

DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Summer 2023



Construction at the former H.A. Moyer factory in Syracuse.



From the SMTC Director: Planning for growth

When I moved to Syracuse in 2000, I frequently heard terms like “sprawl without growth” and “stagnant population” thrown around in discussing our community. Planning for a region anticipating little to no real overall growth has presented challenges, like maintaining infrastructure for a population much less than what it was originally built for. For years we have tried to plan for a vast and aging infrastructure with a tax base that wasn’t growing much. That became the refrain and guiding principle for most planning activities in the community.

Now, that is all changing. With two mega-projects ramping up, we have a real opportunity to make our community “what we want” – but first we must decide what that is.

The I-81 Viaduct Project (including the Community Grid) will transform how our infrastructure interacts with our community and how we move people, not just cars. This is an opportunity for our entire community. We have a challenge: how do we, the people of the greater

Syracuse area, want to move around our community? It’s a chance to break a 60+ year tradition of prioritizing the auto above all else and instead benefit all users of our transportation system. The Community Grid project will go a long way to advancing this goal, but there is still a huge opportunity to further enhance transit, biking, and walking while also supporting efficient traffic flow. No one mode has to lose or win here. With the size of fiscal investment being made in our community right now, we have a unique opportunity to make new connections and transform how we get around in Central New York.

An even bigger opportunity looms in the northern suburb of Clay with construction of the Micron chip fabrication plant. A huge investment and decades of construction will yield the largest increase in employment in a lifetime for Central New York, both at Micron and via the synergy of its numerous suppliers and related businesses. We can now proactively plan for what we want Central New York to look like in the near future

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with the conviction that this vision should materialize. We also have the choice to passively allow residential and commercial growth to just happen, without any thoughtful direction, but we may not like what we get as a result of that choice. Proactively planning for thriving, mixed-use communities with varied transportation choices and a variety of housing options will enhance the quality of life we enjoy in Central New York for decades to come while remaking what our community looks like and lives like.

Both the I-81 Viaduct Project and Micron development require us to do something that has not happened here in multiple decades: plan for regional

growth. Working together, we can create a vision for our community, driven by what the people that live here want for their future. So, if you ever thought about getting involved in your local government, planning board, zoning board or other local body – this is the time to do it! I encourage you to stay plugged-in to both land use and transportation planning in our community. One way to do that is to engage with the SMTC by subscribing to our newsletter, following us on social media, and attending public meetings for our studies. Growth is coming – if we are ready or not – so let's seize the opportunity!



New Scopes of Work Approved

The checklist to the right is followed before work begins on the majority of new planning efforts undertaken by the SMTC.

On July 26th, the SMTC Planning Committee approved four scopes of work that range from research into financing new multimodal networks or enhancing existing roads, trail route feasibility, establishing a community streets pilot program, and assessment of enhanced public transit options.

- Brewerton Trail Technical Analysis
 - On behalf of the Town of Cicero
- Community Streets Program
 - On behalf of the City of Syracuse
- New York State Route 31 Transit Corridor Assessment
 - On behalf of the Onondaga County Department of Planning (formerly known as the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency)
- Plan & Finance Local Mobility
 - On behalf of the Onondaga County Department of Planning.

With the scopes approved, staff will initiate outreach to potential advisory committee members and continue

- ✓ **Step 1** New planning projects received through annual call-for-projects
- ✓ **Step 2** Planning projects reviewed and adopted in the SMTC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- ✓ **Step 3** Scopes of work drafted and approved by the SMTC Planning Committee

SMTC's 2023-2024 UPWP available at:
smtcmpo.org/

existing conditions research and analysis, including in-field data collection. These efforts, and others, support "planning for growth" (see page 1) our community will undertake for several years to come. If interested, sign-up to the SMTC's email list to receive updates as efforts advance.

