] on the energy and GHG analyses in TIPs and Plans include capturing both the direct energy (energy that will be used after the project is complete) and the indirect energy (energy needed to build the project) relative to the no-build situation. The energy and GHG analyses of TIPs and Plans follow these steps:

Step #1 – Identification of all Non-Exempt and Regionally Significant Projects

The first step in this process is determining which projects would be subject to analysis. All of the projects included in the TIP and the Plan are reviewed for their significance in affecting energy consumption; projects that are non-exempt for air quality conformity are almost always energy-impacting projects. Projects that maintain current levels of service or capacity, such as safety improvements, resurfacing, bridge repair, or bus replacements are presently considered exempt from the energy analysis. Similarly, projects that result in operations improvements, without an increase in capacity (such as signal retiming) are also considered exempt and excluded from the analysis. Since MPOs normally perform the air quality conformity analysis at the same time as the energy analysis and thus are familiar with the non-exempt definition, no additional identification requirements are needed.

Step #2 – Travel Demand Modeling

To determine the impact of future projects, the MPO uses its travel demand forecasting model to forecast Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT). The energy/GHG analysis includes Build and No-Build scenarios.

Step #3 – Off-Line Model Analysis

A quantitative analysis is undertaken to account for any significant projects in the Plan or TIP that cannot be modeled with the MPO forecasting model. Transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects are normally beyond the capabilities of the software. The VMT reductions related to these projects are then factored into the modeled VMT to better analyze the Build scenario.

Step #4 - Direct Energy Analysis

Direct energy represents the energy consumed by vehicles using a transportation facility. Direct vehicle energy is calculated using the VMT Fuel Consumption Method as described in NYSDOT Guidance.[99] The calculations are based on the VMT (not seasonally-adjusted) reported by the No-Build and Build scenarios and a calculated vehicle type. Three vehicle types are included in the energy analysis: light duty vehicles, medium trucks, and heavy

trucks. Each of the three vehicle types have a fuel usage rate per year based on the fuel type used.

For each scenario (build verses no-build), the total VMT is multiplied by the percentage of each vehicle type to determine vehicle type VMT. That vehicle type VMT is then divided by the fuel economy rate to calculate the number of gallons of fuel used. These fuel consumption values are then converted to British Thermal Units (BTUs) by multiplying each gallon by 125,000. Finally, the total direct energy consumption (in BTUs) is summarized for all vehicles in each scenario.

Step #5 – Indirect Energy Analysis

Indirect energy represents the energy required to construct and maintain the transportation system. For this analysis, per ESB guidelines, only the energy used in construction activities for Regionally Significant or Non-Exempt projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and widening is analyzed. Certain nonexempt projects, such as ridesharing, include no energy-consuming construction or maintenance activities, and therefore, an indirect energy calculation is not applicable.

The intent of the indirect energy calculations is to measure the energy used in the construction of the projects included in the Build scenario. The indirect energy value of the No-Build scenario is zero; therefore, it is not possible to compute the percentage difference between the two scenarios.

Indirect vehicle energy is calculated using the Lane Mile Approach as described in NYSDOT guidance. The number of lane miles for each project is multiplied by a rate of Construction Energy Consumed per lane mile to calculate the total Construction Energy Consumed in BTUs.

Some MPOs believe that the indirect energy assessment procedure is not as relevant to the energy/GHG issues as the direct energy assessment. They reason that roughly the same amount of energy would be spent on transportation investments regardless of what mix of projects was chosen (e.g.; a small number of large projects versus a large number of small projects would use similar amounts of energy in total). If an MPO did not spend money to build a mile of new roadway, they would likely spend that same money to build thirty miles of bikeway with an equivalent amount of indirect energy. Either of such scenarios, they argued, would lead to roughly the same indirect energy consumption.

Step #6 – CO_2 Emissions Estimates from Direct Energy Consumption

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the surrogate for all GHGs in these analyses. CO_2 emissions are calculated as described in NYSDOT guidance. The Direct Energy consumed (by vehicle type) is multiplied by the Carbon Emission Coefficients for both gasoline and diesel engines and then by a factor representing the amount of carbon that is oxidized. This process creates a value representing total tons of CO_2 emitted.

Step #7 – CO_2 Emissions Estimates from Indirect Energy Consumption

Per NYSDOT protocol, the indirect energy consumed as a result of the Build scenario from Step #5 is multiplied by the Carbon Emission Coefficients for diesel vehicles and then by a factor representing the amount of carbon that is oxidized, resulting in the total tons of carbon emitted.

RESULTS OF ENERGY AND GHG ANALYSES

The energy and GHG analyses at present are a "build' verses "no-build" comparison, not "build" less than a certain date (e.g.; 2002). SMTC's analysis of its *2007-2012 TIP* and *2027 Plan* "build" scenarios would use less energy and emit less GHG that the "no-build". So far, the similar analyses performed by other New York MPOs have always shown that the "build" scenarios would use less total energy and emit less GHG than the "no-build". Furthermore, 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. For this reason, some MPO representatives are unsure of the utility of the energy assessment in reducing energy and GHG emissions. Others, however, believe that conducted the analysis could provide useful information to inform planning decisions.

