



## Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

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### PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

April 19, 2022

10:00 a.m.

Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council  
Syracuse City Hall Commons Atrium

Megan Costa, Chairperson, Presiding

### AGENDA

1. **Additions and Changes to the Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
  - January 20, 2022
3. **Communications and Reports**
  - A. Relationship between the I-81 Viaduct Project environmental review, LRTP, and TIP, and summary of public comments received on proposed LRTP/TIP amendments (presentation by SMTC staff)
  - B. I-81 Project overview presentation by NYSDOT
4. **Old Business**
  - None
5. **New Business**
  - A. LRTP Amendment: I-81 Viaduct Project cost revisions
  - B. TIP Amendment: addition of I-81 projects
6. **Public Comment\***
7. **Adjourn**

*\*Please note, consistent with all SMTC Planning Committee meetings, the agenda includes time for general public comments after the conclusion of New Business. Comments on the business items (LRTP and TIP amendments) were solicited during the official public comment period, which closed on March 31, 2022. Comments made at the meeting will be recorded in the meeting minutes but will not be part of the official record for the LRTP/TIP amendment, nor part of the official record for the I-81 DDR/DEIS.*

*Members of the public wishing to comment during this portion of the agenda will be asked to add their name to a list at the beginning of the meeting and will have 3 minutes to speak.*

### **The Metropolitan Planning Organization**

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

# SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the April 19, 2022 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

### Voting Members

Megan Costa, Chair  
Brian Schultz  
David Roth  
Dave Mankiewicz  
Mary Robison, Vice Chair  
Tim Coley  
Aaron McKeon  
Cody Kelly  
Kevan Busa  
Owen Kerney  
James Fayle  
Stephanie Webb

### Organization

Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency  
CNY Regional Transportation Authority  
NYS Department of Transportation  
CenterState CEO  
City of Syracuse, Administration  
Onondaga County Department of Transportation  
CNY Regional Planning & Development Board  
Onondaga County Legislature  
City of Syracuse, DPW  
City of Syracuse, Division of Planning  
Empire State Development  
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

### Also Attending

Katie Bergan  
Rich Sawczak  
Mark Frechette  
Chris Tuff  
Bren Daiss

NYS Department of Transportation  
NYS Department of Transportation  
NYS Department of Transportation  
CNY Regional Transportation Authority  
CNY Regional Transportation Authority

### SMTC Staff

James D'Agostino, Mario Colone, Jason Deshaies, Andrew Frasier, Mike Alexander, Meghan Vitale, Tom Bardenett, Alexander McRoberts, Joseph DiStefano, and Lori Irvine.

### BUSINESS MEETING

Chairperson Costa called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Syracuse City Hall Commons Atrium.

#### 1. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

#### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Costa inquired if there were any changes to the January 20, 2022, minutes. Hearing none, Chairperson Costa called for a motion.

Mr. Kerney moved, and Mr. Schultz seconded the Approval of the Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**

A. **Relationship between the I-81 Viaduct Project and environmental review, LRTP, and TIP, and summary of public comments received on proposed LRTP/TIP amendments (presentation by SMTC staff)**

Mr. D'Agostino provided the Planning Committee with some brief context for the I-81 Viaduct project in relation to the SMTC process.

Mr. D'Agostino discussed some important milestones: In September 2020, the SMTC Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) identified the I-81 Viaduct project as both a regionally significant project and an illustrative project, at that time, as there was no funding strategy in place. In July of 2021, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) released the I-81 Viaduct DEIS and held public hearings during the public comment period. In February 2022, the SMTC LRTP was amended and quickly identified the I-81 project funding and associated short-term projects for addition to the Transportation Improvement Program, as well as mid-term projects. The project was then transferred as an illustrative to an actual project in the LRTP and now had a concept of fiscal constraint. Soon after the NYSDOT announced a cost increase for the project from \$1.9 billion to \$2.25 billion dollars as well as extending the project duration from 5 to 6 years. Mr. D'Agostino indicated that an additional LRTP Amendment was being brought forth at today's meeting to identify additional cost increases for fiscal constraint purposes, as well as adding individual projects. Mr. D'Agostino discussed the 13 public comments that the SMTC received during the public comment period that were made available to the committee members and posted on the SMTC website. Mr. D'Agostino mentioned that in April 2022, the NYSDOT had released their FEIS. Mr. D'Agostino recommends that the Policy Committee adopt at their upcoming meeting the LRTP amendment and the TIP amendments for Phase 1 where 5 projects will be added to the TIP, then 3 projects will be added for Phase 2 to the next TIP. Mr. D'Agostino indicated that the final design must be in place prior to the Record of Decision.

This was an information item only and no action is required by the Committee.

B. **I-81 Project overview presentation by NYSDOT**

Mr. Frechette from the NYSDOT provided a presentation related to the I-81 Viaduct Project including its status, the EIS process, and next steps.

Mr. Frechette indicated that it was a monumental day for the SMTC and NYSDOT regarding the vote on the future funding phases for the I-81 Community Grid project including the funding for the final design, real estate acquisition, construction and construction inspection which will all be funded in Phase 1 of the project. Mr. Frechette indicated that the NYSDOT and FHWA released the FEIS on 4/15/2022 recognizing the Community Grid as the preferred alternative. Mr. Frechette indicated that the work will be broken down into 8 smaller construction contracts to help allow local business competition and help with job initiatives locally. Mr. Frechette indicated that Phase 1 will include 5 contracts starting by the end of this year with all 5 contracts in place by early 2023. The Phase 1 active construction is 2023 – 2025. Phase 2 will have 3 separate contracts estimated at \$1.2 billion dollars that will begin in 2026-2028. Mr. Frechette indicated that I-81 will remain active and not be decommissioned until after all 5 contracts in Phase 1 have been completed. Also being voted on today is a support services contract. Mr. Frechette then reviewed the timeline and asked member agencies for any questions.

