

# DIRECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (SMTC) • SUMMER 2016



*Onondaga Lake from the West Shore Trail*

## SMTC POLICY COMMITTEE ADOPTS 2017-2021 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Routinely happening every three years, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), in collaboration with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Centro, and other SMTC member agencies develop a multi-year **Transportation Improvement Program** (TIP). The new 2017-2021 TIP, adopted by the SMTC Policy Committee on June 8, 2016, totals **\$285,840,000**. This new program for the SMTC area is a multi-year listing of transportation capital projects together with a five-year estimate of transit capital and operations requirements. Federal transportation policy and regulations mandate that a TIP consist of the following:

1. Identify transportation improvement projects recommended for advancement during the program years. The projects required are those located within the study area and receiving any Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds;
2. Identify the criteria and process for prioritization for inclusion of projects in the TIP and any changes from past TIPs;
3. Group improvements of similar urgency and anticipated staging into appropriate staging periods;
4. Include realistic estimates of total costs and revenue for the program period;
5. Include a discussion of how improvements recommended from a Long Range Transportation Plan's Transportation Systems Management Plan were merged into the program;
6. List major projects from previous TIPs that were implemented and identify any major delays in projects that were planned for implementation;
7. Describe progress in implementing any required Transportation Control Measures as identified in the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality Redesignation Request;
8. Include an air quality conformity analysis of the TIP to the SIP with a list of all projects found to conform in previous TIPs that should be considered as a base case for conformity analysis; and
9. Include a Financial Plan that demonstrates how the approved TIP can be implemented.

Essentially all projects in the SMTC's new TIP are aimed at increasing efficiency, improving the condition of, and/or safety of the existing transportation system rather than construction of entirely new facilities. Project types in the

## TIP CONT. FROM THE FRONT PAGE

TIP include bicycle/pedestrian, bridges (including other structures), paving, safety, special, and transit.

### FHWA

Of the \$185,807,000 federal dollars from the FHWA programmed over the five-year cycle, NYSDOT has programmed approximately 61% of the federal transportation allotment. The remaining 39% is split between the City of Syracuse (22%) and Onondaga County (16%), with the Town of Cicero and Centro programmed at less than 1% each.

Bridge and paving projects make up 80% of the FHWA funded projects. This is consistent with previous capital programs and the objectives identified in the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan and the TIP whereby funding is distributed to projects to maintain the existing aging infrastructure. Bridges in Onondaga County and the other five counties that comprise the Region 3 office of the NYSDOT have historically been identified as having one of the higher percentages of bridges in need of repair throughout the state. (See the **Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System** article on page 7.) Due to the condition of bridges, this 2017-2021 funding cycle programs 31% of the FHWA dollars to 25 projects to assist in improving functional or structural deficiencies. Much like bridges, roads throughout the area are in need of attention as well. Thirty paving projects, consisting



The graphic below shows the number of projects programmed with FHWA funds.

Source:  
2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program

Cont. on next page

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**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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of numerous city, county, and state facilities, are programmed at 41% of the FHWA dollars.

Another item worth mentioning is that the new TIP sought to assign a funding percentage (10%) to bicycle/pedestrian projects. Bicycle/pedestrian projects are supported through many objectives of the 2050 LRTP and are also associated with one of four regionally significant projects: expanded regional trail network. The expanded regional trail network focuses on advancing projects identified in existing plans, like the Onondaga “Loop the Lake” Trail, Onondaga Creekwalk, and the Erie Canalway Trail, as well as connecting these trails. \$17,000,000 dollars are programmed to bicycle and pedestrian projects that include, but are not limited to, three “Loop the Lake” projects and the City of Syracuse’s Creekwalk extension.

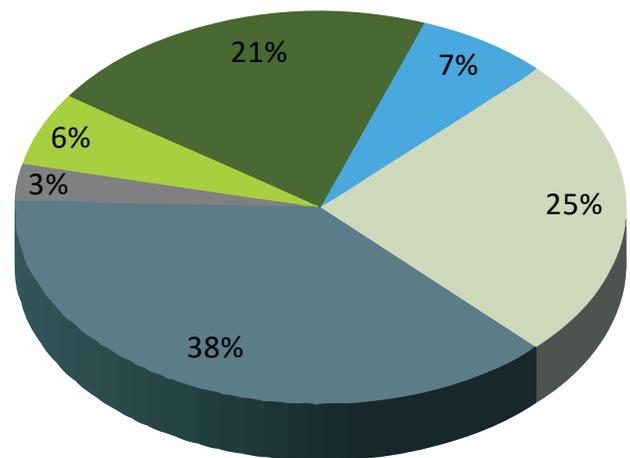
The graphic to the right shows the percentage of FHWA/FTA dollars by project type.

