



# Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

2013 FHWA/FTA Certification Review



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

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# Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

## Transportation Certification Review

Certification Report: **June 2014**

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## Preface

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to review, evaluate, and certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in each Transportation Management Area (TMA), an urbanized area of 200,000 population or more, at least every four years. The intent of the statutory and regulatory requirements is to develop a transportation system that serves the mobility interests of people and freight through a multifaceted metropolitan planning process. The certification review is to assure that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area, and that the planning process is being conducted in accordance with:

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

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

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



Within the context of the certification review the following terms may be used: Corrective Action, Recommendations, and Commendations.

- Corrective Action includes those items that fail to meet the requirements of the transportation statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome of the overall process. The expected change and timeline for accomplishing it are clearly defined.
- Recommendations are those items that, while somewhat less substantial and not regulatory, are still significant enough that FHWA and FTA are hopeful that State and local officials will consider taking some action. Typically, Recommendations involve the state of the practice or technical improvements instead of regulatory requirements.
- Commendations and noteworthy practices are those elements that demonstrate innovative, highly effective, well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements. Elements addressing items that have frequently posed problems nationwide could be cited as noteworthy practices.

During the winter of 2013, FHWA and FTA conducted a certification review of the transportation planning process in the Syracuse, New York urbanized area as carried out by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). This report documents the Federal review.

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## Executive Summary

### Main Conclusions

The transportation planning process in the Syracuse, NY urbanized area, as carried out by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, is a very professional endeavor but due to the need to address a number of corrective actions it is hereby certified with conditions.

### Background

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration reviewed the SMTC transportation planning process in accordance with the requirement of *23 CFR '450.334'* that all urbanized areas over 200,000 be reviewed at least every four years to assure that the planning process is in accordance with federal regulations.

The review included a desk-audit, a site visit to Syracuse, discussions with member agencies and the Central Staff, and a night meeting for public input.

### Noteworthy Practices

Embedded in the all of the planning efforts in the Syracuse Transportation Management Area (TMA) is the discussion of how to address the aging I-81 viaduct. I-81 is a highway that serves as a major commuter route, providing access to jobs, businesses, and services in downtown Syracuse and the hospitals and institutions on University Hill. It also serves as a national and international north-south trade route from Tennessee to the Canadian border. Portions of I-81, which was built in the 1950s and 1960s, are deteriorating and nearing the end of their useful life. Also, sections of I-81 do not meet current safety standards and are experiencing high accident rates. The goals of the planning surrounding I-81 are to improve safety and create an efficient regional and local transportation system within and through greater Syracuse and to provide transportation solutions that enhance the livability, sustainability, and economic vitality of greater Syracuse.

### Corrective Actions

The Federal Review Team has issued three corrective actions in the following areas:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan
2. Financial Plan
3. Congestion Management Process

**Recommendations**

The Federal Review Team has issued recommendation in the following areas

1. UPWP
2. TIP
3. Financial plan
4. Public Involvement
5. Title VI
6. Freight
7. Intelligent Transportation Systems

**Commendations**

The Federal Review Team has provided commendation in the following areas:

1. UPWP
2. TIP
3. Public Involvement
4. Title VI
5. Intelligent Transportation System
6. Safety

## Introduction to the Certification Review Process

**Regulation:** 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5)(A), 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5)(A)

(5) Certification. -

(A) In general. - The Secretary shall -

(i) ensure that the metropolitan planning process of a metropolitan planning organization serving a transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law; and

(ii) subject to subparagraph (B), certify, not less often than once every 4 years, that the requirements of this paragraph are met with respect to the metropolitan planning process.

### Background

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

### Overview of the 2013 Certification Review

The 2013 certification review of SMTC officially began in September 2013 with a joint FHWA/FTA letter to Ms. Kathleen Rapp, the Chairperson of SMTC, informing the MPO about the upcoming review and identifying the primary topics for the review (*Appendix A*). The dates of the site visit were coordinated with Mr. James D'Agostino, Director, SMTC. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) received individual copies of the letter. The SMTC staff notified the SMTC member agencies and the public about this review.

In preparation for the on-site visit, FHWA and FTA conducted an internal desk audit of SMTC process and materials, including the SMTC June 12, 2013 self-certification statement, the 2013-2014 Unified Planning Work Program, the 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program, and the 2011 Long Range Transportation Plan update.

### Site Visit

The FHWA New York Division and FTA Region II office, herein referred to as “The Federal Review Team,” conducted the site visit from November 19<sup>th</sup> through November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The team consisted of James Goveia, Leah Flax (FTA, Region II Office), Maria Chau, Christine Thorkildsen, and Alex Appel, (FHWA, New York Division Office)

The on-site review took place at the SMTC office. Detailed discussions were primarily with the MPO Director, members of the SMTC staff, and John Reichert (NYSDOT Region 4 Regional Planning & Program Manager). The Federal Review Team met with members of the Policy Committee, as well as SMTC staff members on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 in a round-table forum to discuss their thoughts on the overall transportation planning process in the region and major regional opportunities and issues.

### **Public Input**

As part of the certification review process the Federal Review Team solicits input from the communities and stakeholders within the region where they are offered the opportunity to submit both verbal and written comments on SMTC's transportation planning process. The Public Meeting was held on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 between 6:00pm – 7:30pm at the SMTC offices. Written comments were accepted through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Both the meeting and solicitations of written comments were publicized through the local Syracuse newspaper (*Appendix C*). These arrangements were made through the generous assistance of SMTC.

One person attended the meeting who was affiliated with the bicycle community. The comments he offered were focused on the SMTC serving as a clearinghouse for the numerous planning efforts going on in the City of Syracuse and its surrounding areas.

## Corrective Actions, Commendations, and Recommendations

Below is the compiled list of *Corrective Actions*, *Commendations*, and *Recommendations* from the Federal Team's review of work products and processes that are the result of the MPO transportation planning process. Each of these comments can also be found at the end of their respective Certification topic section. There are three corrective actions, eighteen recommendations and, ten commendations for SMTC as a result of this review.

### Corrective Action

#### 1. *Long Range Transportation Plan*

- The LRTP does not currently articulate the 20 year horizon of the Syracuse MPA as required by 23 CFR 450.322(a). The MPO must provide an approved LRTP by October 2015 to ensure that decisions made on transportation funding accurately reflect the needs/vision of the region.

#### 2. *Financial Plan*

- SMTC's current financial plan does not meet the requirements outlined in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii). SMTC must revisit the regulation and companion resources and develop a financial plan that meets these requirements by October 2015.

#### 3. *Congestion Management Process*

- SMTC must provide a plan to update its CMP to ensure full compliance with 23 CFR 450.320(c) six months from the issuance of this report and have the CMP updated by October 2015.

### Recommendations

#### 1. *Unified Planning Work Program*

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC maintain a UPWP process by which a sponsor of a proposal that was not selected can understand the basis for their denial.

#### 2. *Transportation Improvement Program*

- We recommend SMTC include a statement in their TIP document describing how the TIP is fiscally constrained.
- We recommend SMTC continue to work with their operating agencies to increase the rate of obligation of projects that have made it through the selection process and included on the TIP.
- The Federal Review Team believes that instead of using a revenue-based approach when the sources of revenues are uncertain, SMTC would be better served to use a cost-based approach.

### 3. *Financial Plan*

- The Federal Review Team recommends that the SMTC utilize the following resources to develop financial plans in order to satisfy the regulations contained in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii):

**USDOT Transportation Planning Capacity Building website**

[http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus\\_fiscal.asp](http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_fiscal.asp)

**Fiscal Constraint in Long-Range Transportation Planning: Best Practices Case Studies**

[http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint_rpt.pdf)

### 4. *Public Involvement*

- We recommend SMTC document the multitude of methods used for the I-81 project, note their challenges and benefits, and assess their usefulness in the region. This documentation should serve as the basis for the methods of outreach needed for the LRTP, TIP process and other federally required planning products.
- SMTC should develop a framework to serve as a clearing house on livability and sustainability and should consider how to facilitate dialogue between advocate groups and public agencies on this topic.

### 5. *Title VI and Environmental Justice*

- We recommend that SMTC include a “Plain Language” glossary of frequently used terms and the MPO’s mission and purpose in an easily accessible location on their website and publications that would make the program and services provided by the MPO better understood by the public. It would allow the public to better understand their rights under Title VI, why their involvement is important and provide a clearer understanding of the work products and processes the SMTC utilizes.
- We recommend that SMTC continually update their Environmental Justice Analysis to include all completed work products to assure a full understanding of impacts to protected groups.
- We recommend that SMTC attend training opportunities to keep up to date with the most recent information from NYSDOT and FHWA concerning Title VI, EJ and LEP. Continual communication with NYSDOT for these opportunities is recommended.
- We recommend that the SMTC’s Public Participation Plan dated May 2007 be updated to reflect the most current public involvement activities and accomplishments. It is difficult to reach and engage certain portions of the public and it is recommended that SMTC research best practices from other MPOs, NYSDOT and other State/City Agencies.