We note that SMTC's *2007 Plan* states that SMTC and its member agencies fully support the efforts and goals of the New York State Energy Plan.[100] The SMTC *2007 Plan* notes that NYSDOT, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT) and the City of Syracuse have upgraded a number of their traffic signals to use LEDs, which save energy and are longer lasting than standard bulbs. The NYSDOT and the CNYRTA maintain CNG fueling stations and both agencies are increasing their fleets of CNG vehicles, with the CNYRTA beginning to replace the CNG fleet with diesel-electric hybrids, which further reduce energy, greenhouse gases and CO emissions. In addition, the City of Syracuse has an established CNG fueling facility maintained by the Department of Public Works that services not only the growing City fleet of alternative fueled vehicles, but also provides services for other agencies and municipalities. CNYRTA envisions that by 2011 their fleet would consist of diesel-electric hybrids allowing the retirement of the existing diesel fleet and the operation of clean-fueled buses throughout their regional system (where currently CNG buses cannot operate). SMTC has supported CNYRTA's efforts with CMAQ funding, and this allows the replacement of both diesel and CNG with an even cleaner, more energy efficient transit fleet.

Climate Change Considerations in Transportation

New York State NYSDOT

NYSDOT has supported a series of environmental initiatives, including a charge to its Climate Change/Energy Efficiency Team to develop transportation policy strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by the NYSDOT and the state's transportation sector. It has also participated on the various task forces involved in the development of the State Energy Plan. Just recently, NYSDOT started **GreenLITES** (Green Leadership In Transportation and Environmental Sustainability)," which is a transportation environmental sustainability rating program.[101] It is a self-certification program that distinguishes transportation projects and operations based on the extent to which they incorporate sustainable choices. This is primarily an internal management program for NYSDOT to measure performance, recognize good practices, and identify where there is a need for improvement..

The New York MPOs

At the MPO level, none of the New York MPOs specifically consider the impact of potential climate change on the transportation system. As mentioned previously, the federal regulations require the metropolitan planning process to promote energy conservation. The regulations as yet do not require consideration of "climate change" per se in transportation planning, but such activity is eligible for FHWA and FTA planning funds if the federal agencies conclude that the MPO's ability to fulfill the critical Federal requirements, including the preparation of federally required planning products, can be still be accomplished with this added work burden.[102]

The Staff Director of the Albany MPO, John Poorman, has developed a very interesting presentation on the subject of Climate Change, Land Use and Transportation Planning in the event that an MPO might want to specifically consider Climate Change in the planning process.

> "I would suggest that substantial tempering of the rate of climate change will not be likely to occur from the range of items I am labeling "transportation and land use planning." On the other hand, never say never to the macro policy options being implemented at a scale with meaningful impacts. This distinction is similar to what many of my transportation planning colleagues struggle with in air quality conformity planning. Consider this: a simple 5 mpg increase in CAFÉ fleet standards would reduce GHG emissions by roughly 20% within 10 years. On the other hand, doubling transit ridership in the United States would reduce GHG emissions by less than 5%."
>
> "In sum, I suggest that we carefully dissect the question. Separate the can? from the will? Distinguish the ability to mitigate actual climate change from the ability to adapt to substantial change if/when it occurs. Examine market, policy and planning forces and tools separately. And in all thoughts, do not suspend what we know about physical, economic, political and human behavior."
>
> Climate Change and Transportation and Land Use Planning, John Poorman, 2006

Even the term 'greenhouse effect' itself is a misnomer, because greenhouse gases do not act like the glass in a greenhouse or like a blanket around the earth. Science by metaphor is always a risky business, and this misleading idea has clouded peoples' understanding of the issue. A real greenhouse operates by modulating *convection of air flow*, whereas the 'greenhouse effect' in the atmosphere works by modulating *radiation of energy*.

Eventually, the science will lead to resolution of the various positions and more certainty regarding predictions; however, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change itself admits that long-term climate forecasts should be viewed cautiously.[103]

Can transportation and land use planning reduce the rate of global climate change? Yes or no?

		Market Forces	Macro Policy	Local Planning
Can it?	**Reduce climate change?**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**
	Mitigate impacts of?	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Will it?	**Reduce Climate change?**	**No**	**Maybe**	**No**
	Mitigate impacts of?	**Yes**	**Maybe**	**Maybe**

John Poorman, *Climate Change and Transportation and Land Use Planning*

CONCENTRATION ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

With the uncertainty surrounding future temperature forecasts, how should an MPO approach the discussion of climate change and greenhouse gas reductions? An MPO, therefore, may want to frame the discussion primarily in terms of Energy. Transportation's main contribution to GHGs in the atmosphere comes from using fossil fuels as energy. Energy efficiency and self-sufficiency are laudable goals in and of themselves; they assist with:

- Stewardship of the planet
- National security
- Conservation of resources

GHG emissions can be reduced through policies that emphasize energy conservation and energy efficiency in both transportation systems and land use planning. Energy conservation, use of alternate energy sources, land use planning, demand management, transit improvements, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities, reductions in VMT rate of growth, and technology are keys to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel energy and our transportation emission of GHGs.

While not being advanced to address climate change per se, SMTC has a multitude of worthwhile efforts that will conserve energy - and reduce GHGs as a side benefit. The following are just a few examples of these related efforts:

- SMTC is now engaged in a UPWP task entitled Transportation Demand Management for Downtown Syracuse. It is intended to produce a plan to reduce parking demand in the downtown area by encouraging transportation alternatives.
- SMTC staff is assisting Onondaga County DOT in a task for Signal Optimization that will reduce delays.
- SMTC staff is completing the University Hill Phase II Feasibility Study for Park & Ride Initiative that is looking at three suburban locations and four within the city limits.

- SMTC staff has a fine continuing program in bicycle and pedestrian planning effort.
- SMTC staff will assist in a major examination of transit as part of the I-81 study effort. This will include looking at additional modes of mass transit for the area, particularly connecting University Hill with downtown. The Bus Rapid Transit and Fixed Rail options will be examined. This activity was originally planned under UPWP task Transit Initiative Study, but it will now be part of the I-81 effort.
- SMTC continues to support CENTRO's clean fuel bus efforts through the use of CMAQ monies.

