

Context setting

OUR COMMUNITY

The SMTC MPA has a total population of 511,878 people.

(2020 Decennial Census)

As the only city in the SMTC MPA, Syracuse anchors the region economically and culturally. Suburban and rural areas throughout our region provide additional jobs, retail options, and recreational opportunities that contribute to the overall quality of life in Central New York.

From its peak of about 220,000 residents around 1950, the City of Syracuse's population declined steadily until 2010. The 2020 Decennial Census showed a slight uptick in the city's population, to 148,620 people, accounting for 29 percent of the total MPA population. Growth in the city has been unevenly distributed, though. Much of this recent growth has been attributed to a resurgence

in downtown living as well as an increase in the city's New American population, especially in the Northside neighborhoods. Onondaga County as a whole grew steadily between 1950 and 1970, then remained essentially stable as the city's population declined over the next few decades, resulting in a pattern of 'sprawl without growth.' The City of Syracuse and the four most populous towns (Clay, Salina, Manlius, Cicero) together account for about 60 percent of the MPA population. Some inner-ring suburbs and villages have population densities comparable to neighborhoods in the City of Syracuse, but large swaths of our MPA remain rural, and this character is an important part of the identity of Central New York.

FIGURE 2.1: POPULATION OF CITY OF SYRACUSE AND ONONDAGA COUNTY, WITH SQUARE MILEAGE OF URBAN AREA, 1950 TO 2020

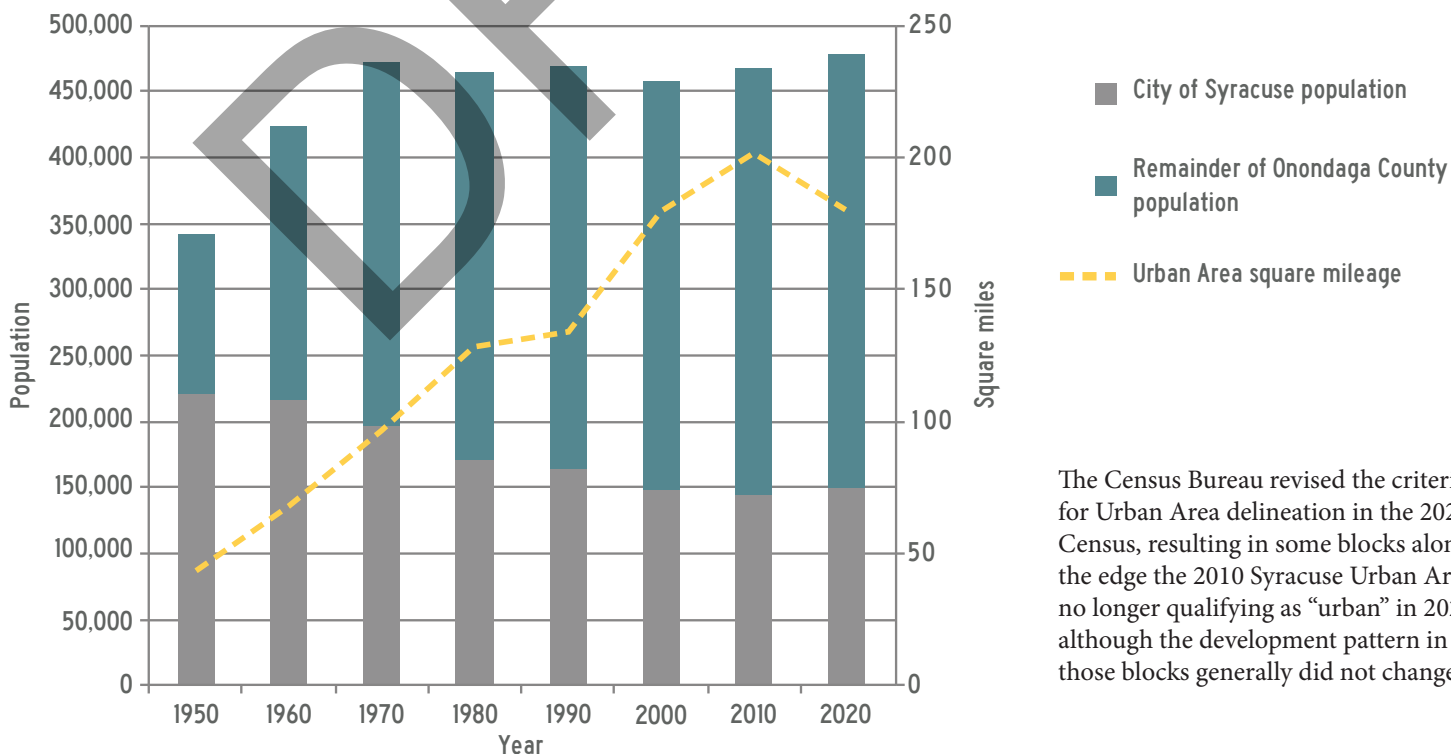
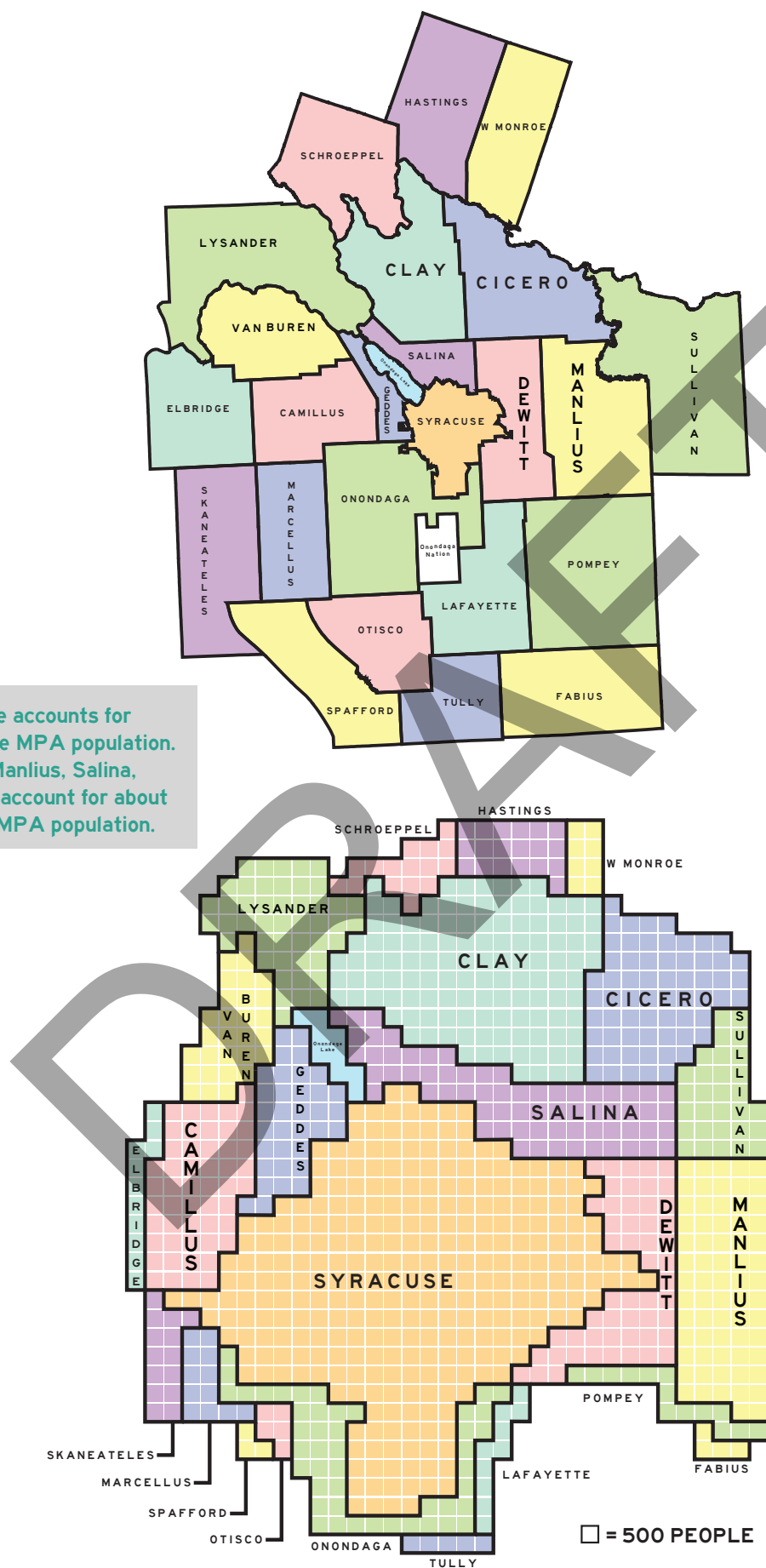


FIGURE 2.2: CITY AND TOWNS IN THE SMTC MPA BY AREA AND POPULATION



The City of Syracuse accounts for about one-third of the MPA population. The towns of Clay, Manlius, Salina, and Cicero together account for about another third of the MPA population.

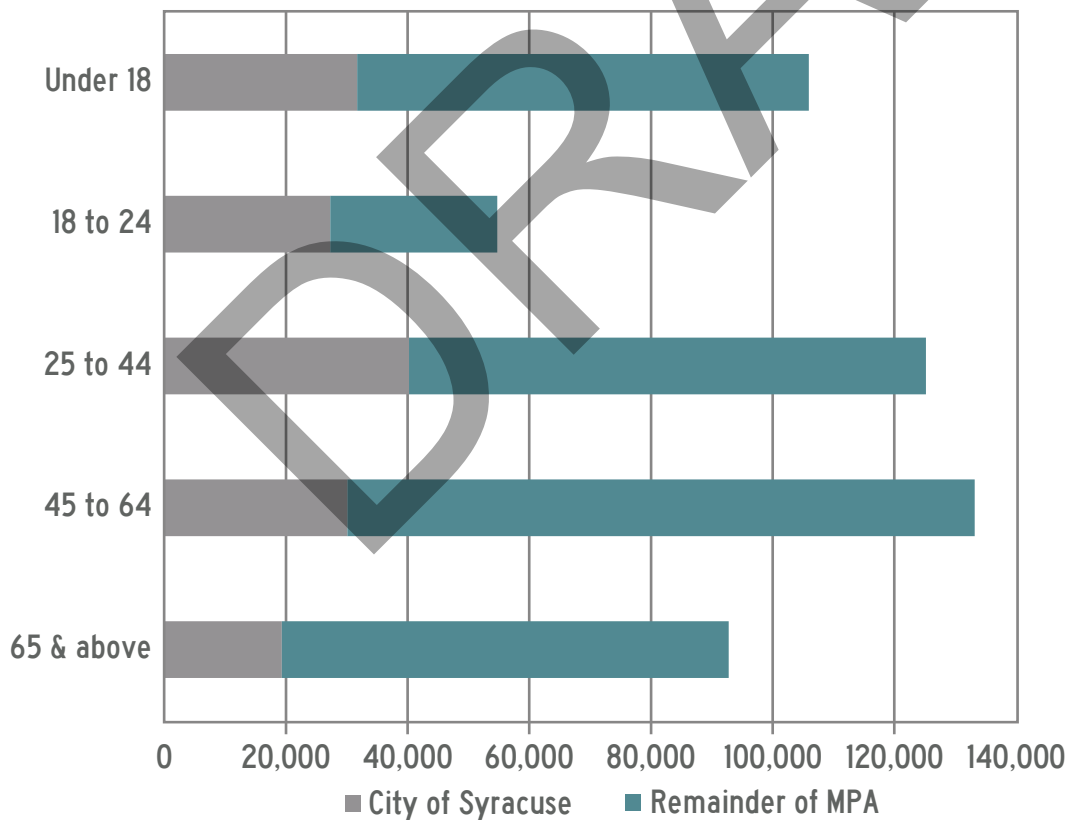
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020. Village population is included in town population. Note: The Onondaga Nation does not participate in the U.S. Census.

The City of Syracuse has a younger population than the region as a whole.

