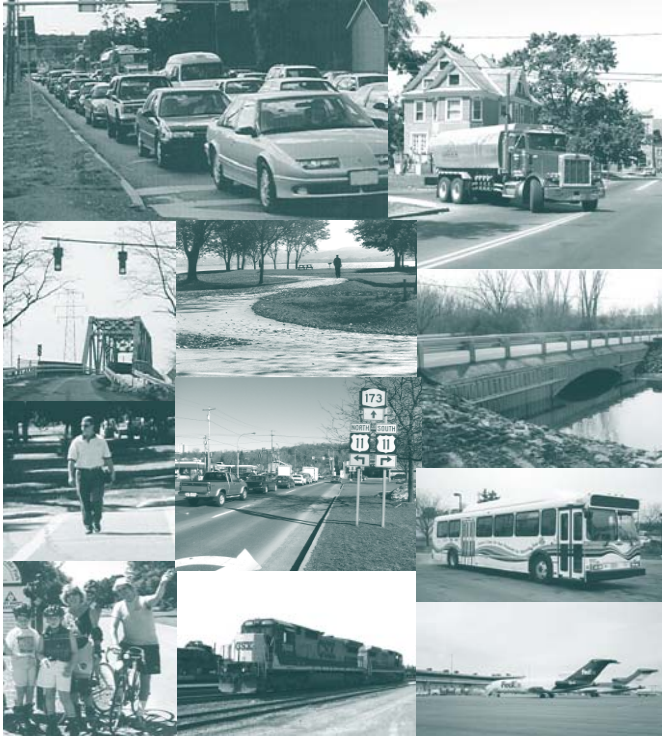


# Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council



## A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning



# WHAT IS THE SMTC?

## What is the SMTC?

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the Governor of the State of New York, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) was created in 1966 to carry out the continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation PLANNING PROCESS for the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, which includes all of Onondaga County and a small part of Oswego County.

## What Does the SMTC Do?

In addition to maintaining a long range transportation plan (a 20-year vision of future transportation projects and improvements), the SMTC conducts a number of specific transportation planning activities, some of which include: traffic corridor studies; transportation data collection; accident surveillance; congestion management; and multi-modal transportation planning (including bicycle and pedestrian planning). The SMTC is also responsible for the maintenance of the area's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a five-year program that funds capital projects related to transit, local roadways and interstates, bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and more. It is important to note, however, that the SMTC is not an agency that can implement particular transportation improvements, but serves as a collaborative forum where transportation issues are studied, and recommendations made.

## Who is the SMTC?

The SMTC is composed of officials representing local, state and federal governments or agencies having interest or responsibility in comprehensive transportation planning. To facilitate and encourage maximum interaction among these groups and the local community, the SMTC has adopted a committee structure that consists of a Policy, Planning and Executive Committee. Served by the SMTC Central staff, these committees serve as the hierarchy to the transportation planning activities of the SMTC.

SMTC Policy Committee Members include:

- Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
- Central New York Regional Transportation Authority
- Empire State Development Corporation
- Mayor, City of Syracuse
- Metropolitan Development Association
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Thruway Authority
- Onondaga County Executive
- Onondaga County Legislature
- Syracuse Common Council
- Syracuse Planning Commission

## The Process Involves You



The SMTC recognizes that the active involvement of the entire community, in addition to the SMTC Policy, Planning and Study Advisory Committee members, is paramount to good transportation planning. Public comments are valued because they can shape the direction of a particular transportation study or planning activity, and may help to identify new transportation projects that are important to citizens of the area.



For many of the SMTC activities, a project-specific **Public Involvement Plan**

**(PIP)** sets the framework for the public involvement opportunities that will be available throughout the course of the project. The PIP also pinpoints when in the project that public involvement meetings will be held that allow for the exchange of information and input. In addition to public meetings, the SMTC also recruits the necessary technical personnel and community representatives to serve on a project-specific Study Advisory Committee (SAC). Such a committee is created for most of the SMTC planning activities to assist in managing projects, as well as provide needed input and direction.

