CHAPTER 2
GOALS, OBJECTIVES and ACTION PLANS

Introduction

The 2020 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) provides the policy framework for fulfilling transportation needs within the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area of responsibility. In January 1995, the adopted LRTP included six goals, 23 objectives and 46 recommended action plans. In the interval since 1995, these goals, objectives and actions have been reflected in the development of the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) adopted by the SMTC Policy Committee. The member agencies of the SMTC, representing state, regional, county, city and other organizations, cooperate in carrying out the action plans. The SMTC member agencies also participate in the allocation of funds in the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the SMTC instrument for programming capital improvement projects to complete the planning and implementation process.

Changing Program Focus

During the interval since the publication of the LRTP in 1995, a shift in emphasis has occurred in order to include more activities involving bicycle and pedestrian facilities planning, such as the Onondaga Lake Circumferential Trail and Canalway Trail and the redevelopment of Clinton Square. The increase in facilities for non-motorized travel creates a stronger multi-modal orientation to the work of the SMTC that is not reflected in the original LRTP. Other issues that are currently receiving more attention, although not noted in the original LRTP, include roadside maintenance and periodic clean-up in order to improve the visual attractiveness of the area, as well as enhancements that make transportation facilities accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

For the future, better measures of effectiveness will be needed for assessing the quality of non-motorized transportation facilities, as well as general quality of life issues that are increasingly important in Onondaga County. The SMTC currently anticipates that, in the future, a growing amount of attention will be given to non-motorized travel, as well as to the maintenance of the bridge and pavement infrastructure, which currently have some significant needs for attention. For example, many of the Interstate bridges were built during the 1950s and are showing signs of aging. Therefore, the need is for infrastructure renewal, rather than the construction of new roads for the foreseeable future.

Other issues needing future attention are the roads originally designed for home to market use that have been strip-developed and simultaneously serve as local streets, collectors and arterials, in the absence of a more fully developed hierarchical road network. Also, more regional links are needed to the Interstate system to support area economic development and municipal decision-making. One example is the need for a stronger road network around Interstate 481/Kirkville Road in the
Town of DeWitt that is built upon a clear understanding of the best use of the surrounding land and the infrastructure improvements needed to support that development. Another example is an area in the Town of Clay, which is proposed for new industrial use, including a Chip Fab site, involving the same types of issues.

Progress Achieved on UPWP Projects

During the interval since the 1998 Update, the SMTC has achieved measurable progress on several major transportation planning projects. These projects address a variety of transportation and land use issues in specific geographic locations. The projects were originally selected for inclusion in the SMTC annual UPWP, which establishes the activities and programs to be carried out. Examples of projects completed include, but are not limited to the following: the South Side Transportation Study (October 1999); the Liverpool Area – Onondaga Lake Parkway Transportation Study (February 2000); the University Hill Special Events Transportation Study (February 2000); the City of Syracuse Truck Route Study (May 2000); and the South Salina Street Corridor Study (February 2001). These projects, together with the implementation actions identified in the following pages, provide an overview of the wide range of activities being carried out by the SMTC and its member agencies. In Map 2-1, the location is shown of major transportation planning projects, carried out under the UPWP.

Review of Action Plans Implemented

Part of the process for updating the LRTP during 2001 includes the identification of action plans, which have been implemented under each of the six goals during the years since 1995. The 1998 Update did not address implementation actions associated with specific goals and objectives. The identification of implemented action plans involved discussions with the member agencies responsible for their respective TIP projects. In the pages that follow, the implemented action plans are presented, together with their respective goals and objectives. The implemented action plans are summaries rather than complete descriptions. In many cases, an overlap exists because a particular action plan may apply to multiple goals. For example, a highway project can fulfill both a safety and a mobility goal.
COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Goal:** To enhance the safety of the people using the transportation system.

**Objectives:**

- To annually identify the ten highest accident locations in the SMTC area and initiate remediation measures that, within five years, will reduce the accident rate at these locations by an average 25%.