By utilizing energy more efficiently, and simultaneously using alternative sources of energy (e.g.; hydrogen, solar, wind, etc.), our use of fossil fuel in transportation and the related CO_2 emissions are reduced.

Summary of Issue for Transportation Planning

The federal transportation regulations require consideration of energy in the planning process and allow latitude in determining the eligibility to fund transportation and supporting planning activities (e.g.; climate change impacts/mitigation strategies). If an MPO chooses to participate in the latter, the MPO's ability to fulfill the critical Federal requirements, including the preparation of federally required planning products, must be assured before funding other transportation-related work activities.

Energy conservation and related efforts are integral to the planning process of the SMTC and we support a continuation thereof because it is the right thing to do.

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.

AGW – Anthropogenic Global Warming: theory that mankind's use of fossil fuel is adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, causing the temperature to rise dangerously and the climate to change for the worse for this and future generations.

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.

CMP - Congestion Management Process: 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.

CO_2 – 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

GHG – Greenhouse Gas: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6)

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

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: 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.

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. A micron is one millionth of a meter. PM_{10} is small particulate matter is too small to be filtered by the nose and lungs. It may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, fumes, etc.

$PM_{2.5}$ - 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).

TCSP - 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).

YOE – Year of Expenditure: Revenue and cost estimates for the STIP and TIPs must use an inflation rate(s) to reflect 'year of expenditure dollars,' based on reasonable financial principles and information, developed cooperatively by the State, MPOs, and public transportation operators.

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.

Notes

[1] 23 CFR 450.334

[2] 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 CFR 450

[3] CAAA sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93

[4] Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d–1) and 49 CFR part 21

[5] Section 1101(b) of the SAFETEA– LU (Pub. L. 109–59) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded projects

[6] 23 CFR part 230

[7] 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.* and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38;

[8] 29 U.S.C. 794

[9] 23 CFR 450.334 (a)

[10] 23 CFR 450.334(b)(4)

[11] *Information/Guidance: Planning Horizons for Metropolitan Long-Range Transportation Plans*, Gloria Shepherd, 4/15/2005

[12] 450.322(c) "In addition, the MPO may revise the transportation plan at any time using the procedures in this section without a requirement to extend the horizon year."

[13] § 450.104 Definitions - *Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)* means the policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process.

[14] 23 CFR 450.310(d)

[15] 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.

[16] 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*

[17] 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(37)

[18] 23 CFR 450.320(a)

[19] 23 CFR 450.320(b)

[20] ibid.

[21] § 450.104 Definitions**:** *A public transportation operator* is "the public entity which participates in the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304, and is the designated recipient of Federal funds under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 for transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but does not include school bus, charter, or intercity bus transportation or intercity passenger rail transportation provided by Amtrak."

[22] 23 CFR 450.314 (a) The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) serving the MPA. To the extent possible, a single agreement between all responsible parties should be developed.

[23] Ibid. The written agreement(s) shall include specific provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to the development of financial plans that support the metropolitan transportation plan (see § 450.322) and the metropolitan TIP (see § 450.324) and development of the annual listing of obligated projects (see § 450.332).

[24] Ibid "…and development of the annual listing of obligated projects (see § 450.332)."

[25] SMTC approved the MOU on March 19, 1993.

[26] The FTA consultant that performs triennial reviews has recently cited this area as a weakness; FHWA disagrees.

[27] *A Profile of Central New York*, 1996, MDA and CNY RPDB.
[28] The CNY RPDB planning area covers all of these counties.
[29] *Onundagaono,* "people of the hills"
[30] The original five nations were (from west to east): Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. 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).

[31] 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).
[32] 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.
[33] 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.
[34] 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.
[35] 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.[35] The Onondagas do not like the term "Iroquois", as that was the name given to them by their enemies (Algonquin name for "rattlesnake" plus *Aois* = 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 Afee simple@, just as one can own a house.

[36] **http://www.hetf.org/**

[37] *2009-10 UPWP Amendment* , Table "Program Outline", page 16.

[38] 23 CFR 450.316(1)(iv)

[39] RSG, Inc. Resource Systems Group, Inc. **http://www.rsginc.com/travel-land-use-forecasting/**

[40] Memorandum to Travel Model Advisory Committee from RSG, 27 My 2009

[41] **http://www.smtcmpo.org/gis_about.asp**

[42] Task 2E in 2009-2010 UPWP update - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) –Member Agency Assistance

[43] § 450.104 Definitions

[44] The *SAFETEA-LU* legislation changed the Plan update cycle in nonattainment areas from three to four years.

[45] 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 four Updates to the 1995 Plan: 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007.

[46] § 450.322(g)

[47] 23 CFR §450.104 definitions Fiscal constraint

[48] 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.

[49] 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.

[50] § 450.322(7)(7)

[51] 23 U.S.C. 134 (i)(1), as per SAFETEA-LU

[52] 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. It is scheduled to begin on October 1, which coincides with the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year, but lately is has been delayed due to incomplete processes in some MPOs.

[53] http://www.smtcmpo.org/tip.asp

[54] TIP Guidebook, Chapter 2.

[55] 23 CFR 450.324(i)

[56] 23 CFR 450.324(i)

[57] § 450.332

[58] Centro assumed the operating lines of the Onondaga Coach Corporation in 1993.

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

[60] 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.

[61] Centro Parking, Inc. manages two multi-level parking garages and several surface parking lots and garages in downtown Syracuse

[62] "Public transportation operator" means: "the public entity which participates in the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304, and is the designated recipient of Federal funds under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 for transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public…" 23 CFR 450.104 Definitions (emphasis added) The FTA-designated recipient within the TMA area is the CNYRTA.