Our bike suitability map has been updated!

smtcmpo.org/planning-activities/bicycle-pedestrian/



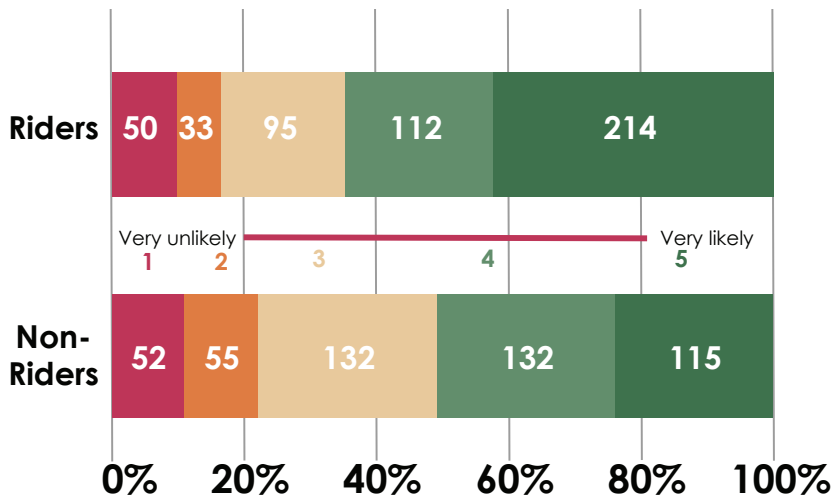
Exploring Tomorrow's Transit continues with Community Discussion Meetings

Thank you to the 1,049 people who responded to our Exploring Tomorrow's Transit (ETT) survey in spring 2023! This was a great start to the ETT effort. The survey results make clear that everyone wants more frequent transit service, particularly to and from shopping, employment, and educational destinations. Many of the trips made by current bus riders are for purposes other than commuting, such as shopping and getting to medical appointments. Survey results also indicated that both current bus riders and people who don't currently ride the bus are interested in on-demand transit service options.

We'll be continuing our outreach in partnership with Centro through a series of Community Discussions this fall, where we will review the feedback from the survey and discuss in more detail the future design of the Centro system in Onondaga County. We will discuss community priorities for high-frequency routes along with new options including on-demand services and "micromobility" (bike and scooter share), and the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes. Check out the ETT page of our website for more information, and join us at one of the upcoming Community Discussions!

More info on Exploring Tomorrow's Transit, including schedule of Community Discussion meetings:
smtcmpo.org/centroett

ETT Survey Results: How likely current riders and non-riders are to use an on-demand transit service



SMTC staff distributed "Take Our Survey!" cards at the Centro Hub in April 2023.



Directions is a publication of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). Formed in 1966 as a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, the SMTC serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Syracuse metropolitan area, and provides a forum for cooperative decision making in developing transportation plans and programs. Its committees are comprised of elected and appointed officials, representing local, state, and federal governments or agencies (member agencies) having an interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming.



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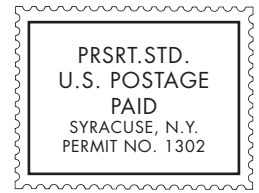
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WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SYRACUSEMPO



Stop by one of our upcoming
Exploring Tomorrow's Transit
Community Discussion Meetings!

Monday, September 11, 5-7 p.m.

Liverpool Public Library
310 Tulip St., Liverpool

Monday, September 18, 5-7 p.m.

East Syracuse Free Library
4990 James St., East Syracuse

Wednesday, September 20

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Salt City Market Community Room
484 S. Salina St., Syracuse

Tuesday, September 26, 5-7 p.m.

Solvay Fire Department
1925 Milton Ave., Solvay

Thursday, September 28, 5-7 p.m.

Bob Cecile Community Center
174 W. Seneca Tpk., Syracuse

At these meetings, you will be able to:

- Review what we learned from the ETT public survey conducted in spring 2023.
- Engage in discussion with SMTC and Centro staff about the future design of the transit system including fixed-route bus service, on-demand service, bus rapid transit, and bike/scooter share.

These meetings will not include a formal presentation. You are welcome to drop in at any point during the scheduled time.

More info:
smtcmpo.org/centroett

Meeting facilities are ADA accessible. American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters will be available at all meetings, and Spanish interpreters will be available at the Salt City Market and Cecile Center meetings. For additional accommodation requests, please contact the SMTC at contactus@smtcmpo.org or 315-422-5716 two weeks prior to the meeting.



Exploring Tomorrow's Transit
(ETT) is an outreach initiative designed to gain an understanding of our community's public transportation needs and expectations.