



2021 Public Participation Plan

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

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Adopted June 23, 2021 by the SMTC Policy Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public participation is a requirement of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning process. In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) contained a key provision that required all MPOs to develop and utilize a Public Participation Plan that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on the content of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. With this SAFETEA-LU requirement in place, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) first Public Participation Plan was adopted in 2007. This 2021 Public Participation Plan is an update from the agency's 2016 version.

While public participation is mandated, it is also practical. No one organization has a monopoly on good ideas – they often evolve through an open exchange of information. The SMTC recognizes that the active involvement of the entire community, in addition to the SMTC Policy, Planning, and Executive Committee members, is paramount to good transportation planning and the SMTC promotes the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define the goals, objectives and performance measures of transportation planning activities undertaken by the agency. Public input is valued because it can shape the direction of a study or planning activity, identify new transportation projects that are important to citizens of the area, or suggest new approaches to address issues.

The goals of the SMTC's Public Participation Plan are to:

- Understand the issues and concerns of community members.
- Seek input from the community about opportunities and possible solutions.
- Present ideas and receive feedback.
- Actively encourage involvement by underrepresented groups.
- Build community support for final plans and recommendations.
- Educate the public about the connections between transportation and land use planning.
- Build awareness of the MPO and our role in the community.

The SMTC will achieve these goals by continuing to be create public awareness of the goals, objectives, and processes of various SMTC activities including the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, and other studies, as well as publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the development of these programs and studies. Additionally, we will seek to involve the public in the transportation planning process so that transportation plans, policies, and investments embrace the concerns of the traveling public, rural and urban neighborhoods, economic development interests, and others. Outreach and involvement opportunities will be extended to all affected and interested groups and individuals including those traditionally underrepresented or underserved including minorities,

elderly persons, persons with limited English proficiency, low-income persons, persons with disabilities, and members of tribal governments.

The SMTC is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its metropolitan transportation planning process on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability or economic status as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, all in-person outreach transitioned to all virtual. It is the SMTC's policy at this time that no in-person meetings will occur for the foreseeable future and that outreach/engagement opportunities will take place through a variety of virtual public involvement activities. This policy will be revisited to ensure appropriate safety measures continue and, that outreach continues to reach as many community members as possible through a combination of in-person and/or virtual outreach.



**Get involved,
stay informed**

1. INTRODUCTION

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the Governor of the State of New York, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) has the responsibility to carry out the continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area. This area, shown in Figure 1, consists of Onondaga County, the Towns of Hastings, Schroepel, West Monroe and the urbanized area of Granby in Oswego County, and the Town of Sullivan in Madison County. All MPOs throughout the country are required to include proactive public involvement. While public participation is mandated, it is also practical. No one organization has a monopoly on good ideas – they often evolve through an open exchange of information. The SMTC recognizes that the active involvement of the entire community, in addition to the SMTC Policy, Planning, and Executive Committee members, is paramount to good transportation planning and the SMTC promotes the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define the goals, objectives, and performance measures of transportation planning activities undertaken by the agency. Public input is valued because it can shape the direction of a study or planning activity, identify new transportation projects that are important to citizens of the area, or suggest new approaches to address issues.

The SMTC Committees

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council is comprised of three committees that incorporate all SMTC member agencies. The agencies that comprise the Policy Committee, Planning Committee and Executive Committee are listed below.

These groups provide guidance to the SMTC's studies and public participation process. Committee attention to planning concerns may require detailed technical evaluation by Central Staff, preparation of brief policy issue papers, or identification and debate on the committee floor. Issues may be brought to SMTC's attention at the committee level either through contact with the staff, presentation by individual Committee members or presentations by external groups.

All regularly scheduled committee meetings are open to the public. All committee meeting agendas and other

important announcements are mailed to the Policy Committee chairperson, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Main Office of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), in addition to each member of the relevant committee. Notices of SMTC Committee meetings and associated meeting materials are posted on



the SMTC website, sent via email to our e-newsletter group, and press releases are sent to the local media prior to meeting dates.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee consists of the elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments in the metropolitan area, and meets approximately three times annually. Other meetings are scheduled as needed. The Policy Committee is responsible for the general direction of the Central Staff, including establishment of goals, performance measures and targets, adoption of plans and programs (specifically, the Long Range Transportation Plan [LRTP], Transportation Improvement Program [TIP], and the Unified Planning Work Program [UPWP]), and approval of recommendations. The Policy Committee consists of the following agencies:

- U.S. Department of Transportation
 - Federal Aviation Administration*
 - Federal Highway Administration*
 - Federal Transit Administration*
- New York State
 - Department of Environmental Conservation
 - Department of Transportation
 - Thruway Authority
 - Empire State Development
- Onondaga County
 - Office of the Executive
 - Legislature
 - Planning Board
- Madison County
 - Board of Supervisors*
- Oswego County
 - Legislature*
- City of Syracuse
 - Office of the Mayor
 - Common Council
 - Planning Commission
- CNY Regional Transportation Authority
- CNY Regional Planning and Development Board
- CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
- Onondaga Nation*

* = Non-voting advisory agency

Note: The Onondaga Nation is a member of both the Policy and Planning Committees, and the SMTC acknowledges the added emphasis given to contact with sovereign nations under various federal policies. The SMTC includes the Onondaga Nation in all mailings (including press releases, newsletters, fliers, and public meeting announcements). Current contact lists include several representatives from the Onondaga Nation.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee oversees the technical aspects of the transportation planning process in the Syracuse metropolitan area. The Planning Committee meets approximately three times per year, or as needed. The Planning Committee consists of the following agencies:

- New York State
 - Department of Environmental Conservation
 - Department of Transportation
 - Thruway Authority
 - Empire State Development
 - Public Works or Engineering
 - Planning
- Onondaga County
 - Department of Transportation
 - Legislature
- Madison County
 - Planning*
- Oswego County
 - Community Development, Tourism, and Planning*
- City of Syracuse
 - Administration
- CNY Regional Transportation Authority
- CNY Regional Planning and Development Board
- CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
- Onondaga Nation*

* = Non-voting advisory agency

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides oversight for the day-to-day operations of the SMTC as well as its finances. These meetings are held once a month. The Executive Committee consists of the following agencies:

- CNY Regional Planning & Development Board
- CNY Regional Transportation Authority
- City of Syracuse
- NYS Department of Transportation
- Onondaga County
- Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

Planning Process

Planning activities at all MPOs must consider and integrate the following ten planning factors, based on current federal legislation:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;

- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism. (23 USC 134 (h) (1)).

In addition to these ten planning factors, public participation is a requirement of the MPO planning process. In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) strengthened the role of MPOs in urban transportation planning processes. In 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) built upon ISTEA and required the planning process to include proactive public involvement and input gathering as well as providing complete information and timely public notice to communities, stakeholders, and interested parties.

In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) contained a key provision that required all MPOs to develop and utilize a Public Participation Plan (PPP) that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on the content of the LRTP and the TIP. With this SAFETEA-LU requirement in place, the SMTC's first PPP was adopted in 2007.

In 2012, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) was adopted, and this authorization continued the requirement for the development and utilization of a PPP. The current surface transportation authorization – the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act – was signed by then President Obama on December 4, 2015 and remained in effect through September 30, 2020. The FAST Act was extended for one year to September 30, 2021 and maintains the requirement for an agency-wide PPP. At time of writing, the extended FAST Act remained as the surface transportation authorization for SMTC to follow.

This document replaces our 2016 version and details various opportunities and engagement approaches, including virtual formats, for public participation in the SMTC's planning process. At the SMTC we strive to use "...public engagement techniques to gain critical insights that are difficult or

impossible to discern from quantitative analyses, and to effectively address unique concerns and values.”¹ To accomplish such efforts, it is essential that engagement reach as many people as possible so that different opinions and input are included in the metropolitan transportation planning activities and processes.



¹ National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. *Equity Analysis in Regional Transportation Planning Processes, Volume 1: Guide*.



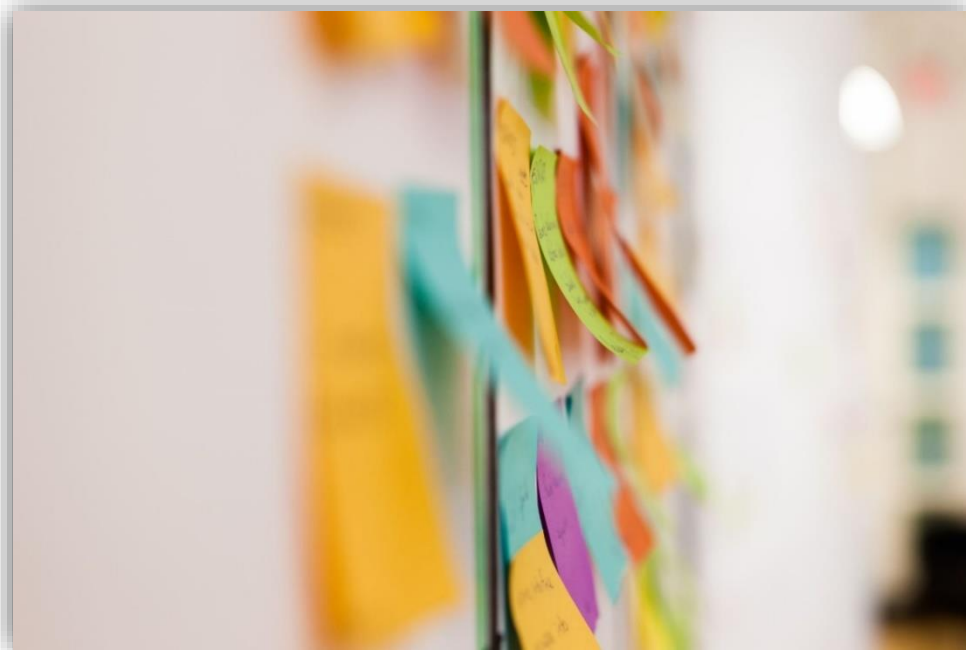
Figure 1: SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)

2. GOALS

The goals of the SMTC's PPP are to:

- Understand the issues and concerns of community members.
- Seek input from the community about opportunities and possible solutions.
- Present ideas and receive feedback.
- Actively encourage involvement by underrepresented groups.
- Build community support for final plans and recommendations.
- Educate the public about the connections between transportation and land use planning.
- Build awareness of the MPO and our role in the community.