Mr. Fayle asked if there were any issues in acquiring the land needed for the project. Mr. Frechette indicated that they cannot make any offers until the Record of Decision is approved but indicated that current tenants will be offered fair market value and will offer to help businesses relocate.

Mr. Coley asked about utility cost reimbursements. Mr. Frechette indicated that it will be a challenge, but they will be working closely with all utility companies throughout the project.

Mr. Kerney asked about the Public Outreach Center and referred to it as a “nerve center”. Mr. Frechette indicated that it would be somewhere in the Syracuse community and would be open during the entire construction period from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to give the public a place to go for comments/complaints instead of going to the actual work area. Mr. Frechette indicated there would also be a hotline and website for 24/7 public use.

Hon. Cody Kelly asked about the EIS Public Comment period. Mr. Frechette indicated that the initial public comment period was during the DEIS which was 7/18/21 – 10/15/21 and was extended another 30 days. The current FEIS period gives the public the opportunity to review the comments received. Mr. Frechette indicated that the project is evolving and will be adjusted throughout the entire project.

Mr. Schultz thanked Mr. Frechette for the detailed presentation and questioned about the possibility of a lawsuit. Mr. Frechette indicated that everyone has the right to their opinion regarding the project and believed that there have been some changes to the project due to the opinions already received by the public from their comments. Mr. Frechette also indicated that the Attorney General would be the representative for the state on this project if a lawsuit was presented.

This was an information item only and no action is required by the Committee.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **LRTP Amendment: I-81 Viaduct Project cost revisions**

Ms. Vitale gave a presentation indicating how the SMTC is required to update the LRTP every five years. The most recent update to the 2050 LRTP was adopted in September 2020. That plan included The I-81 Viaduct Project as an “illustrative project” (i.e., not within the fiscally constrained portion of the LRTP). An amendment to the LRTP was adopted by the SMTC Policy Committee on February 10, 2022, which added specific projects associated with the I-81 Viaduct Project to the short- and mid-term projects lists and included additional revenues for these projects within the fiscal constraint analysis.

An additional amendment is now proposed to modify the cost estimates for The I-81 Viaduct Project and the anticipated revenue within the plan. As announced by the NYSDOT in February 2022, the total estimated cost for The I-81 Viaduct Project increased from \$1.9 billion to \$2.25 billion due to inflation and local material and labor availability. The short- and mid-term project costs in the LRTP have been adjusted accordingly in the proposed amendment to Chapter 6 (Financial Analysis).

Chairperson Costa asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chairperson Costa called for a motion.

Mr. Schultz moved, and Mr. Kerney seconded the motion that the Planning Committee recommend that the Policy Committee adopt the proposed amendment to the 2050 LRTP – 2020 Update.

The motion passed unanimously.

**B. TIP Amendment: addition of I-81 projects**

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) requests 6 TIP amendments totaling \$985.136 million related to the I-81 Viaduct Project's community grid preferred alternative. 5 projects cover the first of two phases, while the 6th project will be used for relevant project support services such as design & construction management, and right-of-way.

Addition of project:

PIN 350190 (I-481 Conversion to I-81, I-81 North of I-690)

PIN 350191 (I-481 Conversion to I-81, I-81 South of I-690)

PIN 350192 (Business Loop 81 Northern Section, Phase 1)

PIN 350193 (I-690 over Crouse Ave & Irving Ave)

PIN 350194 (Business Loop 81 Southern Section, Phase 1)

PIN 350198 (I-81 Community Grid Support Services)

Chairperson Costa asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Chairperson Costa called for a motion.

Mr. Mankiewicz moved, and Mr. Schultz seconded the motion that the Planning Committee recommend that the Policy Committee approve the TIP amendments.

The motion passed unanimously.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments made at the meeting will not be part of the official record for the LRTP/TIP amendment, nor part of the official record for the I-81 DDR/DEIS. Members of the public wishing to comment were given 3 minutes to speak.

Rex Giardine is a local resident, architect and engineer that totally supports the Community Grid concept and believes that the original location for the roundabout was the right location but believes that it is the wrong location for an elementary school. Mr. Giardine indicates that an elementary school should be on 10 acres and not 5.3 acres of land and certainly not near railroads or interstates. Mr. Giardine would like to see a state of art school built approximately 3 blocks west of its current location between Furman and Kennedy Streets which he believes would cost approximately \$65M. Mr. Giardine believes it may be more cost effective and better long term urban planning than shifting a roundabout.

Charles Pierce-El from Southside Homeowners Association has lived in the Syracuse for over 75 years in an African American community. He believes the roundabout is going to be in the wrong location and asks why during Syracuse University events that traffic can exit from Comstock to Jamesville to 481 but cannot enter from there. He believes the roundabout should be located on Brighton Street where there are no children.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. D'Agostino reminded the Committee that there is a Policy Committee meeting on April 29th, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m. by Chairperson Costa.