This is largely due to the presence of Syracuse University and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) within the City, but also attributable to a slightly higher percentage of younger adults in the City compared to the MPA as a whole. Downtown living has proven especially attractive to young professionals in the region. While some older adults have also been attracted to downtown living, many suburbs face challenges associated with older residents ‘aging in place,’ such as availability of right-sized and accessible housing, proximity of services, and opportunities to get around the community without driving. Nearly half of the population outside of the city is age 45 or older, compared to about 30 percent of the city’s total population in this age bracket.

Median age
City of Syracuse: 32.2 yrs Onondaga County: 39.8 yrs
New York State: 40.0 yrs United States: 39.0 yrs
(2022 ACS 1-yr estimates)

FIGURE 2.3: POPULATION OF THE CITY AND REMAINDER OF MPA BY AGE



The investment by Micron Technology, Inc. in a semiconductor manufacturing facility in the Town of Clay in northern Onondaga County is expected to result in unprecedented growth in jobs and population.

Upwards of 44,000 new jobs are projected over 30 years for the Central New York region (including Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Cortland, and Cayuga counties) as a result of the project: 9,000 on-site jobs when fully-operational, plus an additional 35,000 indirect and induced jobs. This is expected to result in about 76,000 new residents in CNY, or about 33,000 new households,¹ the majority of which are expected to locate in Onondaga County.²

A substantial investment in housing will be necessary, and the community will have to make choices about the form that growth will take.

Both rehabilitation of existing housing and new construction will be necessary to meet the community's needs. In 2023, Onondaga County adopted Plan Onondaga, a new county-wide comprehensive plan. This plan “provides a framework for understanding how and where the County can focus its resources in order to support and foster competitiveness in the global economic system.” Recognizing the unprecedented level of growth anticipated in the near future, Plan Onondaga presents a Future Land Use Vision that “expresses the big picture for how Onondaga County envisions growth and development over the next several years.” Plan Onondaga is organized around five themes: **Strong Centers**, **Housing and Neighborhoods**, **Community Mobility**, **Greenways and Blueways**, and **Agriculture**.

White Pine Commerce Park and Micron Technology, Inc.

In 1999, the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) began purchasing land in the Town of Clay to create the Clay Business Park, with hopes of attracting a high-tech manufacturing tenant to the site, then at a little over 300 acres. Since that time, OCIDA continued to purchase adjoining properties to expand the park, eventually renaming it White Pine Commerce Park and ultimately amassing over 1,300 acres by 2022.³ In October 2022, Micron Technology, Inc., announced that it had selected the site in Clay to build up to four semiconductor fabrication plants (“fabs”) in what will be the “largest single private investment in New York history.”⁴ The project site is located along NYS Route 31 in the Town of Clay, in northern Onondaga County, west of I-81. The fabs are expected to be built in phases over approximately 20 years, with the first two operational by 2032 and the last two operational by 2041. Expected to operate as a 24-hour manufacturing facility with three shifts, the Micron site will become a significant commuting draw in northern Onondaga County. Transportation impacts – and anticipated mitigation measures – are being assessed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

Strong centers are walkable, people oriented places with a mix of jobs, housing, shopping, dining, culture, public spaces, entertainment, transportation, and services.

Vision: Onondaga County will strengthen the quality of life and economic stability of local communities through the development of amenity-rich, vibrant, and walkable centers.

Community Mobility is the ability of people to travel from place to place within Onondaga County. Community mobility strategies aim to provide for more choice in the transportation system and to improve safety for all users.

Vision: Onondaga County will enhance mobility by improving the safety, accessibility, and diversity of options for moving people within and between communities.

From: Plan Onondaga.

¹ REMI, Inc. (September 29, 2022.) Economic and Fiscal Impact of Establishing a Semiconductor Manufacturing Facility in Onondaga County, New York.

² Based on analysis from AKRF, 19,284 new households are expected in the SMTC MPA by 2045 as a result of the Micron project. The total 2050 household growth in the SMTC's travel demand model is 42,804 new households, including Micron-associated growth and additional “background” growth that had already been projected for the MPA.

³ Weaver, Teri. (October 4, 2022.) The decades-long chase to land a semiconductor giant new Syracuse. Syracuse.com

⁴ Weiner, Mark. (October 4, 2022.) Micron picks Syracuse suburb for huge computer chip plant that would bring up to 9,000 jobs. Syracuse.com

The Central New York Region

The SMTC MPA sits within the Central New York Region, generally defined as Onondaga County and the four adjacent counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, and Oswego. The five-county region is home to over 785,000 people across approximately 4,000 square miles. While Syracuse is the urban center of Central New York, five smaller cities and numerous villages populate the region, with large swaths of rural land covering much of the five counties.

Cayuga County

Population (2020) – 76,248

City: Auburn (26,866)

Although a primarily rural county, Cayuga County is home to the region's second largest city, Auburn, which is also the County's primary employment center. Similar to the SMTC MPA, education and healthcare services are two of the largest employment sectors for the County, with the Auburn Enlarged School District and Auburn Community Health as two of the area's largest employers. Additionally, the Auburn and Cayuga Correctional Facilities employ over 1,300 people, combined.

US 20 and NY 5 are the primary connections between Auburn and Syracuse. Northern Cayuga County's primary east-west corridors are I-90 and NY 104. Running from NY 104 south, NY 34 functions as the main north-south corridor for the County, connecting Auburn to Ithaca.

Centro operates four fixed bus routes throughout the City of Auburn, along with daily commuter buses to Syracuse and Call-A-Bus services. To supplement transit services within Cayuga County, SCAT vans provide door-to-door transportation for individuals 60 years of age and over or that have a disability.

No passenger rail facilities currently operate within Cayuga County, but CSXT and Finger Lakes Railway operate freight rail lines running east-west through the region.

Cortland County

Population (2020) – 46,809

City: Cortland (17,556)

The smallest of the five counties, Cortland County is centered around the City of Cortland. Home to many of the county's largest employers, including the State University of New York (SUNY) at Cortland and the Cortland Regional Nursing Center, the City of Cortland is defined by its educational and healthcare services. The nearby Village of Homer, home to the Homer Performing Arts Center, is located just north of the City of Cortland, creating a cultural anchor within the small urbanized area.

The primary north-south routes through Cortland County are I-81 and US 11, which run parallel to one another. Cortland County is further connected by NY 41 and NY 13, running northwest to southeast and northeast to southwest, respectively. NY 13 is a highly traveled connection to the City of Ithaca, in Tompkins County.

Transit service in Cortland County is focused around the City of Cortland. In 2025, Centro took over operations of seven fixed bus routes, operating within the City of Cortland and reaching out into the more rural areas of the county, along with Call-A-Bus services. Cortland became the fifth county within Centro's operating area.

Rail freight in Cortland County is primarily handled by NYS&W along its Syracuse Main Line.

Madison County

Population (2020) – 68,016

City: Oneida (10,329)

Madison County is home to

Central New York's smallest city, the City of Oneida, along with several prominent villages, including Chittenango, Cazenovia, and Hamilton. Higher education and healthcare services are the dominant employment fields within Madison County. Colgate University, in the Village of Hamilton, and Oneida Healthcare each employ an estimated 1,000 people.

Northern Madison County's primary east-west connections, I-90, and NY 5, run through or past the villages of Chittenango, Canastota, and Wampsville, as well as the City of Oneida. To the south, US 20 connects the villages of Cazenovia, Morrisville, and Madison, with the village of Hamilton just south of the route.

Transit service within Madison County is provided by the Madison Transit System (MTS), which is operated by Birnie Bus. MTS offers service in the City of Oneida and the villages of Chittenango, Cazenovia, and Hamilton.

Freight rail service through Madison County is operated by CSX Transportation along the Mohawk line, which runs parallel to I-90.

Oswego County

Population (2020) – 117,525

Cities: Oswego (16,921), Fulton (11,389)

Oswego County is the only county in the region that includes two cities: Oswego and Fulton. Both cities, along with the Village of Phoenix and Hamlet of Minetto, are connected to the Syracuse urbanized area via NY Rt 481. The Fulton urbanized area ends roughly one mile from the Syracuse urbanized area. Other population centers, including the villages of Central Square, Pulaski, and Sandy Creek, connect to the wider region via I-81, US 11, and Rt 104 and 49.

Similar to other counties in the region, education and healthcare

The Central New York Region

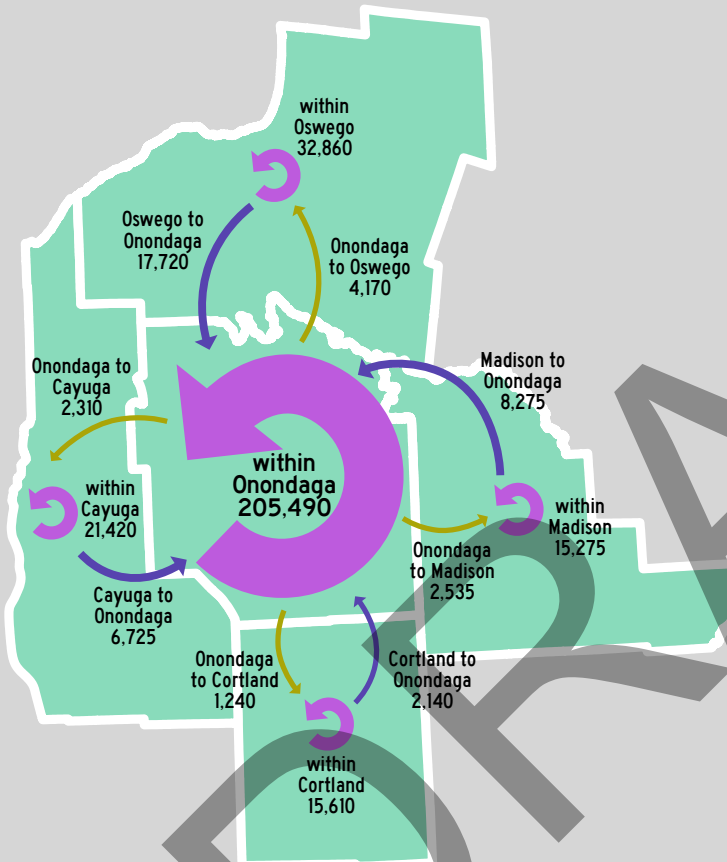
services are the major employment sectors within Oswego County, with SUNY Oswego alone employing roughly 3,000 people. Novelis, an industrial aluminum company, also maintains a large presence within the County's economy.

The Oswego Canal, which intersected with the Erie Canal in Downtown Syracuse, is an

important piece of the region's industrial heritage. Today, what remains of the Oswego Canal connects to the New York State Barge Canal and the Port of Oswego.

Freight rail within Oswego County is operated by CSX Transportation, along the Baldwinsville line, parallel to Rt 481, and the St. Lawrence line, parallel to I-81.

Centro operates fixed bus service around the City of Oswego, including an on-campus shuttle for SUNY Oswego. Commuter service, between the City of Oswego, City of Fulton, and the City of Syracuse operates daily. Additionally, Oswego County Public Transit (OPT) provides fixed route service between the City of Fulton and the surrounding villages, including Pulaski, Sandy Creek, and Mexico.



