

Goals & Objectives

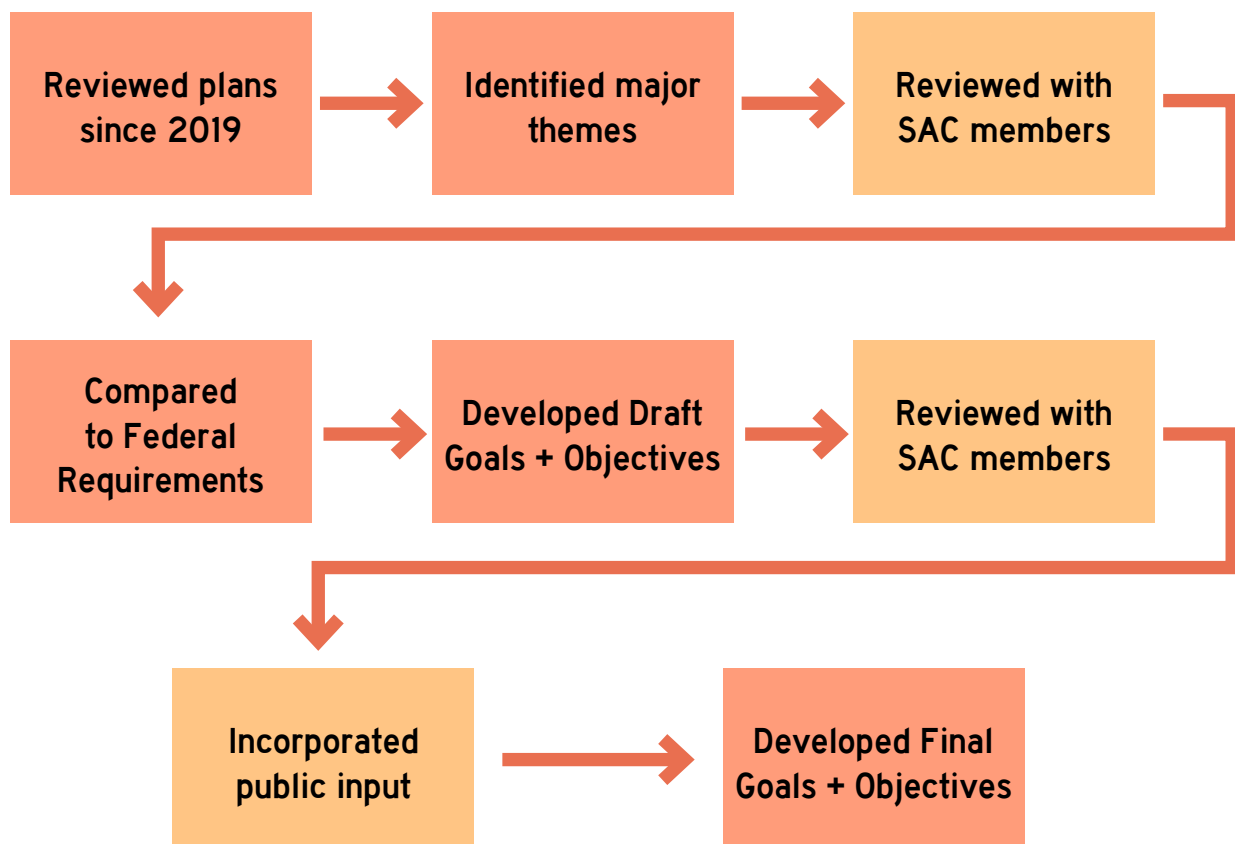
Evolution of Goals & Objectives

This MTP approached the goals and objectives with a “clean slate” given the anticipated demographic, economic, and technological changes in the Syracuse area.

The goals and objectives of the previous long-range transportation plan, established over a decade ago, remained largely unchanged in the last update (2020). However, the evolving dynamics in the Syracuse area over the past few years, as detailed in the Context Setting chapter, require a new perspective, anticipating significant demographic shifts, economic development, and the adoption of new transportation technologies over the next 25 years.

Additionally, guidance for incorporating the federally-required performance measures and targets into the MTP has been clarified since these were originally introduced by the FAST Act in 2015. These performance measures are reflected in the MTP goals and objectives, and fully-documented in the System Performance Report in Appendix B.

Given the substantial changes in our planning context and updated federal guidelines, we took a “clean slate” approach to defining our goals and objectives. This approach allows us to address contemporary challenges and leverage new opportunities to create a ***forward-thinking, resilient transportation plan*** that meets the current and future needs of the Syracuse region.



