

Chapter VIII:

Long-Term Outlook and the Financial Plan

A. Long-Term Outlook

When examining the long-term outlook for transportation planning and programming over the foreseeable future, there are several summary conclusions that can be drawn.

1. Asset Management and Infrastructure Maintenance

First and foremost, as shown in the previous sections of this plan, the vast majority of financial resources relating to transportation for the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) area are committed to maintaining the extensive, diverse, and aging infrastructure that already exists in the community. This infrastructure maintenance includes, but is not limited to the following major activities discussed briefly below.

- **Pavement Maintenance / Road Reconstruction:**

Most member agencies have programs for preserving infrastructure maintenance, including pavement and bridges. The City of Syracuse, the Onondaga County Department of Transportation (OCDOT), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) all have active pavement management systems (PMS) that include routine scoring of pavements and repaving a pre-determined number of centerline miles of roadway each year. The repaving program consists of in-house work (for routine pavement maintenance and minor repairs) and contractual work (for major overhauls and maintenance paving). By following a periodic treatment cycle (for example, every eight to ten years) for the pavement maintenance program, the initial pavement investment is preserved, with the possibility of avoiding a future total pavement overhaul for quite some time. Additionally, the SMTC includes the Bridge and Pavement Condition Management System (BPCMS) annually on its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The goal of this effort and corresponding report is to publish the conditions of the bridges and pavement in the MPO area for each member agency that is responsible for infrastructure maintenance. This tool is an additional aid that can be utilized by member agencies in setting their road maintenance priorities.

- **Bridge Repairs / Improvements:**

The NYSDOT inspects all bridges in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area and determines goals for the condition of both state and local (non-state) bridges. The bridge condition ratings and the goals are also included in the annual SMTC BPCMS report. A common existing programming challenge with bridges in the MPO area is that many of the bridges are of similar age, and therefore are due to be repaired at relatively the same time (i.e., interstate bridges, canal bridges). This presents a challenge because only a limited amount of money is available for bridge repairs in any given year, yet many bridges may be “due” for improvements. It is more difficult to stagger bridge rehabilitation schedules than pavement life cycles. This challenge is met via a priority system given to the bridges so that the safety of the traveling public is never compromised.

- Other Safety Improvements:

Safety is a high priority for the implementing agencies in the MPO area. Most member agencies regularly schedule safety improvements for corridors, roadways and intersections. Common safety improvements to minimize incident severity include minor widening of roadways, minor horizontal and vertical changes in a roadway and geometric adjustments such as the straightening of a curve. There are various mechanisms in place to monitor safety conditions on highways. One such NYSDOT safety monitoring mechanism is the creation of annual accident/incident location lists. Similarly, the SMTC annually completes a Safety Improvement Analysis that examines 10 locations chosen by either the City of Syracuse or Onondaga County.

- Transit Maintenance and Improvements:

Centro is leading the way in Central New York in the use of alternative fuel, low emissions vehicles. Currently, Centro has 207 total buses in its fleet including 114 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. Centro has constructed a CNG fueling facility that is open to the public. However, this facility is currently being used only by companies with fleet vehicles. Additionally, Centro is pursuing New York State consortium of transit properties to purchase hybrid buses. The consortium would include approximately seven transit agencies interested in buying the same model of hybrid buses. Through purchasing a larger quantity using the consortium, the buses can be purchased at a reduced rate. This would include Centro purchasing five to nine buses at approximately \$450,000 to \$500,000 each. In looking toward future improvements, hydrogen fuel cell buses (approximately \$1 million each) will improve air quality. As buses require maintenance and eventual replacement during their life cycle, there is a need for continuous money to be available to upgrade and upkeep Centro's fleet. Additionally, instead of purchasing a few buses each year to keep the fleet operable, Centro purchases a larger number of buses every few years because this allows for a reduced rate on the bus price.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) bus lines serving the City of Syracuse converge at "Common Center" in downtown at the intersection of Fayette and Salina Streets. During weekday, midday and evening periods and also on weekends, buses are scheduled to meet at Common Center to facilitate passenger transfers. Currently, the number of bus lines that can make connections at these "pulses" or "line-ups" is constrained due to space limitations. Buses entering the City are routed to specific stops; however, bus queuing within each stop can be inconsistent, which can lead to customer confusion. Moreover, Fayette and Salina Streets are major arterials in downtown Syracuse, carrying significant traffic volumes. While the intersection is fully signalized, the volume of vehicular traffic often conflicts with crossing pedestrian movements creating safety concerns. Finally, while bus shelters are provided at Common Center, its location at a major central business district (CBD)