## 6. *Freight Planning*

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC engage with freight stakeholders such as facility owners or users of the system to further their understanding of freight stakeholder needs in the region.
- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC develop a regional goods movement plan that highlight both mobility needs of freight in the region, such as geometric challenges for trucks and intermodal connectors, and potential impacts or needs to assist in economic development.

## 7. *Congestion Management Process (CMP)*

- The Federal Team suggests that SMTC identify additional “SMART” performance measures in its next CMP update to ensure that planned congestion mitigation activities address specific goal-driven needs.
- The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council’s CMP excels in appropriately scaling its degree of analysis to the nature of congestion in the Syracuse region.
- The identification of the Level of Service goal (“to improve LOS of at least the top ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020”) is an excellent first step towards the identification of additional “SMART” performance measures.

## 8. *Intelligent Transportation Systems*

- SMTC should stay involved with the update to Syracuse’s Regional ITS Architecture and, per 23 CFR §450.306 (f), ensure that the metropolitan planning process remains consistent with the Architecture in the future.
- SMTC should work with its member agencies to update the region’s Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan, originally published in 2003.

## **Commendations**

### 1. *Unified Planning Work Program*

- SMTC’s staff is commended for its ability to conduct all relevant UPWP studies without the need for outside consultant contracts.

### 2. *Transportation Improvement Program*

- We commend SMTC on updating their TIP project solicitation process, Transportation Improvement Plan Guidebook, to ensure that it is linked to the LRTP goals and objectives.

### 3. *Public Involvement*

- We commend SMTC on their work to involve the public in the I-81 project and the creative participation-building strategies they tested in the process.

- We commend the breadth of multi-media used in the I-81 public outreach including a dedicated website, facebook page, television interviews, and video production, each consisting of excellent quality, content, and graphics.
- We commend the success of the I-81 outreach which brought widespread attention across the region engaging many residents.

4. *Title VI and Environmental Justice*

- SMTC is very engaged with the community it serves. Data sources as well as community based organizations and advisory groups are continually tapped for input on MPO work products and activities to address Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency. The complaints procedure is easily accessible on their website and their non-discrimination statement is prominent. The public meeting held on the evening of November 19th (as part of this certification review) included numerous published documents by SMTC, a video presentation and handouts.
- SMTC well understands the importance of compliance with Title VI and its programs and produces a program and work products that address these requirements.

5. *Congestion Management Process*

- The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's CMP excels in appropriately scaling its degree of analysis to the nature of congestion in the Syracuse region.
- The identification of the Level of Service goal ("to improve LOS of at least the top ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020") is an excellent first step towards the identification of additional "SMART" performance measures.

6. *Safety*

- SMTC's Safety Improvement Analysis report provides an annual update to their members on available high accident location information with detailed diagrams which can be used in a safety analysis. This report was highlighted and shared with the FHWA Safety Engineer and NYSDOT Safety Program Bureau Director.



## Status of 2010 Certification Review Findings

The following is a summary of the Corrective Actions and Recommendations from the 2010 Certification Review. There was one corrective action and two recommendations which are listed below.

The follow is the status on the **Corrective Actions**:

| <b>Corrective Action</b>  | <b>Status</b> |
|---|---------------|
| 1. 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. | Completed     |

The follow is the status on the **Recommendations**:

| <b>Recommendations</b>  | <b>Status</b> |
|---|---------------|
| 1. 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.  | Ongoing       |
| 2. 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. | Ongoing       |

## Overview of the Region

### SMTC Organization and Boundaries

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requires every metropolitan area with a population of over 50,000 to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to qualify for the receipt of federal highway and transit funds. As designated by the Governor of the State of New York, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) was created in 1966 to carry out the continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, which includes all of Onondaga County and small portions of Madison and Oswego Counties. (See Map, p.12)

#### Organizational Structure

The SMTC is comprised of officials representing local, state, and federal agencies (non-voting) having interest or responsibility in transportation planning and programming. To facilitate and encourage maximum interaction among these groups and the local community, the SMTC has adopted a committee structure that consists of a Policy Committee, a Planning Committee, and an Executive Committee. These committees are supported by the SMTC central staff, and oversee SMTC transportation planning activities.

The Policy Committee consists of representatives that have an interest or responsibility in transportation planning and/or programming in the MPA. The primary responsibility of the Policy Committee is to establish policies for the overall conduct of the SMTC.

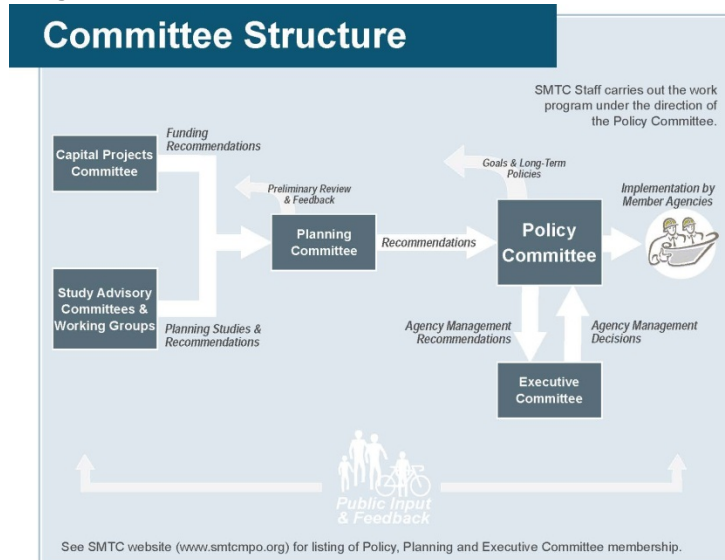
SMTC Policy Committee members include representatives from:

- The CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity,
- The City of Syracuse Office of the Mayor,
- The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB),
- The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA),
- The Empire State Development Corporation(ESDC),
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC),
- The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT),
- The New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA),
- The Onondaga County Office of the Executive,
- The Onondaga County Legislature,
- The Onondaga County Planning Board,
- The Syracuse Common Council, and
- The Syracuse Planning Commission.

Oswego and Madison Counties are represented on the Policy Committee as non-voting, advisory agencies, as is the Onondaga Nation. As depicted in Figure 1-1, the Policy Committee oversees both the Executive Committee and the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee, which is established by the Policy Committee, is composed of professional representatives of Policy Committee member agencies having direct or indirect responsibility for transportation planning and implementation. Their primary responsibility is to monitor all technical activities, including the development of a draft UPWP and TIP for recommendation to the Policy Committee. They also provide an initial screening of all major studies and planning activities for funding recommendations to the Policy Committee.

The Executive Committee is comprised of Planning Committee members. It provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the MPO and its central staff, including financial management, personnel, and other administrative requirements.

Figure 1-1



**Policy Committee**

- Establishes goals and long-term policies
- Approves and adopts the UPWP, TIP, and LRTP
- Reviews and acknowledges completion of planning studies

**Planning Committee**

- Monitors progress of planning studies
- Approves scope of work for planning studies
- Established by the Policy Committee and composed of professional/technical representatives

**Executive Committee**

- Manages administration within the SMTC
- Coordinates with the SMTC Director, who manages SMTC staff
- Consists of Planning Committee members

**Capital Projects Committee**

- Managed by SMTC Staff
- Reviews, prioritizes, and recommends projects to be funded with federal transportation dollars to the Planning Committee

**Study Advisory Committees and Working Groups**

- Managed by SMTC Staff
- Provides guidance throughout planning studies



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Data Source: SOCPA, NYSDOT, 2011  
Prepared by SMTC, 11/2013



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

### SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area

- Legend
- Interstate
  - Major Roads
  - Local Roads
  - ▭ County Boundary
  - ▭ Village
  - ▭ Town
  - ▭ City of Syracuse
  - Water features
  - Parks
  - Proposed Urban Area (pending approval)
  - SMTC MPA
  - Onondaga Nation Territory

## 2013 Certification Topics / Results of the Certification Review

The Federal Review Team selects topics for the Certification Review based on the federal regulations MPOs operate under. The federal findings on these topics inform the Federal Review Team in determining if an MPO should be certified or re-certified. The Team considers the desk audit, in-person meeting, and observations of the MPO's operations on a day to day basis. The findings of the topics are detailed in the following sections, along with the basis for corrective actions, recommendations, and commendations.

