

**Clay-Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**

**APPENDIX A**

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 define the goals and objectives of the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**, to develop alternatives, and to evaluate the alternatives.

## **II. Goals**

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) of the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study** is intended to:

- (1) create public awareness relative to the study’s goals, objectives, and process, as well as publicize the public participation opportunities and activities available throughout the study; and
- (2) involve the public throughout the planning process.

## **III. Formation of Study Advisory Committee and Interested Stakeholder Group**

The PIP includes the formation of two groups to assist the SMTC in the study effort. A Study Advisory Committee (SAC) consisting of representatives from affected organizations, local and state governments and agencies (including but not limited to the Towns of Clay and Cicero, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA), New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA), and selected community representatives) will meet regularly with the SMTC to assist in managing the project. The SAC’s role will be to advise the SMTC on the technical content of deliverables and to provide needed input and guidance throughout the project.

It is anticipated that a minimum of five SAC meetings will be held throughout the course of the study. Securing a meeting location (facility), announcing the SAC meetings through mailings, running the SAC meetings (including preparation of agenda, materials, presentations, etc.), and preparing the minutes from each meeting will all be the responsibility of the SMTC.

In addition to the SAC, a list of interested “stakeholders” (a broader group of interested individuals with significant relations and interest in the study area) will be maintained by the SMTC. The stakeholders will be sent pertinent study information, kept apprised of significant study developments, notified of all public meetings, and encouraged to provide feedback and comment regarding the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**. If during the course of the study it seems warranted, a “stakeholder workshop”

may be held separately to further assist the study in gathering and processing public input.

The SMTC and project sponsors will determine initial representation on the SAC and Interested Stakeholders group. However, the SMTC will actively seek input at its “kick-off meeting” and throughout the course of the study regarding additional individuals who could participate in this planning activity and provide valuable input and perspective.

#### **IV. Meetings and Public Comment**

The SMTC will hold public involvement meetings/workshops at specific stages during the study. Securing a meeting location (facility), promoting the event through flyers, mailings and press releases, presenting the public meetings (including preparation of agenda, materials, presentations, etc.) and preparing the minutes of each meeting will be the responsibility of the SMTC.

The first public meeting will provide the opportunity to formally present the study to the public and will occur early in the study’s time frame. Citizen input obtained from this meeting will be considered throughout the remaining stages of the study, and will be factored into subsequent reports, conclusions, and/or recommendations. At this meeting, some of the known and perceived issues and concerns will be identified and discussed.

The second public meeting will take place following the production and approval of *Technical Memorandum No. 1: Existing Conditions Report*. This meeting will serve to inform the public of the existing conditions, data analysis and forecasting reached in Technical Memorandum No. 1, as well as invite the public to speak out on the next phase of the study process, which will document relative transportation and mobility issues (in *Technical Memorandum No. 2*). A public meeting will be held to present *Technical Memorandum No. 2* at the appropriate time as well as to solicit input into the next stage of the project.

An additional public meeting will serve to present *Technical Memorandum No. 3: Recommendations and Implementation Plan* to the public. Alternative solutions, recommendations, and an implementation plan (developed and evaluated through the public and SAC process) will be discussed at this meeting. This will be the final opportunity for the public to make comment before a Draft Final Report is prepared and presented to the SMTC Planning and Policy Committees.

The SMTC will be responsible for the scheduling and preparation of all meetings and distribution of meeting documentation. SMTC will also be responsible for presenting at all SAC and public meetings (to include preparation of agenda, materials, presentations, etc.), preparing meeting minutes that document the discussions and decisions of the committees, including the documentation of public input; and the production of technical memorandums, reports, handouts, etc.

Note: All meetings (SAC and public) 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.

To further increase its outreach to the public, the SMTC will be initiating and conducting a variety of public involvement activities:

**Introductory Flyer:** The SMTC will be distributing a one-page introductory flyer throughout the study area that will serve to introduce the public to the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**. This flyer will focus on the purpose, goals and objectives of the study. It will seek to educate, inform and encourage feedback and public comment. Additional flyers (to highlight specific study development or publicize public meetings) may be distributed as the study progresses if deemed appropriate.