[63] **http://www.smtcmpo.org/finalreps.asp?fy=2001&ShowAll=0**

[64] **http://www.smtcmpo.org/finalreps.asp?fy=2008&ShowAll=0**

[65] 23 CFR 450.104 definitions

[66] 23 CFR 450.320(d)

[66] Recurring congestion refers to congestion that arises on a routine basis at the same place and generally at the same time, a condition that may hint at a systemic imbalance between roadway capacity and existing demand

[67] *2007 Update* LRTP, Chapter 4, page 88

[68] 23 CFR 500.109

[69] The *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) defines capacity as Athe maximum rate of (traffic) flow that can reasonably be expected to pass a point or uniform section of a lane or roadway under prevailing roadway traffic and control conditions.@ Level of Service (LOS) standards to evaluate operating conditions, ranging from a high Level-of-Service AA@ (vehicles are free to maneuver within the traffic stream), down to Level-of-Service AF@ (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).

[70] $$ExcessDelay^{**}_{segment} = FreeflowTime * (1 + 0.15 * (\frac{DirectionalVolume}{DirectionalCapacity_{LOS"C"***}})^4 - 1.366)$$

[71] *ICF Consulting*, Fairfax, VA 22031

[72] **http://www.nysmpos.org/sci/cms/NYSMPO_SCI_CMS_TASK1-REPORT.pdf**

[73] Special events such as basketball and football games at Syracuse University, baseball games at McArthur Stadium, the New York State Fair in the Fairgrounds, and events at the Convention Center and the War Memorial generate a large number of concentrated vehicle trips that occur only on a non-daily basis. These events have to potential to decrease travel speeds up to 35%, causing congestion and high CO locations.

[74] An area is allowed three exceedances over a three-year period.

[75] Section 175 of the Clean Air Act

[76] The EPA 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.

[77] 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.

[78] Because the SMTC Plan is a policy document, it does not contain specific projects. Therefore, the projects contained in the TIP, all of which are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan and subsequent updates are considered to be the project list for the LRTP. Presently, there are only three projects in the TIP identified as air qualified "non-exempt": Geddes/Genesee Sts Signal Interconnection Lodi St/North Salina St. Signal Improvements, and the N,S,E,W Interconnect Expansion

[79] 23 CFR 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation (a)(1)(iii) *"Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs"*

[80] 23 CFR 450.304 Definition

[81] **http://cms.transportation.org/?siteid=59&pageid=849**

[82] **http://www.pictometry.com/government/product_3d.shtml**

[83] SAFETEA-LU project #459

[84] General Tommy Franks, American Soldier, HarperCollins Publishers, August 2004

[85] In 1991, the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) stated safety and security should be addressed as appropriate by MPOs. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) developed seven planning factors to be considered in the transportation planning process. One of these seven factors was to "increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users".
[86] 23 CFR 450.306(b)

[87] **http://planning.dot.gov/Documents/Securitypaper.htm**

[88] PB Farradyne

[89] 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

[90] **http://www.511ny.org/Default.aspx**

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

[92] **http://www.semo.state.ny.us/info/relatedLinks.cfm**

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

[94] 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.

[95] 2000 Census of population and Housing Summary file 3 NYS Data center, P30.

[96] 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.

[97] 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.

[98] NYSDOT has released three basic guides: • *Air Quality Analysis of Transportation Improvement Programs, Regional Transportation Plans, and Capital Project programs – Technical Guidance to Assist Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Department of Transportation Regional Offices Meet the Objectives of the 2002 New York State Energy Plan* (January 21, 2003); • *Development of Revised NYSDOT Energy Analysis Guidelines (Draft), Subtask 12a: Energy Analysis Guidelines for TIPs and Plans* (June 21, 2002); and • *Development of Revised NYSDOT Energy Analysis Guidelines (Draft), Subtask 12b:*

[99] *Subtask 12a: Energy Analysis Guidelines for TIPs and Plans.*

[100] Chapter 7, page 2008

[101] **https://www.nysdot.gov/programs/greenlites**

[102] F*HWA/FTA Planning Program Funds to Support Integration of Transportation, Land Use, and Climate Change*, November 17, 2008, **http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/plnlnduse.htm**

[103] "In climate research and modeling, we should recognize that we are dealing with a coupled non-linear chaotic system, and therefore that the long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible." International Panel on Climate Change, "The Scientific Basis", *Climate Change 2001: IPCC Third Assessment Report*, 774

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

New York Division

Federal Highway Administration
Leo O'Brien Federal Building, Suite 719
Clinton Avenue & North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12207

Federal Transit Administration
Region II
One Bowling Green, Room 429
New York, NY 10004-1415

March 13, 2009

Mr. William H Meyer, Jr.
Onondaga County Legislature Chairman
Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100
Syracuse, New York 13202

Dear Mr. Meyer;

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for your metropolitan area on June 22-24, 2009. These dates were selected in consultation with the staff director of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Syracuse area.

Titles 23 and 49 of The United Stated Code require the Secretary of Transportation to designate urbanized areas over 200,000 in population as Transportation Management Areas (TMA). As a result of the 2000 Census, the Syracuse Urbanized Area continues to be a TMA. Designated TMA's are subject to special planning and programming requirements. In accordance with 23 USC 134(i) (5), the Secretary must certify compliance of the MPO in each TMA with the metropolitan planning regulations not less than once every four years. This is a joint responsibility of the FHWA and FTA. The four-year cycle runs from the date of the previously jointly signed Certification Report, which was September 2005.

The primary purpose of the certification review is to ensure that the planning requirements of 23USC134 and 49USC5303 are being satisfactorily implemented. As in past reviews, we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. The review will include a field visit with the opportunity for public participation. At the present time, we see our discussions primarily with the MPO's staff; local member agencies may also be present to offer comments and their insights.