- To identify the five highest intermodal accident locations (vehicle/pedestrian, transit/pedestrian, rail/vehicle, bicycle/vehicle) periodically, and to encourage remediation measures that will reduce intermodal conflict.

- To assist local planning officials and developers in accommodating travel between different areas when planning new developments.

**Safety Action Plans Implemented:**

1. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has instituted an annual program to identify high accident locations and institute remedial design improvements, including the following.

   - The Carrier Circle safety capital project (1993) channelized Route 635, Thompson Road and Route 298 westbound approaches and upgraded traffic signs; the Route 298 3R project (expected 2001 letting) will channelize and reduce approach/merge skew angle of Route 298 eastbound approach.

   - The I-81/I-690 Interchange capital project (1999) replaced scuppers and downspouts on Almond Street viaduct, cleaned scuppers and downspouts on the Onondaga interchange, and cleaned the underground drainage system. A recent highway safety investigation (2000) recommended cleaning bridge drainage systems as part of the annual bridge cleaning project to address wet pavement and ponding-related accidents; the study also recommended consideration of transverse grooving under a future bridge repair project.

   - The I-690 at Route 635 (Thompson Road) capital project (1996) improved channelization and signs within the interchange, including creation of a two-lane exit along I-690 eastbound.

   - The Route 11 near Bailey Road capital project (1999) included channelization and lane reallocation improvements at I-81 northbound exit at Route 11 northbound/Northern Lights Plaza; Route 11 northbound and South Bay Road northbound split; Route 11 northbound at South Bay Road southbound; Route 11 southbound at South Bay Road Southbound/Northern Concourse; Route 11 between Bailey Road and Elbow Road.
• The Route 31 and County Route 57 capital project (completed in 2000) created a five-lane section on Route 31 from Theodolite Lane to Soule Road.

• The Adams and Almond Streets capital project (completed in 2000) upgraded and coordinated downtown traffic signals; a 2000 maintenance by contract (MBC) project resurfaced the Adams Street Arterial.

2. Recent/upcoming NYSDOT improvements for the ten highest vehicular accident locations on State-owned roads include:

• Route 298 between Court Street and Carrier Circle.

• Adams Street (Salina to Almond) with a double left turn from Townsend Street to Adams Street (1998).

• Route 11, from Sand Road to South Bay Road (see above).

• Route 31 to Route I-81 - currently exploring alternatives to reduce accidents and congestion along the corridor.

• Erie Boulevard (Route 5) at Thompson Road. The highway safety investigation (1997) recommended review of set back loop operation, sign upgrade and consideration of signal interconnect; the loops were checked and lane use signs were upgraded or added.

• Route 11, Wally Road to Taft Road. The highway safety investigation (2000) recommended review of signal clearance intervals.

• Route 11 at South Bay Road (see above).

• Route 298, Court Street Road to GM Circle. The Route 298 3R project (2001 letting) will address various safety and operational deficiencies between Arterial Road and Carrier Circle.

• Route 11 at Bailey Road (see above).

• I-81 at 7th North Interchange. The highway safety investigation (1997) recommended upgrading chevrons on the exit loops with speed advisory panels.

3. The NYSDOT funds safety improvements through the capital program update process. Qualifying improvements, those which can achieve a benefit/cost ratio of 5.0 or higher, are added to the capital program every two years through the following methods:

• Safety Capital Projects, which are stand-alone projects programmed for the purpose of eliminating a safety deficiency and/or reducing accident frequency and severity.
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- Safety Enhancements, which are safety improvement components added to a paving or infrastructure improvement project to reduce accidents and severity at high accident locations and cluster locations.

4. The NYSDOT is currently developing a Safety Information Management System (SIMS) that will provide accident record information on State and local highways and streets.

5. The NYSDOT is currently pursuing a program to produce a comprehensive statistical and GIS-based report on pedestrian and bicycle crash data.