**Material Distribution at Locations Within Study Area:** If deemed necessary (at the discretion of the SAC and/or other appropriate SMTC committees), the SMTC may distribute miscellaneous study-specific information at sites throughout the study area (e.g. gas stations, restaurants, convenience stores, etc.). This information may include one or more of the following: introductory flyer, meeting notice, comment card, and a pre-addressed survey on a particular study issue. It is also the SMTC's intent to work with and encourage other agencies to include this information in their publications or to assist in material distribution. For example, the SMTC will be working with the Towns of Clay and Cicero and community groups in the towns, seeking their assistance in "getting the word out" about the study, and helping to publicize public meetings.

All citizens (especially those who are not able to attend the public meetings or participate in direct contact with the SMTC staff) are encouraged to submit comments to the SMTC at any time. This message will be publicized and made clear throughout the study's project schedule, verbally, and on all study material and publications. The public is also welcome to attend any of the publicized SMTC Executive, Planning and Policy Committee meetings in which the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study** may be on the agenda as a discussion item.

## **V. Press Releases/Media Coverage**

The SMTC will issue news releases announcing the details of all public meetings to all major and minor newspapers, television stations, and radio in advance. If necessary, the SMTC will also send additional news releases, or take the initiative to promote media coverage on pertinent developments pertaining to the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**.

If possible, all media inquiries should be directed to the SMTC staff director or project manager. However, this is not always possible. If you (e.g. SMTC committee members, SAC members, and/or interested stakeholders associated with the study) are interviewed by the media, please limit your comments to your respective agency's opinion or involvement in the study. As for speaking to the media on specific issues and questions regarding the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**, its progress and development, this is the exclusive responsibility of the SMTC.

## **VI. SMTC Publications**

The SMTC publishes a newsletter, DIRECTIONS, that offers news about its activities and particular studies. This newsletter is distributed to nearly 1,500 individuals, some of whom include the media; local, state, and federal agencies associated with the SMTC; municipal and elected officials; community agencies and representatives; and a large number of interested citizens. It is anticipated that articles on the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study** (e.g. study development issues or the announcement or coverage of a public meeting) will be published in subsequent issues of DIRECTIONS. Should the need arise for the production of a separate newsletter/flyer/report to convey a timely study development; the SMTC staff is prepared to perform this additional task. It is also important to note that the mailing list of the SMTC newsletter, DIRECTIONS, will be updated to include all members of the SAC, stakeholders, and others interested or involved in the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**.

## **VII. Miscellaneous Public Involvement Efforts**

To further its public involvement efforts, the SMTC will be asking the SAC members and interested stakeholders to assist them in better notifying citizens and community groups living and/or working in the study area about the public meetings and the study in general. Such a request is imperative in order to get the “grassroots community” involved. By helping to distribute flyers/announcements and speaking to the members of the community about the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**, the SAC and interested stakeholders will serve to further promote public involvement in areas (and to individuals) that were not reached through the standard outreach.

Meeting notices and study-specific material previously mentioned may also be posted at libraries, local stores, shopping centers, and/or businesses.

Approved documents, such as the study’s Final Report, may be made available at libraries within the study area. News releases will be produced to announce the availability of such items, as well as invite written comments to be submitted to the SMTC.

The SMTC web site [[www.smtcmpo.org](http://www.smtcmpo.org)] will also serve as a resource for general information about the SMTC, the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**, and any final approved reports.

If a certain need arises to get public perception/opinion on a particular topic/issue, surveys may be used at one or more of the public meetings.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

It is important for the SMTC to understand public attitudes and values in the early stages of the **Clay/Cicero Route 31 Transportation Study**, as well as solicit input from affected citizens and community representatives. It is the SMTC’s belief that the public involvement plan set forth, one that solicits input frequently, will bring people inside and provide the opportunity for the public to develop greater awareness and active involvement. In such a study that pays particular attention to preserving and enhancing the pedestrian and transit-oriented nature of the neighborhoods, such involvement is paramount.