Some of the focal points we are proposing for the Certification Review meeting include the following:

-Status of recommendations from previous certification
-The Long Range Plan update
-TIP/STIP Process and Product
-Coordinated Planning/5310, 5316, and 5317 Programs
-Title VI/Environmental Justice/Public Involvement
-Consideration of safety and security in the planning process
-Major Development Project

By May 29, 2009, we request that SMTC provide us with a description of the status of recommendations from previous certification and a description of what SMTC does to incorporate safety and security in the planning process. You may accompany the information with any backup documentation that you would like to provide.

The Federal contacts for the review are Mr. Joseph Rich of FHWA, (518) 431-4125 extension 221 and Mr. James Goveia of FTA, (212) 668-2325. The review is a positive means to advance our mutual goals to maximize the effectiveness of the planning process. We look forward to our on-site visit.

Sincerely,

Original signed by\

Brigid Hynes-Cherin
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
Region II

Original signed by\

Jeffrey W. Kolb , P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
New York Division

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Alan J. Steinberg, Regional Administrator Environmental Protection Agency, Region II
Mr. James D'Agostino, Director, SMTC
Mr. Carl F. Ford, P.E., NYSDOT Region 3 Director
Mr. Mark Frechette, NYSDOT Regional Planning and Program Manager
Ms. Janine Simonsen, NYSDOT Statewide Planning Bureau, 6th floor

Enclosure 1

DRAFT agenda outline

The certification review is structured so that the initial meeting will discuss the planning issues, products and coordination that are required as part of being a TMA. The focus of this initial meeting is on planning activities within the TMA boundary:

- Discussion of regional issues
- Coordination efforts
- CMP
- TIP oversight & eSTIP
- Section 5307 monies
- Cross-border traffic
- Studies of mutual interest

The next three meetings are with the individual MPOs to discuss the individual MPO capabilities and operations in their respective counties, including areas outside the TMA boundary. The discussions will focus on:

- Long Range Plan – existing, update schedule, financial constraint
- TIP – development process, estimates of available resources, fiscal constraint
- Staff size and capabilities
- Safety considerations in the planning process
- Security considerations in the planning process
- Public Involvement process
- Title VI/EJ considerations – how included in the planning process

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) announces that a public meeting will be held in conjunction with its quadrennial Federal Certification Review, Tuesday, June 23, 2009 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the SMTC's Lower Level Conference Room, 100 Clinton Square, 126 N. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY.

The U.S. Department of Transportation requires every Metropolitan area with a population over 50,000 to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to qualify for receipt of federal highway and transit funds. The SMTC is the designated MPO responsible for transportation planning in Onondaga County and small portions of Madison and Oswego Counties.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in accordance with 23 USC 134(i)(5) must certify compliance with these regulations by MPOs not less than once every four years.

The primary purpose of the certification review is to ensure that the required planning activities of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 are being satisfactorily implemented by the SMTC. This meeting will be your opportunity to talk directly with FHWA and FTA concerning your views on the transportation planning process in the SMTC area.

Written comments may also be sent to:

Joseph Rich, FHWA
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building
Room 719
Albany, NY 12207
JOSEPH.E.RICH@FHWA.DOT.GOV

or

James Goveia, FTA
Region 02
One Bowling Green, Room 429
New York, NY 10004
james.goveia@fta.dot.gov

For those needing special accommodation please contact Patricia Wortley of the SMTC at (315) 422-5716 or pwortley@smtcmpo.org at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting. Persons who are hearing impaired and/or require an interpreter please call the SMTC at (315) 422-5716 via the NYS Relay Service at 711 or (800) 662-1220.

For more information, call the SMTC at (315) 422-5716.

June 22-24, 2009

100 Clinton Square
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100
Syracuse, NY 13202

Monday June 22, 2009

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm.
- Introductions
- General Overview of Certification
- Status of recommendations from the 2005 Certification Review

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- MPO Organization
- Staff size, capabilities (e.g.; visualization, forecasting model, etc.), web site
- Agreements (MPO, NYSDOT and CENTRO)

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm
Break

3:15 pm - 4:00 pm
- TIP – development process, estimates of available resources, fiscal constraint, including eSTIP

Tuesday June 23, 2009

9:30 am - 11:00 am
- Long Range Plan - existing, update schedule, financial constraint, coordinated planning with transit
- Discussion of regional issues, DestiNY, I-81 study etc.

11:00 am -11:15 am Break

11:15 am -12:30 pm
- Congestion Management Process
- Mobility and ITS
- TIP development, amendments, project selection, fiscal constraint

12:30 pm -1:30 pm
Lunch

1:30 pm -2:30 pm
- Title VI/EJ – how included in Planning Process
- Public Participation Plan

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
- Transit Planning
  - Transit Agency Involvement
  - Transit Vision
  - Transit Plan Development
  - Job Access

6:00 pm -7:00 pm
- Public meeting ??

Wednesday June 24, 2005

9:30 am - 10:30 am
- Safety and Security considerations in the planning process

10:30 am - 11:30 am
- Wrap-up and final remarks

Appendix D:
DestiNY USA Considerations

"The MPO shall review and update the transportation plan at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period to at least a 20-year." 23 CFR 450.322(c)

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 Companies1 (owners of Carousel Center) announced a much larger vision for the expanded Center - "*DestiNY USA*." The name implies a national destination.

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

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.

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

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.2 The redevelopment guide for the area is the *Syracuse Lakefront Area Master Plan*, which the LDC Board of Directors, the Syracuse Planning Commission, and Syracuse Common Council adopted.