LOCAL PLANS REVIEWED

Statewide	Regional	County	Town & Village*	City of Syracuse	Additional Cities
- Transportation Master Plan - Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) - State Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) - NYS Freight Plan	- CNY Regional Economic Development Council - CNY Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB) - Vision CNY	- Plan Onondaga - Housing Onondaga - Onondaga County Hazard Mitigation Plan - Oswego County Comprehensive Plan	- Town of Clay - Town of Geddes/Village of Solway - Town of Lafayette - Town/Village of Skaneateles - Town of Van Buren - Village of Fayetteville - Town of Onondaga - Town of Manlius	- ReZone Syracuse - Syracuse Housing Study	- City of Oswego Comprehensive Plan - City of Fulton Comprehensive Plan

*New/updated since 2020



MAJOR THEMES IDENTIFIED

Mobility	Economic Development	Community	Environment	Governance
Improve accessibility for all users, with focus on bicycles and pedestrians	- Support small, local businesses - Concentrate development near existing commercial centers	- Provide a diverse range of housing options - Preserve historic structures and existing character	- Preserve and enhance natural amenities - Preserve agricultural spaces	- Improve collaboration with other government agencies - Improve transparency

Goals are statements that describe the way things should be. The MTP is built around eight goals that provide a general direction for the region's transportation system.

Objectives are specific, measurable steps to be taken to reach a goal. Each of the MTP's eight goals has distinct objectives associated with it.

Performance Measures are the means by which progress will be gauged. Performance measures are quantifiable. Each objective of the MTP has at least one performance measure associated with it.

Regional growth and technological advancements were the primary influences in developing new goals and objectives.

The SMTC took a comprehensive approach by considering the two primary influences on transportation planning in our region: regional growth and technological advancements. Regional growth includes population increases, economic development, and shifts in land use patterns, while technological advancements encompass innovations like electric vehicles, smart traffic management systems, and improved public transit solutions. These factors formed the foundation for developing a new set of goals and objectives.

To craft the new goals and objectives of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the SMTC reviewed planning documents and initiatives that were created or updated since the prior LRTP's adoption in 2020. This included Onondaga County's comprehensive plan, *PlanOnondaga*, planning efforts at the City of Syracuse like *ReZone Syracuse* and the *Syracuse Housing Study*, and new town and village plans. These local plans offer detailed insights into current land use and development trends and community priorities. Appendix C includes a summary of the transportation-related goals and objectives from existing regional plans.

Federal legislation requires that the MTP address ten 'planning factors' and seven National Goals for the transportation system.

The approach aimed to continue aligning local priorities with national goals and planning factors, ensuring coherence and compatibility with overarching federal requirements. MAP-21 identified eight planning factors to be used by metropolitan planning organizations like the SMTC to structure their policies and programs. In 2015, the FAST Act added two new planning factors to the list that address resiliency, mitigation of stormwater impacts, and travel and tourism.

Federal legislation also requires that the MTP address seven National Goals for the transportation system, which include safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. By aligning these local goals with national priorities, the MTP ensures that the Syracuse area's transportation system is integrated with broader federal initiatives. The performance measures associated with the National Goals are detailed in Appendix B.

The 10 Planning Factors are:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
5. 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;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation;
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ON LONG-TERM VISIONS

Public engagement has evolved to emphasize flexibility, asynchronous participation, and more direct contact with community members and organizations.

To engage a more diverse cross section of the Syracuse metropolitan region, SMTC staff developed a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that emphasized meeting people within their communities (see Appendix D). This included “piggybacking” on regular meetings of established community/citizen groups, tabling at local events, and presenting to local high school classes. SMTC staff interacted with over 400 individuals through all of these events, spanning from April to September 2024.

Since peoples’ busy schedules can make attending public meetings and events difficult, a dedicated MTP website was developed to provide access to materials for asynchronous participation. The website included a short introductory video, briefly summarizing the changes to our region over the last 25 years and the role of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in the planning process. The video received over 230 views.

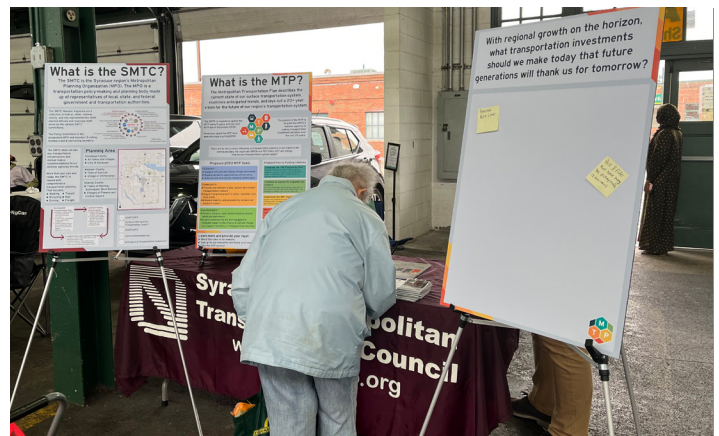
An online survey was also available on the website and received 353 responses. The survey aimed to capture how individuals currently use our region’s transportation system, identify issues and opportunities they experience in their daily lives, and determine what they believe our region should be investing in to improve our quality of life. At the community meetings and tabling events, SMTC staff distributed bookmarks with a QR code that linked to the MTP website, and people were encouraged to watch the video and complete the survey. Paper surveys were also available, and both forms were also available in Spanish.