6. The NYSDOT has eliminated a rail grade crossing at Poolsbrook Road crossing in the Town of Manlius.

7. The NYSDOT has developed a community outreach program presentation that is used during development of the capital program for obtaining local government and citizen input during the planning process. The outreach program is used to identify and address problems, as well as current and anticipated needs.

8. The NYSDOT is implementing the guidelines contained in the brochure Best Practices In Arterial Management and An Information Guide to the Highway Work Permit Process in order to enhance safety.

9. The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) has a System Safety Plan, which is updated every 24 months covering internal and external operations.

10. The CNYRTA uses a system for tracking and categorizing transit accidents. During 2001, a new tracking process is being initiated using the NYS Public Transportation Safety Board process as a template.
COMMUNITY MOBILITY

Goal: To improve the mobility options for people within the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Area.

Objectives:

- To provide fixed-route or demand-responsive transit service to all areas with urban population densities (approximately 1000 or greater per square mile) and to all major activity centers. This service should accommodate both work trip and non-work travel (shopping, medical etc.) for both able-bodied and mobility impaired citizens.

- To improve the level-of-service (LOS) of at least half of the ten most congested sections and intersections between 1990 and 2020.

- To reverse the decline in the share of trips made by modes other than the single occupant vehicle by 2000 and to increase the share of trips made by high occupancy vehicles (including fixed and demand-responsive transit), bicycle and walking by 25% collectively, by the year 2020.

- Transportation facilities should be accessible to all people. All improvements to the transportation system should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- To encourage greater utilization of electronic communication with the workplace and to conduct personal business (shopping, etc.).

Mobility Action Plans Implemented:

1. During the period 1995 through 2000, the CNYRTA has gone through a complete route restructuring process. Part of the effort has been to decentralize operations and shorten transfer and trip times, with all transfer trips routed through the Regional Transportation Center, Carousel Center or Shoppingtown Mall. The impact of these improvements has been to enhance service for both work and non-work trips. During 1999-2000, the CNYRTA began two small bus services in suburban/rural areas that provide feeders to the main CENTRO network as intracommunity circulators. These services have been established in the eastern and western portions of the service area. A similar service will be extended to the northern service area during 2001-2002.

2. The Congestion Management System (CMS) model has identified mobility hot spots, resulting in projects being placed on the TIP and implemented to address high priority mobility concerns at locations such as Routes 5 and 92 and the Baldwinsville Bypass.

3. The NYSDOT is evaluating alternative funding sources for a new Seneca River bridge crossing in Baldwinsville (Baldwinsville Bypass Project). The Baldwinsville Bypass Project, Phase II, is on the TIP for right-of-way (ROW) and design, but construction funds are not yet identified.
4. The NYSDOT is exploring the applicability of non-traditional modes for the Routes 5/290 corridor. Project scoping for the Routes 5/92 Demonstration Project was concluded with a Final Expanded Project Proposal in 1999. A variety of traditional and non-traditional alternatives were evaluated and five were recommended for further consideration. A Park & Ride lot is being reviewed by the CNYRTA, a signal interconnect project and a Routes 5/92 TSM project are on the Region 3 program and the I-481 interchange modification is on the Long-Range program. The fifth project, at Lyndon Corners, was deferred.

5. The SMTC has implemented the CMS Model, which is updated on an annual basis. The NYSDOT provides updated traffic counts each year and the SMTC staff runs the model and issues a project report that identifies the congestion concerns in Onondaga County.

6. The CNYRTA has reviewed the factors affecting mode choice in the SMTC area in its continuing efforts to increase transit ridership. Several factors adversely impact the agency’s ability to increase ridership. These include: a low density regional development pattern that minimizes opportunities for creating the type of critical mass needed for supporting transit service; low levels of commuter congestion at peak hours compared to other large urban areas; city and suburban parking policies that result in providing the public with large areas of inexpensive automobile parking space; time and cost differentials that often favor single occupancy commuting; generally improved air quality; a high capacity road network; and a limited level of interest in ride-sharing.