REGIONAL COMMUTER FLOWS

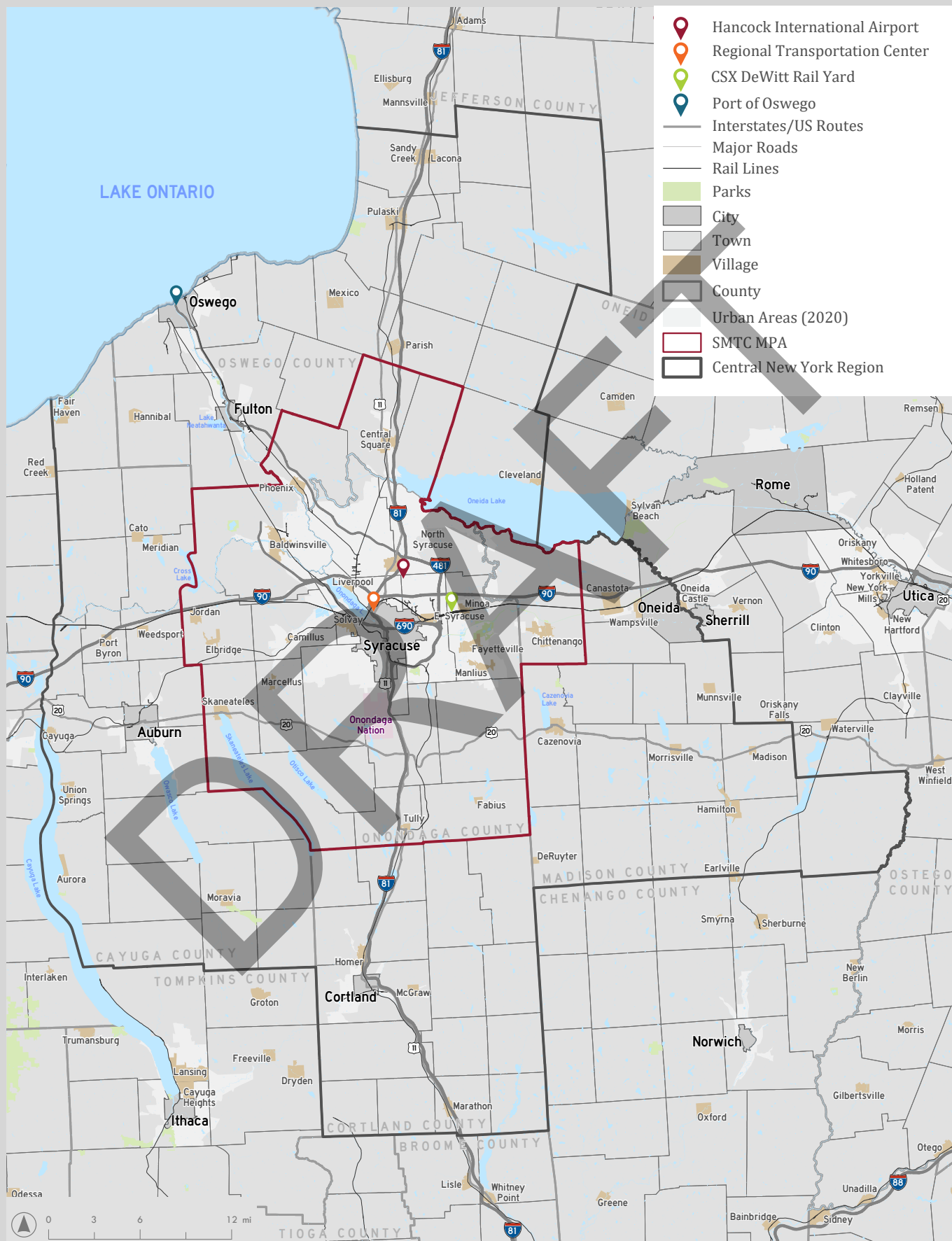
Onondaga County is the region's job center, and the vast majority of workers also live in Onondaga County. In each of the surrounding counties, most of the people who live in that county also work within that county. The largest county-to-county flow is from Oswego to Onondaga county, at about 18,000 workers, and that figure is only about one-twelfth of the number of workers who both live and work in Onondaga County. Most of the workers from outside of Onondaga County are commuting to locations outside the City of Syracuse. Of the workers that live in Onondaga County and work in another county, only the City of Auburn draws a majority of those commuters in the respective county; in Oswego, Cortland, and Madison counties, commuters from Onondaga County are mostly going to locations outside of the cities.

TOP EMPLOYERS IN ONONDAGA COUNTY'S CONTIGUOUS COUNTIES

Rank	Cayuga County		Cortland County		Madison County		Oswego County	
	Employer	# of Employees	Employer	# of Employees	Employer	# of Employees	Employer	# of Employees
1	Auburn Community Hospital	1,400	SUNY Cortland	1,400	Colgate University	900	SUNY Oswego	3,500
2	Auburn Correctional Facility	800	Cortland County Regional Nursing Center	1,000	SUNY Morrisville	800	Oswego Hospital	1,300
3	Auburn Enlarged School District	700	Cortland County Medical Society	900	Oneida Healthcare	700	Constellation Energy Corporation	1,300

Source: Auburn Community Hospital; Auburn Correctional Facility; Auburn Enlarged School District; Colgate University; Oneida Healthcare, Oswego County Business; Oswego Health; SUNY Cortland; SUNY Morrisville; SUNY Oswego; QWI 2021 Annual Averages; Esri 2023 Estimates; 2023 CNY Business Journal Book of Lists

The Central New York Region



Poverty and the uneven access to opportunity pose challenges to our regional prosperity.

State and federal policies for Urban Renewal and mortgage loan guarantees (redlining), restrictive local zoning, discriminatory housing practices, and historical patterns of underinvestment over many decades created the racial and economic segregation in our region today. With a child poverty rate of over 45 percent based on 2018 through 2022 data, the City of Syracuse earned the dubious distinction of having the second-highest rate of child poverty among U.S. cities with at least 100,000 people.⁵ The City's overall poverty rate – nearly 30 percent – is also among the highest in the nation, and, unfortunately, Syracuse has consistently ranked high on these lists for many years. Meanwhile, the poverty rate in our MPA outside of the City of Syracuse is eight percent, underlining the issue of concentration of poverty within the City. A 2015 report found that concentration of poverty had increased most rapidly, since 2000, in mid-size metropolitan areas across the U.S., and Syracuse topped that list as well with “the highest level of poverty concentration among blacks and Hispanics of the one hundred largest metropolitan areas.”⁶

FIGURE 2.4: MPA POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY



⁵ Tampone, Kevin. (December 7, 2023.) Syracuse ranks No. 2 among big US cities for worst child poverty even as rate falls. <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2023/12/syracuse-ranks-no-2-among-big-us-cities-for-child-poverty-even-as-rate-falls.html>

⁶ Jargowsky, Paul A. (August 9, 2015.) Architecture of Segregation: Civil Unrest, the Concentration of Poverty, and Public Policy.

Most of our MPA is experiencing some level of economic distress, as defined by New York State Empire State Development (ESD). ESD has developed an index of economically distressed communities, which includes households that receive public assistance income and have experienced some combination of population loss, high rates of unemployment, high rates of poverty, and low private sector job growth. Within the SMTC MPA, “severely distressed” communities are concentrated within the City of Syracuse, along with neighborhoods in the villages of Solvay and Phoenix, and neighborhoods within the towns of Salina, Clay, and Sullivan. Within these communities, access and mobility are key to improving residents’ ability to reach opportunities and services.

Figures 2.5 and 2.6 illustrate how elements of “transportation insecurity” – traffic safety, vehicle access, and household income – overlap with economic distress. Areas with the highest rates of traffic fatalities and serious injuries are concentrated within the City of Syracuse, but also include many of the more rural communities to the north and south of the City. The areas with the highest proportion of households without a vehicle are almost entirely within the City of Syracuse, along with portions

of the villages of Solvay and North Syracuse, as well as a portion of the Town of Salina. Census tracts with median incomes below 50 percent of Onondaga County’s median income are also concentrated within the City of Syracuse, plus several more rural communities.

Onondaga County also faces challenges with housing affordability, especially rental affordability, created in part by a lack of diverse housing types resulting from zoning regulations that require large minimum lot sizes and allow only single-family detached housing throughout much of the County.⁷

As we move into a new era of growth in Central New York, we need to ensure that the benefits – and the burdens – of that growth are shared across every community and that all residents of our region can access quality transportation, housing, jobs, and educational opportunities.



Low private sector job growth, which may result in vacant commercial properties, is a key factor in ESD’s distressed communities index.

⁷ CNY Fair Housing. (February 2023.) Exclusionary Zoning in Onondaga County.