intersection precludes significant improvement to the facility due to lack of right-of-way and surrounding land use considerations.

CNYRTA is seeking funding to construct a stand-alone Common Center transit facility where bus operations can be conducted off-street and out of general traffic patterns. This facility will offer a convenient, safe, weather-protected environment for passengers to make transit connections.

2. Notable Exceptions

It is expected that the majority of the resources that will be expended in the near future relate to maintenance via the activities previously discussed and other required actions. However, there are some notable exceptions that should be called out.

- **Additional Capacity:**

While not a major activity in the MPO area, adding capacity is an occasional activity that is required due to economic and residential expansion into outlying areas. While there are no current major capacity building efforts on the programmed TIP, it is possible that in the near future some additional capacity will be needed in select and isolated portions of the transportation system in response to growth. Recent examples of projects that are either completed or underway include the added capacity improvements on NYS Route 31 in response to the large influx of development in the area, as well as the Belgium Bridge replacement project. While these existing scenarios are likely extreme examples of additional capacity building that may be needed at select locations in the future, it would be incorrect to say that no capacity improvements will be necessary in the twenty-year planning horizon. Rather, it is more likely that minor capacity building projects may be required in response to select areas of growth.

- **New Transit Initiatives:**

Centro will continue to pursue alternative service concepts. Studies that have been completed regarding transit initiatives (such as the Regional Mobility Action Plan [ReMap] and Job Access Reverse Commute [JARC]) recommended alternative transit options and services. One example of this concept is the successful Mobility Management Center, which Centro plans on expanding.

- **Additions and improvements to the Non-Motorized System (Bicycle & Pedestrian System):**

Since the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 legislation, bicycle and pedestrian planning activities continue to be addressed through the UPWP. Bicycle and pedestrian capital projects have also become a growing element of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). This trend will continue to be a consistent element when dealing with transportation issues within the SMTC members' transportation systems. As a result, the completion and connection of existing trails, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities may be further emphasized in the future, thus improving the non-motorized transportation system.

- **New Development Potential:**

Theoretical plans for the Lakefront area call for various economic development opportunities. One such plan is the Destiny USA initiative. If built to its advertised potential, these plans could significantly impact the MPO area. If the plans materialize, an update to the existing Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will likely be needed in order to take transportation changes and requirements adequately into account. Due to the various options currently being discussed and the lack of any guarantee of the project actually being constructed, it would be inappropriate for this document to speculate as to the details of the development or its transportation needs at this time. Similarly, any new major employment center (that is not currently being planned or envisioned) that should arise in the MPO region would have a similar effect and require possible modification to the LRTP to account for its needs. If the Lakefront development (including Destiny USA) occurs to its full potential, new financial resources will have to be obtained and factored accordingly for the transportation system.

- **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS):**

As noted in several locations throughout this document, ITS is becoming more of an active methodology to assist in traffic and incident management. The member agencies of the SMTC expect the role of ITS to continue to grow significantly and that the various ITS technologies will require planning and financial assistance via the SMTC. Please refer to the earlier sections of this document or the ITS Strategic Plan Executive Summary (located at www.smtcmpo.org) for more details on the various strategies under consideration.