Below is a list of the topics that were selected:

Agreements and Contracts

Long Range Plan

Unified Planning Work Program

Transportation Improvement Program

Financial Plan

Transit Activities / Human Services Transportation Plan / Non-motorized (Bicycle/Pedestrian)

Public Involvement

Title VI/Environmental Justice

Freight Planning

Congestion Management Process

Intelligent Transportation System

Safety and Security

## Agreements and Contracts

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### **Basic Requirement:**

*In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134, MPO's are required to establish relationships with the State and public transportation agencies under the cover of specified agreements between the parties to work in cooperation in carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3 C's) metropolitan planning process. The agreements must identify the mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. These agreements must identify the designated agency for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act and address the responsibilities and situations arising from there being more than one MPO in a metropolitan area.*

### **Finding:**

The most recent SMTC host agreement between the MPO and Onondaga County was signed in June 2012. The agreement clearly discusses the role of the host agency and its responsibilities as they relate to the funding of the SMTC's operations. The 2010 operations plan serves as the guidebook for how all of the MPO's business practices are conducted. It also spells out the membership structure of the MPO, and the make-up of the various committees in order to ensure that the MPO is carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process.

## Long Range Plan

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### Basic Requirement:

*23 CFR §450.322 (a) The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date. The transportation plan shall include both Long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of a multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the effective date of the transportation plan shall be the date of a conformity determination issued by the FHWA and the FTA. In attainment areas, the effective date of the transportation plan shall be its date of adoption by the MPO.*

### Finding

The SMTC Policy Committee approved their Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2011 (update) for the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Area on July 21, 2011. SMTC developed the framework for their Long Range Transportation Plan in 1995 and has updated it consistently in 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2011. There were some minor changes to the structure of the document however as a policy based plan the goals remain consistent. The topics include: (1) Safety and Security, (2) Mobility, (3) Environment, (4) Economy, (5) Land Use, and (6) Facilities. Each of these topics contains measureable objectives that can assist the MPO in developing and transitioning to performance measures.

The MPO acknowledged that as the plan has never truly been revised and that there are areas of the updates that do not meet the standards set forth in 23 CFR 450. These areas include but are not limited to:

- Existing and proposed transportation facilities that should function as integrated metropolitan transportation system,
- Consideration of the results of the congestion management process, and
- Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure.

During the on-site visit review, SMTC staff indicated that the next LRTP is targeted for completion in March 2016. This iteration will rewrite the LRTP in its entirety. Instead of being a solely policy based plan, the LRTP will be a hybrid plan that focuses on both policies and major projects. Proposed changes to the LRTP will also include scenario planning, performance measures, MAP-21 planning updates, and a transportation inventory. There has been a significant amount of public outreach in the MPA area recently for input and comments to the Region's updated *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and the I-81 project. SMTC plans to build upon these plans and use the public involvement information collected by the other plans in the development of their next LRTP.



**Corrective Action**

- The LRTP does not currently articulate the 20 year horizon of the Syracuse MPA as required by 23 CFR 450.322(a). The MPO must provide an approved LRTP by October 2015 to ensure that decisions made on transportation funding accurately reflect the needs/vision of the region.

**Commendation**

- SMTC staff has used GIS mapping that has proved to be an effective tool in providing clear visual illustrations of the planning considerations (existing conditions, designation of systems, etc.) and in developing the long-range vision for the TMA.



## Unified Planning Work Program

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### Basic Requirement

*MPO's are required to develop Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) in Transportation Management Areas (TMA's) to govern work programs for the expenditure of FHWA and FTA planning and research funds. The UPWP must be developed in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies and include the required elements.*

### Finding:

At the time of this review SMTC's UPWP covered a period from 2013-2014. SMTC maintains an annual UPWP in order to address the changing needs of the communities. The applications for funds under the UPWP come from a variety of interests such as the transit authority, the City of Syracuse and other towns that have taken note of the services the MPO provides as it relates to conducting planning studies.

SMTC completes the work for the selected products in order to advance them in the UPWP. There are no pass-through funds for outside consultants. The Federal Review Team acknowledges that this speaks to the degree of skill and talent present in the SMTC staff. During the discussion of carryover funds that remain in the UPWP, SMTC informed the Review Team that a small balance is kept to advance a study that may not have been clearly identified in the UPWP selection process but within the course of the year may need to be undertaken in order to meet other project requirements. An example of this would be a traffic count/study for a larger environmental document from a member agency.

The Federal Review Team recognizes the great effort that has been undertaken to develop and maintain a project proposal and selection process that produces quality studies in the UPWP. It is unclear if the sponsors of proposals that were not selected are provided the opportunity to discuss why a proposal was not advanced.

### Recommendation

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC maintain a UPWP process by which a sponsor of a proposal that was not selected can understand the basis for their denial.

### Commendation

- SMTC's staff is commended for its ability to conduct all relevant UPWP studies without the need for outside consultant contracts.

### Basic Requirement

*23 CFR 450.324 requires the MPO to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include, but are not limited to:*

- An updated TIP covering a period of at least four years that is compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and approval process; [23 CFR 450.324 (a)]*
- The TIP should identify all eligible TCM's included in the STIP and give priority to eligible TCM's and projects included for the first two years which have funds available and committed; [23 CFR 450.324 (i)]*
- The TIP should include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other transportation enhancements; Federal Lands Highway projects and safety projects included in the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The TIP and STIP must include all regionally significant projects for which an FHWA or the FTA approval is required whether or not the projects are to be funded with Title 23 or Title 49 funds. In addition, all federal and non-federally funded, regionally significant projects must be included in the TIP and STIP and consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for information purposes and air quality analysis in nonattainment and maintenance areas; [23 CFR 450.324 (c),(d)]*

### Finding

SMTC's updated 2014-2018 TIP went into effect October 1, 2013. During the last update SMTC modified their selection process to use a performance-based approach that incorporated quantitative data. They also requested that sponsors explain how the project fits in with the goals and objectives of the LRTP before ranking (using software that was developed by AMPO in coordination with FHWA).

While the document has a number of sound fiscal assumptions based on historical funding levels, SMTC acknowledged that the financial plan in the document is not as strong as it could be. The Federal Review Team believes that instead of using a revenue-based approach when the source of revenues are uncertain, SMTC would be better served to use a cost-based approach. Should additional revenues become available, the TIP could be amended to include additional phases within various project listings.

### Recommendations:

- We recommend SMTC include a statement in their TIP document describing how the TIP is fiscally constrained.
- We recommend SMTC continue to work with their operating agencies to increase the rate of obligation of projects that have made it through the selection process and included on the TIP.

- The Federal Review Team believes that instead of using a revenue-based approach when the source of revenues is uncertain, SMTC would be better served to use a cost-based approach.

**Commendations:**

- We commend SMTC for updating their TIP project solicitation process to ensure that it is linked to the LRTP goals and objectives.

## Financial Plan

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### Basic Requirement

*The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) must include revenue estimates developed by the State, MPO and public transportation operators in accordance with the MPO Agreement. The requirements for financial plans are contained in 23 CFR 450.322 (f) (10) for the MTP and 23 CFR 450.322 (e, h-k) for the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).*

### Finding

The Federal Review team notes that the section, *Financial Plan*, in the *SMTC Long Range Transportation Plan* has been stagnant using the same formulas and formats that have been established since 1995 without significant change or thoughtful revision. A financial plan is developed to “demonstrate how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented” and should document information that substantiate costs estimates of transportation projects and programs such as a rise in labor cost or construction materials.<sup>1</sup> It should also document steps taken to evaluate ‘reasonable’ revenue forecast assumptions such as revenue from new tolls, user fees such as increase transit fare, or other federal, state, or local initiatives. The Financial Plan in SMTC’s LRTP does not currently meet these requirements.

We recommend SMTC revisit 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii) and change their approach in developing their financial plan to conform to these requirements. Those requirements include but are not limited to:

- A financial plan that should be financially realistic balancing capital and operating costs with reasonable revenue expectations
- A financial plan that includes additional financing strategies to fund projects in the transportation plan, and
- A financial plan that identifies what projects would be funded if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available.

It is expected that the above listed Financial Plan issues would be agreed upon by the MPO and their modal transportation agency partnership in the planning process. The Federal Review Team has provided a link to resources at the end of this section that could be used as companion documents in the development of their next financial plan to assist in resolving this corrective action:

### Corrective Action

- SMTC’s current financial plan does not meet the requirements outlined in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii). SMTC must revisit the regulation and companion resources and develop a financial plan that meets these requirements by October 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)

## **Recommendation**

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC utilize the following resources to develop its financial plan in order to meet regulations contained in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10)(i-viii):

**USDOT Transportation Planning Capacity Building website**

[http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus\\_fiscal.asp](http://www.planning.dot.gov/focus_fiscal.asp)

**Fiscal Constraint in Long-Range Transportation Planning: Best Practices Case Studies**

[http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/fiscalConstraint_rpt.pdf)

### Basic Requirement

*The MPO, under MAP-21 was directed to ensure that public transportation providers were brought to the table as part of the policy board in order to better plan for the needs of the region as it relates to transportation opportunities. GTC has representation from the Rochester – Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA). This type of partnership serves in the development of the Mass transit investments as well as the development of all Human Service Coordination Efforts.*

*According to 23 CFR §450.300(a) the MPO process should carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process that includes accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities.*

### Finding

#### **TRANSIT**

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) was created in 1970 by the Governor and Legislature of New York State. Onondaga County was the “original” CNYRTA member county automatically included in the enabling legislation, with other eligible counties electing to join in the ensuing years. The public transit operating company in Onondaga County, CNY Centro, Inc., commonly known in the community as ‘Centro’, commenced mass transit services to the public in January of 1972, taking over for the bankrupt Syracuse Transit Corporation.