Meetings/ Presentations:

- Cicero Senior Center
- Greater Syracuse Works
- Henninger High School
- Onondaga Central High School
- Moving People Transportation Coalition
- Q Center Youth and Young Adult groups
- Syracuse Urbanism Club
- Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today (Valley, Eastside, Westside, Southside)
- Manlius Library

Tabling Events:

- Central New York Regional Market
- Downtown Farmer’s Market
- Syracuse Mets
- Oswego County Transportation Forum



SMTC staff interacted with community members at the CNY Regional Market on May 18, 2024.

Throughout the public engagement process, SMTC staff continued to return to one guiding question:

“With historic growth heading our way, what transportation investments should we make today that future generations will thank us for tomorrow?”

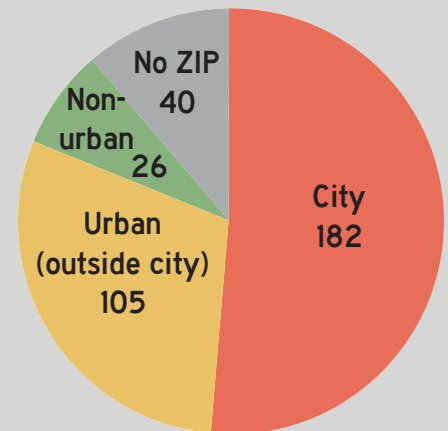
What we heard: overview of survey responses

See Appendix D for a complete summary of the survey.
Public feedback is also incorporated throughout Chapter 4.

353 total surveys submitted

Open March - September 2024

Through an open-ended map-based question, **over 800 specific transportation issues or opportunities were identified.** Although there are slight differences in priorities based on where respondents live within our MPA, some common themes can be found. **Respondents value investments that will improve transit service quality, expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and improve how our current road system functions.**



Survey responses by ZIP code area type

“How many of the following locations can you safely WALK or DRIVE to within 15 minutes of your home?”

Of the 14 destinations listed:

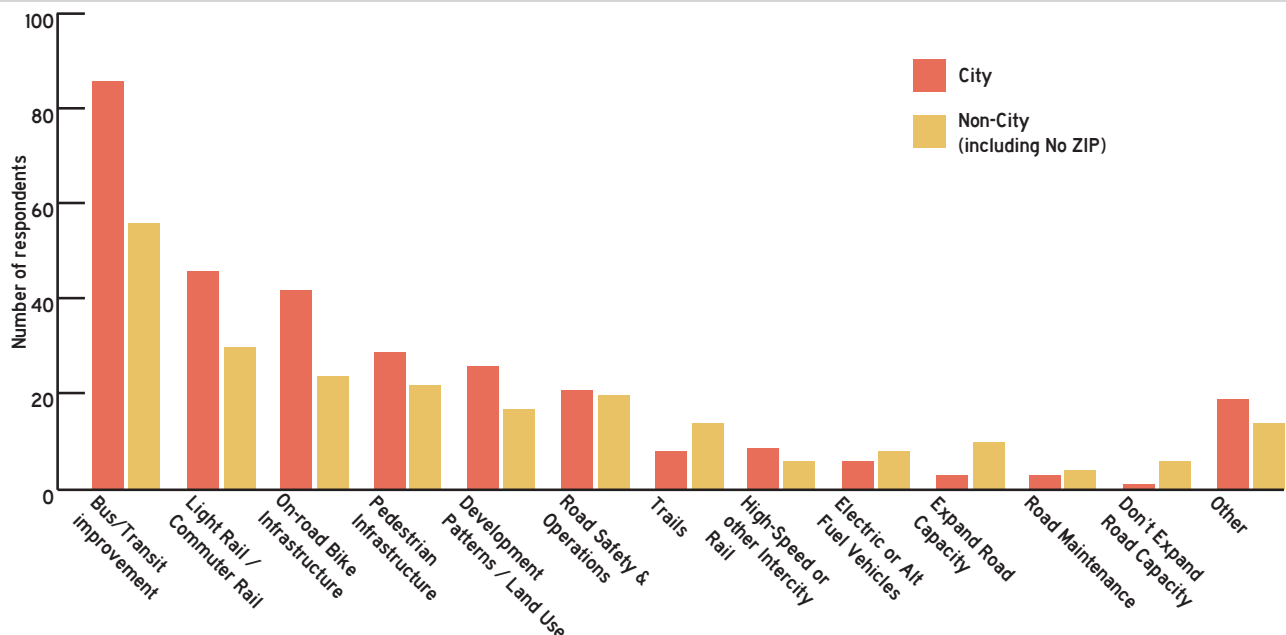
	WALK	DRIVE
MPA average	5.2	11.4
City average	6.2	11.9