The SMTC will achieve these goals by continuing to create public awareness of the goals, objectives, and processes of various SMTC activities including the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and other studies, as well as publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the development of these programs and studies. Additionally, we will seek to involve the public in the transportation planning process so that transportation plans, policies, and investments embrace the concerns of the traveling public, rural and urban neighborhoods, economic development interests, and underrepresented groups such as minorities, elderly persons, persons with LEP, low-income persons, persons with disabilities, members of tribal governments and others.



3. FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

FAST Act

The FAST Act details several specific requirements for public participation in MPO activities. These requirements are found in 23 USC Section 134 (i) and 23 CFR Part 450.316 (see Appendix A) and are summarized below.

- Requirement for a participation plan: MPOs must develop a formal plan in consultation with interested parties. The PPP, and any subsequent revisions, must have a 45-day public comment period prior to the pending approval by the SMTC's Policy Committee. The PPP will be reviewed and revised, as necessary.
- Participation by interested parties: "Interested parties" include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and others. The listed parties will be provided a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process and comment and provide input on the contents of the LRTP and TIP (see Section 4 of this document).
- Seek out and consider needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation systems: To ensure meaningful involvement of persons and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems in the SMTC area, such as minority and low-income households, the elderly population, LEP populations, zero vehicle households, and persons with a disability, the SMTC includes a demographic overview in all planning study reports. Based on the analysis results, including results from the agency's Title VI, LEP, and Environmental Justice documents, community engagement is structured that strives to be inclusive of the various population groups.
- Public participation methods: For studies that require public participation, the FAST Act specifies that the agency shall meet the following conditions "to the maximum extent practicable."
 - hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - employ visualization techniques to describe LRTPs, TIPs and other plans; and
 - make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web.

The SMTC makes every attempt to accommodate all requests for individuals with special needs and has a history of producing high-quality visualization materials in all publications and for all public and agency meetings. The SMTC will continue to produce a variety of visualization materials such as maps, charts, graphs, infographics, photos, renderings, traffic simulations, and other types of visual materials for the LRTP, TIP and other agency-produced materials. The SMTC maintains an agency website that is updated regularly with information about upcoming public participation opportunities, draft documents for public comment, and completed studies (see Section 5 for more information).

- Coordination with statewide transportation planning public involvement: The SMTC's public participation process will be coordinated with statewide public participation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and cost. The SMTC will seek to integrate the public involvement program undertaken as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process with public involvement activities undertaken as part of the statewide transportation planning process.

Other federal requirements

In addition to the requirements set forth in the FAST Act for public participation in all programs and activities associated with the LRTP, TIP, and related SMTC functions, the SMTC also adheres to other separate Federal laws and regulations that apply to public participation such as:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice);
- Executive Order 13166 (Limited English Proficiency); and
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "no person in the United States, shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The SMTC is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its metropolitan transportation planning process on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability or economic status as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. The SMTC has adopted a Title VI Plan that specifies how the agency seeks to ensure participation for traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations. The plan is accessible on the SMTC website in the "Title VI/Nondiscrimination" and "Publications" sections.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 states “Each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.” To understand these needs, SMTC performs an Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis that evaluates population trends and geographic locations of EJ populations (i.e., minority and low-income). Staff relies on demographic and socio-economic data from either the most recent census conducted by the US Census Bureau, or data from the American Community Survey. The analysis is routinely updated to include all completed work products to assure an understanding of impacts to the population groups. Additionally, other variables may be included such as LEP, elderly, and persons with a disability for a broader equity examination.

The most recent Environmental Justice Analysis is available on the SMTC website in the “Title VI/Nondiscrimination” and “Publications” sections.

Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, requires “agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.”² The SMTC staff routinely analyze American Community Survey multi-year datasets on a recurring basis to document changes in the area’s LEP population. LEP concentration maps are created and used in-house. Prior to starting a planning project, the LEP analysis is examined to identify if concentrations of LEP groups, and specific language(s) spoken at home, are present in a study area. Based on the LEP analysis and further input from Study Advisory Committee members, the SMTC staff produces materials to meet identified language needs relying on a federal “safe harbor” provision³. The agency’s overarching LEP Plan, accessible on the SMTC website in the “Title VI/Nondiscrimination” and “Publications” sections, is updated as necessary and describes general and project specific approaches to language assistance.

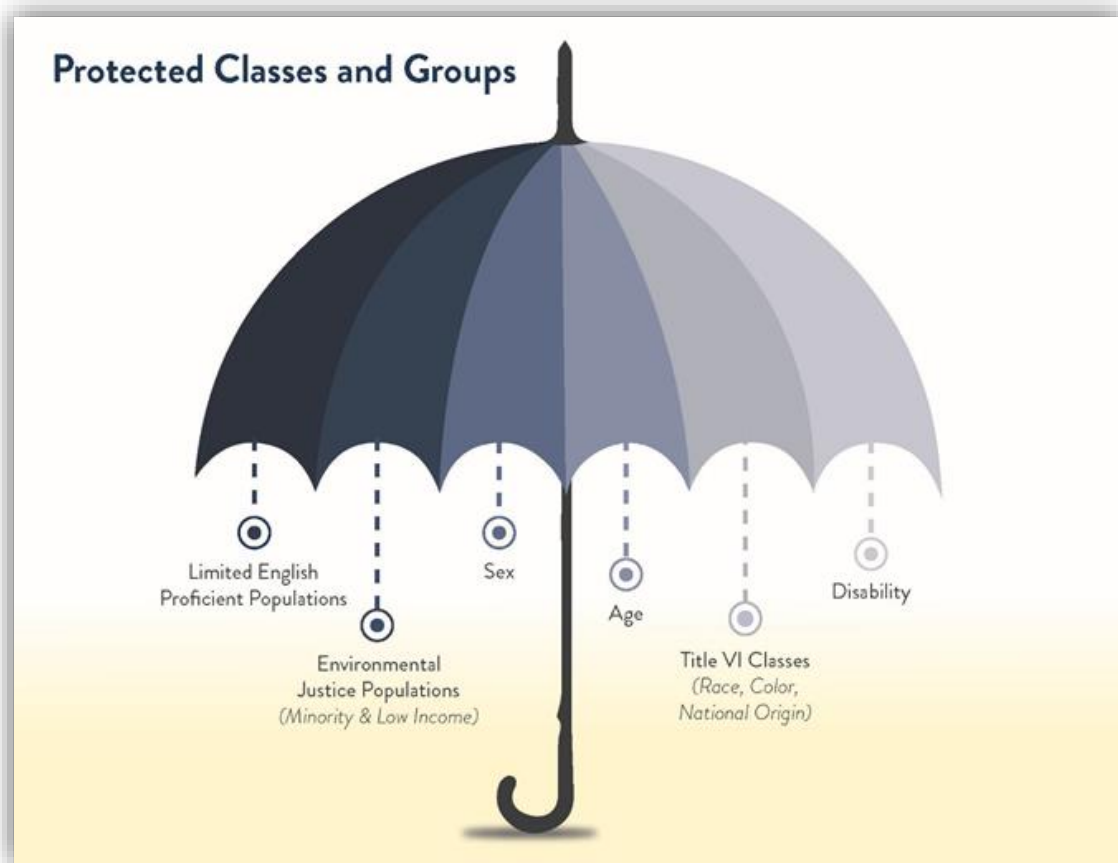
² <http://www.lep.gov/faqs/faqs.html#OneQ2>

³ The USDOT adopted the Department of Justice’s Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a “safe harbor” for recipients regarding translation of written materials for LEP populations. The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if a recipient provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written translation obligations.

The SMTC's website (www.smtcmpo.org) is viewable in multiple languages using Google Translate software. This service is intended to provide a basic understanding of the SMTC's website content in a different language.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services. In accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by SMTC are held in locations that are accessible to persons with mobility limitations. Meeting locations are selected that are near available public transit offered through Centro, the area's public transit service provider. Translation, interpretation services, including American Sign Language (ASL), or other auxiliary services are available upon request with notice to the SMTC at least 10 days prior to a meeting.



Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LRTP, TIP, AND UPWP

The SMTC produces three major documents on a recurring basis:

- The Long Range Transportation Plan: provides a minimum 20-year vision of existing and projected transportation needs, and associated goals/objectives and performance measures, as well as recommended policies and actions to meet these objectives. This assessment is performed in the context of the ten major transportation planning factors previously noted. It provides the framework for guiding federally funded transportation planning and investment decision making in the area. In our area, the Long Range Transportation Plan must be updated at least every five years and can also be amended at any point so long as the horizon year does not change.
- The Transportation Improvement Program: is the multi-year listing of capital and operational transportation projects that are selected and programmed to receive federal transportation funding through the FHWA or the FTA. This program is generally updated every three years and represents the prioritized listing of projects to address the various goals, objectives and performance measures contained in the LRTP.
- The Unified Planning Work Program: is the annual listing of the transportation planning and programming activities that the SMTC seeks to accomplish in support of the LRTP. This includes ongoing activities, such as traffic data collection, as well as short-term individual planning studies (usually 12-18 months) such as corridor studies, parking studies, bicycle and pedestrian focused studies, etc.

The table below summarizes the public comment periods for the three main SMTC documents (LRTP, TIP, and UPWP), as well as for this PPP.

Document	Public Comment Period	Update Schedule
Long Range Transportation Plan	30 calendar days	Updated every five years
LRTP Amendments	30 calendar days	As appropriate
Transportation Improvement Program	30 calendar days	Updated typically every three years

TIP Amendments	10 calendar days (Executive Committee)	As appropriate
	30 calendar days (Planning/Policy Committee)	As appropriate
Unified Planning Work Program	30 calendar days	Updated annually
Public Participation Plan	45 calendar days	As appropriate



Each of the three key documents has specific requirements, as described below, for public participation defined by either federal legislation or SMTC established procedures.

L RTP



The following requirements have been established by the SMTC or federal legislation and will be followed during the creation of a full update or amended LRTP, as applicable. Per 23 CFR 450.316, when developing a full LRTP update, the SMTC will consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are affected by transportation or coordinate its planning process with such planning activities. A specific public involvement plan will be created at the outset of an LRTP update to help guide and identify community engagement and input opportunities.

- Development of the LRTP will include public information sessions and meetings as appropriate. Notification will be provided consistent with Section 7 of this document for all public meetings

held prior to the creation of the draft document.