Current membership of the CNYRTA consists of the counties of Onondaga, Oswego, Cayuga and Oneida. Three other counties - Cortland, Jefferson, and Madison - may also elect to join the CNYRTA by votes of their respective county legislatures.

Operating subsidiary companies created to carry out the functions of the Authority now include:

- CNY Centro, Inc. (1972)
- Centro of Oswego, Inc. (1972)
- Centro of Cayuga, Inc. (1973)
- Centro Parking, Inc. (1978)
- Centro Call-A-Bus, Inc. (1991 as a separate corporation, but service began in the mid-1970s as part of CNY Centro operations in Onondaga County)
- Centro of Oneida, Inc. (2005)

SMTC has continued to ensure that transit is incorporated into all major planning efforts. SMTC recognizes that plans with the central city and Syracuse University areas both advocate for bike

sharing programs. SMTC should consider the role transit will play in accommodating multimodal connections at potential bike sharing hubs. During the review CNYRTA stated that they are waiting to see how future multimodal plans mature at the MPO table prior to making commitments on route planning.

### **HUMAN SERVICE**

The most recent *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services* plan reflects the 2010 census data. With over 100 agencies participating in the update, the plan continues to include the requisite components for a complete plan including.

- Demographic analysis
- Inventory of existing providers
- Existing coordination
- Unmet needs and service gaps
- Strategies for the region

### **BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN (Non-Motorized Transportation)**

SMTC published their Bicycle Commuter Corridor Study in June 2013. This Study identifies suburban and urban corridors within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are most likely to maintain high average cycling speeds to encourage commuter cycling from the suburbs to the city. As a planning level assessment, the Study informs county highway departments about cooperative opportunities to develop a seamless bicycle network based on a consistent set of treatments. These departments may consider applying these treatments when designing and implementing roadway improvements along the identified corridors.

## Public Involvement

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### Basic Requirement

*The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.316, to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation and consultation throughout the development of the MTP and the TIP and is also included in 23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7) and (g) (1) (2), (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 (b).*

### Finding

The 2007 Public Involvement Plan outlines SMTC's basic approach to public participation and establishes the use of study advisory committees. In implementing the public participation plan for the I-81 project, SMTC expanded on some of the ideas within its existing plan and employed a variety of creative, interactive, and multi-media methods to inform and engage the public. Many individuals and organizations have had the opportunity to get to know SMTC because of these efforts.

SMTC is just beginning the process of drafting its LRTP. As of this report SMTC has not completed a designated public participation plan for the development of the LRTP. The Federal Review Team believes that the framework for this plan can be a replication or what was used for the I-81 challenge. This same framework should be used to develop an MPO plan to be more involved in the public outreach for the development of the TIP which has traditionally been left to the sponsor agencies.

### Recommendations

- We recommend SMTC document the multitude of methods used for the I-81 project, note their challenges and benefits, and assess their usefulness in the region. This documentation should serve as the basis for the methods of outreach needed for the LRTP, TIP process and other federally required planning products.
- SMTC should develop a framework to serve as a clearing house on livability and sustainability and should consider how to facilitate dialogue between advocate groups and public agencies on this topic.

### Commendations

- We commend SMTC on their work to involve the public in the I-81 project and the creative participation-building strategies they tested in the process.
- We commend the breadth of multi-media used in the I-81 public outreach including a dedicated website, facebook page, television interviews, and video production, each consisting of excellent quality, content, and graphics.
- We commend the success of the I-81 outreach which brought widespread attention across the region engaging many residents.



## Title VI/Environmental Justice

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### Basic Requirement

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guarantees equal protection under law and prohibits intentional discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability. Title VI includes the Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice, which seeks to ensure that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, national origin, or income, and that they have access to meaningful participation. In transportation programs, this includes:*

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

### Finding

SMTC uses a variety of strategies and methods to assure compliance with Title VI. These activities include analyzing the region's demographics to identify the Title VI population, developing materials to provide public information to those with Limited English Proficiency, reaching out to the minority and low income population for public meetings, developing an Environmental Justice Analysis in 2012, and being inclusive of *Disadvantaged Businesses Enterprises* in the procurement of MPO planning work products.

SMTC's *Title VI Policy, Public Participation Plan* and *complaint procedure* can be found on their website under the "Public Involvement" link where the public can also find information on how they can participate in the transportation planning process. The Federal Team notes that the SMTC Public Participation Plan was last updated in 2007. We recommended the plan be revised to include public participation methods being used currently. We also recommend that SMTC develop a "Plain English" approach for all their Title VI information and materials communicating in everyday language with less technical terms. A glossary of frequently used terms should be provided.

The Federal Team recognizes SMTC's efforts in the transportation planning process to reach out to the Title VI population. In particular we would like to highlight SMTC's public participation efforts for the I-81 Challenge. Due to the complexity of the location and size of the infrastructure, this project has drawn much local controversy. SMTC worked closely with NYSDOT Region 3 to provide a noteworthy and comprehensive public outreach approach developing a website dedicated to the project, a Facebook social media page, and video of historic information and television interviews on their local PBS station with the SMTC staff. For this project a *Four Factor Analysis* was conducted to develop a Limited English Proficiency Plan that outlines their approach to address LEP for the impacted community. American Sign Language and Spanish interpreters have been available at all

large-scale public meetings, and flyers included text in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese<sup>2</sup>. The Plan also included input from the Onondaga Nations as well as an Advisory Committee and Community Based Organizations.

An Environmental Justice Analysis was finalized in July 2012 to ensure that both the positive and negative impacts of transportation planning conducted by SMTC and its member agencies are fairly distributed amongst all socioeconomic populations and that no one population is adversely affected or neglected. This plan and analysis complies with the Title VI program and uses data from the census and the American Community Survey in Geographic Information System software and overlaid transportation planning project boundaries from previous years for geographic comparisons. The analysis showed that the transportation planning activities performed by the SMTC are not known to have been disproportionately distributed amongst the designated target populations. EJ evaluation needs to continue to include all projects and plans included in the EJ Analysis.

SMTC expressed that they have been inclusive of *Disadvantaged Businesses Enterprises* during the MPO's procurement process for work products. When a DBE is chosen for any part of the work activity, that information is shared with NYSDOT to include in their Semi-Annual Report to FHWA. Staffs has received training on Title VI in the past, but are seeking opportunities for additional Title VI, EJ or LEP training from FHWA or NYSDOT.

### **Recommendation**

- We recommend that SMTC include "Plain Language" glossary of frequently used terms and the MPO's mission and purpose in easily accessible location on their website and publications that would make the program and services provided by the MPO better understood by the public. It would allow the public to better understand their rights under Title VI, why their involvement is important and provide a clearer understanding of the work products and processes the SMTC utilizes.
- We recommend that SMTC continually update their Environmental Justice Analysis to include all completed work products to assure a full understanding of impacts to protected groups.
- We recommend that SMTC attend training opportunities is necessary to keep up to date with the most recent information from NYSDOT and FHWA concerning Title VI, EJ and LEP. Continual communication with NYSDOT for these opportunities is recommended.
- We recommend that the SMTC's Public Participation Plan dated May 2007 be updated to reflect most current public involvement activities and accomplishments. It is difficult to reach and engage certain portions of the public and it is recommended to research best practices from other MPOs, NYSDOT and other State/City Agencies.

### **Commendation**

- SMTC is very engaged with the community it serves. Data sources as well as community based organizations and advisory groups are continually tapped for input on MPO work

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<sup>2</sup> What is the Public Involvement Process? LEP reference <http://thei81challenge.org/Home/SubMenuContent/Faqs>

products and activities to address Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency. The complaints procedure is easily accessible on their website and their non-discrimination statement is prominent. The public meeting held on the evening of November 19th 2013 (as part of this certification review) included numerous published documents by SMTC, a video presentation and handouts.

- SMTC well understands the importance of compliance with Title VI and its programs and produces a program and work products that address these requirements.

## Freight Planning

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### Basic Requirement

*In 1991 under the ISTEA legislation freight transportation planning requirements, especially intermodal considerations were added to metropolitan planning regulations. ISTEA made it a national policy "to encourage and promote development of a national intermodal transportation system in the United States to move goods and people in an energy efficient manner provide the foundation for improved productivity growth, strengthen the nation's ability to compete in the global economy and obtain the optimum yield from the nation's transportation resources" [23 USC 134 (a)(1); 49 USC §302(e)]. The trend in emphasizing the need to invest in goods movement continues to grow with the passage of successive national transportation legislation. The newest legislation, MAP-21, includes a section on National Freight Policy and Prioritization of Projects to Improve Freight Movement.*

### Finding

The municipalities that form the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area are centrally located in New York State and comprises of a portfolio of multimodal freight facilities including air, rail, and highway. Syracuse is the nexus between two major interstate highways, I-90, which travels east-west and I-81, which travels north-south. It is also a connection point for the rail industry including one Class I carrier (CSX) and number of regional and shortline railways that link the area to Binghamton, Utica, and New Jersey.