*Source: 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program*

## FTA

In addition to funding sources specific to the FHWA, the TIP also lists funding from the FTA. Within the SMTC area, Centro is the primary operator for public transportation services. The 2017-2021 TIP programs \$49,227,000 federal dollars to Centro. Project activities range from necessary bus and shelter replacements to preventative maintenance activities.

Overall, the 2017-2021 TIP is a balanced, fiscally constrained program over the life of the multi-year program cycle and supportive of the financial outlay of the SMTC’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The newly adopted program is available in the Final Reports and TIP sections of the SMTC web site, [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org). For more details on the TIP and individual projects, please contact Mario Colone at 315.422.5716 or [mcolone@smtcmpo.org](mailto:mcolone@smtcmpo.org).



Note: The 3% in chart represents Safety projects



Bike/Ped



Paving



Transit



Bridge



Special

## FHWA HOLDS FREIGHT ROUNDTABLE MEETING IN SYRACUSE

On Monday, May 16, 2016, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC), in conjunction with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CenterState) and the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (CNY REDC), hosted the **Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Beyond Traffic 2045 Administrator's Roundtable on the Freight Economy**. The invitation-only event was held at the Crowne Plaza, Syracuse. FHWA Administrator Gregory G. Nadeau presided over the event. NYSDOT Commissioner Matthew J. Driscoll welcomed the Administrator to New York State.



*FHWA Administrator Gregory Nadeau and NYSDOT Commissioner Matthew Driscoll (center of picture) at the Freight Roundtable at the Crowne Plaza Syracuse*

The FHWA has been holding regional, policy-specific roundtables with state and local transportation representatives, the business community, safety, and environmental advocates, and freight stakeholders. According to FHWA, the roundtables are a platform to discuss national, state, and local freight economic opportunities and impacts, including elements of national and state freight plans and related performance measures. The meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas, insights and experiences to improve freight movement nationally and in this region.

Attendees were provided with meeting packets that included information on the Syracuse Metropolitan Region Freight Facility Overview, the National Highway Freight Network in New York State, New York Transportation by the Numbers, and Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects. In a letter from United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Anthony R. Foxx, he stated “Beyond Traffic, the Department’s 30-year framework for the future,

outlines changing local and global freight patterns, including significant growth in the tonnage and value of freight movement in response to rising demand”.

Following a brief presentation, attendees were encouraged to ask questions, voice concerns, and address the issues most pressing for the local region.



*Freight Roundtable Attendees*

Additionally, prior to the Roundtable, Administrator Nadeau and FHWA staff toured the Interstate 81 Corridor with Commissioner Driscoll and other representatives from the NYSDOT.

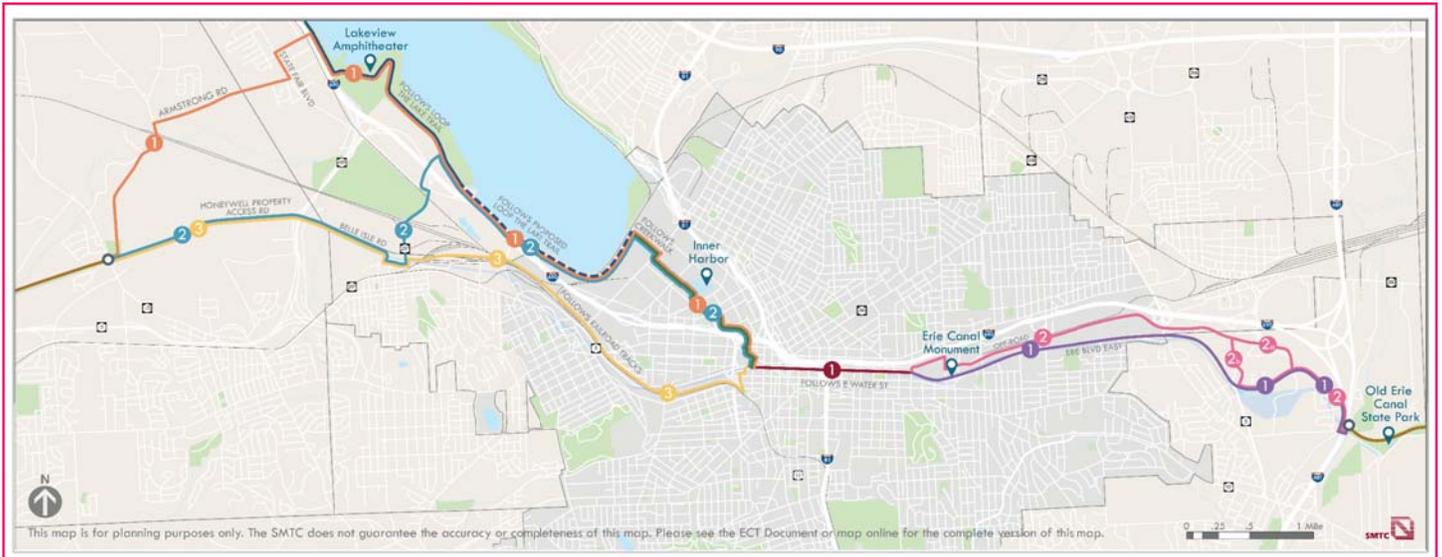
Further information on the Roundtable events can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/beyondtraffic>.



# ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL CONNECTOR ROUTE DOCUMENT FINALIZED

On June 8, 2016, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) Policy Committee acknowledged the completion of the **Erie Canalway Trail – Syracuse Connector Route Part II Document**.

The intent of this multi-year project was to continue discussions on how and where to locate the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT) through the City of Syracuse with connections to existing sections of the trail in the Towns of Camillus (west) and DeWitt (east), and ultimately develop a documented plan for how to close the 12-15 mile gap in the ECT in Onondaga County.



*Phase Two: Suggested Permanent Route Options*

The project was organized into two phases: Part I, completed in June 2013, resulted in a suggestion for a short-term, on-road, signed ECT route that can be utilized until a permanent off-road (to the extent feasible) route is developed and put into place. In the fall of 2015, the City of Syracuse posted ECT trailblazers and signage for this on-road route. Part II, completed in spring 2016, focused on developing a series of potential route options for a permanent trail route along with “Points of Study” that represent examples of what an ECT through the local gap could potentially look like. The “Phase Two: Suggested Permanent Route Options” map above shows the numbered route options. Please refer to the final report to view the route options by section: west, central, and east. Additionally, Points of Study are labeled with the letters A-N in the final report.

In the West section, there are mainly examples of what an off-road portion of the ECT could look like:

## EXISTING



## PROPOSED



*Cont. on page 6*

## ECT CONT. FROM PAGE 5

Only one option is shown for the Central section of the ECT – along East Water Street. In the east, several potential options are shown in the document for an ECT along Erie Boulevard East and Towpath Road. Two intersections were examined: Erie Boulevard East/Thompson Road and Erie Boulevard East/Bridge Street, and example options for an ECT over the Kinne Road bridge (over I-481 in DeWitt) are also depicted.

Overall, this project has provided the opportunity to share ideas for completing the trail within our community and provides a foundation for how to close the Syracuse gap in the statewide Erie Canalway Trail. The final document is available on the SMTC web site at [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org), under the Final Reports tab.

## LOCAL HIGHWAY INVENTORY OUTREACH MEETING AUGUST 2ND

On Tuesday, August 2, 2016, the SMTC will be hosting one of the **Local Highway Inventory Outreach Meeting** for all city, county, and town highway officials in New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Region 3, at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

The NYSDOT is responsible for maintaining an inventory of all miles of public roadways in the New York and for meeting all state and federal highway reporting requirements. In 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) required that states submit all public roads in a geospatial format in addition to the road inventory information. The NYSDOT Highway Data Services Bureau has created a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) route-building project for all local roads in the State. As part of the NYSDOT's outreach, meetings are being held in all the Regions of the State to afford local officials with an opportunity to provide input on the details on the Local Highway Inventory (LHI).

To register for the August 2 event, please contact Patricia Wortley at 315.422.5716 or [pwortley@smtcmpo.org](mailto:pwortley@smtcmpo.org).

## WORK LINK STUDY UNDERWAY

Many low-income workers find that they are unable to find a job that pays more than minimum wage until they own a car, but cannot afford a car until they have a job that pays more than minimum wage. The costs of car ownership, including fuel, insurance, and periodic maintenance, can easily consume nearly a quarter of the annual earnings of the average waitress or home health aide.

Centro's transit service offers one way out of this cycle:

Centro provides more than nine million trips a year. While workers living below the poverty level make up only six percent of Onondaga County's workforce, they make up 26 percent of all commuters riding the bus. But Centro cannot efficiently run bus routes to every major employer in Central New York – particularly for late night shifts and on weekends.

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) **Work Link** project, kicking off in summer 2016, will look at gaps in the transportation network for low-income City of Syracuse residents who want to find better paying jobs in suburban office parks, distribution centers, and manufacturing plants.

Using Centro's route information and data on the regional distribution of employment opportunities for workers with

minimal training, the Work Link study will gauge the accessibility of the region's job opportunities. This study will also evaluate possible transportation solutions for low-income workers, with the goal of identifying cost-effective and practical ideas, as well as possible funding sources.