Over 50% of all respondents can WALK to these destinations

Over 80% of all respondents can DRIVE to these destinations

- Park or recreation facility
- Convenience store
- School (K-12) or college
- Restaurant/coffee shop/cafe
- Grocery store
- Pharmacy
- Library
- Bank
- Local, small-scale retail
- Shopping center/plaza/big box retail
- Gym/community center
- Healthcare facility
- Your place of employment
- Your place of worship

Transportation investments suggested by survey respondents



SMTC MTP 2050 Goals + Objectives

Goal

Economy

Support efficient and reliable freight movement.

Expand access to opportunities and services.

Address new and rapidly changing technologies.

Community

Provide and maintain a safe, secure, and reliable transportation network.

Support targeted growth in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Enhance mobility and accessibility between all modes of travel.

Environment

Protect, enhance, and connect important ecosystems and ecologically significant areas.

Ensure communities are well-equipped to mitigate/adapt to the effects of climate change and support resiliency of transportation facilities.

Objective	Desired Performance
Maintain a high degree of reliability in our freight network and on our National Highway System (NHS).	Per adopted targets* for Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR).
Eliminate barriers to the transportation network through improved usability and accessible design.	Increase the number of ADA compliant facilities.
Improve access to major employment and training centers via all modes of transportation.	Maintain existing commute times for personal vehicles while decreasing commute times for alternative modes of transportation.
Expand transit service options for off-peak and non-commuting trips.	Increase off-peak access to fixed-route and on-demand transit service.
Strategically plan for publicly available electric vehicle charging stations.	Increase the number of EV charging stations along NEVI corridors and within the community.
Incorporate smart city technologies like signal prioritization or autonomous vehicle infrastructure across the region.	Increase the number of “smart city” assets in our transportation network.
Reduce serious injuries and fatalities from vehicle crashes and from crashes involving people walking and biking.	Per adopted targets* for fatalities (# and rate), and non-motorized fatalities + serious injuries (#).
Preserve and maintain existing transportation facilities including pavement, bridges, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.	Per adopted targets* for % of Interstate and non-Interstate NHS pavements in good and poor conditions; % NHS bridges good and poor condition.
Maintain a high degree of reliability on our highway system.	Per adopted targets* for percent of person-miles on interstate and non-interstate NHS that are realiable.
Focus transportation investments in existing and emerging centers, as well as along planned transit corridors.	Concentrate transportation investment where we have existing infrastructure. Encourage job growth around “Main Streets,” Downtown Syracuse, and industrial areas through placemaking investments.
Prioritize investments for disadvantaged communities.	Increase the number of projects funded in disadvantaged communities.
Create a cohesive and connected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the region.	Increase mileage of protected bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the region with an emphasis on filling gaps in the system.
Improve frequency and reliability of fixed-route transit service in the urban core and to regional employment centers.	Increase the number of bus routes with headways of 15 minutes or less for most of the day.
Expand micro-mobility options, such as bike- and scooter-shares, outside the City of Syracuse.	Increase the coverage of micro-mobility options.
Utilize greenways and blueways to connect our communities and natural resources.	Increase the mileage of designated greenway and blueway trails.
Reduce the quantity and improve quality of stormwater runoff from transportation facilities.	Limit expansion of impermeable surfaces from transportation facilities.
Incorporate bioswales, street canopies, and other green infrastructure elements.	Increase the percent of street tree canopy coverage. Increase investments in green infrastructure.
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions per capita.	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions per capita.
Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita.	Decrease vehicle miles traveled per capita.

* Federally-required performance measure. See Appendix B (System Performance Report).

Priority Funding Initiatives

A handful of large-scale surface transportation projects are likely to reshape mobility across our region over the next 25 years.