As discussed above, the maintenance of the existing systems is a top priority in the SMTC area with some exceptions. The following section details the financial resources anticipated to be expended in the near future.

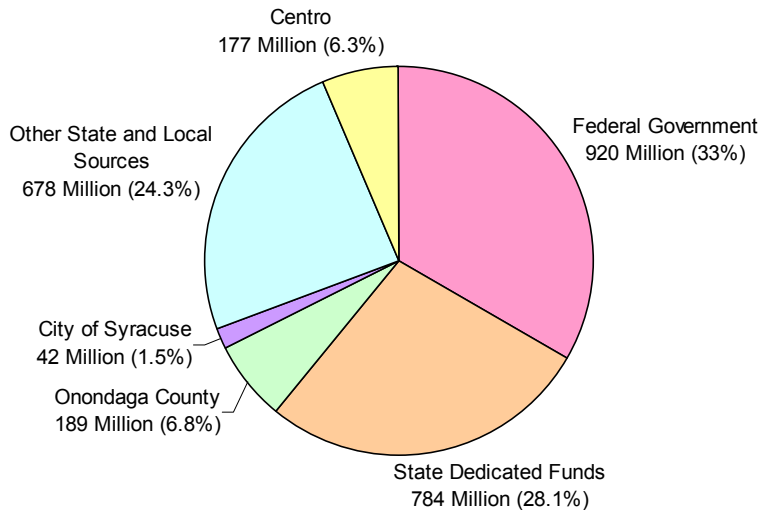
B. Financial Plan

1. Resources Available

The 2020 LRTP, when published in 1995, anticipated a total of \$3.050 billion in funding over the 25-year planning period. This LRTP 2004 Update anticipates a total of \$2.791 billion in funding over the remaining term of the planning period. The major sources of funding, shown in Table 8-1 and 8-3, include the federal government at 33.0% (\$920 million) of the total, the State Dedicated Fund at 28.1% (\$784 million), Onondaga County at 6.8% (\$189 million) and the City of Syracuse at 1.5% (\$42 million). The balance is comprised of other State and local sources at 24.3% (\$679 million)¹ and Centro operating revenue at 6.3% (\$177 million). It is anticipated that all traditional funding mechanisms will be exhausted with the implementation of this LRTP 2004 Update.

¹ The number does not match the number for “Other State and Local Funds” on Table 8-1 because it includes some non-transit funding that cannot be broken out from that number.

Table 8-1
Resources Available- Major Sources of Funding



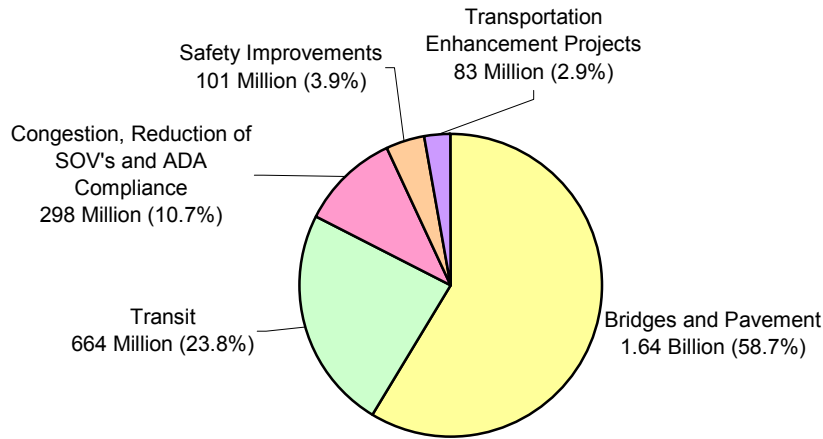
2. Costs

The largest share of the total resources available will be expended to maintain the existing transportation system. The percentage allocation of anticipated resources through 2020 has not been changed from the original LRTP of 1995. Although the transit portion of Table 8-2 and 8-3 shows fewer total dollar resources under the 2001-2020 column, the annual amount is greater now for the Update period than was the case when the LRTP was originally published. The 2004-2025 column for highway funding corrects previous misrepresentations that were not based on the assumption that all of the allocations would be spent in a 25-year period.