7. The CNYRTA works with area employees to promote ride sharing and employer transit subsidies. As indicated above, a continuing fact is the low level of interest in ride sharing and the other factors noted which tend to support and reinforce automobile usage.

8. The CNYRTA, together with the NYSDOT and others, has developed plans and instituted transit service improvements and multi-hub based service under the Regional Mobility Action Plan (ReMAP) Project to improve connectivity. The ReMAP study resulted in a plan to serve reverse commuters through a reworking of the existing fixed routes and adding job-site specific small buses for non-traditional commuter times.

9. The NYSDOT has developed a program to enhance pedestrian and bicycling opportunities through roadway design, as set forth in a rewritten chapter of their Highway Design Manual for accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians. The new Chapter 18 is intended to be used as guidance on how the NYSDOT should take into account the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians into highway design plans.

10. The CNYRTA has fulfilled its policy to have all transportation facilities comply with ADA.

11. The NYSDOT requires that all pedestrian facilities built with federal or state funds comply with the provisions of the ADA.

12. The NYSDOT requires that all repair/retrofit of existing pedestrian facilities to comply with the provisions of the ADA.
13. The CNYRTA has developed an outreach program to discuss the potential for expanding transit service ridership. These efforts include customer focus groups, meetings with municipalities as a part of the previously mentioned ReMAP project, plus numerous individual one-on-one discussions. These outreach efforts are being repeated during 2001 and again thereafter every two years. Another initiative being undertaken by CNYRTA is an Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) system that, when operating in the coming year or two, will result in communications units being installed that provide real time information on bus locations at key CNYRTA passenger stops.

14. The CNYRTA is working with area employees to promote ride sharing and with employers to provide employee transit subsidies. The ride sharing efforts have proven difficult. However, there are currently 40 businesses participating in a transit pass program where the employer pays part of the transit fee and receives a tax credit. The Employer Fare Deal also avoids employees having to pay an income tax on the employer contribution.

15. The CNYRTA is nearing the completion of a project to install bicycle racks on all of its buses. A majority of the fleet is now equipped with bike racks.
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

Goal: To provide a clean and environmentally sound transportation system for current and future residents.

Objectives:
- To implement programs that lead to improvement in the region’s air and environmental quality.
- To reduce the total daily carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from mobile sources by at least 60% from 1991-2003.
- To reduce the overall use of road salt through more efficient application on roadways by 2020.

Environment Action Plans Implemented:

1. The CNYRTA now has 110 buses, or 62 percent of its fleet, powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), as alternative fuel replacement. This replacement effort is continuing, as new buses are required. The Clean Communities of CNY (part of the national Clean Cities Program) has a program that encourages other fleets to pursue alternative fuel electric or natural gas vehicles, including the state, Onondaga County, City of Syracuse, school districts, municipal governments and the local business community. The NYSDOT has begun converting its motor pool fleet to CNG.

2. The Clean Communities of CNY is supporting Niagara Mohawk Power Company’s Electric Car Joint Venture project to manufacture and promote electric car use in Syracuse and New York State.

3. The SMTC is promoting strategies in the Clean Communities of CNY Plan through the participation of its member agencies.

4. As indicated previously, the SMTC and its member agencies are promoting multi-modalism in their transportation projects by planning and implementing enhanced transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking opportunities.

5. The SMTC member agencies are implementing measures contained in the New York State Implementation Plan Redesignation Request for Onondaga County as an Attainment area for Carbon Monoxide. The City of Syracuse continues to strengthen the operation of the coordinated signal system through additional staffing and personnel training to operate the system. Improved management of special events traffic has improved traffic flow and safety, especially for Dome events at Syracuse University.

6. New Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies for snow and ice conditions have been implemented, such as the NYSDOT project installing variable message signs for travel weather conditions monitoring. There are now two such signs in Onondaga County.
on I-81 Northbound in northern Onondaga County that advise motorists of lake affect snow conditions.