FIGURE 2.5: DISTRESSED CENSUS TRACTS AND AREAS OF TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY IN THE MPA

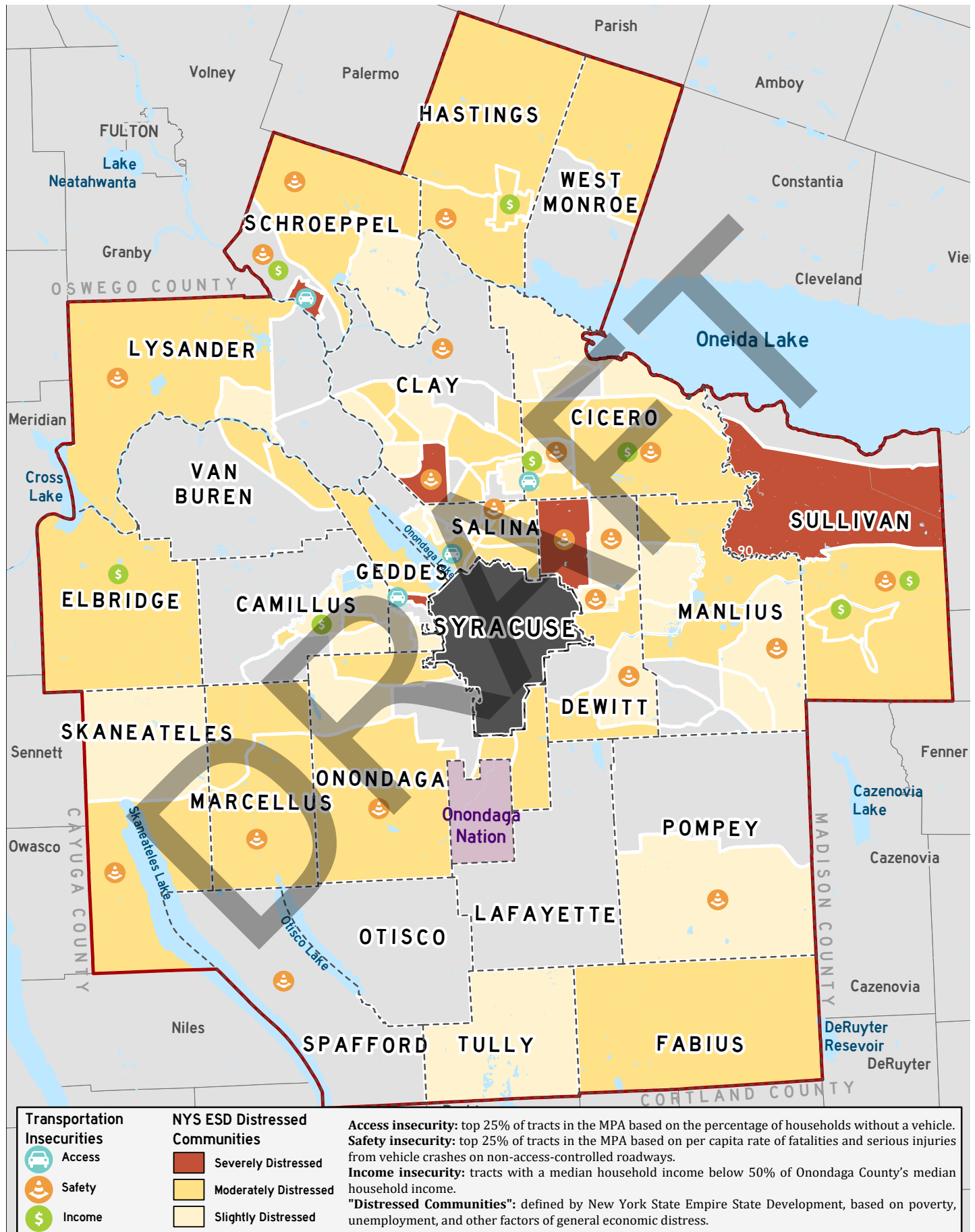
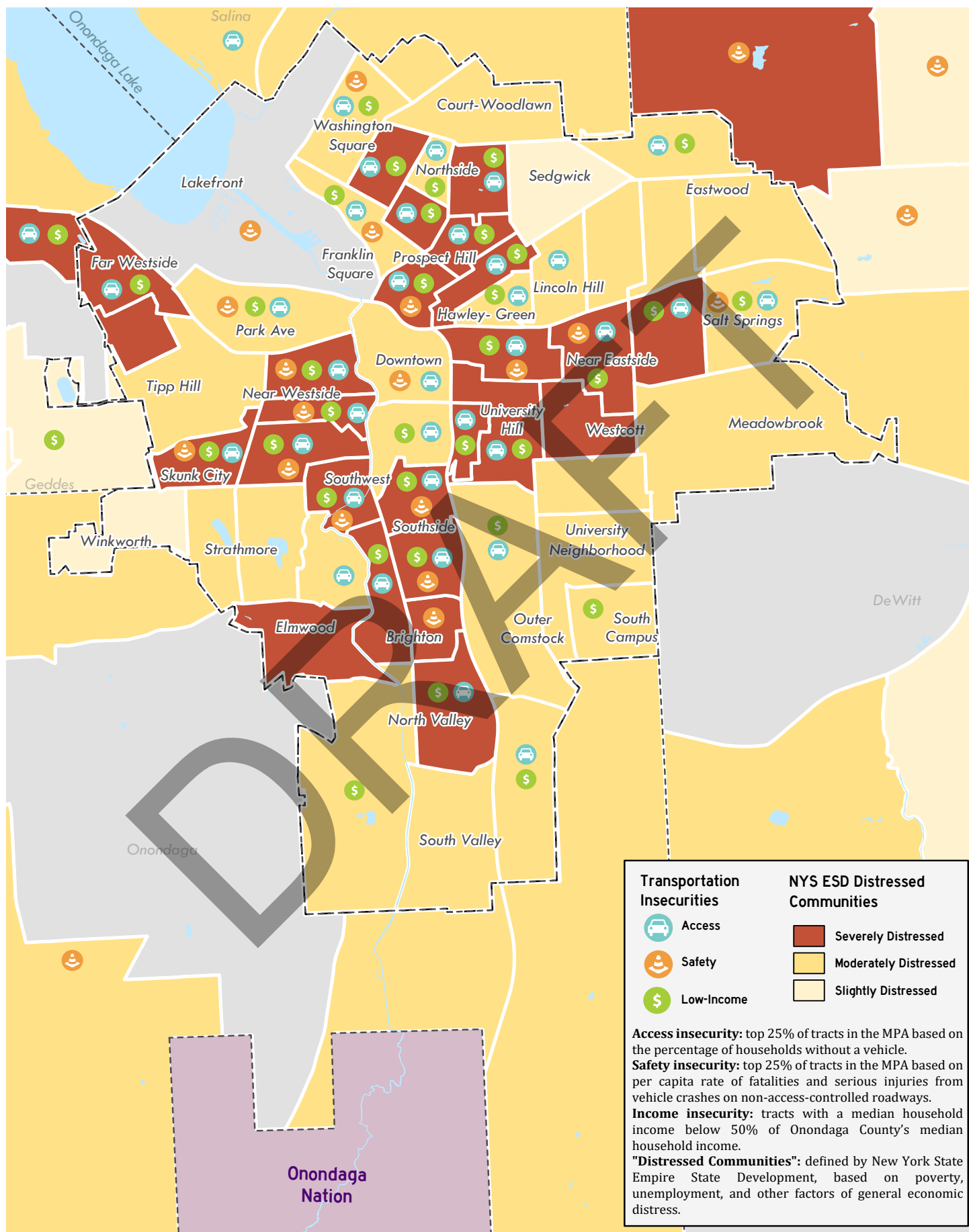
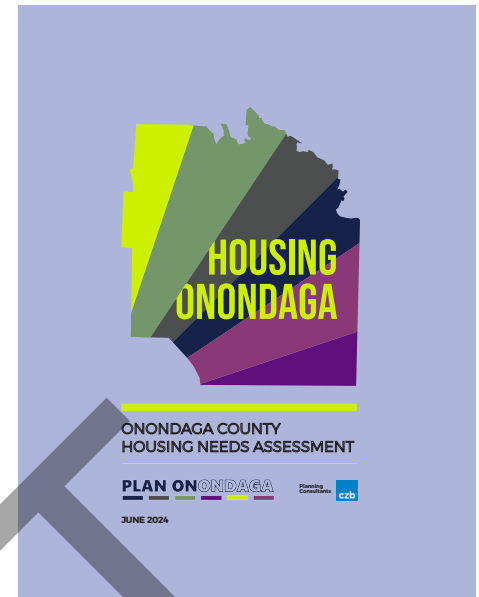
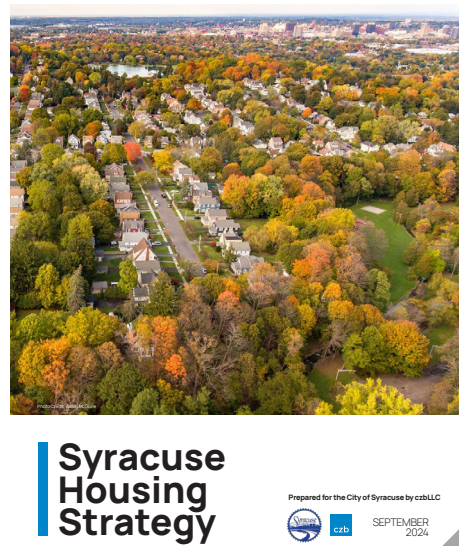
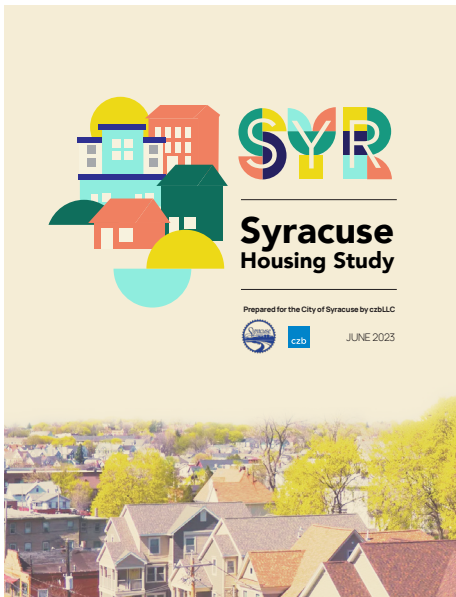


FIGURE 2.6: DISTRESSED CENSUS TRACTS AND AREAS OF TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY IN THE CITY OF SYRACUSE





Housing for a growing population

The City of Syracuse adopted a citywide zoning ordinance and map update called “ReZone Syracuse” in March 2023 to implement the Land Use & Development Plan component of the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan 2040. Along with streamlining the development process and making the documents more user-friendly, ReZone set out to encourage more sustainable development and incorporate modern best-practices such form-based code and transit-oriented development. This will allow the City to continue to grow while encouraging more mixed-use development and higher densities in some areas of the city, especially along key transportation corridors. ReZone also includes requirements for affordable units within larger multifamily and mixed-use developments.

In May 2023, the City’s consultant team completed the Syracuse Housing Study, which found “that nearly every housing issue or challenge that exists in Syracuse can be tied to one of two root conditions: a market gap and an affordability gap.” With an older

housing stock and decades of disinvestment and deferred maintenance in a city within a historically soft regional housing market, there is a gap between the cost to create and maintain housing and both the willingness (market gap) and ability (affordability gap) of the public to bear that cost. In September 2024, Common Council approved the housing strategy final document and creation of the Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation to implement the plan.

Downtown has consistently been a bright spot in Syracuse’s housing market over the past decade. The Downtown Committee of Syracuse reported a total 4,520 Downtown residents and average annual population growth of 6 percent in their 2023 Downtown Syracuse Economic Profile (far outpacing the City as a whole, which grew by just over 2 percent in total from 2010 to 2020). Since 2010, new housing units completed in Downtown Syracuse have averaged just over 100 units per year, for a total of over 1,500 new housing units between 2010 and 2023.

Just south of downtown, the Syracuse Housing Authority’s East Adams Street Neighborhood Transformation Plan envisions a revitalized, mixed-use, and mixed-income neighborhood. SHA is working with the non-profit Blueprint 15, in partnership with the City of Syracuse through efforts such as their Reconnecting Communities planning study, and engagement of local residents and community leaders, to plan for the future of this neighborhood.

The former Syracuse Developmental Center (SDC) on the City’s Westside is expected to be redeveloped with 500 new housing units (mostly apartments, some townhomes) plus retail space. Significant residential growth (and other uses) is also anticipated for Syracuse’s Inner Harbor.

A substantial amount of new housing will also be needed in the suburbs around Syracuse to accommodate all the anticipated population growth. To prepare for this growth, Onondaga County completed *Housing Onondaga*, a housing needs assessment, in June 2024. This assessment is focused

on housing outside of the City of Syracuse. Key findings include the need for more rental units outside of the city, especially affordable units and units targeted to seniors, and the need for a more diverse market of new ownership units beyond the single-family detached housing that has historically been the norm outside of the city. New units should be concentrated in new and existing centers (city and villages) and built at higher densities than the county has seen in the past to accommodate the level of growth and the changing demographics of the county (aging population and decline in

3+ person households). To achieve these outcomes *Housing Onondaga* recommends that municipalities update their comprehensive plans and zoning codes, and that the county expand investment efforts such as the Onondaga County Housing Initiative Program (O-CHIP) to incentivize the needed development.

Opportunities exist for infill development in the County, especially at the various vacant or underutilized shopping malls and older retail plazas. A proposal for mixed-use, “lifestyle center”-type redevelopment of the vacant ShoppingTown Mall property in the Town of DeWitt

includes over 900 housing units and nearly 2 million square feet of leasable space. A local developer has a similar “town center” vision for the former Great Northern Mall property on Route 31 in the Town of Clay, just a few miles from the White Pine Commerce Park, including as many as 1,700 apartments and condos plus hotels, retail, and office space. Both infill and new housing will be essential to creating the ‘Strong Centers’ as envisioned in Plan Onondaga.



Higher density residential developments are occurring both within the City of Syracuse (left) and in suburban towns, such as Camillus (right).



Single family detached homes make up the vast majority of residential units within the Syracuse MPA.

OUR ECONOMY

Anticipated job growth over the timeframe of this plan will change the economy of our region.

The Syracuse area has followed the trajectory of many other 'Rust Belt' cities that grew as manufacturing centers throughout the early to mid-20th Century, experienced industrial job losses in the 1990s and early 2000s due to many global economic trends, and transitioned to a much more service-oriented economy today, largely built on growth in the educational and healthcare sectors ('eds and meds'). A review of the list of top employers in Onondaga County bears this out, with Upstate University Health System the area's largest employer and other healthcare providers, educational institutions, governments, and the local city school district ranking high on the list. Beyond eds and meds, the area's largest private employer is currently Wegmans grocery stores (though their employees are distributed across many locations), followed by Lockheed Martin, Amazon, and National Grid.

Total employment in the region is about 279,000 jobs. The major individual employers and the significant employment clusters are located in the northern half of the MPA. About 25,700 people work in Downtown Syracuse, and another 25,000 people work in the

University Hill area, home to Syracuse University, SUNY ESF, and multiple regional healthcare facilities; together, Downtown and University Hill account for about 18 percent of the region's total employment in a relatively small geographic area. Outside of the City, the Town of DeWitt currently has the greatest number of jobs, at about 43,000, largely attributable to a few significant employment clusters in the northern part of DeWitt around the Route 298, Carrier Circle, and Molloy Road corridors plus the significant number of jobs along Erie Boulevard East.

We are now preparing for significant economic change and growth with the build-out of the White Pine Commerce Park, which will be occupied by multiple semiconductor fabrication plants built by Micron Technology, Inc., as well as associated suppliers on and adjacent to this site and throughout the Central New York region.

Downtown Syracuse is currently the most concentrated area of jobs in the region.



Downtown Syracuse is home to the largest concentration of jobs within the Syracuse MPA.

Growth continues at the Syracuse airport

Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR), operated by the Syracuse Regional Airport Authority (SRAA) has seen passenger levels rebound since the COVID-19 pandemic, with 2023 setting an all-time record with 2.86 million passengers. This figure is 11 percent higher than the previous record set in 2019. SYR now provides direct flights to 30 different airports in 26 cities and has added five new airlines, for a total of nine, since 2018.