- Virtual public involvement will be used in conjunction with public information sessions or meetings.
- A draft version of the LRTP will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days and a final public meeting or comparable input opportunity will be held during this review period to present the plan to the public and solicit comments.
 - The public review document will be made available at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system in Syracuse, NY, at the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website.
 - Fliers will be distributed at community meetings, community centers, libraries, or other known community gathering places.
 - A legal notice will be published indicating the commencement of the 30-day public comment period. The legal notice will also indicate how the public can access the document (online and in-person); how comments can be submitted and the final date for submission of comments; and the date, time, and location of the final public meeting (virtual and/or in-person) for the development of the LRTP.
 - A media release to television stations, radio stations, and weekly and daily general circulation newspapers in the region, as well as specialty newspapers on a case-by-

case basis, and on the SMTC website will announce the availability of the draft LRTP for public review and the schedule of the final public meeting.

- SMTC will send an email to all e-newsletter subscribers indicating the availability of the document for review, with a link to the document online. This notice will also be posted to SMTC's currently in use social media channels.
- For a full LRTP update, the draft public review document will be directly distributed to the parties identified in 23 CFR Part 450.316 (a) to the maximum extent practical (See Section 3 of this document).
- Citizens will be able to make comments during the public comment period via email, postal mail, phone or online*.
 - All written public comments submitted to the SMTC will be included in an appendix to the final LRTP as they are received, along with a staff response; verbal comments will be summarized by staff and included in this appendix as well. Comments will be documented without attribution.
 - Public suggestions for modifying the draft LRTP will be considered and may be incorporated into the final document prior to adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee.
 - If the final LRTP differs significantly from the version first made available for public comment and raises new material issues not reasonably foreseen from the public involvement effort, an additional public comment period of 10-days will be provided. Major comments that generate significant revisions between the publicly distributed draft document and final document will be summarized and included as an appendix to the final document.

*Note: Per the SMTC's Social Media Policy, comments on Facebook posts (page or "wall" posts) will be treated as public discussion and *not* as official comments. Staff may or may not engage in discussion via post comments. However, direct messaging through Facebook – which is not publicly visible and is clearly directed at the SMTC – *will* be treated as official written comment and summarized along with other comments received via email, postal mail, and phone.

- The SMTC Planning Committee must recommend approval of a draft LRTP prior to advancement to the SMTC Policy Committee. The SMTC Planning Committee will consider comments received during the public review prior to recommending a final draft for the SMTC Policy Committee consideration.
- Upon adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee, the final LRTP will be made available for public distribution at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system, the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website. Copies will also be provided to interested individuals upon request.

TIP



The TIP will be developed in consultation with the public and affected local, regional, and State agencies/organizations. Per 23 CFR 450.316, when developing the TIP, the SMTC will consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are affected by transportation or coordinate its planning process with such planning activities.

The following requirements have been established by the SMTC and federal legislation and will be followed during the creation of the TIP.

- A “call for projects” letter will be sent directly to all member agencies and appropriate officials of eligible counties, municipalities, and authorities within the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area notifying them of the opportunity to submit project proposals. Additionally, a similar notice will be

posted on the SMTC website and provided to the local newspaper for publication as a Legal Notice.

- Development of the TIP will include public meetings (in-person and/or virtual) as appropriate. Notification will be provided consistent with Section 7 of this document for all public meetings held prior to the creation of the draft document.
- A draft version of the TIP will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30-days and a public meeting or comparable input opportunity (in-person and/or virtual) will be held during this review period to present the program to the public and solicit comments.
 - The public review document will be made available at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system in Syracuse, NY, at the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website.
 - A legal notice will be published indicating the commencement of the 30-day public comment period. The legal notice will also indicate how the public can access the document (online and in-person); how comments can be submitted and the final date for submission of comments; and the date, time, and location of the public meeting for review of the TIP.

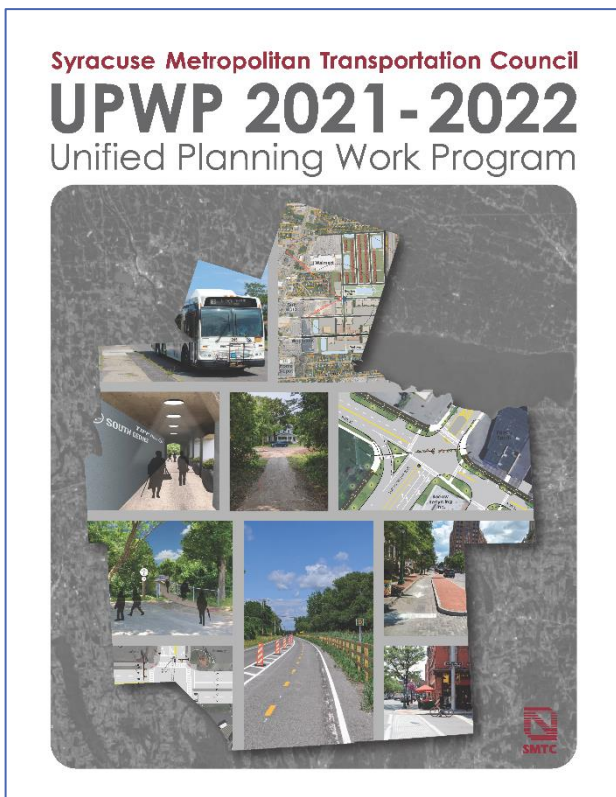
- A media release to television stations, radio stations, and weekly and daily general circulation newspapers in the region, as well as specialty newspapers on a case-by-case basis, and on the SMTC website will also announce the availability of the draft TIP for public review and the schedule of the public meeting.
- SMTC will send an email to all e-newsletter subscribers indicating the availability of the document for review, with a link to the document online. This notice will also be posted to SMTC's Facebook page.
- To the maximum extent practical, the draft public review document will be directly distributed to the parties identified in 23 CFR Part 450.316 (a) (See Section 3 of this document).
- Citizens will be able to make comments during the public comment period via e-mail, postal mail, phone or online.
 - All written public comments submitted to the SMTC will be included in an appendix to the final TIP as they are received, along with a staff response; verbal comments will be summarized by staff and included in this appendix as well.
 - Public suggestions for modifying the draft TIP will be considered and may be incorporated into the final document prior to the adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee.
 - If the final TIP differs significantly from the version first made available for public comment and raises new material issues not reasonably foreseen from the public involvement effort, an additional public comment period of 10-days will be provided. Major comments that generate significant revisions between publicly distributed draft document and final document will be summarized and included as an appendix to the final document.
- The SMTC Planning Committee must recommend approval of a draft TIP prior to advancement to the SMTC Policy Committee. The SMTC Planning Committee will consider comments received during the public review prior to recommending a final draft for the SMTC Policy Committee consideration.
- Upon adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee, the final TIP will be made available for public distribution at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system, the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website. Copies will also be provided to interested individuals upon request.

Amendments to the TIP

Changes to projects on the TIP are oftentimes necessary to account for project cost overages, delays, or schedule advancements. The SMTC makes use of a TIP Project Management Amendment and Administrative Modification Matrix (see Appendix B) to identify various actions that can be accomplished by staff through an administrative modification and, the actions that require an amendment to the adopted TIP. Depending on the type of amendment action, some amendments can be accomplished at the Executive Committee level, while more significant amendments require approval of the Planning and Policy Committees; these specifics are detailed in the matrix.

Amendments do not require a specific public meeting; however, as described in Section 1 of this document, all SMTC committee meetings are open to the public and notice of such meetings are posted on the SMTC website, sent to our e-newsletter group, and provided to local media outlets. In the case of TIP amendments, notice of the amendment is posted to the SMTC website, sent via email to our e-newsletter group, and published as a Legal Notice in the local newspaper depending on the committee. For Executive Committee actions, a notice is provided (website and email) at least 10-days in advance of the meeting. For Planning/Policy Committee actions, notice is provided (website and email) and published as a Legal Notice at least 30-days in advance of a Policy Committee meeting. Notices indicate how to submit comments and/or questions.

UPWP



The following requirements have been established by the SMTC and will be followed during the creation of a new UPWP or amended version, as applicable.

- A “call for projects” letter will be sent directly to all member agencies and appropriate officials of eligible counties, municipalities, and authorities within the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area notifying them of the opportunity to submit proposals for consideration. Additionally, a similar notice will be posted on the SMTC website and provided to the local newspaper for publication as a Legal Notice.
- All prospective UPWP applicants will be required to meet with SMTC staff to discuss their potential project prior to submission of an application. SMTC will schedule an open meeting for this purpose

(date/time will be indicated in the call letter mentioned above). Alternately, applicants may choose to arrange a separate meeting with SMTC staff for this purpose. These meetings could be held in-person or virtually.

- A draft version of the UPWP will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30-days.
 - The public review document will be made available at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system in Syracuse, NY, at the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website.
 - A legal notice will be published indicating the commencement of the 30-day public comment period. The legal notice will also indicate how the public can access the document (online and in-person); how comments can be submitted; and the final date for submission of comments.
- SMTC will send an email to all e-newsletter subscribers indicating the availability of the document for review, with a link to the document online. This notice will also be posted to SMTC's Facebook page.
 - All applicants will be notified of the availability of the public review document.
- Citizens will be able to make comments during the public comment period via e-mail, postal mail, phone or online.
 - All written public comments submitted to the SMTC will be included in an appendix to the final UPWP as they are received, along with a staff response; verbal comments will be summarized by staff and included in this appendix as well.
 - Public suggestions for modifying the draft UPWP will be considered and may be incorporated into the final document prior to the adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee.
- If a proposal is removed from the draft UPWP based on the public comments received, the applicant will be notified of such action.
- The SMTC Planning Committee must recommend approval of a draft UPWP prior to advancement to the SMTC Policy Committee. The SMTC Planning Committee will consider comments received during the public review prior to recommending a final draft for the SMTC Policy Committee consideration.
- Upon adoption by the SMTC Policy Committee, the final UPWP will be made available for public distribution at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library system, the SMTC office, as well as on the SMTC website. Copies will also be provided to interested individuals upon request.

5. GENERAL AND ON-GOING PUBLIC OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT

The SMTC recognizes that public outreach and involvement in the transportation planning process is a continuous endeavor. Although much of our public involvement is focused on required activities such as the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP development (described in Section 4) or with specific studies (described in Section 7), the SMTC encourages the public to get involved and stay informed in the transportation planning process through several on-going activities. These on-going activities generally fall into three categories: online presence, in-person or virtual outreach, and publications.