7. The City of Syracuse and Onondaga County have instituted improved intermunicipal coordination and cooperation for snow and ice removal on arterial highways within the City of Syracuse.
COMMUNITY ECONOMY

Goal: To enhance the area’s economic competitiveness thereby increasing opportunities for employment.

Objectives:

- To place particular emphasis in allocating funding resources supporting access to economic development projects which will encourage job creation/retention including the utilization of an industrial access program.

- To place particular emphasis on maintaining an adequate condition and operation standard (maximizing predictability and reliability) on principal arterials, the facilities most heavily used by both freight and passenger vehicles.

- To increase the amount of employer-centered coordination of employee travel by 50%, including coordination of car/vanpooling, employer coordinated linkages to transit, employer transit subsidy and guaranteed ride home.

Economy Action Plans Implemented:

1. The transportation needs of the local and regional business community and ways to improve intermodal transportation and connectivity are discussed in a number of venues by the SMTC and its member agencies. This includes participation in the Intermodal Roundtable discussions sponsored by the SMTC, which are open to all members of the business community. The focus of the Intermodal Roundtable has been on the movement of freight and on the limitations and restrictions of the transportation network. The input provided at this forum and the results of a survey of a portion of the business community have proven valuable in identifying transportation needs from the businesses’ perspective.

2. Potential TIP projects must meet the criteria contained in the NYSDOT Region 3 Goal Oriented Programming Criteria. Under the capacity/mobility section of the guidelines, a project which displays characteristics beneficial to the community may be ranked higher, based on their potential to improve the quality of life for the community. These projects may demonstrate characteristics such as industrial corridor access or improvements, and strategic or planned economic development.

3. The NYSDOT has expended significant resources on economic development-related projects through the Industrial Access Program (IAP). Funding through the IAP for $950,000 plus 300,000 in multi-modal funds allowed for the construction of improved truck access to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Baldwinsville. The project supported the Brewery’s $100 million upgrade, which secured over 1,000 jobs for Central New York. The construction project, coupled with the designation of Willet Parkway, West Entry Road and Henry Clay Boulevard as State Touring Route 631, has virtually removed truck traffic from the center of the Village of Baldwinsville. Additionally, several new parcels were opened in the Radisson Corporate Park and have since been developed (i.e. Ainsley Warehouse, Nathan Spec-250 Warehouse).
Several other economic development projects were recently completed which had a related transportation element. The Whitacre Engineering Company of Liverpool invested $1.5 million and added 37 jobs after the NYSDOT awarded a $200,000 grant/loan to construct a rail siding into their facility on Wetzel Road. Similar projects were completed at Solvay Paperboard, Climax Corp, and Roth Steel.

4. The SMTC undertook a City of Syracuse Truck Route Study and published a plan for truck routes and freight movement. The SMTC member agencies participated in the study, which was presented to the City of Syracuse transportation officials to implement recommended improvements.

5. The SMTC has adopted TIP selection criteria that give appropriate weight to intermodal connectivity for freight. Regional capacity and mobility shall also be improved by increased transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel and enhanced by promoting the connectivity of the NHS routes to the non-highway transportation modes. These criteria must be met in order for a potential federal aid candidate project to become an SMTC TIP project.

6. The CNYRTA efforts previously mentioned, such as the Employer Fare Deal, ReMAP Project and other employment based initiatives such as the Welfare to Work Transportation Program, being addressed through a new Mobility Management Center, contribute to making the area economically competitive.
COMMUNITY LAND USE

Goal: To promote the development of an efficient urban area and a sense of community through transportation planning.

Objectives:

• To protect/enhance the visual and functional condition of streets and highways by encouraging well-planned residential, and industrial development.

• To educate and encourage municipalities to develop land use, zoning regulations and circulation plans which are supportive of transportation planning objectives including mobility protection.