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

As a part of the Lakefront Development initiative, the City of Syracuse 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 Corridor3. 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, as well as extensions to the Lakefront's Onondaga Creekwalk trail system, which will provide an attractive urban recreational corridor along Onondaga Creek from Onondaga Lake all the way to Downtown Syracuse.

THE CONCEPT

What is *DestiNY USA*? This is somewhat difficult to say because the vision has changed from year to year. As of the writing of this report, the concept includes an ongoing major expansion of the existing Carousel Center Mall and future hotel and entertainment developments that would form the largest entertainment complex in the country.

Expansion of Carousel Center Mall & Lakefront Development

2 **http://www.mda-cny.com/Affiliates/LD/**

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

Arendi, which has a tri-scallion logo very similar to USDOT, is the first phase of DestiNY USA expansion; it is a 1 million-square-foot facility off the south side the current center and located north of Hiawatha Boulevard. *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 is said to possibly 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.

The project(s) will proceed in phases. The Pyramid Corporation estimated 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.

The Phase I expansion hit a roadblock just recently, however, when Citigroup stopped loaning money to the Pyramid Corporation and construction came to a virtual halt. Citibank said that it took this action because Pyramid had yet to identify tenants. Pyramid Corporation has sued Citibank.

REGIONAL IMPACTS

In his 2002 State of the County address, former 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." 4

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.

PLANNING FOR THE IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

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.5 Still, that would leave 10+ million out-of-state visitors via the highway network.

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.6 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.

The SMTC plan considers the present Phase I expansion presently underway and stalled. SMTC has modified its travel forecasting model to reflects the mall's traffic figures as contained in the 1998 EIS, so theoretically the

4 NY Times article 6/24/2002

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

6 April 24, 2002.

modeling and travel impact analysis in SMTC's *2004 Update* adequately reflected the *DestiNY* traffic.

COMMENTS

Should the full build-out occur, the Central New York Region – Syracuse and Onondaga County in particular – would face an enormous challenge in anticipating and accommodating the impacts of this development. *DestiNY USA* would be an enormous economic generator with potentially far reaching impacts.

The SMTC transportation planning process is metaphorically downstream of a dam that has the potential 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. The cost of such a line has been estimated at $750 million. 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.

Appendix E:
I-81 Challenge

As many people in Onondaga County are learning, portions of I-81 are nearing the end of their lifespan. This is particularly true of the elevated sections of the highway in downtown Syracuse. Over the next decade, these portions of the road will need to be replaced, reconstructed, removed, or otherwise changed. Given this reality, the Syracuse region, including the road owner, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), is faced with a challenge: what should be done with I-81?

http://www.thei81challenge.org/

NYSDOT and SMTC are presently investigating the need for transportation improvements to Interstate 81 within the Syracuse area. The decision-making process has been labeled *The I-81 Challenge* and has a website (**http://www.thei81challenge.org/**) that is linked from the SMTC website.

I-81 is one of the Syracuse metropolitan area's major commuter corridors. I-81 provides direct access from suburban and rural communities to downtown Syracuse, the city's hospitals, Syracuse University, and SUNY-ESF. The Greater Syracuse Economic Growth Council reports that five of the region's 10 largest employers are located adjacent to I-81. I-81 is also an important national and international trade route. In terms of long-distance hauling, it provides a major alternative to congested I-95. It is estimated that 12% of the United States' Gross Domestic Product travels on some portion of the I-81 corridor.

Over the years, there have been interest in eliminating the viaduct portion through the city and replacing it with a boulevard, burying the elevated portion underground and covering it with a park, or even rebuilding the viaduct at a higher elevation with a more attractive design.

HISTORY

I-81 was built in Central New York during the 1950s and 1960s to carry through traffic between Pennsylvania

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

and Canada and to bring local traffic in and out of the City of Syracuse. The highway was the product of the Interstate program that included the construction of many miles of interstate highways in every state across the country.

The idea of the proposed highway, particularly through downtown Syracuse, was controversial. Local residents, business interests, and leaders had differing opinions about the highway's design and location. Many issues, including economic growth, property taxes, housing, and community development, were divisive. Ultimately, the decision was made to construct the highway with its current design and alignment.

ISSUE TODAY

When I-81 was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, highway design standards were different from today's standard and I-81 does not meet current standards for high-speed freeways. This is true particularly in the urban sections, where physical constraints forced engineers to design the highway with tight curves, narrow lanes, short weaving distances, and minimal shoulders. In fact, this portion of I-81 has a speed limit of 45 mph, the lowest on the entire 850-mile corridor from Canada to Tennessee. The narrow width and high traffic volumes on the urban sections of I-81 pose significant operational challenges. It is difficult to conduct routine maintenance during daytime hours on I-81 in downtown Syracuse, as construction translates into major congestion. When accidents occur, limited shoulder width means that disabled vehicles are forced to remain in the travel lane, blocking traffic and creating additional hazards.

While *The I-81 Challenge* will study all of I-81 between the I-481 interchanges, the major reason for the urgency of this effort is the condition of the viaduct portion of I-81 in downtown Syracuse. Altogether, the viaduct has a total of 1.4 miles of bridges, with 124 individual bridge spans. The structures are approximately 50 years old and show signs of age and deterioration. NYSDOT frequently inspects these bridges and makes routine repairs to protect the traveling public. However, NYSDOT believes that it is critically important to begin a serious effort to address these pieces of infrastructure to assure the safety and efficiency of the future regional transportation network.