Over the last 10 years, significant upgrades have been made to SYR. Completed in 2018, a \$62 million “Terminal Improvement Project” updated the façade, including a canopy to shelter pick-ups and drop-offs, a new Grand Hall, and reconfigured traffic lanes. In 2022, SRAA received \$20 million to upgrade the Customs and Border Protection Federal Inspection Sta-

tion as well as expand the airport’s north concourse. To better accommodate the increased passenger demand, an expansion of the airport’s parking facilities began in 2022 and will include nearly 2,000 additional spaces.

As SYR has expanded its service, employment at the airport has increased to over 2,500. To improve access for employees, as well as passengers, Centro has begun operation of a modified bus route, SY84 through Mattydale, to include the airport. Service along the line runs from 5:00 am to 7:30 pm.

In 2021, SRAA began the process of updating the Airport Master Plan for SYR, which is a 20-year vision for the development of the facility. This planning effort includes an update to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), which allows the airport to access federal funding for future

projects. Preliminary ALP designs shared at an open house in summer 2023 include alterations to the passenger terminals aimed at improving efficiency and maneuverability for aircraft taxiing, as well as potential changes to the locations of air cargo and general aviation facilities.

In addition to the expanding general aviation service and air cargo, SYR acts as one of the anchors to New York State’s 50 Mile Drone Corridor, an FAA Designated Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) testing facility, alongside Griffis International Airport (RME) in Rome, NY. In 2023, the FAA expanded the Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) corridor to 240 square miles, allowing commercial drones up to 300 pounds to operate and test their technologies in a real-world setting.

Source: syrairport.org

Access to workforce development will be crucial to the region’s success over the next few years and beyond.

In addition to the infrastructure needs of the Micron build-out (transportation, but also sewer, water, and others), there are also significant workforce development needs and opportunities associated with this massive project. Central New York has a history of educating and employing a notable number of engineers, technicians, and skilled manufacturing workers – from legacy manufacturers such as General Electric and Carrier to today’s cluster of high-tech defense contractors and the expanding Unmanned Aerial Systems industry – and a new generation of these workers will be needed to fill positions at Micron and associated suppliers. Additionally, a substantial increase in skilled building tradespeople will be necessary to fulfill the concurrent needs of the Micron build-out, the I-81 Community

Grid project, and home construction/rehabilitation. Taken together, the need for workers will be on a scale that this region has never seen. The region is building-up established workforce development programs and adding more, such as CenterState CEO’s Work Train program, the Syracuse Surge initiative, Syracuse Build, OCC’s partnership with Micron on a new degree program, and the regional STEAM High School. Governor Hochul also recently announced the establishment of four workforce training centers focused on advanced manufacturing in New York State, with the flagship center in Syracuse. Equitable transportation is one of the key factors in people’s ability to tap into these workforce development resources.

FIGURE 2.7: EXISTING/ANTICIPATED EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS AND TOP 25 EMPLOYERS

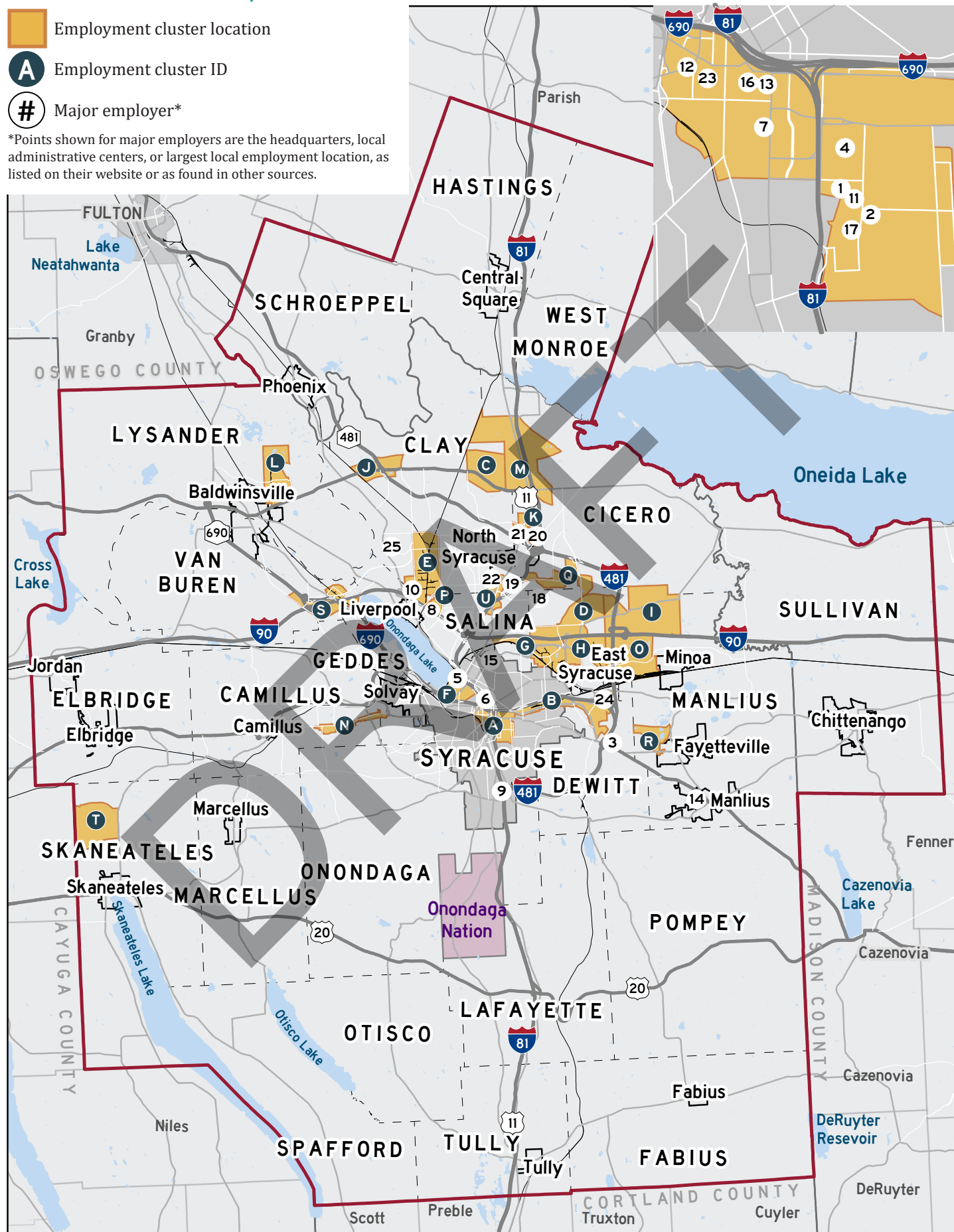


FIGURE 2.8: TOP 25 EMPLOYERS IN THE SMTC MPA

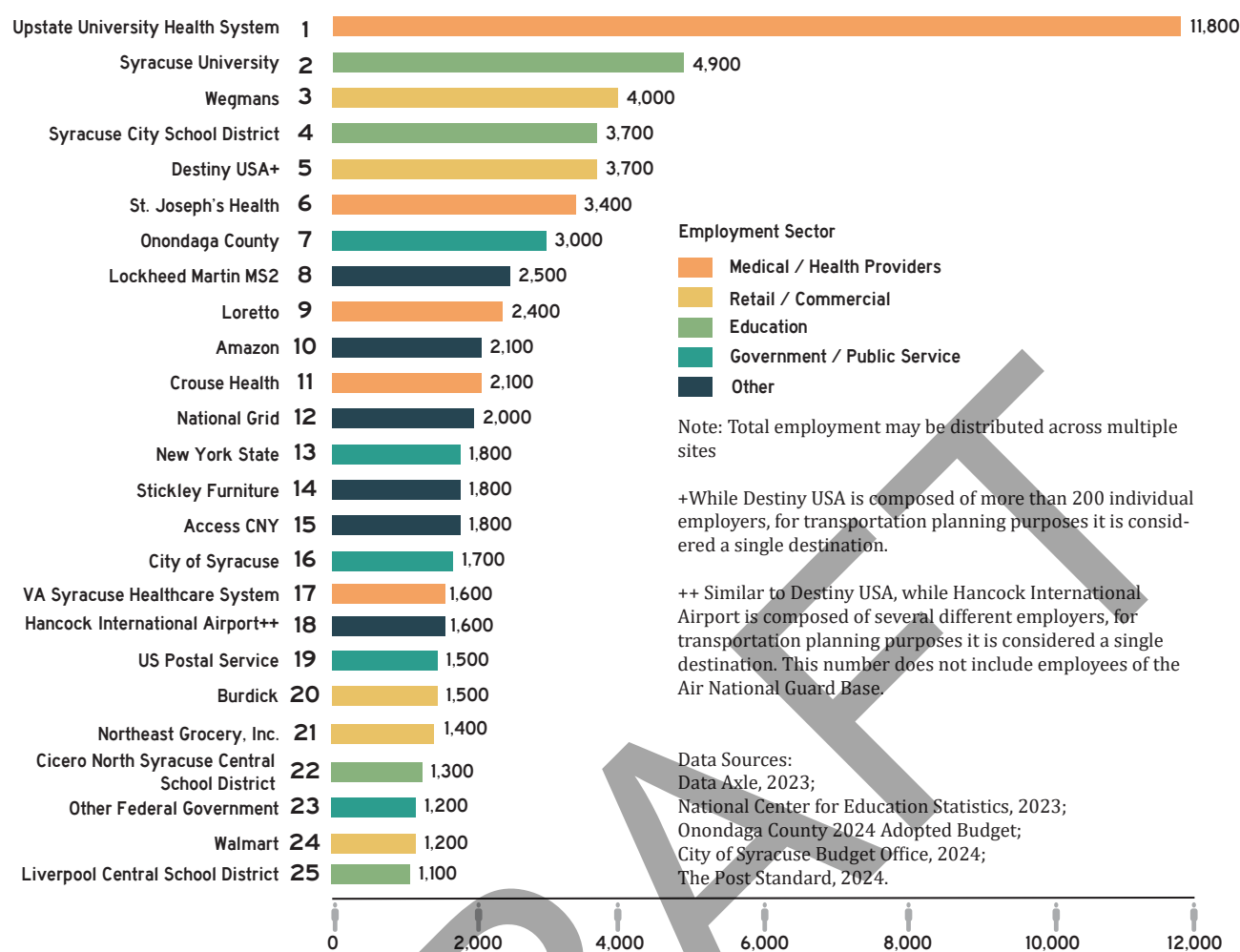


TABLE 2.1: EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS CURRENT AND FUTURE EMPLOYEES

	Employment Clusters	Estimated Number of Employees	
		2020 Estimate	2050 Estimate
A	Downtown Syracuse / University Hill	51,800	64,000
B	Erie Blvd E	12,300	15,300
C	White Pine Commerce Park	100	13,000
D	E Molloy Rd	7,600	9,800
E	Woodard Industrial Park	8,400	9,400
F	Destiny USA / Inner Harbor	5,000	6,800
G	Rt 298 West	5,100	5,800
H	Thompson Rd East	4,800	5,600
I	I-481 / Rt 298	2,800	5,200
J	Rt 31 at Rt 481	3,900	5,100
K	Rt 11 - Cicero South	4,200	4,400
L	Radisson Corporate Park	2,800	4,300
M	Rt 11 - Cicero North	2,000	4,200
N	W Genesee St	3,800	4,100
O	Kirkville Rd / Railyard	2,800	3,800
P	Electronics Parkway	2,800	3,300
Q	E Taft Rd	2,500	2,900
R	Fayetteville Towne Center	2,600	2,900
S	NYS Thruway / Rt 690	2,200	2,600
T	Skaneateles Falls	1,900	2,300
U	Rt 11 - Mattydale	1,800	2,200

Data Source: SMTC Travel Demand Model

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Future development will likely be concentrated in the northern half of Onondaga County, in part due to constraints imposed on water and wastewater infrastructure.

Plan Onondaga (p.16) states “areas served with public water and sewer are best positioned to accommodate growth and increases in residential density. The County continues to encourage development in areas already served by water and sewer.” The current Onondaga County Consolidated Sanitary District includes most of the northern half of Onondaga County, although there are large areas that are excluded due to floodplains and wetlands such as the Cicero Swamp and Three Rivers Wildlife Management Areas. In contrast, “in the southern portion of the County, steep topography has precluded significant development and limits agricultural activity, leading to large expanses of forestland.” According to Plan Onondaga (p. 18), “the County does not anticipate any significant expansion of the sanitary district.”