Online presence

- **Website:** The SMTC website (www.smtcmpo.org) contains a description of the agency; a “what is the SMTC” video; the current LRTP, TIP, and UPWP; completed study reports; announcements of upcoming meetings; numerous static and interactive maps; and other resources. The website provides contact information for the agency and for individual staff. Members of the public can submit a comment on any transportation related issue. The website is viewable in multiple languages using the Google Translate plug-in. Updates and enhancements are routinely made to the overall site so that it remains an informative and useful tool.
- **Social media:** The SMTC maintains an agency Facebook page, which is used to provide general information about transportation planning such as links to relevant news articles from local or national sources and information about specific public involvement opportunities such as upcoming public meeting dates. The SMTC follows the social media policy contained in Appendix C. Also, an agency YouTube channel was created in 2020 where committee meetings are livestreamed. Recordings are posted shortly after the conclusion of a committee meeting. Pre-recorded study-specific videos are also posted.

In-person or virtual outreach

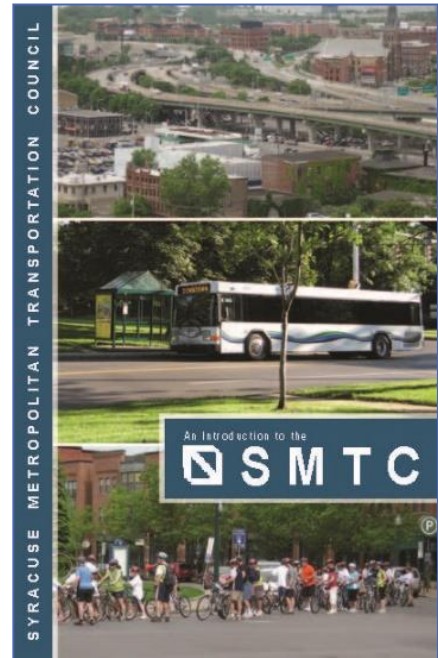
- **Presentations to community groups:** The SMTC receives invitations to speak to community groups (e.g., City of Syracuse Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today, FOCUS Greater Syracuse, Town and Village board meetings, etc.) regarding current or past studies as well as to provide general information about transportation planning. The SMTC honors as many of these requests as is feasible given staff availability.
- **SMTC Forum on Active Transportation:** The SMTC created the Forum on Active Transportation (previously known as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Community Interest Group) in May 2013. The Forum on Active Transportation, re-activated in 2021, serves as a platform

for discussing bicycle and pedestrian issues between public agencies, local organizations, and the public, while promoting bicycling and walking through partnerships, planning projects, events, and education. It does not act as a policy-setting or advocacy group. The SMTC and our member agencies have agreed that hosting an active transportation forum in an informal setting is mutually beneficial to the agency and the public - an opportunity for information exchange. Meetings take place two to four times a year with a speaker on a particular bicycle/pedestrian related topic(s) per meeting. The meetings are facilitated by an SMTC staff member. Each forum meeting is open to all who are interested, and includes representatives from local bicycling and walking groups, the public, and staff from various SMTC member agencies, and is publicized through various means as described in Section 7. This is a recurring, open forum and is not a membership-based group (although for the current virtual meeting platform, pre-registration is required for online meeting security). Beginning in March 2021, forums are held virtually using an online public engagement software and livestreamed on the agency's YouTube channel. Video recordings are posted to YouTube following conclusion of a forum.

- **Jobs Access Task Force:** Transportation is often cited as a barrier to job access, particularly for low-income workers and for people who are unable to drive themselves to work, such as people with disabilities and recent immigrants. The goal of the SMTC's Jobs Access Task Force (JATF), created in 2021, is to reduce the size of this barrier by ensuring that there is a flow of information between transportation providers, business organizations, and workforce development groups. The JATF's work will be informed by a broad-based fact gathering effort to be conducted by SMTC staff that will involve outreach to and communication with a wide array of neighborhood groups and job training organizations. This fact gathering process will precede the convening of the JATF and will provide critical input, in the form of describing and defining gaps in the existing transportation system.

Publications

- **A Citizen’s Guide to Transportation Planning:** This brochure explains the role, purpose, services provided, work products produced, and processes followed by the SMTC. Print copies of the brochure are made available at all SMTC in-person public meetings, and an electronic version can be downloaded from the SMTC website.
- **DIRECTIONS newsletter:** The SMTC produces a newsletter that includes articles regarding transportation planning studies and related activities that is sent to over 4,200 contacts via postal mail and over 500 contacts via email as a PDF, typically two to four times each year. Recent issues of Directions can also be downloaded from the SMTC website.
 - **e-newsletter:** Beginning in January 2021, an e-newsletter was created to provide more timely updates and information for the public. People can sign up to receive the e-newsletter and occasional other notifications through sign-up forms on the SMTC website. The SMTC aims to send the e-newsletter bimonthly, excluding months in which we produce the lengthier hard-copy/PDF newsletter.
- **SMTC Transportation Atlas:** The SMTC created a Transportation Atlas in 2015 that provides a wealth of information about demographics, land use, infrastructure, and mobility conditions in our planning area. Printed reference copies of this document are made available at in-person public meetings and copies are provided to individuals or organizations upon request. The Atlas can also be downloaded from the SMTC website. Updates are anticipated following release of decennial Census data.
- **Study reports:** All final reports from SMTC studies are posted to the agency’s website. A hard copy of many reports is provided to the Central Library and may be provided to branch libraries in or near a study area as well. Hard copies are provided at no cost to the public on request. Prior to SMTC Committee action, draft study reports are routinely posted to the SMTC website for public comment.



Translation of documents

Based on review of data in the SMTC area and shown in the table below, 3.73% of the area’s population over 5 years old would be considered LEP. Spanish is the most prevalent non-English

language spoken at home, followed by Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages, Other Indo-European languages, Chinese, and Other Asian and Pacific Island languages to round out the top 5. Accordingly, as a small agency, the SMTC will provide a Spanish translation of the SMTC’s key planning document executive summaries: LRTP; TIP, and UPWP. Although multiple languages contain over 1,000 LEP speakers as shown in the table, requests for other document translations or languages other than Spanish will be reviewed case-by-case and accommodated to the extent possible.

Table 1: Language Spoken at Home, Syracuse MPA

Language Spoken at Home	LEP Speakers	Total Speakers	Percent of Total Population
MPA Population Over 5 Years (Total)	17,573	471,374	3.73%
Spanish	4,149	14,398	0.88%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	2,501	5,812	0.53%
Other Indo-European languages	2,187	6,666	0.46%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	2,169	4,225	0.46%
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,475	3,160	0.31%
Other and unspecified languages	1,321	4,078	0.28%
Vietnamese	1,287	1,917	0.27%
Arabic	1,201	3,417	0.25%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	519	2,253	0.11%
German or other West Germanic languages	333	1,679	0.07%
Korean	264	710	0.06%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	167	557	0.04%
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey Data, Table C16001: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER.			

6. PROJECT-SPECIFIC PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

All SMTC studies, except those defined as purely “technical analysis” include public involvement. The intensity of the public involvement effort and the methods used vary based on the nature of the study. Therefore, a project-specific Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is created for each study, which sets the framework for the public participation opportunities that will be available throughout the course of the project. This allows the SMTC to craft a public involvement process for each individual project based on the specific needs of that project and encourages continual review and updating of our public involvement methods.

Each individual PIP considers the unique characteristics and potential impacts associated with the geographic focus area of a particular study and draws on the evaluations completed in the agency’s Title VI Plan, LEP Plan, and Environmental Justice Analysis for guidance. The nature of the study, for example, a corridor study versus a bicycle and pedestrian plan, may warrant different approaches to public outreach and involvement.

Individual PIPs may draw on any of the public involvement methods listed below, or additional methods deemed appropriate for that study. The PIP also identifies when in the project process any public meetings will be held or other public engagement methods will be utilized to allow for the exchange of information and input. Members of the public may also provide comment on a study during meetings of the SMTC Executive, Planning and Policy Committees as mentioned in Section 1.

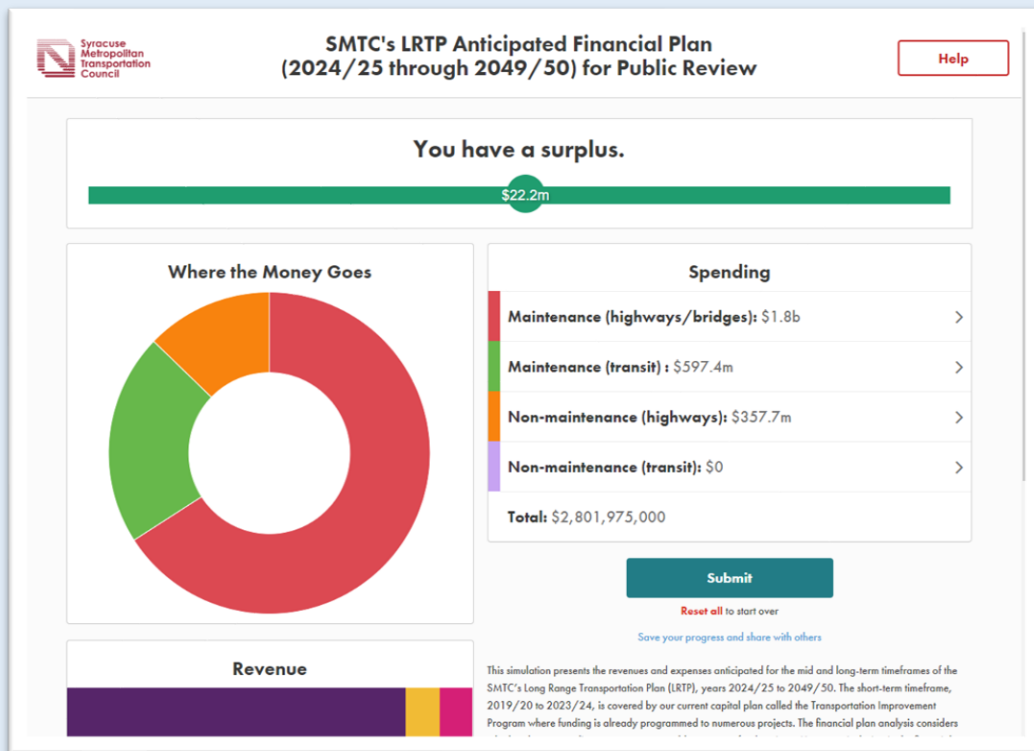
The topic and the extent of the study area will determine the intensity of the public outreach effort. Some public involvement and outreach methods that the SMTC has used in the past are listed below. The SMTC has made use of Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) techniques to reach a broader audience. According to FHWA, VPI tools have several benefits such as:

- **Efficiency and Low Cost.** Virtual tools and platforms can efficiently be made accessible to communities, many at a lower cost than traditional public engagement methods.
- **Accelerated Project Delivery.** Robust public engagement helps identify issues early in the project planning process, which reduces the need to revisit decisions.
- **Communication and Collaboration.** Virtual public involvement can aid in establishing a common vision for transportation and ensure the opinions and needs of the public are understood and considered during transportation planning and project development.
- **Expanded Engagement.** Virtual tools include stakeholders who do not participate in traditional approaches to public involvement. Greater engagement can improve project quality.