STUDY EFFORT UNDERWAY

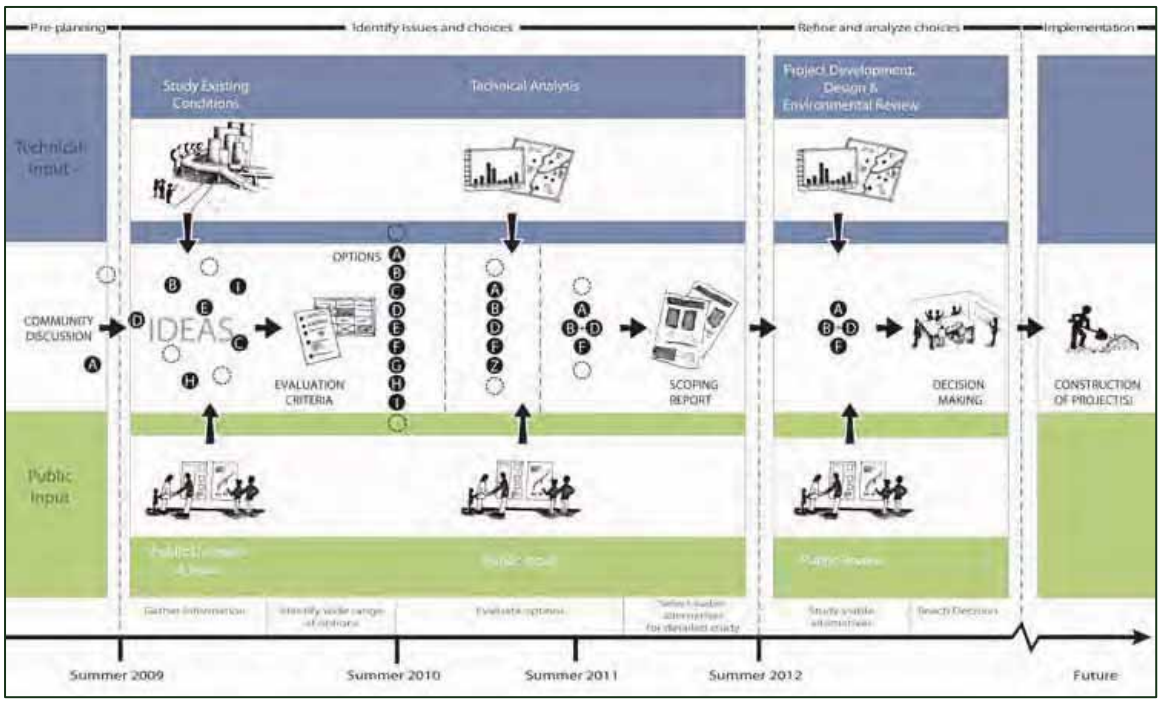
NYSDOT is conducting a $2 million FHWA State Planning and Research (SPR)-funded activity entitled **I-81 Corridor Study & Project Scoping**, the purpose of which is to evaluate the 10.69 miles of Interstate 81 between I-481/I-81 interchanges

(Exits 16A & 29). In particular, NYSDOT will look at feasible project alternatives for addressing various transportation issues associated with the I-81 Viaduct in the City of Syracuse. Scoping activities will be restricted to the area of Interstate 81 between Salina/Clinton exit and Raynor Avenue (viaduct section).

The SMTC Central Staff is supporting this effort through two ongoing UPWP task activities:

- **I-81 Public Participation Project ($200,000) -** This multi-year project is linked to the NYSDOT's I-81 Corridor Study as well as the SMTC's I-81 Travel Demand Modeling Project. The major components of the project are:
  - Outreach and education to inform the public about the corridor; its role, function, outlook, and general condition; and the existing conditions of adjacent areas impacted by it;
  - Education to inform the public about the various planning processes that currently surround the corridor;
  - A public involvement process to gather input on issues/concerns related to I-81 and its environs; and
  - A public involvement process to garner public opinion regarding the future alternatives for the roadway in this area.

  It is presently estimated that between 20 and 40 individual focus group meetings will be held under this activity.



- **I-81 Travel Demand Modeling Project ($100,000) -** The SMTC will utilize its Travel Demand Model to evaluate different alternative planning scenarios for the I-81 Corridor in the MPO area with the goal being to demonstrate the traffic impacts/projections of those scenarios on both the state and local transportation systems. This study will be performed in such a way that preservation of the integrity of the transportation system is assured and sound mobility and reliability measures will be utilized. The major elements of this effort are to:
  - Refine the SMTC's travel demand model in order to improve its validity, and
  - Use the travel demand model to evaluate various potential concepts for the I-81 corridor (and permutations of those concepts), based on the impacts to the transportation network of the greater metropolitan region and on the impacts to regional interstate access and general mobility, with an emphasis on the movement of goods and people, and with a keen awareness of regional air quality implications.

The findings of the public participation effort will be used to assist in the development of alternatives to be tested in the model, and the results of the modeling effort will be reported to the public through the Public Participation Project. These two projects, along with additional technical analysis done by the NYSDOT, will form the foundation for NYSDOT's greater I-81 corridor study, which will make the final determination regarding the future of I-81. The SMTC will be a key stakeholder in the NYSDOT study.

To make information available to the public, various outreach activities have been initiated:

- *I-81 Challenge* Mailing List
- *I-81 Challenge* newsletters will be distributed by e-mail and regular mail at key points in the I-81 process. The newsletter will provide updates on progress and will publicize opportunities to get involved.
- Workshops, Meetings, and In-Person Forums

  At this point, the study is just beginning. It is contemplated that between 20 and 40 focus group meetings will be held to get community and stakeholder input.
- Public Comment Opportunity

  The public may sent comments at any time through the internet at contactus@theI81challenge.org**.**
- Questionnaires

  Over the course of *the I-81 Challenge*, there will be periodic questionnaires designed to gather input on key topics related to I-

81. The first such questionnaire is currently live. **http://www.thei81challenge.org/?ThisPageID=24**

At this point, the *I-81 Challenge* is just getting off the ground. In September 2009, SMTC began hosting a first round of small focus group meetings to gather initial impressions from a broad cross-section of the community. The purpose of these focus groups is not to talk about solutions for the future of the highway, but to gather suggestions on the best ways to reach out to the community in the coming months and years. These focus groups will initially be by invitation only and consist of sampling of representatives from a variety community organizations, agencies, and governments. The focus group meetings will be followed by large public workshops in the winter. These workshops will be open to the general public.