The impermeable surfaces of our transportation system – including roads, sidewalks, and paved trails – create stormwater runoff that collects and transports pollutants, which can ultimately end up in local water bodies. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) administers the permit program for municipal separate stormwater

sewer systems (MS4s), in compliance with federal law developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The goal of the MS4 permit program is to reduce discharge of pollutants and improve water quality. Many of the municipalities within the SMTc’s MPA are regulated MS4s and, therefore, must have a stormwater management plan and comply with the general permit requirements for stormwater discharges. Most of these municipalities are also members of the CNY Stormwater Coalition, which is led by the CNYRPDB and provides a forum for the municipalities to exchange information and work together to improve water quality.

Limiting the expansion of impermeable surfaces and incorporating green infrastructure techniques that slow the flow of stormwater runoff in future transportation projects can contribute to a reduction in overall stormwater quantity and improvement in water quality in our region.

Farmland accounts for about 30 percent of Onondaga County’s land area and is critical to community identity and scenic resources with over 12,000 acres of agricultural land protected as forever farmland by conservation easements held by local land trusts. (Plan Onondaga)

Greenways and blueways serve multiple purposes in our communities.

One of the themes of Plan Onondaga is “greenways and blueways” which “work together to provide a connected system of recreation and conservation lands.” (p.152) The Plan defines two types of greenways: conservation greenways and recreation greenways. In some cases, active transportation corridors (such as the Empire State Trail and the Onondaga Creek Walk) overlap with recreation greenways – and are often adjacent to the blueways (navigable lakes and streams).

Active transportation corridors provide walking and biking connections between destinations, though they may overlap with some of the recreational trails in our community.

Many communities in our MPA are actively involved in statewide programs to address climate change and transition to renewable energy.

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers grants, rebates for electric vehicles, and free technical assistance. Registered communities have made a commitment to act by passing the CSC pledge. Certified communities are the foremost leaders in the state; they have gone beyond the CSC pledge by completing and documenting a suite of actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change at the local level.⁸

Transportation-related themes from Climate Action Plans (CAPs) and Sustainability Plans in our MPA include:

- Reducing VMT, especially by improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure;
- Installing publicly available EV charging stations;
- Electrifying municipal (and school district) fleets.

Note that Onondaga County last updated its CAP in 2017, but currently has a CSC grant through NYSDEC to update their GHG inventory and CAP.

Fleet electrification is also one of the “high impact actions” in NYSEERDA’s Clean Energy Communities program, which provides access to tools, resources, and potential funding for communities to move towards clean energy solutions.⁹ As of May 2023, there were 83 EV charging locations with a total of 274 ports in the MPA, representing an uptick from 2020 when there were 54 locations with a total of 154 ports. Fourteen of the current locations – totaling over 70 ports – are within Downtown Syracuse or the University Hill area, with the remainder mostly scattered throughout the northern half of Onondaga County in village centers and along major transportation corridors such as Erie Boulevard, NY Route 31, I-90, and I-81.

TABLE 2.2: PARTICIPATION IN CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES, CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITIES, AND MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORMWATER SEWER SYSTEMS

Towns/City	Camillus	Cicero	Clay	DeWitt	Elbridge	Fabius	Geddes	Hastings	LaFayette	Lysander	Manlius	Marcellus	Onondaga	Otisco	Pompey	Salina	Schroeppe	Skaneateles	Spafford	Sullivan	Syracuse	Tully	Van Buren	West Monroe
CSC				✓	✓	✓	✓		*		*	✓						✓			✓			
CEC	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	*		*		*	✓			✓	✓		*			✓	✓		
MS4	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓

Villages	Baldwinsville	Camillus	Central Square	Chittenango	East Syracuse	Elbridge	Fabius	Fayetteville	Jordan	Liverpool	Manlius	Marcellus	Minoa	North Syracuse	Phoenix	Skaneateles	Solvay	Tully
CSC	✓							*	✓				✓			✓		*
CEC	✓	*		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*	✓
MS4	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Notes:

- For CSC: ✓ = Registered; * = Certified Bronze (highest level achieved in our MPA). Madison County is Certified Bronze, and both Onondaga and Oswego counties are Registered.
- CEC: ✓ = Designated; * = Advanced Designation. Madison County is also Designated.
- MS4: ✓ = Designated. Onondaga County is also a designated MS4.

⁸ <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>

⁹ <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Clean-Energy-Communities>

Transitioning to electric and zero emissions vehicles

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) is a key component of the national and state level plans aimed at addressing climate change. As a result, several laws and programs have been developed to help guide this transition.

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) established the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program, which provided funding to states to deploy EV fast charging stations. In 2023, NYSDOT adopted the State's NEVI Plan, allowing it to access approximately \$175 million to implement the program. Funds were to be invested within one travel mile of a designated EV corridor, with charging stations no more than 50 miles apart. In the SMTc's MPA, I-81 and I-90 are the designated EV corridors and there

is one compliant charging station (having a minimum of four direct current fast chargers [DCFC]) along each corridor. The buildout within Central New York was completed in 2024.

Additionally, New York State's EV Make-Ready Program aims to invest over \$1.2 billion to build over 50,000 Level 2 charging stations and over 6,000 DCFC stations, along with dedicated charging facilities for e-bikes and e-scooters. Over \$370 million of those funds will be directed towards disadvantaged communities, as defined by NYSEEDA.

Expanding public charging infrastructure is a necessary component of the State's overall transition to EVs and ZEVs. NYS Executive Order 22 requires that the State's vehicle fleet fully transitions to ZEVs for light-duty vehicles by 2035 with

medium- and heavy-duty vehicles by 2040. In 2022, the State adopted the California Air Resources Board Advanced Clean Cars II regulation, requiring all light-duty passenger vehicles sold in the State to be ZEVs by 2035, with medium- and heavy-duty vehicles following by 2045.

The transition to ZEVs will also impact our mass transportation, including public transportation and school buses. In the 2022-2023 New York State budget, all school bus purchases, beginning in 2027, must be EV or ZEV, including battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell. Centro, the regional transportation authority, has also been evaluating the potential use of hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles as part of its future fleet, as described in their 2022 Sustainability Plan.

As required by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Onondaga County maintains a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), which must be updated every 5 years, "to prepare for and reduce the potential impacts of natural hazards." Onondaga County last updated the HMP in 2019, and is currently finalizing the 2025 update. SMTc staff participated in the HMP process. The primary hazards of concern identified in the HMP are: drought, earthquake, heat wave/extreme heat*, flood, geological hazards, harmful algal bloom, invasive species and infestation, severe weather, winter weather, and wildfire*. (*Added in the 2025 update.) The HMP includes an inventory of transportation facilities in the county. Hazards noted to have a potential impact on transportation facilities include flood, earthquake, geological hazards (especially along steep slopes), and winter weather. Mitigation actions identified in the HMP include culvert replacements, drainage, and bank stabilization projects.



Skaneateles Lake, which provides the drinking water for the City of Syracuse and several municipalities, has experienced harmful algal blooms in recent years.

OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Commute times by car in the Syracuse region are low and congestion is minimal.

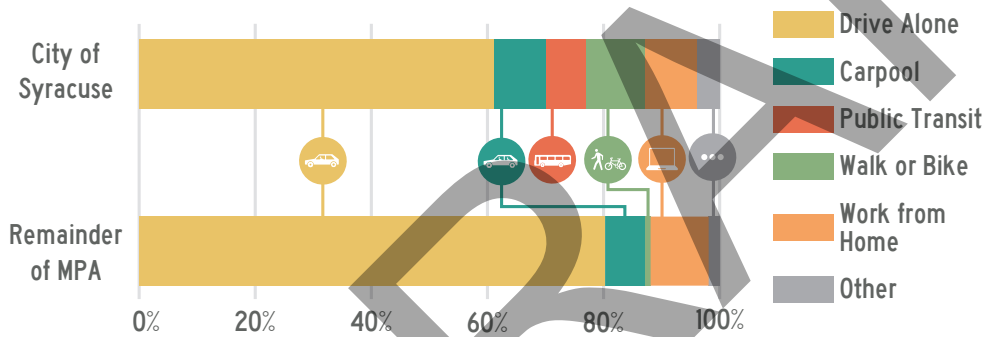
As the region's population spread out and local industries boomed in the middle part of the 20th century, the region built a robust network of Interstate highways, other limited-access highways, and arterial roads that still provides today's population with relatively low commute times and little congestion. With population shifts and job losses in the early 2000s, the region has been left with a vast and aging road network, with some corridors in the region having excess capacity for the role they now play while congestion – though minimal – has shifted to a few hot spots at constrained highway interchanges and suburban retail corridors. Overall

average commute time in the MPA is about 21 minutes. Our region spends most of its federal capital funds for highway and bridge maintenance projects.

For people who are able to own and drive their own vehicle, the short commutes by car and relatively low congestion contribute to the quality of life in Central New York. However, this benefit is not shared by all members of our community.

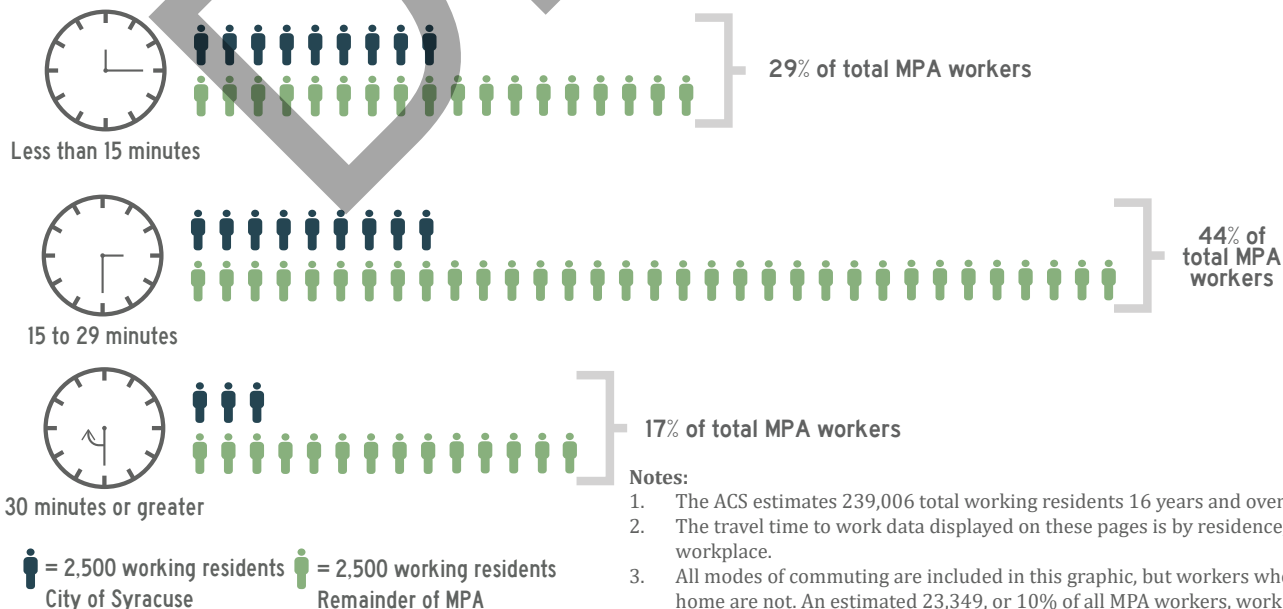
Average commute time
 City of Syracuse: 17.6 min Onondaga County: 20.1 min
 New York State: 33.2 min United States: 26.7 min

FIGURE 2.9: MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK



Data Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022

FIGURE 2.10: COMMUTE TIME BY NUMBER OF WORKING RESIDENTS



Notes:

1. The ACS estimates 239,006 total working residents 16 years and over in the MPA.
2. The travel time to work data displayed on these pages is by residence, not by workplace.
3. All modes of commuting are included in this graphic, but workers who work at home are not. An estimated 23,349, or 10% of all MPA workers, work from home.