The 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in 2015, as well as the 2020 Update, both identified four “regionally significant projects” for the SMTM MPA. This list was developed based on previous SMTM studies, along with feedback from the Study Advisory Committee and the public during the LRTP process in 2015 and again in 2020. The region has made significant progress on these projects since that list was originally created in 2015, but more work remains to be done for the I-81

Community Grid, regional trail network, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Along with regional access to White Pine Business Park, these were identified as the “priority funding initiatives” for the expenditure of MPO capital funds over the next 25 years. The new goals and objectives of the MTP continue to support these priorities. Each priority initiative is not a singular project, but will likely be accomplished over time through multiple capital projects in the Transportation Improvement Program.

OLD: LRTP 2020 Update “Regionally Significant Projects”	Activity since 2020	NEW: Current MTP “Priority Funding Initiatives”
The I-81 Viaduct Project “Advance a solution that addresses the transportation needs within the priority area identified in the I-81 Corridor Study (2013), and further examined the the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.”	The Final Design Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the I-81 Viaduct Project was published by FHWA and NYSDOT in April 2022, and identified the Community Grid Alternative as the Project’s preferred alternative. The Record of Decision was issued in June 2022. Construction began in 2023.	Complete the I-81 Community Grid Including conversion of existing I-481 to I-81 and associated capacity projects, removal of downtown viaduct, completion of BL81 through the City of Syracuse, and new I-690 exit.
Expanded Regional Trail Network “Continue to progress projects identified in existing plans, such as the Onondaga Lake Trail and Onondaga Creekwalk.”	Phase II of the Onondaga Creekwalk, extending to Kirk Park on the city’s Southside, was completed in July 2020. The Empire State Trail between Camillus and DeWitt was completed in 2020, including the bridge over the CSX rail line at the southern end of Onondaga Lake (also part of Loop the Lake.)	Continue to expand the regional trail network Focus on closing gaps and increasing connectivity to the primary corridors such as the Empire State Trail, Onondaga Creekwalk, and Loop the Lake Trail.
Enhanced Transit System “Progress the locally-preferred alternative (Bus Rapid Transit in mixed traffic) from the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (Smart 1), completed in 2018.”	Centro has engaged a consultant to update data from the 2018 SMART study. Capital funds have been allocated to purchase BRT buses and the City of Syracuse is updating their Opti-Com system for traffic signals. Centro is targeting 2026 to begin BRT operations. Centro has contracted with Veo to provide bike/scooter share outside of the City, and is considering expansion of their on-demand service (implemented for their Rome property only in March 2024).	Implement the BRT system as identified in the SMART 1 Study (Eastwood-OCC via James St/South Ave & SU-RTC), and continue to expand other transit options.
Inland Port Facility “Support improvements to the DeWitt Rail Yard, which will expand freight movement capacity at this location.”	In 2019, NYS dedicated up to \$19 million toward construction of the Syracuse Intermodal Container Transfer Facilities at the CSX DeWitt Rail Yard. The upgrades, completed in 2020, included new cranes and lift equipment, additional space for stacking containers, and technology and security enhancements.	<i>Project is complete.</i>
<i>Not included as regional priority project in previous LRTP.</i>	In October 2022, Micron Technology, Inc. announced its selection of the White Pine Commerce Park site in the Town of Clay to build up to four semiconductor fabrication plants. Transportation (and other) impacts are being assessed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).	White Pine Commerce Park regional accessibility Transportation projects necessary for build-out of Micron site and surrounding industrial areas.

I-81 Community Grid



The centerpiece of the I-81 Project is the 1.4-mile stretch of elevated highway that cuts through the middle of Downtown Syracuse. The community grid alternative will replace the viaduct with an at-grade boulevard that disperses traffic throughout the city grid. Construction is anticipated to take six years and cost \$2.25 billion.

Regional Trail Network



In 2017, New York State launched the Empire State Trail to promote outdoor recreation, encourage healthy lifestyles, support community vitality, and bolster tourism-related economic development. The 750-mile trail showcases New York's special places, diverse history, and iconic landscapes.

Bus Rapid Transit System



Centro's initial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes will feature enhanced bus stop amenities and more frequent, predictable headways. SMTc's Exploring Tomorrow's Transit study, completed in 2023, identified frequency and coverage as Centro riders' top priorities through an online and in-person survey that garnered over 1,000 responses.

White Pine Commerce Park



Located along Route 31 in the Town of Clay, the White Pine Commerce Park is a 1,400-acre site with nearby connections to Interstate 81, CSX Rail, the Port of Oswego, and Syracuse Hancock International Airport. Micron's \$100 billion investment in the site will bring an estimated 9,000 jobs and 35,000 spinoff community jobs to the Central New York region over the coming decades.

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