It is SMTC’s expectation that VPI tools will continue to be used, perhaps to a greater degree because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as virtual meetings have replaced all in-person meetings since March 2020. Once in-person meetings are allowed and can safely be held, the use of VPI tools will continue.

SMTC’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan 2020 Update VPI example

Virtual public engagement occurred during the public outreach and review period of the SMTC’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan 2020 Update. Prior to sharing all draft document materials on the SMTC website, which included the development and distribution of an LRTP update newsletter, an online financial plan simulation tool was made available where individuals could share their comments on a variety of project types. Through the online tool the public could also adjust anticipated costs and revenues to gain a better understanding of “fiscal constraint” requirements. Additionally, a pre-recorded video of the LRTP update process was posted on the SMTC’s website and YouTube channel. Lastly, an online comment form was added to the LRTP webpage so that individuals could email comments to staff.



All studies will include the following:

- **Public meetings:** Public meetings provide an opportunity for the SMTC to educate the public about a current study and provide opportunities for the public to provide feedback on various aspects of the study. In most cases, the SMTC will host a public meeting specifically for a current study; however, in some cases, attending a standing community group or municipal

meeting may be more effective than hosting a separate public meeting. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis and, to the extent foreseeable, is specified in the PIP. Public meeting procedures are discussed in more detail in Section 8. Meetings could be held in-person or virtually (livestreamed or pre-recorded).

- **Virtual meetings:** Online virtual meetings allow members of the public access to all the information and feedback mechanisms provided at a traditional in-person public meeting. A virtual meeting could consist of a live or pre-recorded video, PDF version of a meeting presentation and/or display boards along with a form for providing feedback or a set of survey questions. Virtual meetings typically supplement a traditional in-person public meeting to provide access to a wider audience or to allow people to review the information at their convenience.
- **Project stakeholders list:** The SMTC creates a project stakeholders list (for postal and/or electronic mailing) for most projects. Involved municipalities are included on this list, as well as any known community organizations that are within the study area or address a topic relevant to the study. The initial list is compiled with input from a project's Study Advisory Committee. The list is continually updated throughout the project. Members of the public may contact the SMTC and request to be added to the stakeholders list. All attendees at a public meeting specific to the project will be added to the stakeholders list if a sign-in form is filled out. The individuals on the stakeholders list will receive all public meeting announcements and may be included in other study-related communications as well. As a policy of the SMTC, personal information gathered through SMTC project participation is not shared with others outside the organization.
- **Attendance at community/municipal meetings:** Upon invitation, SMTC staff will be available to the extent practicable to attend community or municipal meetings and discuss the status of a current study.

Some studies may warrant additional public outreach based on the topic of the study or the specific geographic reach of the study. Additional public outreach methods include:

- **Focus groups:** Focus group meetings may be utilized to deepen the staff's understanding of a specific topic within a study. A focus group consists of representatives of agencies and organizations from within a study area that all have a common interest. The number of focus group meetings will depend on the content and timeframe of the study. Potential focus groups include and are not limited to freight carriers/shippers, business developers, property owners, community leaders, social service agencies, fire and police representatives, and representatives of publicly available transit services.

- **Surveys or questionnaires:** Surveys related to a specific study may be conducted to gather public input from a broad swath of the community and to supplement the public input garnered from public meetings. Generally, these surveys are not conducted to be statistically significant and, therefore, are technically questionnaires. Such questionnaires may be made available online, in paper format, or both. In some cases, questionnaires are distributed as part of a public meeting, but they may also be stand-alone efforts. The SMTC has conducted telephone surveys in the past and may do so in the future depending on the specific needs of a project. Both questionnaires and surveys can add valuable insights to a project. Depending on location of a project, surveys may be translated into other languages.

A few very high-intensity studies (those that address topics of intense community interest or that have a very broad geographic extent) may include the following outreach methods.

- **Project-specific newsletters or fact sheets:** In addition to articles in our agency newsletter, DIRECTIONS, the SMTC may produce a project specific newsletter or fact sheet. The project newsletter may be distributed as an insert with DIRECTIONS or as a stand-alone document, either in hard-copy or electronically. A project-specific newsletter might include a description of the project, updates on progress, schedule for public meetings, and/or opportunities for public comment.
- **Project-specific websites:** In addition to the main agency website, the SMTC may develop sub websites or pages specific to an individual project. A project-specific website or page would provide general information about a project’s planning process, announce upcoming meeting dates, provide updates on the activities and progression of the project, and allow the public to participate, comment, or ask questions via the website.
- **E-mail blasts:** Depending on the potential magnitude and community relevance of a planning project, “eblasts” may be sent out to members of the public. Content would generally be like a project-specific newsletter, but with more focus on driving traffic to the SMTC website and/or a project-specific website.
- **Intercepts:** Intercepts typically consist of display boards, which may be interactive, set up in a highly public location. At these display boards, the passing public will be able to comment, vote, state preferences, etc. The exact nature and location of these boards would be determined by SMTC staff based on the nature of the study and the type of information to distribute and/or receive. Possible locations include destinations such as the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, the Museum of Science and Technology, Destiny USA, Regional Market, and various festivals at Clinton Square. It is also encouraged that boards be made available during peak usage times, such as during holidays or weekends. Intercepts may also be used at community centers or libraries to reach traditionally underrepresented populations.

- **Community Liaison Committee:** A Community Liaison Committee (CLC) may be formed to broaden community outreach for a project and ensure that diverse points of view are represented in the planning process. Groups could include representatives from local community organizations whose missions cover a range of issues including the environment, social justice, local neighborhoods, education, civic engagement, urban design, business and economic development, and housing. Members of a CLC may be asked to comment on materials and methods for public involvement, to convey the concerns of their constituency to the project staff, and to disseminate information about the project to their constituents. A CLC is an advisory body only; it is not a decision-making body.
- **Interactive mapping:** Interactive maps allow "...individuals to share comments or ideas directly on a map they can access from their mobile phones, tablets, or computers."⁴



⁴ Virtual Public Involvement Initiative Mapping Tools Fact Sheet. FHWA

7. PUBLIC MEETING PROCEDURES

In addition to the public meetings specified above as part of the LRTP and TIP development processes, the SMTC may hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, or informational sessions as part of any SMTC study. The number of public meetings will depend on the type, intensity, and length of the study, and will be described in the study's PIP (see Section 6).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, in-person outreach transitioned to all virtual. It is the SMTC's policy at this time that no in-person meetings will occur for the foreseeable future and that outreach/engagement opportunities will take place through a variety of virtual public involvement activities. This policy will be revisited to ensure appropriate safety measures continue and, that outreach continues to reach as many community members as possible.

The SMTC follows specific procedures for conducting public meetings to maximize attendance and involvement by the public and interested groups in the community. All public meetings conducted by the SMTC are open to the public and are subject to the following procedures.

- **In-person meeting locations:** Public meetings will be conducted in locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with the ADA. Meeting announcements will clearly indicate that the meeting location is accessible. To the extent feasible, public meetings will be conducted in locations that are convenient to alternative modes of transportation. Underrepresented and underserved audiences (i.e., minority, elderly, limited English proficient, low-income, persons with disabilities, tribal governments) will also be considered when selecting a meeting location.
- **Committee meetings:** Public notice for SMTC Committee meetings will be made no less than one week prior to a scheduled meeting. Notice of a Committee meeting will be posted on the SMTC website, sent via email to the e-newsletter group, and a media release to television stations, radio stations, and weekly and daily general circulation newspapers in the region, as well as specialty newspapers will be distributed on a case-by-case basis. Meeting materials are posted on the SMTC website no less than one week prior to a scheduled meeting. Virtual committee meeting participation may be re-evaluated in the future.

- **Meeting notice:** Public notice of meetings will be made a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting, if known/scheduled.
 - Notice of public meetings will be posted on the SMTC website and Facebook page, and sent to the SMTC's e-newsletter subscribers list.
 - A media release to television stations, radio stations, and weekly and daily general circulation newspapers in the region, as well as specialty newspapers on a case-by-case basis will also provide notice of a public meeting.
 - To the extent practical, SMTC will reach out to community partners such as neighborhood associations or community advocacy groups for assistance promoting a public meeting. SMTC will provide meeting information to community partners for posting on their website, or for dissemination through social media, postal or electronic mailing list.
 - Mayors/supervisors of cities/towns/villages within a study area will receive direct notice of a public meeting. SMTC will also encourage municipalities to promote the meeting through their website or social media accounts and will provide text or fliers for that purpose.
 - SMTC may also distribute fliers at community meetings or post fliers at locations within a study area (particularly libraries, community centers, or other known community gathering places).
 - SMTC will develop and maintain a list of interested stakeholders for each study, and a meeting notice will be sent directly to these individuals through postal and/or electronic mail.
 - Bus placards may be developed on a case-by-case basis and delivered to Centro staff for posting on their buses.
 - When appropriate, the SMTC may consider paid print, online, or radio advertisements to provide additional notice of a public meeting.

- **Accommodations:** The SMTC will make every effort to respond to those who need a sign language interpreter, assistive listening system, or any other accommodations, such as language interpretation and translation, to facilitate the public's participation in the transportation planning process. Meeting announcements will clearly indicate that assistance may be requested by contacting the SMTC at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The accommodations text may be translated into another language and included on a meeting announcement/flyer depending on the location of a given project.

- **Comments:** For study-specific public outreach efforts, comments will be accepted virtually, verbally and in writing. Verbal comments received at a public meeting or via phone following a public meeting will be summarized and documented in a meeting summary. Written

comments (virtual or in-person) received at a public meeting or following a public meeting (either through postal or electronic mail) will be included verbatim in a meeting summary, along with staff response. During official Committee meetings, time will be allotted on the agenda for individuals or groups to convey their comments.