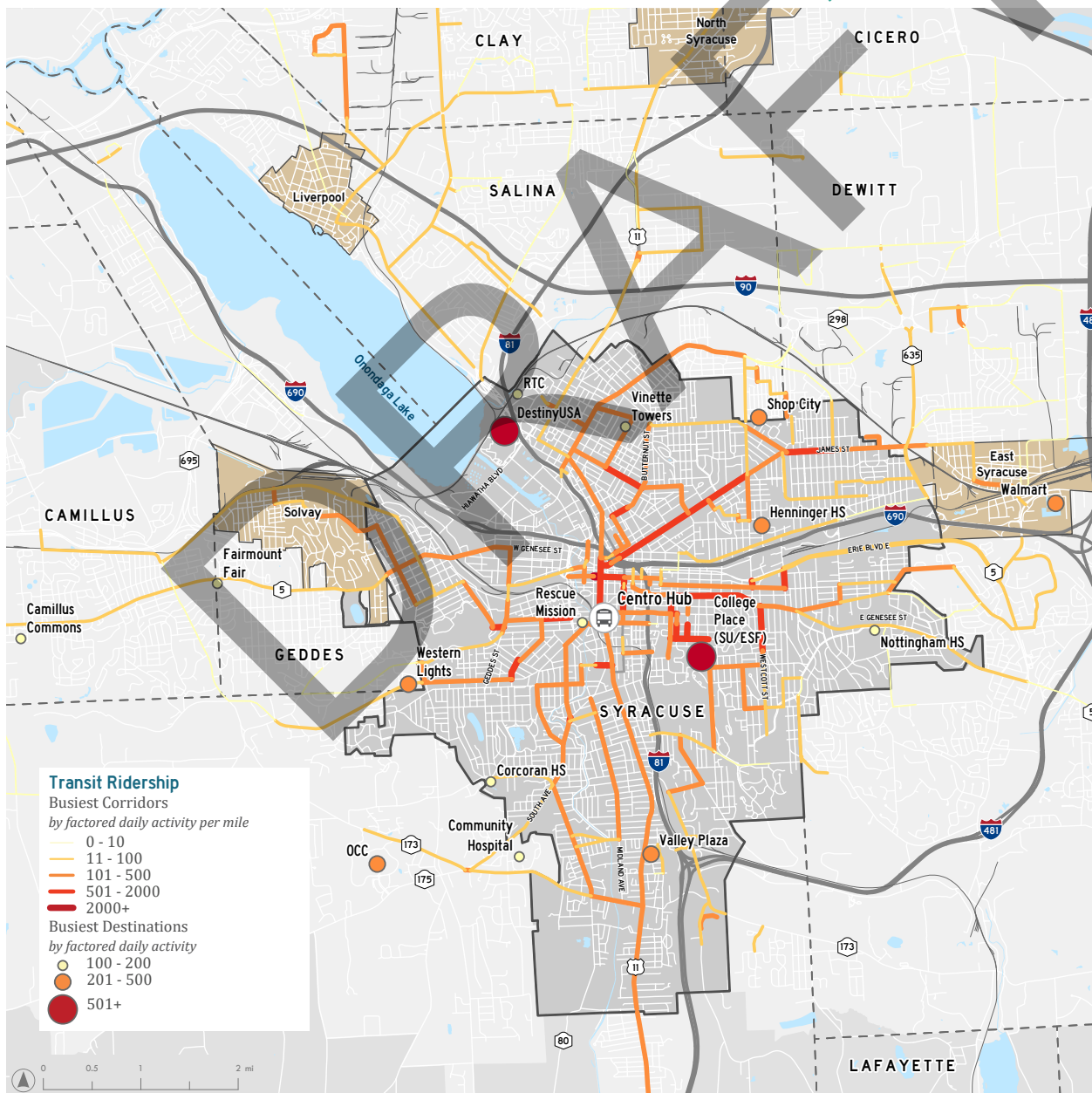
Data Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022

For those who cannot or choose not to drive or own a vehicle, accessing jobs and other daily needs in our region is challenging.

About 26 percent of households in the City of Syracuse do not have access to a vehicle, compared with about 7 percent of households in the remainder of our MPA. The majority of commuters in our region - both inside and outside the City - drive to work, mostly in single-occupant vehicles. In the City of Syracuse, 8 percent of commuters use transit and 12 percent walk or bike to work, in stark contrast to the remainder of the MPA where only 1 percent of commuters use transit and 2 percent walk or bike.

Centro provides bus service in our MPA, operating a hub-and-spoke system with all trips having an endpoint at the Transit Hub in downtown Syracuse. Some routes in the urban core operate during peak times with 10-15 minute headways but headways for longer routes into some suburban areas and off-peak times can reach to over an hour. Ridership is concentrated primarily in City neighborhoods close to downtown and along major arterials in the City. The busiest individual transit stops (other than the Hub) are colleges (SU, OCC) and shopping centers (both within and outside the City).

FIGURE 2.11: BUSIEST CENTRO CORRIDORS AND STOPS, 2023 RIDERSHIP



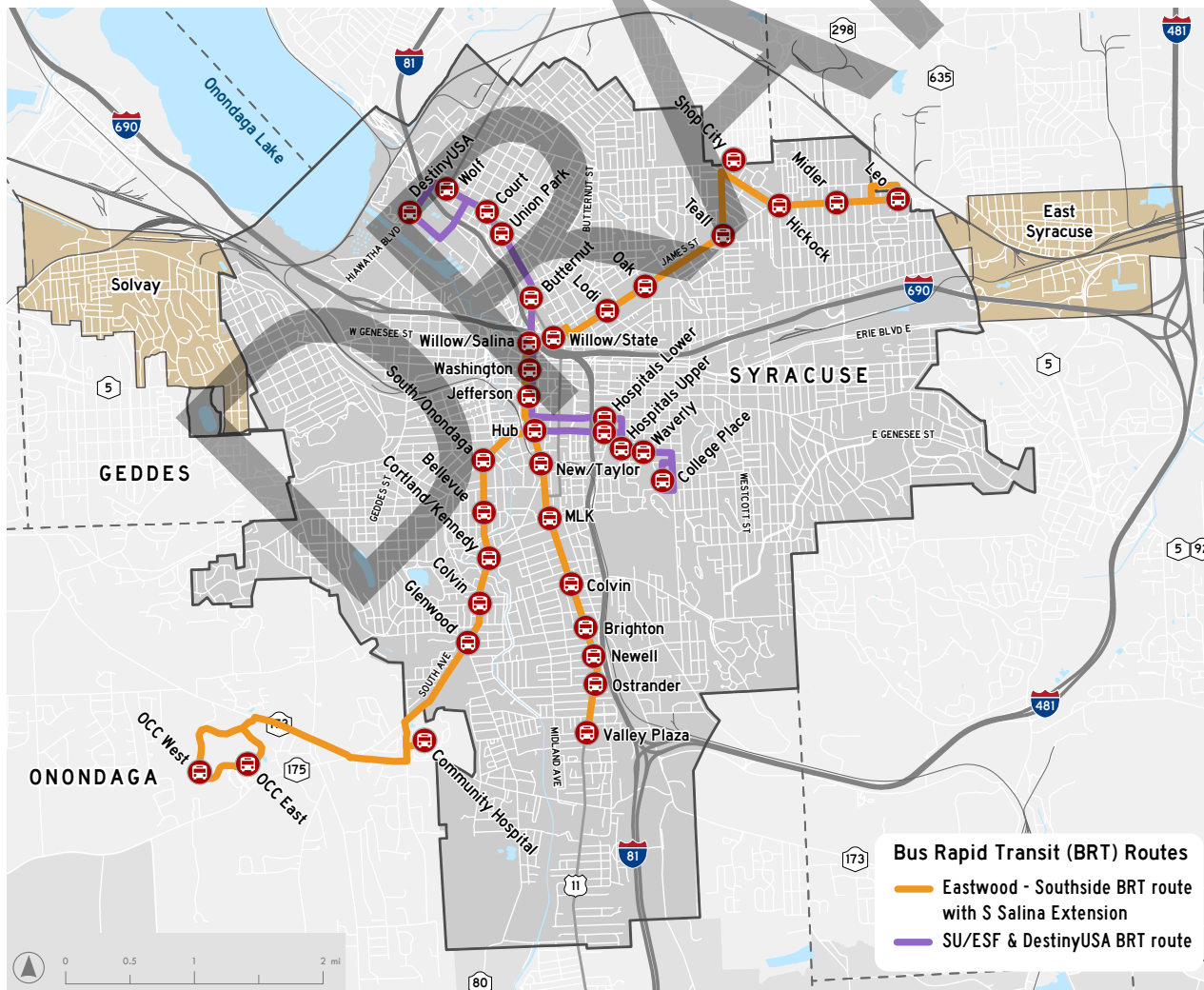
Increased frequency is key to enhancing transit service and attracting new riders.

In 2023, the SMTC conducted a survey as part of the “Exploring Tomorrow’s Transit” public outreach effort, on behalf of Centro, and received over 1,000 responses. When asked to prioritize potential future transit system improvements, both riders and non-riders overwhelmingly asked for increased service frequency. Centro is pursuing a BRT system initially consisting of two lines as recommended by the 2018 SMART study that will provide higher frequency and more reliable service to high-demand corridors, with a line connecting SU to DestinyUSA and another running along James Street (from Eastwood) to OCC via South Ave and Valley Plaza via South Salina St. Future expansions of this system may be considered. Centro is also pursuing on-

demand options, beginning with the MOVE service in the City of Rome in 2024 and, eventually, to be expanded to other Centro properties. Centro is planning for BRT and on-demand service along with other changes to the fixed-route system to better meet current demand travel patterns through their “Better Bus” planning project, which is expected to be completed at the end of 2025.

Investment in new options like Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and on-demand service will provide more efficient, higher-quality service to our region.

FIGURE 2.12: PROPOSED BUS RAPID TRANSIT ROUTES



Multiple efforts are underway in our community to increase the safety of the transportation system for all users.

The City of Syracuse is currently creating a Complete Streets Design Guide and Vision Zero Action Plan, Onondaga County is currently creating a Safe Streets for All Action Plan, and New York State adopted the “Towards Zero Deaths” vision with the 2023-2027 Strategic Highway Safety Plan. All of these planning efforts utilize the Safe System Approach, which “works by building and reinforcing multiple layers of protection to both prevent crashes from happening in the first place and minimize the harm caused to those involved when crashes do occur.”¹⁰



VISION ZERO is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. It is a multidisciplinary approach that recognizes that people sometimes make mistakes, so the road system and policies should be designed to ensure mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities. visionzeronetwork.org

The Syracuse region sees an average of 41 crashes per day...



...of which 1 results in a serious injury or fatality



Speed humps, as seen above in the Village of Fayetteville, are one tool communities may use to address speeding concerns in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity.

¹⁰ U.S. D.O.T. <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem>

The region has been expanding and improving opportunities to walk and bike, though we still have more work to do.

There are currently about 33 miles of on-road bicycle facilities in the MPA (an increase of about 9 miles since 2020), with the majority of that in the City of Syracuse. There are also about 90 miles of signed bike route for NYS Bike Routes 5 and 11.