For this 2004 Update, the 2001 cost of each objective has been prorated using the new 16-year resource base of \$2.790 billion. The results show that maintenance of existing bridges and pavement (Facilities 1-3 in Table 8-4, as well as Table 8-2) will absorb 58.7% of the budget (\$1.64 billion). An additional 23.8% (\$664 million) will be allocated to support the area transit system; 10.7% (\$298 million) will be used to improve congested locations, reduce single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance; and 3.9% (\$101 million) will be spent for efforts to increase safety at high incident locations. The remaining 2.9% (\$83 million) of the budget will support transportation projects that enhance economic development, environmental quality and efforts to coordinate land use and transportation planning decisions in the study area. The 2004 Update also supports a number of innovative initiatives new to this area. Examples of the latter include funds which have been allocated to encourage the application of ITS technology in the Syracuse region and an effort to devise a cost/benefit methodology for application to future TIPs.

Table 8-2

Resources Available to Maintain Existing Transportation System



3. Evaluation of the Project Financial Tracking Process

A review of the LRTP section on Goals, Objectives and Action Plans for this Update indicates that there is an opportunity to strengthen the current system for tracking and evaluating projects in relation to LRTP goals. Specifically, it is sometimes difficult to link a project to one or more goals. Consequently, it is difficult to document what has been accomplished toward reaching a goal or to demonstrate how far along the SMTC is toward attainment of any given goal.

In order to strengthen the existing process, the SMTC intends over the short term (the next three years) to restructure the current project tracking system in order to make documentation of goal progress more effective. Essentially, this will occur by linking each project with one or more specific goals. Additional information could be provided, such as project sponsor, or forecasted versus actual cost. This will permit a more systematic documentation and evaluation of progress achieved toward goal attainment.

The resources on Table 8-1 are based on adjustments to the original allocations from the original 1995 LRTP. It can be assumed that total allocations will be spent down because of the fact that the need for transportation projects far outweighs the resources to implement them. Therefore, by proportionally spending down the total allocation from the beginning in 1995, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allocation percentages by funding category have not been changed. It is because of this lack of resources to fund all of the needs that projects have been prioritized and thus, the Project Financial Tracking System.

Table 8-3

Established Resources Available for Transit Operations Capital Funding and Highway Capital Funding					
	1995-2020 (Millions of Dollars)	1998-2020 (Millions of Dollars)	2001-2020 (Millions of Dollars)	2004-2025 (Millions of Dollars)	
<i>The estimates below were calculated as planning estimates for the corresponding planning periods and are not to be interpreted as actual budgets.</i>					
Transit Funding Sources	Federal-FTA	\$180 M	\$99 M	\$91 M	\$105 M
	State Dedicated Funds	\$30 M	\$16 M	\$15 M	\$17 M
	Other State and Local Funds	\$290 M	\$327 M	\$301 M	\$557 M
	Operating Revenue	\$170 M	\$167 M	\$154 M	\$177 M
	Total Transit Funding	\$670 Billion	\$609 Billion	\$561 Billion	\$856 Billion
Highway Funding Sources	Federal-FHWA	\$1095 M	\$1087 M	\$1000 M	\$920 M
	State Dedicated Funds	\$1010 M	\$801 M	\$738 M	\$784 M
	Onondaga County-Capital Program	\$225 M	\$242 M	\$233 M	\$189 M
	City of Syracuse-Capital Program	\$50 M	\$70 M	\$64 M	\$42 M
	Other Municipalities in the SMTC Area	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included	Not Included
	Total Highway Funding	\$2.380 Billion	\$2.200 Billion	\$2.025 Billion	\$1.935 Billion
Total Highway and Transit Capital Funding		\$3.050 Billion	\$2.809 Billion	\$2.586 Billion	\$2.791 Billion

Sources: NYSDOT and CNYRTA

Notes and Assumptions: The 2004-2020 column for highway funding corrects previous misrepresentations that were not based on the assumption that all of the allocations would be spent in a 25-year period.

