

DIRECTIONS

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THE SMTC'S CONTINUING PLANNING EFFORTS

The last several months have been full of activity at the SMTC. Following the start of the program year in April 2009, the SMTC staff has been working on many new and existing projects. A large majority of staff time has been spent on the I-81 Public Participation project. (See article on page 3.)

As stated in the Summer 2009 issue of Directions, staff has begun work on several new Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) projects. Consultant services have been retained for the Onondaga County Department of Transportation Signal Optimization Study, the Traffic Count Program, and the Transportation-Land Use Survey. Project kick-off meetings are being scheduled. Additionally, the Transportation-Land Use Survey will be randomly mailed to area residents. Please participate if you receive a mailing. Work will begin soon on the University Hill Phase II Short-Term Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Study. (See article on page 4.) The SMTC has issued Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority Transit Initiative Study, the Clay Three Rivers Access Study and the Transportation Demand Management Project for Downtown Syracuse. (See article on page 2.) Once proposals are reviewed and consultants are selected project kick off meetings will be scheduled.

The SMTC continues to work with our member agencies relative to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The SMTC solicited volunteers to assist staff with the rating of streets and roads throughout Onondaga County in the summer and fall for our bike map update. Work has also continued on the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan. The SMTC held the final public meeting for the Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation study and the project will be concluding in the near future.

At this time, a new federal transportation bill has not been enacted by the United States Congress. We are continuing to operate under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Once new legislation is adopted by Congress the SMTC staff will begin to familiarize themselves with the legislation. The lack of current legislation will impact the upcoming capital projects cycle for the TIP/STIP update.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 315.422.5716 or jdagostino@smtcmpo.org.

Yours truly,
James D'Agostino
Director



DOWNTOWN SYRACUSE

WORK BEGINS ON TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT FOR DOWNTOWN

In September, the SMTC's Planning Committee approved the scope of work for the *Transportation Demand Management Project for Downtown Syracuse*. This project, which is being completed on behalf of the Metropolitan Development Association, is a direct product of the 2008 *Downtown Syracuse Parking Study*, a document commissioned by the Syracuse Industrial Development Association. The *Downtown Syracuse Parking Study* recommended the implementation of a

transportation demand management (TDM) program in downtown Syracuse, particularly for employees, as a way to reduce both current and future parking needs.

It is widely recognized that TDM programs can be successful in improving transportation system efficiency by encouraging shifts in:

- *Mode* - from single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) to alternatives
- *Origin/Destination* - from far locations to near
- *Time* - from peak to off-peak hours
- *Frequency* - from many trips to fewer.

Shifting trips from particularly resource-intensive modes, routes, or times adds up to fewer SOVs, shorter commutes, more evenly distributed commutes, and less trips altogether. This translates into less congested streets, less parking demand, and a more effective transportation system as a whole.

TDM takes on a variety of forms. At its most basic level, TDM strategies can include improvements to the physical infrastructure that support changes in travel patterns: enhancements to a bus system, additional bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, or mixed-use development that places residences proximate to destinations. TDM can also include policy-oriented strategies, such as supportive programming (carpool matching programs, flexible work schedules), incentives (transit subsidies, rewards programs), and disincentives (parking fees, congestion pricing). When these strategies are combined, not only does the transportation system work better, but a more vibrant downtown, more pedestrian-friendly environment, and fewer environmental impacts often result.