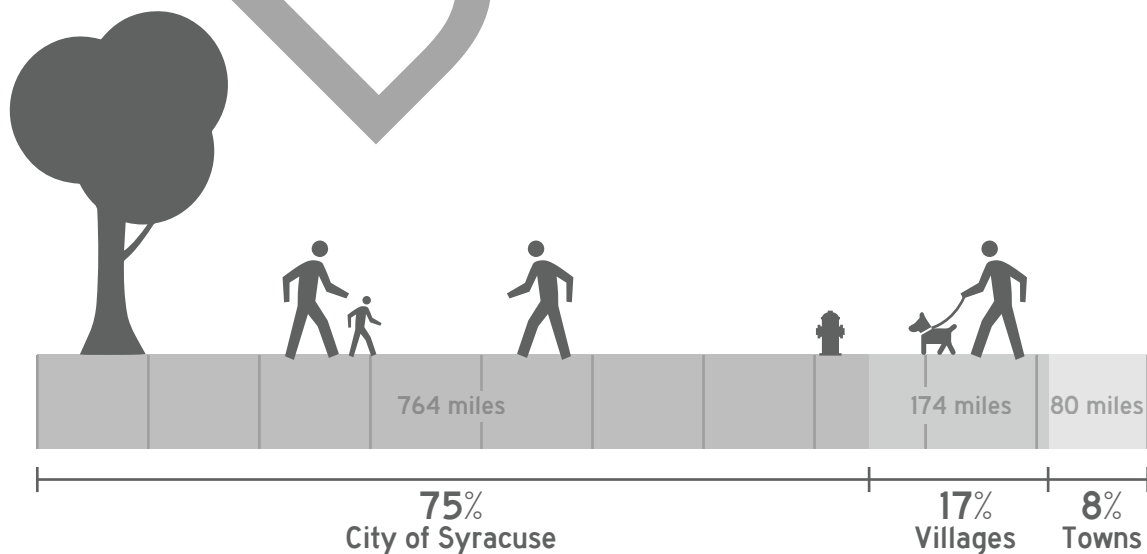
The major trails in the region are the Onondaga Creekwalk, Empire State Trail, and Onondaga Lake Trail (“Loop the Lake”). These three trails plus other local trails (not in parks) total about 85 miles. Phase II of the Onondaga Creekwalk was completed in July 2020. With that addition, the Creekwalk now extends from Kirk Park on the City’s Southside all the way to Onondaga Lake. The Empire State Trail between Camillus and DeWitt was completed in 2021, including connections on Honeywell property, Erie Boulevard East, Towpath Road, and Kinne Road (bike/ped bridge), plus the bridge over the CSX rail line at the southern end of Onondaga Lake (also part of Loop the Lake).

Veo bike and scooter share began operating in the City of Syracuse in 2021 (replacing a previous vendor), and has expanded steadily, deploying 850 vehicles in the City in 2023. Centro has contracted with Veo to provide access to bike and scooter share outside of the City, with the launch of service to the OCC campus in 2023.

Nearly 70 percent of the region’s sidewalks are within the City of Syracuse. Most villages in the region also have robust sidewalk networks, but sidewalks in towns outside of villages are very limited. Two towns - DeWitt and Salina - account for more than half of the town sidewalk mileage outside of villages.

The City of Syracuse currently has two programs for sidewalks: the Municipal Sidewalk Program (MSP) and the supplemental Sidewalk Snow Removal Program. The MSP started in 2021 and is a data-driven, planned maintenance program to repair existing sidewalks and expand the sidewalk network. Locations are identified using various data inputs, including an assessment conducted by SMTC largely based on our Pedestrian Demand Model. Starting in the summer of 2021, SMTC staff began collecting sidewalk condition data for the City, completing this effort for all public sidewalks in the City in the summer of 2024. City DPW now provides supplemental sidewalk snow removal on approximately 156 miles of sidewalk, a significant increase since the 2019/2020 season when 77 miles were included in the program. The snow clearance routes were identified by the City in partnership with the SMTC based largely on traffic volume data and the location of pedestrian generators such as schools and stores.

FIGURE 2.13: SIDEWALK MILEAGE BY MUNICIPALITY IN THE MPA



Road and bridge maintenance consume the bulk of our federal capital funds for transportation projects.

With approximately 4,000 centerline miles of road and nearly 550 roadway bridges in the MPA, system preservation and maintenance is an on-going process as well as a substantial investment of time and resources. SMTC annually produces a Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System (BPCMS) report for federal-aid eligible roads in our region, summarizing numerous aspects of pavement and bridge rating data collected by our member agencies. SMTC also collects and reports pavement ratings for all roads in the City of Syracuse.

Most bridges in the region are in fair condition, and most pavement is in good to excellent condition. Although only about 10 percent of both bridges and pavement are in poor condition, this still translates to a significant number of bridges and lane miles of pavement needing a substantial level of work and investment. Also, good asset management practices call for investing in bridges and pavements in fair condition to prevent them from deteriorating to poor condition. All of this translates to a substantial portion of our region’s allocation of federal capital funds being spent on bridge and paving projects that are, by and large, replacement in-kind projects that do not substantially alter or add capacity to the system. Similarly, most of our federal transit funding in the region is spent on maintenance projects such as bus replacements or facility maintenance.

FIGURE 2.14: CONDITION OF ALL BRIDGES IN MPA, BY DECK AREA

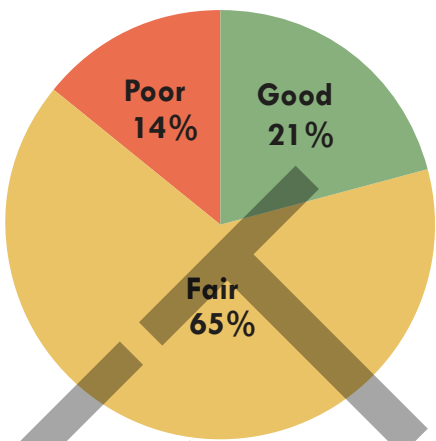
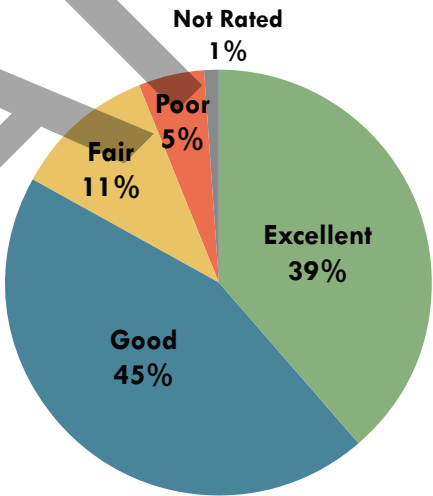
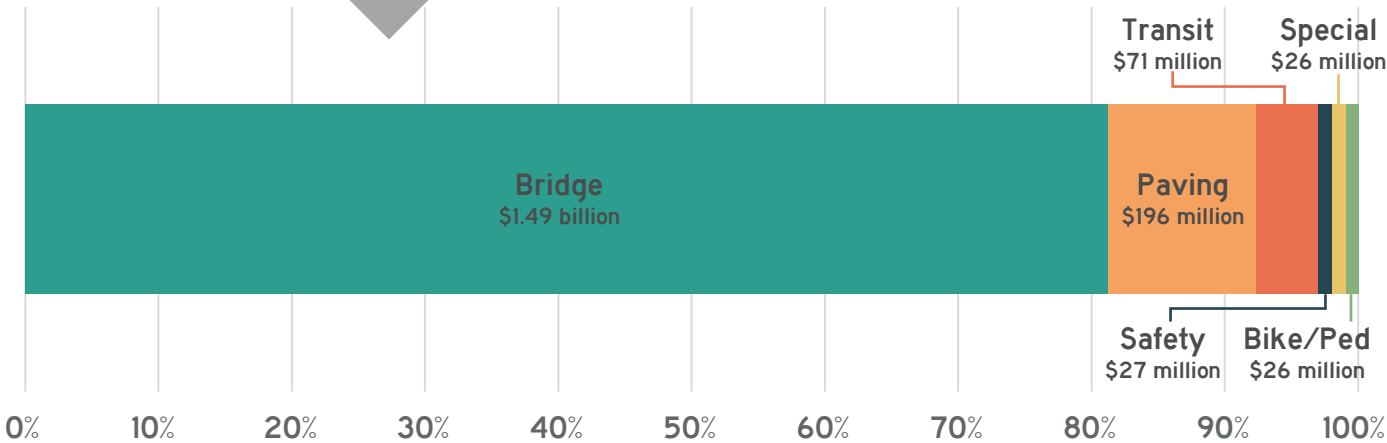


FIGURE 2.15: PAVEMENT CONDITION, FEDERAL AID ELIGIBLE ROADS



Source: SMTC’s 2023-2024 Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System Report

FIGURE 2.16: PROGRAMMED TIP FUNDS BY PROJECT TYPE, FFY2018/2019 - FFY2023/2024



The vast majority of freight moving through our region is carried by truck, although it is likely that other modes will increase with the coming industrial development.

The SMTC created a “Freight Transportation Profile” in 2017 and updated this document in 2025, aimed at assisting staff and member agencies in the development of plans and programs. The Profile provides an overview of the freight transportation system in our region, identifies tons and value of commodities traveling through the system, and tracks the primary shipping modes (i.e., air, rail, and truck).

In 2021, approximately 10.1 million tons of freight was inbound to Onondaga County, valued at \$15.9 billion. Roughly 48 percent of this freight originated within New York State (4.9 million tons). Outbound freight included 8.1 million tons (\$12.4 billion), with 48 percent being shipped within New York State (3.9 million tons). Inbound and outbound freight levels, both in terms of tons and value, were down compared to 2012 (inbound: 13.5 million tons, valued at \$20.4 billion; outbound: 10.5 million tons, valued at \$15 billion). Approximately 2.1 million tons of freight (valued at \$4.7 billion) was

generated and shipped within the county, via truck, in 2021.

TRANSEARCH projections for 2050 estimate inbound freight to increase to 14.6 million tons (\$21.6 billion) and outbound freight to increase to 11.9 million tons (\$22.1 billion).¹¹ The forecasts were prepared prior to the announcement that Micron Technologies would be building a semiconductor chip manufacturing facility on Onondaga County. Given the light weight and high value of chips, it is probable that air would be utilized to a significantly higher percentage of overall value than exists within the dated forecasts.

Roughly 200,000 tons of cargo landed at Syracuse’s Hancock International Airport in 2023. The top three air cargo destinations from Syracuse are Louisville, Memphis, and Buffalo. Overall, the vast majority of freight movements within Onondaga County occur via truck (approximately 99 percent).

Expansion at the Port of Oswego

The Port of Oswego on Lake Ontario, about 40 miles from Syracuse, is the first U.S. port-of-call and deepwater port on the Great Lakes from the St. Lawrence Seaway, and handles more than one million tons of cargo annually. Although outside of the SMTC’s MPA, the Port is connected to the surface transportation network within the MPA via NYS Route 481, which connects to I-81.

In the last 5 years, the Port of Oswego has pursued and been awarded multiple state and federal grants to expand their facilities. The Port’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan identified opportunities such as expanding docks, deepening the port, creating recreational amenities like

lake cruises and a performing arts center, and establishing the Port District as a foreign trade zone.

The Port’s new deep-water marina opened for the 2024 season on the site of the former Goble Dry Dock; this \$2.1 million project was funded by the NYS Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) and the Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Program.

Several projects have already been awarded funding, including \$3.5 million in dock upgrades, \$754,000 for a container reach stacker from the USDOT America’s Marine Highway Projects, and a \$600,000 agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to deepen the Port’s harbor. In

March 2023, the Port received two awards under New York State’s Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Program: \$1.832 million to reduce emissions through an Electric Railcar Mover and \$2.861 million to construct additional storage track capacity, safety upgrades, and upgraded unloading for agricultural products.

According to an economic impact study completed in 2023, the Port saw a surge in employment, increasing from 106 to 1,132 direct jobs between 2017 and 2022. The Port also created 300 indirect jobs and 797 induced jobs in 2022, which support the overall community.

¹¹ TRANSEARCH is a proprietary freight planning tool based on a national database of commodity flows. These data sources were the most current available at the time that SMTC created the Freight Transportation Profile (2025).

The SMTC supports New York State's targets for performance-based planning, and contributes to the achievement of the national performance goals.

Performance-based planning continues to be a requirement of the MPO process. The MTP must include a system performance report that describes the current performance of the transportation system and includes performance targets in the areas of:

- highway safety;
- transit asset management;
- pavement and bridge condition;
- system performance (reliability) and freight; and
- transit safety.

Appendix B includes the full SMTC System Performance Report for 2025.

As described above, the majority of commuters in our region travel by car and enjoy relatively short commute times and minimal congestion in our region. The highway and road systems are also easy to use for other types of trips as well. A very large portion of our capital funds are spent on maintaining the roads and bridges that make car travel in our region easy and attractive to so many residents. This is reflected in the system performance report for our region.



Maintaining safe and efficient roadways, including important commuter corridors like Rt 57 in the Village of Liverpool, is vital to the economic health of our region.