

Conclusion

SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

For the first time in many decades, the Syracuse region is anticipating substantial population and job growth.

Recent trends have shown growth in some economic sectors such as “eds and meds” and this growth will accelerate and expand across industries with the forthcoming investment by Micron Technology at the White Pine Commerce Park. Excitement across the region is palpable, but we also need to be purposeful in creating opportunities for all residents of our region as a result of this growth. Access to education and workforce development centers will be essential to support this growth.

The need for new housing in our region is substantial, and the choices we make about where and what types of housing to build will impact the transportation options available to existing and future residents. Higher-density housing in strong centers will support the active transportation and enhanced bus service that people want. Achieving that will require support for a variety of housing options in targeted areas.

Our previous MTP was adopted in the fall of 2020, and trends emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic were still very much in flux. Five years on, we are seeing some trends that are enduring, such as less rigid work hours and more off-peak trips, which impact how we plan our future transportation system. We need to expand our view of transportation beyond the traditional daily commute. Walking and biking should be safe options for shorter trips around one’s neighborhood, while enhanced bus service can become the mode of choice on key commuter routes in our region. New options such as micromobility and on-demand transit will increase accessibility.

In conversations with community members and through our MTP survey, people have told us they want more transportation options in the region. Sidewalk connections that cross municipal boundaries, especially between the City of Syracuse and nearby suburban retail/service plazas, are a concern. People want to use the Centro bus system, but need more frequent and reliable service on the core routes and to key employment destinations. People appreciate our recreational trail system, and want to see more blueways and greenways in the region, both for recreation and to provide more active transportation options. As our regional trail system has matured, more local connections to the system are needed to provide greater access. We recognize that maintaining our roads and bridges and our transit system in good condition requires a substantial and ongoing effort. Overall, people want the transportation system to be safe and reliable for all users.

This MTP lays out a vision for transportation investment in the Syracuse region over the next 25 years.

The 2025 update to the MTP fulfills the requirement to update the MTP every 5 years. The MTP also includes the required system performance report, and is fiscally constrained.

LINKAGE WITH CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

As we pursue specific capital projects in the future, we will look to our MTP goals in the areas of Community, Economy, and Environment to guide our choices, while continuing to advance our four priority funding initiatives: I-81 Community Grid, regional trail connections, BRT, and access to the White Pine Commerce Park.

In 2025, the SMTC adopted a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) consisting almost entirely of carry over projects from the previous TIP cycle. Selected projects were vetted against criteria which were influenced by the previous LRTP's goals and objectives. Prior to the next TIP update in 2029, the SMTC will review

the MTP goals and objectives to identify new selection criteria and develop a process that reflects the needs of the region. This process will continue to prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities while seeking projects that promote accessibility and connectivity for all road users.

UPDATING THE MTP

The next required update of the MTP will occur in 2030. However, we recognize that there are some major developments happening in our region right now that may prompt the need for an update prior to 2030.

Two significant environmental reviews are currently in progress. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Micron Technology site was released in June 2025 with public comments due in August. As of this writing, the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA), acting as lead agency for the environmental review, was reviewing public comments and a Final EIS is expected to be issued in fall 2025 so that construction can begin in November 2025.

In May 2025, the NYSDOT initiated a separate environmental review to address the anticipated transportation demands collectively associated with multiple planned developments in northern Onondaga County. As of this writing, the NYSDOT process is still in the scoping phase, with publication of a Project Scoping Report expected in fall 2025 and aiming for the release of a Draft EIS in spring 2026.

It is likely that one or both of these environmental reviews may recommend changes to the transportation system, and those future projects could require federal funding. This MTP includes White Pine Commerce Park access as one of our priorities and multiple MTP objectives support economic development and transportation system reliability. Depending on the scale of the recommendations from the environmental reviews, we may need to amend the MTP to add specific projects before the required 5-year MTP update is due. SMTC staff will continue to monitor progress and work closely with our member agencies to ensure that the White Pine Commerce Park project and associated development can proceed in a timely manner.

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