In discussion with SMTC staff, Syracuse is not a region where road congestion is a major concern. Most trucks are able to navigate the region with little to no delay. According to SMTC's Long Range Transportation Plan over the last several years the area has benefited from growth in the rail industry. The Dewitt Rail yard has attracted the attention of a number of private sector logistic firms who has identified the location as a potential site to cultivate an inland port. This past year the Empire State Development Board awarded Dewitt Railyard<sup>3</sup> in the Town of Manlius \$420,000 to develop phase one of an inland port project.

### Freight Planning

SMTC was activity engaged in freight planning between the late 1990s into mid-2000s producing a number of goods movement studies that demonstrated the MPO's engagement in freight planning. These include:

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<sup>3</sup> 3Gi CNYIP (Central New York Region – Onondaga County) - \$420,000

[http://esd.ny.gov/NewsRoom/Data/2013/08222013\\_ESDBoard.pdf](http://esd.ny.gov/NewsRoom/Data/2013/08222013_ESDBoard.pdf)

New York State gives \$420,000 to inland port project in Manlius

[http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/08/new\\_york\\_state\\_gives\\_420000\\_to\\_inland\\_port\\_project\\_in\\_manlius.html](http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/08/new_york_state_gives_420000_to_inland_port_project_in_manlius.html)

**Studies:**

**I-481 Industrial Corridor Transportation Study 2004**

**Central New York Rail Corridor Inventory 2003: Technical Report**

**Rail / Truck / Transit Planning Summary Report 2002 - 2003**

**Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Inventory 2001**

**Skaneateles Truck Study 2000**

**1997 Conrail / CSX Intermodal Terminal Access: Technical Report**

SMTC's current LRTP demonstrates an understanding of the assets and corridor that encompasses the multimodal regional freight system. Freight is included in the 'Mobility' section of their LRTP and includes descriptions of freight facilities for each transportation mode. The plan contains two maps that illustrate multimodal *Freight Movement Facilities*<sup>4</sup> and a list of facilities on the *Regional Freight Corridors*.<sup>5</sup> For SMTC's I-81 project outreach they collaborated with NYSDOT to put together a *Community Liaison Committee* where the *NYS Motor Truck Association* was represented. They also released a questionnaire in early 2013 targeting freight stakeholders. Though not specific solely to goods movement, SMTC also is a member of the I-81 Corridor Coalition and participated in planning activities for NYSDOT's *Mohawk Erie Multimodal Study* and *New York State Rail Plan* which included a component for freight.

With MAP-21's inclusion of a *National Freight Policy and Prioritization of Projects to Improve Freight Movement*, SMTC recognizes the need to increase their engagement in freight planning. Freight planning strategies are in their early stages of discussion and could be viewed as an important component to assist the region as part of economic development. Within the past two years, SMTC has assigned dedicated staff for freight planning as part of staff collateral duties. The staffs participate in the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group and have also participated in a number of training workshops that FHWA, NYSDOT and NYSAMPO have brought to the state to build professional capacity.

SMTC is encouraged to seek opportunities to engage with freight stakeholders in the public and private sector, either facility owners or users of the system for planning input to further their understanding of freight stakeholder needs in the region. SMTC should also consider developing a regional goods movement plan that highlights both mobility needs of freight in the region, such as geometric challenges for trucks and intermodal connectors, and potential impacts or needs to assist in economic development. A regional goods movement plan can also promote regional freight investment priorities especially as New York State is in the process of developing a State Freight Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Long Range Transportation Plan 2011 Update - MAP 4-3 – Air, Water and Rail Freight Movement Facilities

<sup>5</sup> Long Range Transportation Plan 2011 Update - MAP 4-4 – Regional Freight Corridors

## **Recommendation**

- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC engage with freight stakeholders in the public and private sector, either facility owners or users of the system for planning input to further their understanding of freight stakeholder needs in the region.
- The Federal Review Team recommends that SMTC develop a regional goods movement plan that highlight both mobility needs of freight in the region, such as geometric challenges for trucks and intermodal connectors, and potential impacts or needs to assist in economic development.

### Basic Requirement

*The State (s) and the MPO must develop a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that “provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) applies to transportation management areas (TMA’s) based on a cooperatively development and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under 23 USC and title 49 USC Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.” (23 CFR 450.320 (a))*

### Finding

Due to the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Area's designation as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) is required to develop a Congestion Management Process (CMP). The region's current CMP was adopted by SMTC in 2011 and it continues to use the two-tier process identified in prior CMP versions to evaluate congestion on road segments within the region:

- In Tier One, analysis is performed to determine volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios during the morning and evening peak periods. The segments identified as having a v/c ratio greater than 0.90 were considered by the MPO to be congested. This evaluation yielded the finding that fifty-five (55) roadway segments in the region were congested.
- In Tier Two, the congested segments identified in Tier One were then evaluated to determine their excess delay - "the difference between the actual travel time a vehicle experiences and the time it would experience if there were few other vehicles on the roadway." (TRB). SMTC determined that four roadway segments within its network experienced excess delay during the PM peak, though this is qualified by the acknowledgement that, "the magnitude of excess delay did not rate as significant for any of [the] locations." Network performance in the 2011 version of the CMP was similar to that of SMTC's 2005 CMP: in 2005, fifty-seven (57) roadway segments were identified as being congested in the PM peak via Tier One analysis and five segments were identified as experiencing excess delays during the PM peak.

As a result of its Tier One and Tier Two analyses of roadway segments (in addition to some intersection analyses and corridor travel time studies), SMTC determined that congestion in the Syracuse region is primarily “peak period and/or incident-based.” Therefore, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the primary congestion mitigation strategy identified for implementation. Some of the TDM activities identified by SMTC in the Strategies and Implementation chapter of the CMP include transit improvements, park and ride lots, ride share, and signal coordination/optimization. However, SMTC states clearly in section 4.2 that the agency “is not an implementing organization, [and] it is the responsibility of the Council’s member agencies

and municipalities to implement the strategies contained...within [the] CMP...should they be deemed appropriate by the facility owner.”

Due to the way that the scope and level of analysis contained in SMTC’s CMP are appropriately scaled to the extent of the congestion problem in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, the document can generally be considered successful. Analysis of the roadway network yields the conclusion that congestion is not terribly problematic in the region. Because of this, a future CMP produced by SMTC that significantly overstated the nature of the congestion problem or over-prescribed solutions might not be the best use of the agency’s resources. However, in future CMP iterations, the Federal Team has concluded that SMTC must amend the framework of its CMP in order to guarantee full compliance with legislation (23 CFR 450.320(c)). Specifically, the CMP must include the following:

- *Methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system*  
The current CMP (2011) only acknowledges the presence of bicycle/pedestrian, freight, and public transit in passing.
- *A definition of congestion management objectives and appropriate performance measures*  
The performance measures currently used within SMTC’s CMP (Level of Service; volume/capacity ratios, excess delays, average speeds) have been neither revised nor amended in a number of CMP versions, despite advancements in the state of the practice of performance measurement. SMTC should assess other commonly used performance measures to determine whether other ones might better serve the region. Also, while one quantifiable performance goal is documented in the CMP (“to improve LOS of at least the top ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020”), SMTC should consider adopting additional goal-driven “SMART” (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ctionable, **r**elevant and realistic, and **t**ime-framed) performance measures.
- *Identification and evaluation of the anticipated performance and expected benefits of appropriate congestion management strategies*  
While it is true that SMTC is not an implementing organization, the MPO should work alongside its member agencies to determine a more specific list of congestion management strategies than the one currently found in the *Strategies and Implementation* chapter.
- *Identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each strategy...proposed for implementation*  
An implementation schedule/responsibilities/funding sources are not present in the current version of the CMP. This must be addressed in future versions.
- *Implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies, in terms of the area’s established performance measures*  
The current SMTC CMP makes no reference to congestion management strategies implemented in prior years. There is no documented process for evaluation of implemented strategies. This deficiency must be addressed in future versions.



The Federal Team understands that the relative lack of congestion in the Syracuse region is likely a contributing factor in the reluctance of MPO staff to dramatically expand CMP analysis methods, advance new strategies, and expand performance measurement. Per the CMP itself, “smaller and medium-sized MPOs, such as the SMTC...[have historically seen the CMP offer] limited benefits while [its production] consumes staff and member agency time and resources.” However, a strong CMP, spearheaded by integration of performance measurement concepts, will allow SMTC to begin its preparation for a national shift to performance measurement, driven by the development USDOT MAP-21 performance-based planning requirements.

### **Corrective Action**

- SMTC must provide a plan to update its CMP to ensure full compliance with 23 CFR 450.320(c) six months from the issuance of this report and have the CMP updated by October 2015.