### Study Advisory Committees

Other methods the SMTC uses to inform and invite the public to participate include the use of press releases to announce various meetings, project updates, and available reports; the production of its quarterly newsletter,

### PUBLIC MEETINGS



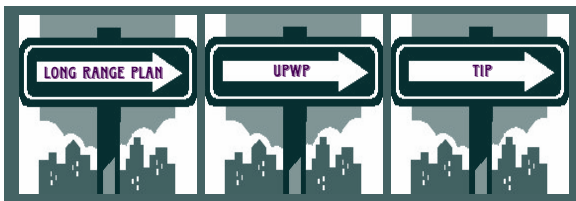
**DIRECTIONS**; distribution of various project-specific fact sheets and flyers; and the use of public comment cards and questionnaires.

**So, GET INVOLVED!** See the back page of this brochure to learn more about **how YOU can participate in the transportation planning process!**

WHY GET INVOLVED?

## Transportation Planning Process

The SMTC develops three key documents that are the ingredients to the transportation planning and programming in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area: the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Together in tandem, these three documents represent the beginning, middle and end - the ingredients if you will -- to an effective transportation planning process.



### Long-Range Transportation Plan

The LRTP is a blueprint to guide the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's transportation development over a 25-year period. Updated every three years to reflect changing conditions and new planning principles, the LRTP is based on projections of growth and travel demand coupled with financial assumptions. The LRTP specifically looks at major urban transportation planning concerns as environmental/air quality; complete access to transportation; alternative transportation modes (especially bicycle and pedestrian), the impact of land development on the transportation system; highway traffic congestion; and maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

It is important to note that in all of its transportation planning activities, the SMTC considers and integrates the following planning factors:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation and improve quality of life;
5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
6. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

# Unified Planning Work Program

**The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies the annual transportation planning activities** that are to be undertaken in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area in support of the goals, objectives and actions established in the Long Range Transportation Plan. In short, it is an outline of the transportation planning activities that will be conducted by the SMTC and its staff over the course of one year.



The UPWP serves as **the basis for all funding assistance** for transportation planning and programming for state, local and regional agencies.



The UPWP **undertakes various transportation planning and engineering related studies** for the SMTC and its member agencies. Strategic studies of land use and transportation issues give an accurate picture of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area's condition, and provides information to find solutions to transportation issues. The work performed under this annual work program is primarily accomplished by a combination of professional, technical and administrative staff of the SMTC, with the assistance and cooperative support of participating SMTC member agencies.



Through the efforts of its UPWP, the SMTC **makes specific recommendations that seek to improve the transportation network throughout the Syracuse Metropolitan Area.** Recommendations reached in a number of UPWP activities are then forwarded on to the respective SMTC member agencies who have the authority to act upon said recommendations. In addition, certain recommendations of merit (developed via a UPWP study) are often considered for inclusion on the SMTC's federally funded Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) -- *see next page.*

A sampling of the **UPWP studies and planning activities** that the SMTC has conducted over the past few years include:



- Accident Surveillance Program
- City of Syracuse Truck Route Study
- Multi-Modal Transportation Planning
- South Salina Street Corridor Study
- South Side Transportation Study
- University Hill - Special Events Transportation Study

WHAT IS THE UPWP?

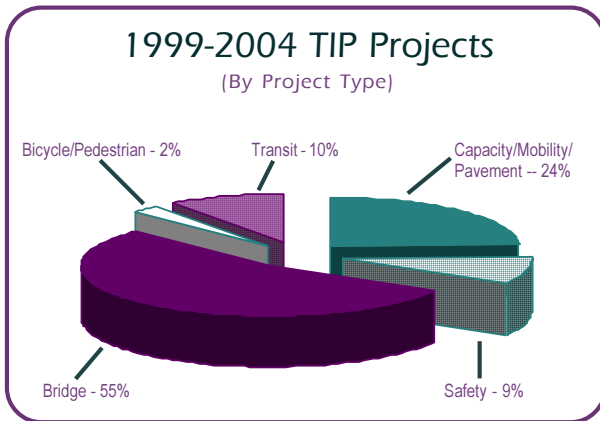
# WHAT IS THE TIP ?