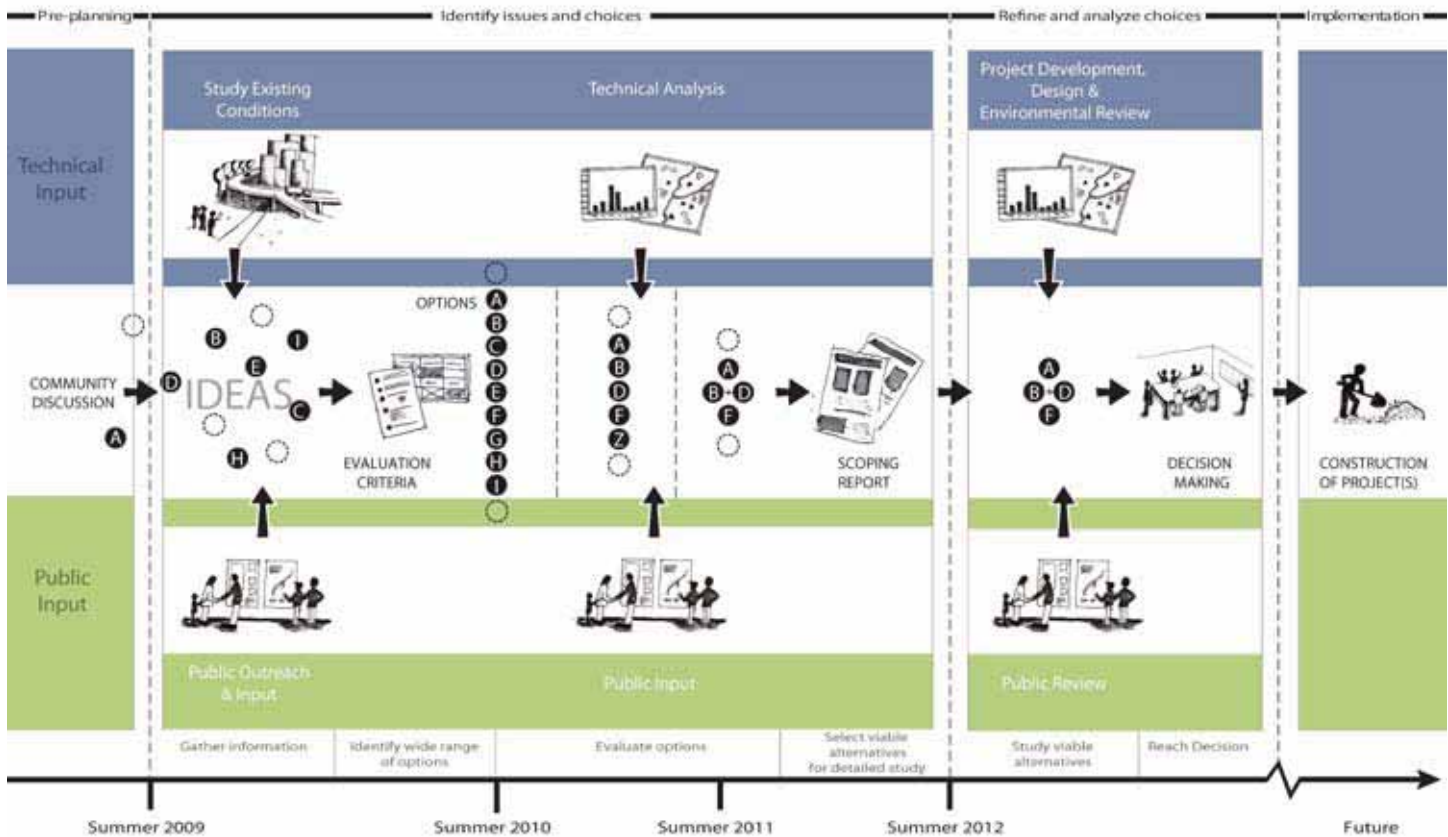
Ultimately, the Downtown Transportation Demand Management Project will develop a set of TDM strategies appropriate for downtown Syracuse. The project is expected to be completed in 2011.

DIRECTIONS

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

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UPDATE ON THE I-81 CHALLENGE



PROCESS GRAPHIC FOR THE I81 CHALLENGE

In recent months, *The I-81 Challenge* has gotten into full swing, with a web site update and a series of focus group meetings occurring throughout the summer and early fall. Small community group presentations are slated for this coming winter.

The updated web site, www.theI81challenge.org, with a new design and significantly more content, was launched in August. This web site includes information about the history of I-81 and current conditions on the highway, including basic traffic, safety, capacity, and operational information. It also includes information about *The I-81 Challenge* process and ways to participate. Interested citizens can get involved right now by visiting the web site, sending us a comment at contactus@theI81challenge.org, or joining the I-81 mailing list online. People who sign up for the postal mail mailing list will receive newsletters at key points in the I-81 process. In addition, people who sign up for the e-mail mailing list will receive notification of all in-person public involvement opportunities as they are planned.

In addition to the updated web site, *The I-81 Challenge* reached out to a wide range of stakeholders through a series of focus groups in September and October. This first round of focus groups was not meant to be all-encompassing, but included a sample of representatives from existing agencies and organizations from throughout the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County. The focus groups were designed as a starting point for a regional dialogue that will continue over the next several years. Focus groups yielded valuable information about the ways that community members currently use I-81, think about potential impacts, and want to be involved moving forward. In conjunction with the focus groups, an online questionnaire, which mirrors the focus group questions, was launched in the early fall.

This audience will be widened in the coming months with additional small group presentations. To arrange for a small group presentation on *The I-81 Challenge* for your organization or group, contact us at contactus@theI81challenge.org.

ALMOND STREET PEDESTRIAN ANALYSIS UNDERWAY

Are there measures that can be implemented in the near-term to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility on Almond Street in the City of Syracuse?

This question will be analyzed over the next several months as part of the *University Hill Phase II Short-Term Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Study*. Future projects in proximity to University Hill predict a substantial increase in the number of pedestrians who would seek to cross Almond Street. Previous studies have recommended improvements be made to Almond Street, however, these strategies generally focused on impacts to the movement of automobiles. The short-term study will provide an in-depth, multimodal examination of Almond Street between Adams Street and East Genesee Street.

The goal of this study is to provide the City of Syracuse, as the facility owner, with several pedestrian alternatives for immediate implementation.

For additional information on this project, please contact Mario Colone at 315.422.5716 or mcolone@smtcmpo.org.

ALMOND STREET STUDY AREA



THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



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