### **Recommendations**

- The Federal Team suggests that SMTC identify additional “SMART” performance measures in its next CMP update to ensure that planned congestion mitigation activities address specific goal-driven needs.

### **Commendations**

- The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council’s CMP excels in appropriately scaling its degree of analysis to the nature of congestion in the Syracuse region.
- The identification of the Level of Service goal (“to improve LOS of at least the top ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020”) is an excellent first step towards the identification of additional “SMART” performance measures.

### Basic Requirement

*The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards, issued on January 8, 2001 and codified under 23 CFR Part 940 ITS Architecture and Standards, requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the national ITS architecture, as well as to U.S. DOT-adopted ITS standards. 23 CFR 940 states that:*

- *At the issuance date (January 8, 2001) of the Final Rule/Policy, regions and MPOs implementing ITS projects that have not advanced to final design by April 8, 2005, must have a regional ITS architecture in place. All other regions and MPOs not currently implementing ITS projects must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.*
- *All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the provisions laid out in 23 CFR 940.*
- *Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project-level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the national ITS architecture.*
- *All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.*
- *Projects must use U.S. DOT-adopted ITS standards as appropriate.*
- *Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with U.S. DOT oversight and Federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.*

### Finding

Nationally, due to a variety of different factors, the integration of management and operations/ITS strategies within the planning process has proven to be somewhat of a challenge. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council has made strides towards bringing ITS and operations into the planning process, but there remains room for improvement.

In SMTC's Long-Range Transportation Plan, for example, the Safety and Security chapter features a short discussion of ITS. This section includes an overview of previously-deployed ITS projects and the Region's ITS Architecture. However, the 2011 LRTP fails to detail any deployments planned outside of a short timeframe. Furthermore, the chapter contains numerous references and hyperlinks to 2003's Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan, a document that, while being a valuable resource at the time of publication, has outlived its useful life and requires an update.

With respect to FHWA/FTA Final Rule/Policy 940 and the Region's ITS Architecture, there remains significant room for improvement in the Syracuse region, namely due to the fact that the Region's ITS Architecture has not been updated since 2003. However, in its 2013-14 UPWP, SMTC included a work item "to assist in identifying updates to various components of the New York State Department of Transportation's Regional ITS Architecture." Despite the fact that this task limits SMTC's participation in the Regional ITS Architecture update process to coordination and

facilitation, this represents an important achievement, that points towards continued integration of the regional planning community within the operations community, a concept FHWA has endorsed under its Planning for Operations program. SMTC staff should continue to refer to 23 CFR §450.306 (f), a section of legislation that describes the requirement for the metropolitan transportation planning process to be consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture “to the extent practicable” as an opportunity to engage NYSDOT Region 3 as it continues its update to the Region’s Architecture. Ideally, involvement in the Regional Architecture update would generate the momentum necessary at the MPO level to ensure that the Architecture remains relevant and useful in future TIP programming and plan development. According to FHWA guidance ([plan4operations.dot.gov](http://plan4operations.dot.gov)) “given the authority that most MPOs have in regional transportation decision-making, they are in a unique position to ensure that the ITS architecture is relevant for informing the transportation planning process.”

### **Recommendation**

- SMTC should stay involved with the update to Syracuse’s Regional ITS Architecture and, per 23 CFR §450.306 (f), ensure that the metropolitan planning process remains consistent with the Architecture in the future.
- SMTC should work with its member agencies to update the region’s Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan, originally published in 2003.

## Safety and Security Planning

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### Basic Requirement

*Federal legislation has separated security as a stand-alone element of the planning process (both metropolitan and Statewide planning). The regulations also state that the degree and consideration of security should be based on the scale and complexity of many different local issues.*

*MPOs are required to consider safety and security as two of the eight planning factors. As stated in 23 CFR 450.306, the metropolitan transportation planning process provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.*

### Findings

SMTC is dedicated to integrating safety into the planning process as 'safety' is one of the main goals in SMTC's LRTP. SMTC is a member and active participant of the 'Onondaga County Traffic Safety Advisory Board' and participates in the 'NYSAMPO Safety Working Group' which gathers a statewide group of transportation safety professionals to collaborate and coordinate safety issues that affect New York. Through this working group SMTC also participated in the development of NYSDOT's 2010 Strategic Highway Safety Plan and intends to advance the SHSP through complimentary infrastructure and program based countermeasures<sup>6</sup>.

SMTC informs Onondaga County DOT (OCDOT) and City of Syracuse DPW annually of high accident locations in their respective jurisdictions through the SMTC *Safety Improvement Analysis* report. The data use they for the report originate from NYSDOT's Accident Location Information System (ALIS). The report contains diagrams of each high accident location and provides multi-dimensional analysis of priority intersections based on collision rates. This lays the groundwork for municipalities to complete their own analysis of intersection<sup>7</sup> which assist them in applying for *Highway Safety Improvement Program* (HSIP) funds. SMTC's Safety Improvement Analysis report was highlighted and shared with the FHWA Safety Engineer and NYSDOT Safety Program Bureau Director and received commendation of this practice.

### Security

SMTC participated in the planning activities that developed the *2011 Hazard Mitigation Plan for Onondaga County*. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided the county with a grant to jointly develop this plan with the region and comprehensively plan for emergency events such as flooding, severe storms, severe winter storms, landslides, wildfires taking into account existing infrastructure and resources to address events at hand. Coordination between various entities is high and is reflected in the list of agencies and organization. SMTC staff, SMTC's members

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<sup>6</sup> SMTC 2011 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 8 Safety and Security, p. 8-11,12

<sup>7</sup> SMTC 2011 Long Range Transportation Plan, Chapter 8 Safety and Security, p. 8-9

which includes local municipalities, the NY State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), NY State Thruway Authority (NYSTA), Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA), City of Syracuse Department of Aviation, and Department of Public Works is all engaged in this effort.

### **Commendation**

- SMTC's Safety Improvement Analysis report provides an annual update to their members on available high accident location information with detailed diagrams which can be used in a safety analysis. This report was highlighted and shared with the FHWA Safety Engineer and NYSDOT Safety Program Bureau Director.

## Appendix A: FHWA/FTA Letter



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**New York Division**

September 24, 2013

**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

Ms. Kathleen A. Rapp, SMTC Policy Chair  
Onondaga County Legislator  
Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council  
c/o James D'Agostino, Director  
100 Clinton Square  
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100  
Syracuse, New York 13202

Dear Ms. Kathleen Rapp;

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 November 19-21, 2013. 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 States 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 February 2010.

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 in November will include a field visit and 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.

## Appendix A: FHWA/FTA Letter (Con't)

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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 (LRP)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- TIP/STIP process and product
- Title VI/Environmental Justice
- Public participation
- Consideration of safety and security in the planning process
- Financial planning
- Intelligent Transportation System/Congestion Management Planning (CMP)
- Freight Planning

There will be an opportunity for the public, including key MPO committee members or other local elected officials, and special interest groups, to talk directly with FHWA and FTA staff in an open public meeting concerning their views on the conduct of the transportation planning process in the Syracuse region. This review will also allow the public to participate through a 30 day comment period.

By October 15, 2013, we request that SMTC provide us with a description of the status of recommendations and corrective action from the previous 2010 certification and a description of what SMTC does to incorporate them in the planning process. You may accompany the descriptions with any backup documentation that you would like to provide.

Further details, including a draft agenda and list of questions for the on-site discussion, will follow under separate cover. The Federal contacts for the review are Ms. Maria Chau of FHWA, (518) 431-8878 and Mr. James Goveia of FTA, (212) 668-2325. We look forward to our on-site visit.