2004-2020 (16 years) Estimated Resources-Transit Operations and Capital Funding

Federal-FTA-Assume continuation of current 5307 program at approximate level of \$5 million per year. This program is subject to reauthorization approximately every six years, as well as to specific annual appropriation levels that can be less than the authorization.

State Dedicated Funds- This capital program is subject to renewal by New York State approximately every five years. Specific funding is determined by NYSDOT annually based on relative need. CNYRTA estimates it will receive and average of about \$800,000 per year over this 16-year period.

Other State and Local Funds-Components include: local mortgage recording fees, Statewide Transit Operating Assistance (STOA), local match for portions of the STOA amount, and state 10% match.

Mortgage recording fees are expected to be nominally higher over this period compared to previous estimates.

The STOA program was substantially increased in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2002 and was continued at a slightly lower level in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2003. For purposes of estimation, we anticipate the April 1, 2003 level of \$19.7 million to be the base amount going forward. This is the primary reason for the substantial increase in this resource category.

Local match for STOA, plus some small non-required subsidies, is expected to hold at about \$2.7 million per year.

With federal capital programs estimated at \$5 million per year (representing 80% of project costs) results in a total capital program of up to \$6.25 million per year. The NYS share of a \$6.25 million annual capital program is 10% or \$625,000.

Operating Revenue-Projected at approximately current levels, with nominal increases.

Table 8-4

Allocation of Resources by Long-Range Transportation Plan Objective				
OBJECTIVE	1995 – 2020	1998 – 2020	2001-2020	2004-2025
Mobility 1 – Transit service	\$520 M	\$479 M	\$441 M	\$664 M
Mobility 2 – Improve LOS at congested locations	\$300 M	\$276 M	\$254 M	\$252 M
Mobility 3 – Decrease the number of SOVs	\$25 M	\$23 M	\$21 M	\$21 M
Mobility 4 – Comply with ADA	\$30 M	\$28 M	\$26 M	\$25 M
Mobility 5 – Greater utilization of electronic communication	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land Use 1-4 – Assist local communities in planning	\$1 M	\$0.9 M	\$0.8 M	\$0.8 M
Environment 1 – Implement programs that improve air quality	\$15 M	\$14 M	\$13 M	\$13 M
Environment 2 – Implement carbon monoxide SIP	\$14 M	\$13 M	\$12 M	\$12 M
Environment 3 – Decrease use of road salt	\$5 M	\$5 M	\$4 M	\$4 M
Economy 1 – Support access to economic development	\$50 M	\$46 M	\$42 M	\$42 M
Economy 2 – Maintain operation/condition standard on principal arterials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Economy 3 – Employer coordination of employee travel	\$12 M	\$11 M	\$10 M	\$11 M
Facilities 1 – Bridge maintenance	\$776 M	\$715 M	\$659 M	\$652 M
Facilities 2 – Pavement maintenance	\$1172 M	\$1079 M	\$994 M	\$984 M
Facilities 3 – Maintain sidewalks & other pedestrian/bike facilities	\$10 M	\$9 M	\$8 M	\$8 M
Safety 1 – Reduce accident rates at highest accident locations	\$95 M	\$87 M	\$80 M	\$80 M
Safety 2 – Reduce the highest intermodal accident locations	\$25 M	\$23 M	\$21 M	\$21 M
Safety 3 – Assist planning officials and developers in accommodating travel in new developments	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$3.050 Billion	\$2.809 Billion	\$2.586 Billion	\$2.791 Billion
Source: New York State Department of Transportation				