• To ensure that funding decisions, particularly projects which improve street capacity for highway improvements, are related to municipal land use regulations which are supportive of mobility protection.

• To support development patterns, densities and design options which are conducive to transit service, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Land Use Action Plans Implemented:

1. The Onondaga County has prepared, sometimes with consultants, transportation plans, land use/site design recommendations and/or development suggestions, for the villages, towns and the City of Syracuse. The plans encourage municipalities to utilize techniques and concepts, which are supportive of the SMTC 2020 LRTP and Onondaga County’s 2010 Plan.

2. The SMTC is pursuing the implementation of the guidelines contained in the brochure Best Practices In Arterial Management, prepared by the NYSDOT in cooperation with the NYS Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and others.

3. Onondaga County has prepared, sometimes with consultants, model zoning, subdivision and highway access control ordinances and regulations.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal: To provide safe, clean, well-maintained and efficient transportation infrastructure.

Objectives:

- To increase the bridges with condition ratings of better than 5 to 80 percent and to increase the deck area of bridges with condition ratings of greater than 5 to 83 percent of the total number of bridges by 2020.

- To stabilize pavement conditions at or above the following levels for all medium and high volume roads (greater than 2500 AADT): 11 percent poor; 26% fair and average condition rating of 7.0 for all medium and high volume roads by 2020.

- To rebuild sidewalks and other pedestrian or bicycle facilities most used by cyclists and pedestrians.

- To maintain transit system facilities, providing safe and reliable service through 2020.

- To ensure connections between transportation modes for passenger travel and goods movement, through facility location and design.

Facilities Action Plans Implemented:

1. The NYSDOT programs TIP funds annually to address bridge maintenance needs in the most cost-effective way. Life cycle costs are a factor in bridge programs. The percentage of state-owned bridges in Onondaga County, in terms of the total number of bridges that are non-deficient, is 69.4%. The percentage of state-owned bridges, based on deck area of bridges that are non-deficient, is 70.5%. Since 1995, funds have been allocated through the TIP to achieve the 2020 goal of 80% non-deficient by number and 83% by deck area. The percentage of deficient bridges in Onondaga County is lower than that for the entire six county NYSDOT Region 3 area for state-owned bridges. The current condition for all local bridges in Onondaga County is 57.7% non-deficient.

2. The NYSDOT programs TIP funds annually to address pavement conditions in the most cost-effective way, emphasizing preventive maintenance on the basis of high volumes and functional class. From 1995 to 2000, the percentage of poor condition pavement for medium and high volume state roads has decreased from 6.9% to 2.8% in Onondaga County. This exceeds the 2020 goal of reaching not more than 11% poor condition. During the same time frame, the percentage of fair condition pavement for medium and high volume state roads has decreased from 47.6% to 24.2% in Onondaga County. This exceeds the 2020 goal of reaching not more than 26% fair condition. The average pavement condition rating from 1995 to 2000 has increased from 6.56 to 7.27 for medium and high volume roads in Onondaga County. This compares favorably with the 2020 goal of reaching an average condition rating of 7.0. Since 1995, funds have been allocated through the TIP to address pavement conditions with emphasis on preventive maintenance on high volume roads with higher level functional classifications.
3. During the period 1995 through 2000, TIP funds have been programmed to enhance maintenance and construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities where potential use increases exist.

4. The NYSDOT has implemented the Pavement and Bridge Management Systems.

5. The CNYRTA has completed construction of the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center. This facility links transit, rail and air transportation systems and has experienced a 15 percent growth in passengers served over the past two years. Additional improvements call for expanding the existing parking facilities during 2001 to accommodate the passenger growth.

6. The NYSDOT (Headquarters) is currently engaged in developing the Intermodal Management System. When available, this tool will be used to display all grade crossings on a GIS and, pending yet further development, will display other features.

7. The CNYRTA has a program item in the TIP to implement bus waiting shelters.