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Carr  
Deputy Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
Region II



Jonathan McDade  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
New York Division

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Judith A. Enck, Regional Administrator Environmental Protection Agency, Region II  
Mr. James D'Agostino, Director, SMTC  
Mr. Carl F. Ford, P.E., NYSDOT Region 3 Director  
Mr. Joseph A. Flint, NYSDOT Regional Planning and Program Manager  
Ms. Marty Neveu, NYSDOT Statewide Planning Bureau, 6<sup>th</sup> floor



## Appendix B: Certification On-Site Review Agenda

### **SMTC 2013 Certification Review Schedule**

#### **Tuesday, November 19**

|     |              |   |
|-----|--------------|---|
| PM: | 1:30 to 2:15 | Introductions (Federal Team & SMTC)                                 |
|     | 2:15 to 3:00 | Overview of MPO / Regional Issues (SMTC)                            |
|     | 3:00 to 3:45 | <b><u>Status of Items from 2009 Review</u></b>                      |
|     |              | Transportation Planning Process Topics                              |
|     | 3:45 to 4:45 | <b><u>Public Participation /Title VI /Environmental Justice</u></b> |
|     | 4:45 to 5:00 | Day 1 Wrap Up   |
|     | 7:00 to 8:30 | Open Public Meeting   |

#### **Wednesday, November 20**

|     |                |   |
|-----|----------------|---|
| AM: | 9:00           | Transportation Planning Process (Cont.)         |
|     | 9:00 to 9:45   | <b><u>Long Range Plan</u></b>                   |
|     | 9:45 to 10:30  | <b><u>Unified Planning Work Program</u></b>     |
|     | 10:30 to 11:00 | <b><u>Safety and Security</u></b>               |
|     | 11:00 to 11:30 | <b><u>Intelligent Transportation System</u></b> |
|     | 11:30 to 12:00 | <b><u>Congestion Management Planning</u></b>    |

#### **Wednesday, November 20**

|     |              |  |
|-----|--------------|--|
| PM: | 1:00 to 2:00 | <b><u>Discussion on Transit Activities / Human Services Transportation Plan<br/>Non-motorized (Bicycle/Pedestrian)</u></b> |
|     | 2:00 to 2:45 | <b><u>Transportation Improvement Program</u></b>   |
|     | 2:45 to 3:15 | <b><u>Financial Plans</u></b>  |
|     | 3:45 to 4:00 | <b><u>Discussion on Freight Planning</u></b>   |
|     | 4:00 to 5:00 | Discussions/Interviews (w/non-public agency stakeholders)  |

#### **Thursday, November 21**

|     |               |                           |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------|
| AM: | 8:00 to 9:00  | Conference with MPO staff |
|     | 9:00 to 9:30  | Caucus by Review Team     |
|     | 9:30 to 10:30 | Closeout                  |



## Appendix C: Acronyms/Glossary

Source: *Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues Appendices (Page 61-65)*

### Appendix: Acronyms

#### Acronyms

|        |  |            |  |
|--------|--|------------|--|
| 3-C    | Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive Planning Process         | MPO        | Metropolitan Planning Organization   |
| AASHTO | American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials | MTP        | Metropolitan Transportation Plan   |
| BTS    | Bureau of Transportation Statistics                                | NAA        | Nonattainment Area   |
| CAA    | Clean Air Act as amended in 1990                                   | NAAQS      | National Ambient Air Quality Standards   |
| CE     | Categorical Exclusions   | NADO       | National Association of Development Organizations                                    |
| CMAQ   | Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement program          | NEPA       | National Environmental Policy Act of 1969  |
| CMP    | congestion management process                                      | NHS        | National Highway System  |
| CO     | carbon monoxide  | NOI        | Notice of Intent   |
| COG    | Council of Governments   | NOx        | nitrogen oxide   |
| CPI    | Consumer Price Index   | PL         | Planning Funds   |
| CSS    | context sensitive solutions  | PM         | particulate matter   |
| DEIS   | Draft Environmental Impact Statement                               | PPM        | parts per million  |
| DOT    | Department of Transportation                                       | ROD        | Record of Decision   |
| EA     | Environmental Assessment   | RPO        | Regional Planning Organization   |
| EIS    | Environmental Impact Statement                                     | SAFETEA-LU | Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users |
| EJ     | Environmental Justice  | SDOT       | state DOT  |
| EPA    | Environmental Protection Agency                                    | SHSP       | Strategic Highway Safety Plan  |
| FAA    | Federal Aviation Administration                                    | SIB        | State Infrastructure Bank  |
| FEIS   | Final Environmental Impact Statement                               | SIP        | State Implementation Plan  |
| FHWA   | Federal Highway Administration                                     | SOV        | single-occupancy vehicle   |
| FONSI  | Finding of No Significant Impact                                   | SPR        | State Planning and Research Funds  |
| FTA    | Federal Transit Administration                                     | STIP       | Statewide Transportation Improvement Program   |
| FY     | fiscal year  | STP        | Surface Transportation Program   |
| GIS    | Geographic Information Systems                                     | TCM        | Transportation Control Measure   |
| HC     | hydrocarbons   | TDM        | Transportation Demand Management   |
| HOV    | high-occupancy vehicle   | TEA-21     | Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century                                       |
| I/M    | Inspection and Maintenance   | TIFIA      | Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998                     |
| IHS    | Interstate Highway System  | TIP        | Transportation Improvement Program   |
| IM     | Interstate Maintenance   | TMA        | Transportation Management Area   |
| ISTEA  | Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991           | TMIP       | Travel Model Improvement Program   |
| ITS    | Intelligent Transportation Systems                                 | TOD        | Transit-Oriented Development   |
| LRSTP  | Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan                           | TRB        | Transportation Research Board  |
| L RTP  | Long-Range Transportation Plan                                     | UA         | urbanized area   |
| M&O    | management and operations  | UPW/P      | Unified Planning Work Program  |
|        |  | VOC        | Volatile Organic Compound  |

## Appendix C: Acronyms/Glossary (Con't)

Source: *Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues Appendices (Page 61-65)*

The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues

### Glossary

#### A

##### **Administrative Modification**

A minor revision to a long-range statewide transportation or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP 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**

A revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, that involves major change to a project included in MTP, 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). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for MTPs 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.

##### **Area Sources**

Small stationary and non-transportation pollution sources that are too small and/or numerous to be included as point sources but may collectively contribute significantly to air pollution (e.g., dry cleaners).

##### **Attainment Area**

Any geographic area in which levels of a given criteria air pollutant (e.g., ozone, carbon monoxide, PM10, PM2.5, and nitrogen oxide) meet the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for that pollutant. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a nonattainment area for others. A "maintenance area" (see definition below) is not considered an attainment area for transportation planning purposes.

#### C

##### **Capacity**

A transportation facility's ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles in a given time period.

##### **Capital Program Funds**

Financial assistance from the transit major capital programs of 49 U.S.C. Section 5309. This program enables the Secretary of Transportation to make discretionary capital grants and loans to finance public transportation projects divided among fixed guideway (rail) modernization; construction of new fixed guideway systems and extensions to fixed guideway systems; and replacement, rehabilitation, and purchase of buses and rented equipment, and construction of bus-related facilities.

##### **Carbon Monoxide (CO)**

A colorless, odorless, tasteless gas formed in large part by incomplete combustion of fuel. Human activities (i.e., transportation or industrial processes) are largely the source for CO emissions.

##### **Clean Air Act (CAA)**

The original Clean Air Act was passed in 1963, but the national air pollution control program is actually based on the 1970 revision of the law. The Clean Air Act as amended in 1990 made major changes and contains the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law.

##### **Conformity (Air Quality)**

A CAA (42 U.S.C. 7506[c]) requirement that ensures that federal funding and approval are given to transportation plans, programs and projects that are consistent with the air quality goals established by a State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity, to the purpose of the SIP, means that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The transportation conformity rule (40 CFR part 93) sets forth policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of transportation activities.

##### **Congestion Management Process (CMP)**

A systematic approach required in transportation management areas (TMAs) that provides for effective management and operation, 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. through the use of operational management strategies. Provides information on transporta-

tion system performance and finds alternative ways to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods, to levels that meet state and local needs.

##### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program**

A federal-aid funding program created under ISTEA. Directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards. CMAQ funds generally may not be used for projects that result in the construction of new capacity available to SOVs (single-occupancy vehicles).

#### D

**Department of Transportation (DOT)** When used alone, indicates the U.S. Department of Transportation. In conjunction with a place name, indicates state, city, or county transportation agency (e.g., Illinois DOT, Los Angeles DOT).

#### E

##### **Emissions Budget**

The part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that identifies the allowable emissions levels, mandated by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), for certain pollutants emitted from mobile, stationary, and area sources. The emissions levels are used for meeting emission reduction milestones, attainment, or maintenance demonstrations.

##### **Environmental Justice (EJ)**

Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination. (See also "Title VI.")

##### **Environmental Mitigation Activities**

Strategies, policies, programs, actions, and activities that, over time, will serve to avoid, minimize, or compensate for (by replacing or providing substitute resources) the impacts of or disruption of elements of the human and natural environment associated with the implementation of a long-range statewide transportation plan or MTP. The human and natural environment includes, for example, neighborhoods and communities, homes and businesses, cultural resources, parks and recreation areas, wetlands and water sources, forested and other natural areas, agricultural areas, endangered and threatened species, and the ambient air. The environmental mitigation strategies and activities are intended to be regional in scope, and may not necessarily address potential project-level impacts.

## Appendix C: Acronyms/Glossary (Con't)

Source: *Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues Appendices (Page 61-65)*

### Appendix: Glossary

#### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The federal regulatory agency responsible for administering and enforcing federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and others.

#### **F**

#### **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the federal-aid highway program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges. The FHWA also administers the Federal Lands Highway Program, including survey, design, and construction of forest highway system roads, parkways and park roads, Indian reservation roads, defense access roads, and other Federal Lands roads.

#### **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal funding to transportation authorities, local governments, and states to support a variety of locally planned, constructed, and operated public transportation systems throughout the U.S., including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, streetcars, monorail, passenger ferry boats, inclined railways, and people movers.