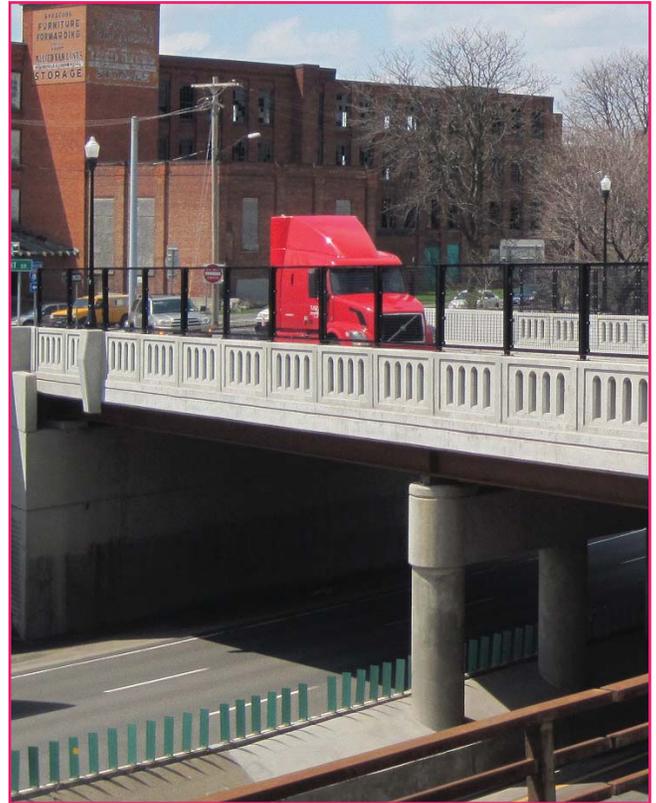
*A Centro bus waiting to depart for Destiny USA*

## ANNUAL BRIDGE AND PAVEMENT CONDITION REPORT COMPLETED

The **Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System** (BPCMS) project was recently completed and is available online in the Final Reports section of our web site, [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org). The report, which is completed yearly, tracks and analyzes bridge and pavement data throughout our Metropolitan Planning Area.

This year's report was the first to incorporate results from roads that were rated by SMTC in the summer of 2015. Beginning last year, the SMTC began rating all Federal Aid-Eligible (FAE) roads that were owned by the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, approximately 400 miles total. Fieldwork is underway this summer. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) will continue to rate the same roads as in past reports. This data has improved the quality of data in the report by standardizing data collection, in that all data is collected by staff – here at SMTC and at NYSDOT - who have been trained with the NYSDOT pavement scoring system. Also, along with NYSDOT, SMTC collects data yearly, which increases the frequency of data collection for the City and County, and thus the accuracy of the data that we analyze.

By tracking bridge and pavement conditions, the SMTC hopes to underscore the need for ongoing support of infrastructure maintenance efforts. As the report has demonstrated over the years, deterioration of bridges and pavement is constant, and a program of monitoring and maintenance is vital. As of the last Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), 80% of funding is dedicated to FAE highways and to bridge projects. The BPCMS report is an important way to explain the need for these funds, as well as to invest these funds in the appropriate projects.



*Spencer Street Bridge over Interstate 81*

## CENTRO RIDER AND NONRIDER SURVEYS SCOPE OF WORK APPROVED

The SMTC will develop two surveys for Centro as part of the **Centro Rider and Nonrider Surveys** project. One survey will be directed to current bus riders and will ask questions about what Centro does well and seek suggestions for improving service or adding value to the service. This survey will be distributed on Centro buses and will also be available online. The second survey will target people who do not currently, but could reasonably, use Centro services. This survey will be distributed through a targeted mailing, and be available online, with questions asking if the respondent would ever consider riding transit, why he/she currently does not use transit, and what might make the respondent become a transit rider. The SMTC will summarize the responses and key information learned from each survey. We anticipate completing both surveys by the spring of 2017.



*Students boarding the bus at Onondaga Community College*

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## ADA TRANSITION PLANS WORKSHOP HELD

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) provided municipalities with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training opportunity on May 18, 2016. The event was held at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. The SMTC, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), held the **ADA Transition Plans** workshop for over 40 participants. The training was facilitated by an FHWA representative.

This workshop was provided free of charge to municipalities and covered a variety of topics such as ADA Transition Plan requirements and methods to conduct them, as well as other general ADA requirements, including the United States Department Justice/FHWA Joint Technical Assistance.

This training was important as ADA Transition Plans are required for all government agencies and will soon become



*ADA Transition Plans Workshop attendees at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo*

mandatory for receiving Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding and Federal Aid.