- **Distribution of meeting materials:** Depending on the type of meeting held, the SMTC may provide meeting materials on the agency’s website following an in-person meeting or provide copies to individuals upon request. Materials may include a copy of presentation slides used by staff, display boards, or handouts that were distributed at the meeting. Additionally, official Committee meetings that are held virtually are recorded and posted to the SMTC’s YouTube channel. Study-specific presentations may also be posted to the YouTube channel as well.
- **Meeting summary:** SMTC will produce a summary of the public meeting indicating, briefly, the format and content of the meeting. Public comments will be included in the meeting summary as noted above, and the public meeting summary will be included in an appendix to the final study documentation.



8. EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

This PPP outlines the many avenues that the SMTC seeks to involve the public in the transportation planning process. As previously mentioned, the SMTC has transitioned to utilizing more virtual public involvement approaches because of COVID-19. The SMTC will regularly review the effectiveness of the traditional and virtual public participation procedures and strategies to ensure a full and open participation process and update the PPP accordingly.

Several tools may be used to determine the effectiveness of the SMTC's public outreach and to inform any future revisions to this plan:

- **Quarterly website activity:** Tracks activity on the SMTC's website or project specific websites/pages, including the number of unique visits.
- **Quarterly Facebook page updates:** Tracks activity on the SMTC's Facebook page such as number of updates and "Likes."
- **Contact lists:** Number of contacts on SMTC's e-mail and mailing lists that receive newsletters (print and/or e-newsletter), public meeting notices and other SMTC related materials.
- **Comments received through public meetings, comment cards, or website:** As mentioned above, the SMTC encourages the public to provide comments, questions, and suggestions through several methods.
- **Post-meeting evaluation forms:** Provides additional opportunity to gather feedback on planning study or activity.

The SMTC and its member agencies recognize the value of public input in the transportation planning process. The SMTC believes that the traditional and virtual public involvement procedures outlined in this PPP, and those not currently listed, provide the opportunity for the public to develop greater awareness of and active involvement in the transportation planning process. Over the past decade the SMTC has used, and continues to use, several outreach techniques from this document that have proven effective at getting community members engaged. Face-to-face interaction has been the most beneficial; however, it's apparent that interest levels can vary considerably depending on a study or topic. In the future, the SMTC may consider creating a survey to gain more insight into the public's preferences for approaches to public participation.

This PPP is a reference for the public, the SMTC staff, and the SMTC member agencies. The procedures outlined in the PPP guide SMTC in involving the public; help ensure that citizens have access to an open, fair, transparent, and equitable process; and ensure that transportation plans, policies, and investments consider the environmental, economic, and social concerns of the public.

Appendix A - 23 CFR 450.316 Federal Regulations

23 CFR 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

- (1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
 - (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
 - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises

new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

- (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
- (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinated its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
- (2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
- (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.

- (c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

Appendix B – TIP Project Management Procedures

TIP Project Management Amendment & Administrative Modification Matrix

Description	Amendment Process	Administrative Modification
	TIP Amendment Required	
Adding/Deleting Project		
Project deleted in entirety	Planning/Policy	
New project added over \$500,000	Planning/Policy	
New project added under \$500,000	Executive	
Changes to Scope		
Project type/function is changed	Executive	
Projects are combined		✓
Project phase is added less than \$500,000 (i.e., New ROW Phase)		✓
New CMAQ or STP-Urban phase added greater than or equal to \$250,000 and less than \$500,000	Executive	
New CMAQ or STP-Urban phase added less than \$250,000		✓
Project phase is added between \$500,000 and less than \$10,000,000	Executive	
Project phase is added greater than or equal to \$10,000,000	Planning/Policy	
Project phase is deleted		✓
Project limits increase		✓
Project limits decrease		✓

Changes to Schedule		
Phase is delayed 1 or more fiscal years	Executive	
Phase is advanced 1 or more fiscal years from Year 5	Executive	
Phase is advanced 1 or more fiscal years from Year 2, 3 or 4		✓
Changes in Costs		
Cumulative cost of a phase increases (Less than an increase of \$500,000)		✓
Cumulative cost of a CMAQ or STP-Urban phase increases (greater than or equal to \$250,000 and less than \$500,000)	Executive	
Cumulative cost of a CMAQ or STP-Urban phase increases (Less than \$250,000)		✓
Cumulative cost of a phase increases (between \$500,000 and less than \$10,000,000)	Executive	
Cumulative cost of a phase increases (greater than or equal to \$10,000,000)	Planning/Policy	
Cost of a phase decreases		✓
Changes in Funding Source		
Funding source for a phase changes in part or completely (To 1 or more different funding sources)		✓

Note:

Funding thresholds are in federal dollars, not total project cost. All amendments utilizing traditional TIP federal funds (i.e., “planning targets”) within the SMTC Metropolitan Planning Area require compensating offsets. External funding from such items as a statewide solicitation or Congressional award does not.

Appendix C – Social Media Policy

SMTC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

Many people communicate and obtain information online, including the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The SMTC seeks to use these social media platforms to reach a broader audience and gather feedback from the public. This policy establishes guidelines for the SMTC's use of these social media platforms and shall be posted on all websites and social media platforms maintained by the SMTC as notification to users.

OVERVIEW

The SMTC's goal in using social media platforms is to provide relevant, timely, and informative information to the public. Social media platforms that may be used are (but not limited to): Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr and blogs. Where appropriate, content posted to the SMTC social media platforms will also be available on websites maintained by the SMTC. Additionally, content posted to the SMTC social media platforms should contain links directing users back to the SMTC-maintained websites for in-depth information, forms, documents, mechanisms to submit official comment, or any other services necessary.

Any content posted to a social media platform will be timely, informative and related to the tasks, programs, products, or events of the SMTC. There may be instances where the sharing of articles, websites, or online information produced by outside sources is appropriate. This could include newspaper articles, municipal websites, other transportation and/or planning agencies or other informative, yet relevant, content from trusted sources. The SMTC may share these items as "information only" and does not endorse, support or have responsibility for the accuracy for these items.

The use of social media platforms will follow all federal, state, and SMTC related laws and/or policies regarding the sharing of information, collection of data, and archiving. The SMTC posts to social media platforms will be the responsibility of the staff person(s) assigned by the SMTC Director. The SMTC Director will make a final determination on any item that may be questionable as related to this policy. The SMTC Director also reserves the right to disable the social media platforms at any time if it is determined they are not fulfilling the SMTC's goals and objectives as detailed herein.

COMMENTS

Social media platforms provide a variety of ways to communicate with the SMTC and fellow users of the platform. Some of these communication methods such as @replies on Twitter or wall postings on Facebook are publicly visible and it is not directly stated whether the comment is intended for the SMTC or fellow users of the platform. As such, the SMTC will treat these social media communication methods as discussion, not official comments directed at the SMTC. Discussions on social media platforms may be summarized and shared with the SMTC's Policy Committee, Planning Committee, or Study Advisory Committees as appropriate.

Other communication methods provided by social media platforms such as direct messages on Flickr and Facebook are not publicly visible and are received by the SMTC via their designated contact email. Comments received via these methods are clearly directed to the SMTC and will be treated as official comments. Comments received through social media platforms via direct messages may be shared,

either verbatim or in a summarized form, with the SMTC's Policy Committee, Planning Committee or Study Advisory Committees as appropriate.

User comments that contain any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed and will be removed at the discretion of the SMTC:

1. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures or that are politically biased;
2. Profane language or content;
3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
4. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
5. Solicitations of commerce;
6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the SMTC, the public or public systems; or
8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

If available, the SMTC may also use a social media's 'blocking' feature for repeat offenders of the content guidelines specified above.

The SMTC reserves the right to reply or not reply to any and all comments posted on social media platforms. Replies from the SMTC should generally be used to correct erroneous information about SMTC projects that may be posted by other users. Replies from the SMTC should not be used to debate issues or attempt to sway the opinion of other users.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The SMTC will not collect or store the personal information (name, e-mail, location, gender, etc.) of social media users except when required by law. Social media sites may have their own privacy policies that may differ from the SMTC's.

Appendix D – Acronyms

ADA – American’s with Disabilities Act

ASL – American Sign Language

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CLC – Community Liaison Committee

EJ – Environmental Justice

FAST – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act

LEP – Limited English Proficiency

LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan

MAP-21 – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century

MPA – Metropolitan Planning Area

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

NYS DOT – New York State Department of Transportation

PIP – Public Involvement Plan

PPP – Public Participation Plan

SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users

SMTC – Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program

USC – United States Code

Appendix E – Public Outreach and Comments



Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

100 Clinton Square
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100
Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: (315) 422-5716
Fax: (315) 422-7753

April 8, 2021

Dear Interested Party:

I am writing to you as a representative of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), the New York State designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Syracuse area. Federal legislation requires the SMTC to develop a Public Participation Plan that defines a process for providing individuals, interested parties and others with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. To meet the participation plan requirements, the SMTC is completing outreach to solicit comments on our third, and latest participation plan. The SMTC recognizes that the active involvement of the entire community is paramount to good transportation planning. Public comments are valued because they can shape the direction of a particular transportation study or planning activity and may help to identify new transportation projects that are important to individuals of the area.

The SMTC provides the forum for cooperative decision making in the development of transportation plans, programs and recommendations. The SMTC's committees are comprised of elected and appointed officials, representing local, state and federal governments, agencies, and organizations having interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming. The SMTC also provides an opportunity for individuals to participate in the discussion of transportation issues and plans.

The draft 2021 Public Participation Plan is available on the "Public Participation Plan" page of the SMTC website for your review: <https://smtcmpo.org/public-participation/ppp/>. To discuss the plan's content with interested parties and agencies, a virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. If interested, please contact Mario Colone at mcolone@smtcmpo.org for meeting connection details. Should you have any comments on the draft document, please send them to mcolone@smtcmpo.org by 4:00 p.m., April 28, 2021.

Your comments and thoughts on the plan's content are valued before a full draft is released for public comment in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James D'Agostino".

James D'Agostino
Director

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

Office of the Mayor • Syracuse Common Council • Syracuse Planning Commission • CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity • New York State Department of Transportation • New York State Department of Environmental Conservation • New York State Department of Economic Development • New York State Thruway Authority • Office of the County Executive • Onondaga County Legislature • Onondaga County Planning Board • Central New York Regional Transportation Authority • Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board • Federal Transit Administration • Federal Highway Administration



Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

100 Clinton Square
126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100
Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: (315) 422-5716
Fax: (315) 422-7753
www.smtcmo.org

NOTICE OF 45-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW/COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all of Onondaga County and a small portion of Oswego and Madison Counties, has begun the official 45-day public comment/review period for its draft **Public Participation Plan**. The participation plan details approaches and procedures the SMTC will use to engage with the public during the development of transportation plans and studies.