#### **Financial Plan**

The documentation required to be included with a MTP and TIP (optional for the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP) that demonstrates the consistency between reasonably available and projected sources of federal, state, local, and private revenues and the costs of implementing the proposed transportation system improvements.

#### **Financial Programming**

A short-term commitment of funds to specific projects identified in both the regional and the statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

#### **Fiscal Constraint**

Making sure that a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation. The MTP, TIP, and STIP must include sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the MTP, TIP, and STIP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained. For the TIP and the STIP, financial constraint/fiscal

constraint applies to each program year. Additionally, projects in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas can be included in the first two years of the TIP and STIP only if funds are "available" or "committed."

#### **Formula Capital Grants**

Federal transit funds for transit operators, allocated by FTA, and used to purchase rolling stock (e.g., buses and trains) as well as design and construct facilities (e.g., shelters, transfer centers, etc.).

#### **G**

#### **Geographic Information System (GIS)**

Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and display geographically referenced information.

#### **H**

#### **High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)**

Vehicles carrying two or more people. The number that constitutes an HOV for the purposes of HOV highway lanes may be designated differently by different transportation agencies.

#### **I**

#### **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**

Electronics, photonics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system. The National ITS architecture is a blueprint for the coordinated development of ITS technologies in the U.S., providing a systems framework to guide the planning and deployment of ITS infrastructure.

#### **Intermodal**

The ability to connect, and connections between, differing modes of transportation.

#### **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)**

Legislative initiative by the U.S. Congress that restructured and authorized federal funding for transportation programs; provided for an increased role for regional planning commissions/MPOs in funding decisions; and required comprehensive regional and statewide long-term transportation plans.

#### **Interstate Highway System (IHS)**

The specially designated system of highways, begun in 1956, which connects the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers of the United States. Also connects the U.S. to internationally significant routes in Canada and Mexico.

#### **L**

#### **Land Use**

Refers to the manner in which portions of land or the structures on them are used (or designated for use in a plan), i.e., commercial, residential, retail, industrial, etc.

#### **Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (LRSTP)**

The official, statewide, multimodal transportation plan covering no less than 20 years developed through the statewide transportation planning processes.

#### **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region's or state's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, this is the official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that is developed, adopted, and updated by the MPO through the metropolitan transportation planning process.

#### **M**

#### **Maintenance Area**

Any geographic region of the United States that the EPA previously designated as a nonattainment area for one or more pollutants pursuant to the CAA Amendments of 1990, and subsequently redesignated as an attainment area subject to the requirement to develop a maintenance plan under section 175A of the CAA, as amended.

#### **Metropolitan Planning Area**

The geographic area determined by agreement between the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the area and the Governor, in which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out.

#### **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The policy board of an organization created and designed to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000, and designated by local officials and the Governor of the state.

#### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that is developed, adopted and updated by the MPO through the metropolitan transportation planning process.

# Appendix C: Acronyms/Glossary (Con't)

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The Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues

## Glossary

### Mode

A specific form of transportation, such as automobile, subway, bus, rail, air, bicycle, or foot.

### N

#### National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Federal standards that set allowable concentrations and exposure limits for various pollutants. The EPA established these standards pursuant to section 109 of the CAA. Air quality standards have been established for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (or smog), carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide.

#### National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

Established requirements that any project using federal funding or requiring federal approval, including transportation projects, examine the effects of proposed and alternative choices on the environment before a federal decision is made.

#### Nonattainment Area (NAA)

A geographic region of the United States that has been designated by the EPA as a nonattainment area under section 107 of the CAA for any pollutants for which an NAAQS exists, meaning that federal air quality standards are not being met.

### O

#### Operational and Management Strategies

Actions and strategies aimed at improving the performance of existing and planned transportation facilities to relieve congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.

#### Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)

Ozone is a colorless gas with a sweet odor. It is a secondary pollutant formed when VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> combine in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is associated with smog or haze conditions. Although the ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone—resulting from human and natural sources—produces an unhealthy environment in which to live.

### P

#### Particulate Matter (PM-10 and PM 2.5)

Particulate matter consists of airborne solid particles and liquid droplets. Particulate matter may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, fumes, etc. These particles are classified as “coarse” if they are smaller than 10 microns, or “fine” if they are smaller than 2.5 microns.

Coarse airborne particles are produced during grinding operations, or from the physical disturbance of dust by natural air turbulence processes, such as wind. Fine particles can be a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, such as diesel and bus engines. Fine particles can easily reach remote lung areas, and their presence in the lungs is linked to serious respiratory ailments such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and aggravated coughing. Exposure to these particles may aggravate other medical conditions such as heart disease and emphysema and may cause premature death. In the environment, particulate matter contributes to diminished visibility and particle deposition (soiling).

#### Performance Measures

Indicators of how well the transportation system is performing with regard to such measures as average speed, reliability of travel, and accident rates. Used as feedback in the decisionmaking process.

#### Planning Funds (PL)

Primary source of funding for metropolitan planning administered by the FHWA.

#### Public Participation / Public Involvement

The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

### R

#### Regional Council of Governments (COG)

Regional councils of governments are multipurpose, multijurisdictional public organizations. Created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs, regional councils bring together participants at multiple levels of government to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. They may also be called planning commissions, development districts, or other names, and may or may not include the structure and functions of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

### S

#### SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU authorized the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

#### Sources (Pollution)

Refers to the origin of air contaminants. Can be point (coming from a defined site) or non-point (coming from many diffuse sources). Stationary sources include relatively large, fixed facilities such as power plants, chemical process industries, and petroleum refineries. Area sources are small, stationary, non-transportation sources that collectively contribute to air pollution, and include such sources as dry cleaners and bakeries, surface coating operations, home furnaces, and crop burning. Mobile sources include on-road vehicles such as cars, trucks, and buses; and off-road sources such as trains, ships, airplanes, boats, lawnmowers, and construction equipment. Common mobile source-related pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), and particulate matter (PM-10 and PM 2.5).

#### Stakeholders

Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Include federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, users of the transportation infrastructure, and the general public.

#### State Implementation Plan (SIP)

The portion (or portions) of the implementation plan (as defined in section 302[q] of the CAA), or most recent revision thereof, which has been approved under section 110 of the CAA, or promulgated or approved under section 301(d) of the CAA and which implements the relevant requirements of the CAA. Although the SIP is produced by the state environmental agency (not the MPO) to monitor, control, maintain, and enforce compliance with the NAAQS, it must also be taken into account in the transportation planning process.

#### State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)

A revolving fund mechanism for financing a wide variety of highway and transit projects through loans and credit enhancement. SIBs are designed to complement traditional federal-aid highway and transit grants by providing states increased flexibility for financing infrastructure investments.



## Appendix C: Acronyms/Glossary (Con't)

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### Appendix: Glossary

**State Planning and Research Funds (SPR)**  
Primary source of funding for statewide long-range planning, administered by the FHWA.

**Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**  
A statewide prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is consistent with the long-range statewide transportation plan (LRSTP), metropolitan transportation plans (MTPs), and transportation improvement plans (TIPs), and is required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

**Surface Transportation Program (STP)**  
Federal-aid highway funding program that supports a broad range of surface transportation capital needs, including many roads, transit, sea and airport access, vanpool, bike, and pedestrian facilities.

#### T

**Telecommuting**  
Employment utilizing electronic communications (by telephone, computer, fax, etc.) with a physical office, either from home or from another site, instead of traveling to and working in the office.

**Title VI**  
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance. (See "Environmental Justice")

**Transportation Control Measure (TCM)**  
Any measure that is specifically identified committed to in the applicable SIP that is either one of the types listed in section 108 of the CAA or any other measure for the purpose of reducing emissions or concentrations of air pollutants from transportation sources by reducing vehicle use or changing traffic flow or congestion conditions. Notwithstanding the above, vehicle technology-based, fuel-based, and maintenance-based measures that control the emissions from vehicles under fixed traffic conditions are not TCMs.

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**  
Programs designed to reduce demand for transportation through various means, such as the use of public transit and of alternative work hours.

**Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)**  
Legislated in 1998, TEA-21 authorized approximately \$217 billion in federal funding for transportation investment for FYs 1998-2003. Used for highway, transit, and other surface transportation programs.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**  
A prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is developed by an MPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), and required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

**Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998 (TIFIA)**  
A federal credit program under which the DOT may provide three forms of credit assistance—secured (direct) loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit—for surface transportation projects of national or regional significance. The fundamental goal is to leverage federal funds by attracting substantial private and non-federal co-investment in critical improvements to the nation's surface transportation system.

**Transportation Management Area (TMA)**  
An urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and designated by the Secretary of Transportation, or any additional area where TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO and designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

**Trust Fund**  
A fund credited with receipts that are held in trust by the government and earmarked by law for use in carrying out specific purposes and programs in accordance with an agreement or a statute.

#### U

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**  
A statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. At a minimum, a UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds.

**Urbanized Area (UA)**  
A geographic area with a population of 50,000 or more, as designated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

#### V

**Visualization Techniques**  
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 other displays to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.