Appendix F:
Land Use & Transportation

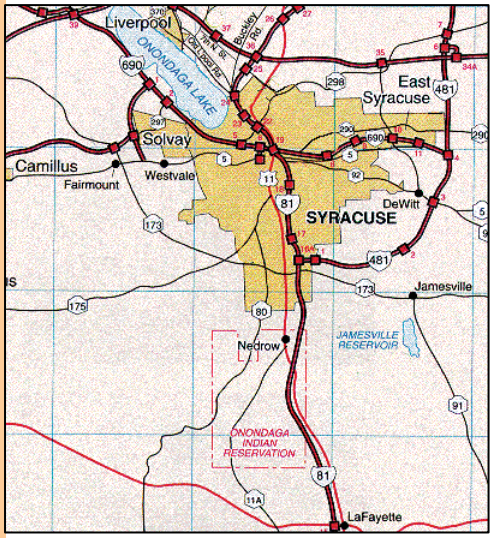
"The degree of consideration and analysis of the (planning) factors should be based on the scale and complexity of many issues, including transportation system development, land use, employment, economic development, human and natural environment, and housing and community development." **§ 450.306** (b)

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 *Long Range Transportation Plan 2007 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 delegated[7] 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.



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 SOCPA[8] 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.

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

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

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 G*uide* 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."9 The County would specifically help limit suburban sprawl by providing planning and zoning tools to foster a renewal of the more traditional neighborhood model of growth.

One of the tools provided in the *Settlement Plan* is the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Code. The TND Code is a set of recommendations, first created over a decade ago by Duany Plater-Zyberk &Co., that is designed to replace traditional zoning and to regulate land uses based on design rather than by use. Critical elements of the new TND Code include the focused design of the public realm, a mix of supportable land uses, a density that encourages pedestrian activity and the easy use mass transit, and built-in predictability of future development based on a regulating plan.

The *Settlement Plan* addresses transportation with a series of policies to guide County's investments in the transportation system to improve the quality of life and walkability of neighborhoods. At the regional level, the *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.

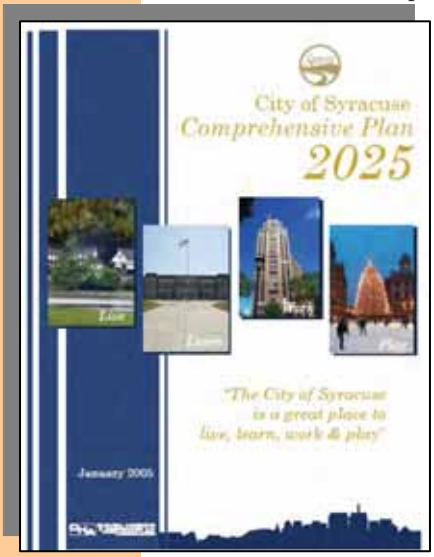
As noted earlier in this report, SMTC is now participating in an effort to conduct a transportation-land use survey as part of the development of its next LRTP (due 2011) and to support the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency's (SOCPA) Development Guide Update (expected in summer 2010). In August 2009, SMTC released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant services to assist SMTC in gaining an accurate understanding of the public's current patterns, perceptions, and preferences as they relate to transportation and land use in the greater Syracuse area. The survey area will encompass all of Onondaga County,

9 *Onondaga County Settlement Plan,* Executive Summary

including the City of Syracuse. As this project is a "support project", a formal scope of work has not been created and no Study Advisory Committee is expected.

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 January 2005. 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 2025 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 *Comprehensive 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 *Comprehensive 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. 10 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.11 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 LRTP, the *Comprehensive Plan* fits in nicely.

THE MDA PLAN

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.

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10 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.

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

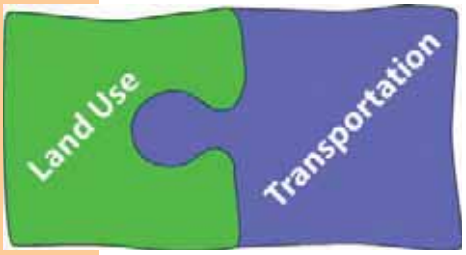
These objectives are to be accomplished by implementation of projects and programs directed at the following six strategies that comprise the Essential New York Initiative:

- Strategy #1: Aggressively Targeting Middle-Market Companies With High Potential For Expansion and Supporting Existing Industries
- Strategy #2: Optimizing Key Industry Clusters
- Strategy #3: Creating, Retaining, and Attracting Talent in Central Upstate New York
- Strategy #4: Leveraging Colleges and Universities as Economic and Community Growth Engines
- Strategy #5: Encouraging the Creation and Growth of a Stronger Entrepreneurial Culture
- Strategy #6: Developing a Broader Regional Consciousness

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.

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.

In 2008, SMTC created an excellent interactive CD entitled *Connecting Transportation and Land Use: A Resource Guide to Understanding the Transportation/Land Use Connection to Local Planning.* This CD is an educational tool that works to assist local planners on the importance of the transportation and land use connection. The current 2009-2010 UPWP allots $10,000 of Central Staff activity on this educational outreach.