Engaging the public in the planning process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and it is required by state and federal laws. Such legislation underscores the need for public involvement, calling on MPOs such as the SMTC to provide individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in transportation plans and programs.

The public review/comment period began on April 29, 2021. **Comments received on or before June 12, 2021, will be considered for the final document**, to be presented to the SMTC Policy Committee in June 2021.

For those interested in reviewing the draft Public Participation Plan, a copy of the document is available via the SMTC's website at <https://smtcmo.org/news/> and at the Central Library of the Onondaga County Public Library System in downtown Syracuse. All comments shall be submitted in writing to mcolone@smtcmo.org, or via postal mail to: SMTC, Attn: Mario Colone, SMTC, 100 Clinton Square, 126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100, Syracuse, NY 13202.

The public comment period is open through June 12, 2021.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

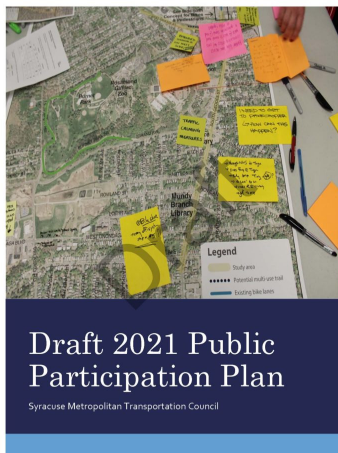
Office of the Mayor • Syracuse Common Council • Syracuse Planning Commission • CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity • New York State Department of Transportation • New York State Department of Environmental Conservation • New York State Department of Economic Development • New York State Thruway Authority • Office of the County Executive • Onondaga County Legislature • Onondaga County Planning Board • Central New York Regional Transportation Authority • Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board • Federal Transit Administration • Federal Highway Administration

Mario Colone

From: SMTC <contactus@smtcmpo.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2021 2:35 PM
To: Mario Colone
Subject: SMTC's draft Public Participation Plan now available for review/comment

NOTE: This message came from outside of the organization. Use caution with all attachments and links in this message.

[View this email in your browser](#)



45-day public review/comment period for the SMTC's Public Participation Plan

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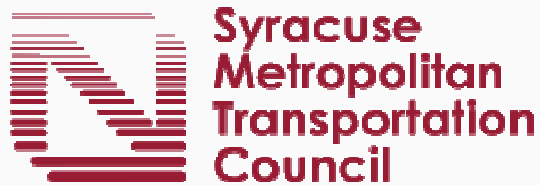
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The public comment period is open through June 12, 2021.

[Click here to view the draft Plan](#)



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Our mailing address is:

126 N. Salina Street
Suite 100
Syracuse, NY 13202

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

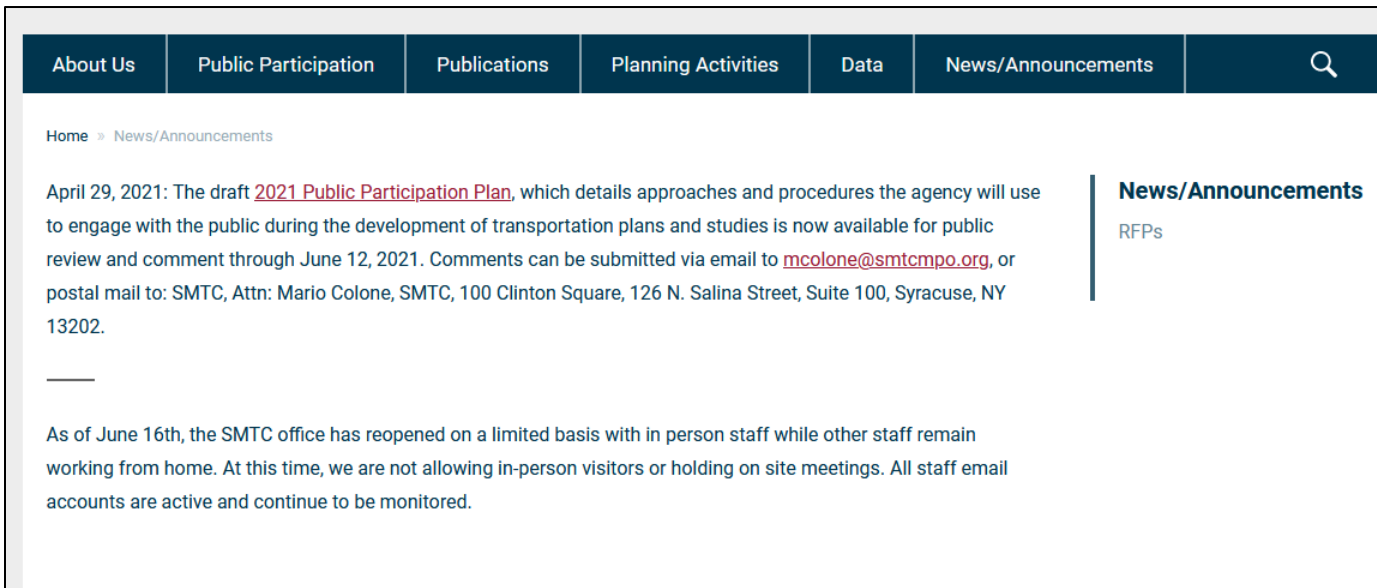
SMTC website posting

Details of the *2021 Public Participation Plan* public review and comment period were posted to the SMTC website on the PPP and News/Announcements pages.

The screenshot shows the website's header with navigation links: Employment, Glossary, Title VI/Nondiscrimination, Contact Us, and Subscribe to Email Updates. A language selection dropdown and social media icons for Facebook and YouTube are also present. The main header features the SMTC logo and the text "Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council" with the tagline "The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Syracuse area." Below this is a dark navigation bar with links for About Us, Public Participation, Publications, Planning Activities, Data, and News/Announcements, along with a search icon. The breadcrumb trail reads "Home > Public Participation > PPP". The main content area has a heading "Public Participation Plan" and a paragraph explaining the SMTC's public participation process. A highlighted section titled "Draft 2021 Public Participation Plan" contains text about the current update, including a deadline of June 12, 2021, and contact information for Mario Colone. To the right, a sidebar lists "Public Participation" sub-items: Meetings, PPP, Surveys, and Title VI/Nondiscrimination. A thumbnail image of the "Public Participation Plan" document is shown, with a link below it: "Read SMTC's 2016 Public Participation Plan". At the bottom left, there is a small image of a map with sticky notes.

Partial screenshot of Public Participation Plan page posting

SMTC website posting



The screenshot shows a website header with navigation tabs: About Us, Public Participation, Publications, Planning Activities, Data, and News/Announcements. A search icon is in the top right. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home » News/Announcements'. The main content area features a news item dated April 29, 2021, regarding a draft '2021 Public Participation Plan'. The text describes the plan's availability for public review and provides contact information for Mario Colone. A horizontal line separates this from a second paragraph about office operations as of June 16th. On the right side, a vertical sidebar contains the heading 'News/Announcements' and the text 'RFPs'.

About Us	Public Participation	Publications	Planning Activities	Data	News/Announcements	Q
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Home » News/Announcements

April 29, 2021: The draft [2021 Public Participation Plan](#), which details approaches and procedures the agency will use to engage with the public during the development of transportation plans and studies is now available for public review and comment through June 12, 2021. Comments can be submitted via email to mcolone@smtcmpo.org, or postal mail to: SMTC, Attn: Mario Colone, SMTC, 100 Clinton Square, 126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100, Syracuse, NY 13202.

As of June 16th, the SMTC office has reopened on a limited basis with in person staff while other staff remain working from home. At this time, we are not allowing in-person visitors or holding on site meetings. All staff email accounts are active and continue to be monitored.

News/Announcements
RFPs

Screenshot of web page posting

To: Mario Colone
From: Charlie [REDACTED]
Date: 4.18.2021
Subj: Public Participation Plan

I have read over your Public Participation Plan document and found it to be as detailed and specific as the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan 2020 Update document. Thank you for including me in your request for comments about the PPP. The plan appears to have covered many of the avenues needed to connect with and initiate a dialogue with the public. I agree that input or feedback from the citizens, especially those affected, is critical to the success of the 2050 LRTP.

Based on my personal conversations with friends and acquaintances there is a lack of understanding on their part of what it is that SMTC does exactly. Some have heard of it but none of them know what SMTC stands for or what it has accomplished to date. This is odd since these same individuals are usually well informed and aware of whats happening in CNY.

One example of what I am talking about is the lack of consistent and timely information regarding the Bike/Run/Walk trails planned for CNY. The segment Onondaga Lake as the wheel and connecting paths in all directions as spokes to and away from the lake. SMTC clearly knows what the complete Bike/Run/Walk proposal will look like for all stages yet those friends and acquaintances that I talk to are unaware of any part of the SMTC's planning picture.

In order for your spelled out avenues of SMTC - Public communication to be effective and productive, the citizens need to be brought up to speed via that media listed in the PPP. There may be other avenues for information dissemination such as SU, SUNY, OCC and LeMoyne that would provide participation from a younger group of citizens.

Of course this is my opinion and I could be off base but I mention it here in case it might be useful. My perception is that the general public is not clear on the SMTC and what it has done or what it plans to do. Maybe the general public is not that interested. Maybe its because I Bike/Run/Walk that I pay attention to SMTC's information releases. I have followed SMTC for several years and attended meetings until COVID-19. Your work is outstanding and again thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Regards:

Charlie [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Syracuse, New York 13206

Mobile: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

SMTC responses sent via email on 4/20/21

Charlie,

Thank you so much for taking the time to provide comments; they're very much appreciated. One of the goals with this 2021 participation plan we hope to achieve is to build awareness, and role of, our agency in the community. Additional outreach to the local colleges and universities, in addition to school districts is something we'll certainly pursue.

Hi Charlie –

I just wanted add a few things to what Mario had said. We have started sending a bimonthly e-newsletter and trying to build up our email list. You can sign-up using the form on website: <https://smtcmpo.org/about-us/contact/> (scroll down) Please encourage others to do so as well! (We tried to transfer most of our existing contacts to our new mail service provider, but technology always has some hiccups, so I apologize if you have sign-up again even if you have received our emails in the past.)