## TRANSPORTATION Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- **Is the agreed-upon five-year list of specific projects for which federal funds are anticipated.** Required by federal law, the TIP represents the transportation improvement priorities of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area. The list of projects is multi-modal and includes highway and public transit projects, as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and freight-related projects.
- **Represents the translation of recommendations from the SMTC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and UPWP into a short-term program of tangible transportation improvements.** All TIP projects are evaluated to assure consistency with the community goals and objectives established in the LRTP. The majority of projects in the TIP are aimed at increasing the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system, rather than construction of new facilities. In addition, all TIP projects must be in conformance with air quality requirements.
- **Is fiscally constrained.** The projects on the TIP must be fiscally constrained to the amount of funds that are expected to be available. Thus, the TIP is not a "wish list" for projects. Competition between projects for a spot on the TIP clearly exists.
- **Is the culmination of the transportation planning process and represents a consensus among local, state and regional officials as to what improvements to pursue.** A project's inclusion in the TIP signifies regional agreement on the priority of the project and establishes eligibility for federal funding.





## Who Participates in the TIP Process?

Many agencies directly participate in the TIP development process. They include member governments, operating agencies, and state and federal agencies. Other groups, the business community, and the general public become involved through the SMTC public participation process in addition to their involvement at the municipal and county level. This multiplicity of jurisdictions and agencies in the SMTC study area necessitates a high degree of coordination during the TIP development process.

## How Are Projects Selected for the TIP?

(1) In many cases, municipal planners and engineers generate lists of potential improvements based on their needs, analyses, previous studies, and citizen input. (2) The local proposals are then reviewed at the city, county, and regional level in consultation with the NYS Department of Transportation. (3) Once each city, county, and regional agency has developed their own list of projects and priorities, they are formally brought to the SMTC, where the SMTC Capital Projects Committee (CPC) reviews them before making recommendations to the SMTC Planning and Policy Committees. The CPC seeks to ensure that the highest priorities of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area are being addressed within the limits of available resources. (4) Finally, the SMTC provides the forum through which its Policy Committee members determine the TIP. After considering the recommendations of the CPC and the public comment, the SMTC Policy Committee determines the final list of projects, and adopts the five-year TIP for advancement.

WHAT IS THE TIP?

# Here's How You Can Get Involved!

**S**ign up to receive the SMTC newsletter **DIRECTIONS**. Full of news on the latest SMTC activities, UPWP studies, and public meeting announcements, this publication will keep you current with the transportation planning going on in your neighborhood.

**M**ake an effort to attend the public meetings that focus on a topic or location of interest to you. For all its planning studies and activities, the SMTC holds public meetings/workshops to obtain public comments and input. All SMTC-held public meetings are publicized in the local media, throughout the specific study area, as well as through direct invitation. The public is also welcome to attend the SMTC's Planning and Policy Committee meetings, where transportation studies and issues are discussed in greater detail among the member agencies.

**T**ake advantage of what the SMTC has to offer. Visit our office today to look through our extensive library of transportation planning reports, technical memorandums, and brochures relating to transportation and land use planning. Talk with our well-trained technical staff, submit written comments, and/or invite the SMTC to give a presentation to your organization or group.

**C**ontact the SMTC! If you are interested in a study or planning effort that is being conducted, contact the SMTC today to request to be a part of the project's "Interested Stakeholder" list. This group, which includes members of the community with significant relations and interest in the study area, is kept apprised of pertinent study developments, notified of all public meetings, and encouraged to participate and provide feedback and comment.

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