

# Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2011 Update

## FINAL Public Involvement Plan

### I. Introduction

Engaging the public early and often in the planning process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and is required by numerous state and federal laws. Such legislation underscores the need for public involvement, calling on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) such as the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) to provide citizens, affected public agencies, businesses, local government, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs.

While public participation is mandated, it is also practical. No one organization has a monopoly on good ideas – they often germinate through an open exchange of information. It is the SMTC's intention to promote the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to update the SMTC's **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**, which serves as a blueprint to guide the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's transportation development over a 20-25 year period. Three public involvement areas that the LRTP 2011 Update will focus on are: (1) physical outreach methods, (2) media outreach methods, and (3) digital outreach methods.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was created under the SMTC's umbrella Public Participation Plan (PPP), which can be found at the SMTC web site, [www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org).

### II. Goals

There are four goals for the public involvement component of the LRTP 2011 Update, outlined below:

- 1) Foster public awareness about the importance of the Long Range Transportation Plan 2011 Update.
- 2) Involve all members of the public in the long range transportation planning process.
  - i. Provide urban, suburban and rural residents with opportunities to provide feedback.
  - ii. Ensure outreach efforts are equitable and just, to under-served and under-represented populations.
- 3) Gauge social and economic needs in the context of transportation planning.
- 4) Establish new and varied public involvement methods.
  - i. Utilize physical outreach methods to provide information in a tactile and/or face-to-face experience.

- ii. Incorporate traditional media outreach methods to reach wider mass-media outlets.
- iii. Experiment with the diverse opportunities made available through digital outreach methods like the internet.

### III. Formation of Outreach Groups

The Public Involvement Plan for the LRTP 2011 Update includes the formation of three distinct outreach groups:

- 1) **Study Advisory Committee (SAC).** The SMTC Planning Committee will be considered the members of the SAC. The project's process will require consistent involvement from the Planning Committee voting members, who have significant responsibility toward transportation planning and programming. The SAC's role will be to advise the SMTC on the technical content of deliverables and to provide needed input and decision-making throughout the project.
- 2) **Consultation Group.** This group of agencies will include pertinent federal and state resource agencies, as well as tribal governments, in an effort to comply with consultation and collaboration requirements put forth by SAFETEA-LU. SMTC will reach out to these agencies for targeted feedback with regard to the LRTP Update. Their role will be to ensure that SMTC's long range efforts are coordinated among the various layers and aspects of government.
- 3) **Stakeholders.** This broader group of individuals will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, notified of all public meetings, and asked to provide feedback regarding the LRTP document. Even if stakeholders are unable to attend meetings, this group will still be encouraged to mail in comments throughout the formation of the LRTP Update. Because of the broad scope of the long range transportation plan, all individuals within the SMTC database will be considered part of the stakeholders list.

### IV. Physical Outreach

The most reliable way to involve the public is to meet with them, or provide the public with physical options to give feedback. All meetings conducted by the SMTC will be held in a handicapped accessible facility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The SMTC will make every effort to respond to those who need a sign language interpreter, assistive learning system, or any other accommodations to facilitate the public's participation in the transportation planning process. Below are a few methods that the SMTC will utilize to involve the public in the update of the LRTP.

- 1) **Public Meetings.** The SMTC will conduct at least one public meeting during the LRTP process. All forms of outreach (physical, media and digital) will be utilized to encourage optimum attendance at this meeting. This meeting will unveil the final draft version of the LRTP 2011 Update and mark the commencement of a 30-day public comment period. All comments received at the public meeting, and during this subsequent comment period will be considered for inclusion in the final LRTP document. Other public meetings may be held as necessary throughout the LRTP development process.
- 2) **Interceptions.** Interceptions typically consist of interactive display boards set up in a highly public location. At these display boards, the passing public will be able to comment, vote, state preferences, etc. The exact nature and location of these boards shall be left indeterminate to allow the SMTC staff to experiment with the utilization of this outreach method. However, possible locations include destinations such as the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, the Museum of Science and Technology, the Carousel Center and the various festivals at Clinton Square. It is also encouraged that these boards be made available during peak usage times, such as during holidays or weekends.
- 3) **Physical Questionnaire.** The SMTC will prepare a physical questionnaire to be utilized throughout the development of the LRTP 2011 Update. The intention of this questionnaire is twofold. It will (1) obtain a sample of information from the public, and (2) provide a broad baseline for future use in subsequent long range transportation plan efforts, as well as in future studies undertaken by the SMTC. Questionnaires will be distributed throughout the community at various locations such as public meetings (Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT), etc.), laundromats, and civic locations like post offices, city / village / town halls, and libraries.
- 4) **Collaborating Meetings.** In addition to the SMTC conducting LRTP public meetings, this PIP suggests outreaching and providing short presentations at other public meetings. The SMTC anticipates working with various neighborhood associations, community groups, business associations, chambers of commerce, planning federations, the City of Syracuse's TNT, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, Leadership Greater Syracuse, towns and villages throughout the MPO area, and more to effectively promote the LRTP.

## V. Media Outreach

In order to better foster public awareness about the importance of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the SMTC will reach out to existing media agencies to assist in the transmission of pertinent information. The SMTC will send out press releases to all major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio. At a minimum, these press releases will contain information about the SMTC public meetings. Additional news releases may be

transmitted to prompt media coverage on pertinent developments pertaining to the LRTP. In addition, as appropriate, the SMTC will provide project updates and/or meeting notices via the SMTC newsletter, DIRECTIONS.

## VI. Digital Outreach

Through the development of the LRTP 2011 Update, the SMTC has a unique opportunity to explore new participatory technologies. The realm of digital outreach and the internet is where much of these exploratory actions are anticipated to occur.

- 1) **Web site.** The SMTC will establish a project web site. At a minimum, this web site will contain information about the long range transportation planning process, announce upcoming meeting dates, provide updates on the activities and progression of the project, and provide public feedback.
- 2) **Digital Questionnaire.** A digital questionnaire will be created, paralleling the physical questionnaire, and will be included as part of the project web site. Results from the paper and online survey will be recorded for application during the LRTP Update as well as within future long range transportation plan efforts.

## VII. Conclusion

As the purpose of the LRTP is to establish a framework to guide transportation investment on a regional scale, outreach conducted for other on-going SMTC studies will include a brief overview of the LRTP 2011 Update, as well as copies of pertinent LRTP materials (questionnaires, meeting announcements, etc). This plan may also incorporate data gained from other long-range projects (such as the new County Plan, or the I-81 Corridor Study). These actions will be taken to ensure that the vision of all projects align with the agency's guiding document, the LRTP.

All of the substantive comments garnered during the tasks outlined above will be documented and included as an appendix within the Long Range Transportation Plan 2011 Update. It is also hoped that this LRTP PIP will only provide a starting point for public outreach. During the course of the project it is expected that additional outreach methods will be researched and applied as relevant.