Also, you can follow us on Facebook if you don't already: <https://www.facebook.com/Syracuse-Metropolitan-Transportation-Council-1577123995856711>

Through the e-newsletters and more frequent use of our social media, we are trying to provide more on-going information about what we do. We even have a short video presentation now on our YouTube channel: www.smtcmpo.org/watch

We have also started a Forum on Active Transportation (FOAT), which we intend to hold quarterly. Our first one was in March. More info is on our website: <https://smtcmpo.org/planning-activities/bicycle-pedestrian/active-transportation-forum/> (You can also watch the recording of the March FOAT on our YouTube channel.) We are aiming for June for the next FOAT meeting. If you sign-up for our email list (above), you'll receive notification about registering for the next FOAT meeting.

And finally, to reiterate what Mario already said, we really appreciate your input!

Please feel free to reach-out if you have any other questions or comments.

Received via email on 4/29/21

Good morning (or afternoon) Mr. Colone,

I'm paranoid; I don't click on links in e-mails.

My suggestion: include your website address (www.smtcmpo.org) in the text of your outgoing e-mails to the public. I did a text search on the e-mail dated April 29, 2021 at 2:34 PM, and your web address did NOT appear in it. (It's possible that I did something wrong!) There were plenty of links to click on, but I don't do that. I'll either type the web address into my browser or, more likely, copy and paste it. I typed the name of your organization into a search engine (NOT Google, I'm PARANOID!) to find your web address. It's easy to argue that paranoid people would do that anyway, so why bother to include your website address? For me, it would have been quicker to copy and paste (although not 100% foolproof) than to look it up.

I hope that you see this as constructive criticism.

Thanks,

--Ken

SMTC response sent via email on 5/3/21

Thank you for the comment. The template we use for e-newsletters and notifications to email contacts/recipients has been updated to include our agency's web address. All future e-newsletter and notification messages will have the address listed at the bottom of the template. Thank you again for taking the time to provide your comment.

Received via email on 5/4/21

Hello Mario,

I found your contact info on the SMTC website and just wanted to pass along a tool I ran across in my own work that I thought may be relevant to your I-81 work: <https://cocensus.io/>

As a citizen of Syracuse, I've been interested in the progress being made around I-81 and the creation of the connective corridor. As a civil servant working in the Office of Accountability Performance and Innovation with the City of Syracuse, I am interested in representative, nuanced, qualitative data from folks who will be impacted by changes made to I-81.

In skimming the Public Participation Plan, it seemed that the plan was thorough in addressing minimum local and national requirements for community feedback, but I would personally love to see the plan go beyond the minimum. I thought you all may benefit from additional resources that would encourage and hold accountable equitable participation. Just figured a cheap partner and resource like cocensus might be worth considering.

Thanks for doing hard and good work that I get to benefit from every day, Autumn

SMTC response sent via email on 6/7/21

Autumn,

Sorry for the delayed reply. We're always open to different engagement approaches and techniques as we continue the metropolitan transportation planning process in our area. Has the Office of Accountability Performance and Innovation partnered with cocensus?

Thank you for taking the time to go through the Public Participation Plan and providing comment.

Received via email on 5/16/21 (copy of message also received in postal mail on 5/18/21)

Mario:

The SMTC Draft 2021 PPP is very informative. I learned that "All MPOs throughout the Country are required to include proactive public involvement." I discovered the role of the SMTC Policy Committee, who comprises it, and its responsibility for establishing goals, measuring performance and adopting the LRTP, TIP, & UPWP.

I now understand that, per TIP, SMTC is available to "consult" with those "agencies and officials responsible" for transportation and development planning, but they are not *required* to seek, nor act upon, SMTC expertise.

1. - I would suggest that more collaboration with SMTC be *required of elected officials* when considering projects in their jurisdictions. Taxpayer-supported expertise - like SMTC & SOCPA- should be consulted by elected officials who, though they have clear agendas, likely need professional input to better site projects, especially those of the magnitude of the I-81 Replacement, the Amazon Warehouse in Town of Clay or the proposed Tech Garden site in Cicero.

SMTCs Planning Committee's role is to provide technical oversight, consideration and integration of federal legislation: ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, & FAST Act. The intent of these federal laws is to ensure PPP -Public Engagement - in metropolitan transportation planning & processes.

It appears that, in practice, the structure of SMTC's Planning Committee allows FAST's "interested parties" who must be "involved" in particular metropolitan transportation processes & projects to be identified solely by the elected officials and/or facilitating County agencies who are siting a project. Ex: Building the World's Second Largest Amazon Warehouse in the Town of Clay was expedited by OCIDA, to whom the SEQR process was delegated by Town of Clay officials. Apparently, the federally required input from those impacted by its traffic in adjacent Town of Salina and Village of Liverpool was circumvented by deeming them not "Interested" or "involved", since the Warehouse was entirely sited in the Town of Clay. This opacity - even of the project's Traffic Plan- was neither necessary nor good planning, but an abuse of "Home Rule".

2. - I would suggest that the size, uniqueness & peripherall/regional impact of some projects - like the Amazon Warehouse - should *require both* SMTCs technical collaboration and *require* more transparent determination of the "Interested" parties who will be affected by the project. Eliminating this process, though a common practice and urged by developers, rarely results in the common good. The wisdom and agendas of the elected officials or agencies who site them in their jurisdictions should not defer this collaboration.

SMTC Draft 2021 states, in both #3-Federal Requirements, and #4 - Goals, that both Planning and Federal Environmental Justice criteria require transportation plans, policies & investments to specifically address impacts upon elderly and disabled. The structural gaps in SMTCs role discussed above have compromised this federal mandate. Neither plan nor process is evident for the Thruway to mitigate the noise and pollution which will increase exponentially for Salina and the Village near Thruway Exit 38 with Amazon Warehouse truck volumes. Some residential properties lay within 50 feet of the NYS Thruway between Exits 38 & 37.

- Springmoor is a senior community in the Village of Liverpool whose 55+ residents include four on oxygen treatment. Some of its buildings lie within 50 feet of the Thruway near Exit 38.

- Homes on Seventh Street in the Town of Salina are also within 50 feet of the same segment of the Thruway. In 2019, a tractor trailer crashed over the Thruway guard rail and barely missed landing on Seventh Street.

3. -I would suggest that, since the Thruway is represented on the SMTC Planning Committee, its input should be part of any project for which increased volumes of access to it are essential. The Amazon Warehouse Traffic Plan was not submitted to SMTC for review & validation of the project's estimated traffic data or for its proposed truck traffic patterns. Requiring the NYS Thruway to erect sound baffle walls and higher guard rails for affected town of Salina properties was not part of the Warehouse Traffic Plan and will likely be extremely difficult to implement after the fact.

Also a major unaddressed traffic concern will be the large number of Warehouse unmarked white delivery vans, some contractors & some on Amazon payroll. They're part of every Amazon Warehouse distribution system. Lacking collaboration with the NYS DOT and County DOT, the intent of narrowing the Onondaga Lake Parkway to two lanes will be compromised. Eliminating commercial traffic there will not prevent these unmarked vans, with non-commercial plates, from using it. Local streets cannot assign these Amazon Vans "Local Delivery Only"; they'll use them to avoid snarled Village of Liverpool intersections.

The Syracuse Metropolitan Area would benefit greatly from more collaborative planning *requiring* the expertise and input of SMTC and SOCPA professionals rather than the current practice of optional transparency and parochial "Home Rule" control of project siting.

Martha

SMTC response sent via email on 5/20/21

Thank you for taking the time to provide such thoughtful comment. We will be evaluating your suggestions for participation as the SMTC moves forward with the required metropolitan transportation planning process.

Received via email on 6/11/21

SMTC, Attn: Mario Colone,
100 Clinton Square, 126 N. Salina Street, Suite 100,
Syracuse, NY 13202.

Via e-mail: mcolone@smtcmpo.org

The goals of the SMTC's Public Participation Plan are to:

- Understand the issues and concerns of community members.
- Seek input from the community about opportunities and possible solutions.
- Present ideas and receive feedback.
- Actively encourage involvement by underrepresented groups.
- Build community support for final plans and recommendations.
- Educate the public about the connections between transportation and land use planning.
- Build awareness of the MPO and our role in the community.

In addition, the SMTC is committed itself to extend Outreach and involvement opportunities to all affected and interested groups and individuals including those traditionally underrepresented or underserved including minorities, elderly persons, persons with limited English proficiency, low-income persons, persons with disabilities, and members of tribal governments.

I identify myself as a person with a disability and I also work for ARISE, the state-certified Independent Living Center in Onondaga and three other upstate counties. My job is that of the systems change advocate—helping to determine the policy and legislative change necessary to improve the lives of the disabled, as well as allow people with disabilities to live and contribute their talents to our community.

While I certainly have been able to participate in the activities promoted by the SMTC to publicize their work, I do feel that the outreach is incomplete. While SMTC meets all its responsibilities for accessible events and communication, can the SMTC truly say that they have truly gotten participation from the wide variety of people that make up the disability community if its outreach stops with the paid professionals such as me that make a point of searching out the zoom webinars and public meetings held by SMTC?

The list of traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups that SMTC has committed to provide involvement for are all a part of the disability community. As such, SMTC could effectively broaden its outreach by creating a Disability Planning Group that met quarterly to discuss both the SMTC's work and our concerns on the lack of transportation opportunities in C.N.Y.

Phil Prehn
Systems Change Advocate
ARISE
635 James Street
Syracuse, N.Y. 13203

SMTC response sent via email on 6/14/21

Phil,

Thank you for taking the time to review the draft Public Participation Plan and provide comment. With this updated participation plan the SMTC aims to not only continue, but to also broaden outreach throughout the community. A recent example includes the creation of an Active Transportation forum to speak with and hear directly from community members. Other forums may be held as well in the coming months. I'd be more than happy to talk with you about creating a disability specific forum.

One planning product the SMTC completes every 4 years that should be of interest is the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, or Coordinated Plan. The Coordinated Plan consists of:

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
2. An assessment of needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes;
3. Strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery; and
4. Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing strategies and/or activities identified.

The Coordinated Plan update recently started and has a scheduled completion in February/March 2022. One of the first tasks in the update is the distribution of a transportation services questionnaire for human service agencies and public transportation providers. A letter was sent last week via postal mail to nearly 90 contacts announcing the availability of the questionnaire. There will be additional public engagement opportunities as the Coordinated Plan update continues.

Again, thank you for the comments. Feel free to contact me via phone or email.