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6  ECONOMY

6.1  GOAL

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

6.1.1  OBJECTIVES

- To place particular emphasis in allocating funding resources and 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 transit subsidy and guaranteed ride home.

6.2  TRENDS

Local, regional, and national economic trends are summarized below. Emphasis is placed on the MPA’s unique attributes that contribute to the success of the local and regional economy. These trends and attributes provide guidance into transportation planning decisions and serve as helpful insight into where future investments in transportation infrastructure could be made.

6.2.1  TRANSPORTATION CROSSROADS OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

Syracuse and Onondaga County benefit from their location at the center of New York State. The establishment of the Erie Canal and the subsequent development of prominent railroad corridors as well as the interstate highway system across Onondaga County ensured Central New York’s rise to prominence through continual access to major transportation routes for nearly two centuries.

Today, Onondaga County continues to benefit economically as the transportation crossroads of Central New York. Interstate 81 serves as a significant north-south corridor reaching from Canada to Tennessee. It also intersects the NYS Thruway just north of the City of Syracuse in the center of Onondaga County. The NYS Thruway runs east-west across all of New York State linking with major interstate corridors in neighboring states.

NYS Route 481 also plays a role in the regional transportation network, stretching from I-81 north of the City of Syracuse to the City of Oswego (Interstate 481 runs from I-81 south of the city to I-81 north of the City). Other significant east-west corridors that span across the state include NYS Route 20 and NYS Route 5. Additionally, NYS Route 31 serves as the northern Onondaga County connector.
In addition, the MPA is served by extensive multi-modal transportation hubs, which include: the Syracuse Hancock International Airport, the deep water Port of Oswego, a CSX intermodal freight rail center, and the Regional Transportation Center that offers Amtrak passenger rail service and commercial bus services.

This network is critical in terms of carrying freight which in turn supports the economy. For example, according to the I-81 Corridor Coalition, I-81 is estimated to carry 12% of the United States Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The network is also critical in terms of providing access for commuters to Downtown Syracuse and the University Hill area, where many Central New Yorkers are employed.

### 6.2.2 Current Economic Conditions

#### National Economy

The *Woods & Poole Economics 2010 Data Pamphlet* developed for Oswego, Onondaga, Cayuga, Cortland, & Madison Counties, identifies 30-year forecasts for national economic trends. The 2010 Data Pamphlet looks at items such as GDP, unemployment rates, oil prices, total residential population, and total employment population.

According to the 2010 Data Pamphlet:

“The long-term outlook for the United States economy is one of steady and modest growth through the year 2040. Although periodic business cycles, such as the 2008-09 recession, will interrupt and change the growth trajectory, the nation’s employment and income are expected to rise every year from 2010 to 2040.”

The report also forecasts that by 2040, population is anticipated to increase 27.4% to nearly 407 million residents, while total employment is anticipated to increase 32.0% to nearly 256 million people employed in the workforce. Employment nationwide is anticipated to grow at 1.06% each year to 2040, while the northeast region is expected to grow at a rate of 0.88% per year. GDP is anticipated to grow at an average annual rate of 2.1% by 2040, and the unemployment rate is expected to be steady at 6.1 percent by the same period. Oil prices are also expected to stabilize but will still lead to inflationary pressures.

#### Regional Economy

As defined by the New York State Department of Labor, the Central New York Labor Market Region consists of five counties – Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego. While broader than the SMTC planning area, it is important to understand the regional economy and its impact on the transportation system.

The CNY region covers an area of approximately 3,600 square miles and has an estimated population of approximately 782,000. The region generally forms an area of interdependent

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economic activity, with Onondaga County at its core. Table 6-1 summarizes some key economic indicators for each of the counties in the Central New York region.

Table 6-1

Civilian Labor Force, Employed, and Rate of Unemployment
By Place of Residence
March 2009-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cayuga</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>40,600</td>
<td>40,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cortland</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>24,300</td>
<td>24,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onondaga</td>
<td>226,800</td>
<td>229,500</td>
<td>232,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswego</td>
<td>59,200</td>
<td>59,600</td>
<td>60,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>35,700</td>
<td>36,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central NY Region</td>
<td>385,400</td>
<td>389,700</td>
<td>394,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Syracuse</td>
<td>61,300</td>
<td>62,100</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As shown, the Central New York labor force consists of approximately 385,000 employees as of March 2011. Onondaga County accounts for nearly 60% of Central New York’s total labor force. The City of Syracuse accounts for nearly 16% of the total Central New York labor force, and approximately 27% of Onondaga County’s labor force.

Local Economy

Within Central New York, many of the region’s largest employers are located in Onondaga County. These companies and institutions include the State University of New York Health Science Center, Syracuse University, Wegmans Food Markets, Inc., St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center, Crouse Hospital, Lockheed Martin, National Grid, and Loretto to name a few.

According to the New York State Department of Labor, the industry sectors with the biggest job gains in the Syracuse metro area over 2009 include:

- Leisure and hospitality (+1,300)
- Educational and health services (+600)
- Professional and business services (+600)
- Other services (+400)
- Natural resources, mining and construction (+300)

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Conversely, the largest job losses were in:

- Trade, transportation and utilities (-1,000)
- Manufacturing (-600). ³

The strongest economic sectors in Onondaga County continue to be in health care and education. The largest concentration of these sectors is located within the City of Syracuse. Educational and health services were the only major sectors to add jobs in the Syracuse area in the 12 month period ending October 2009. Manufacturing, trade, transportation and utilities experienced the greatest decline of employment during this same period.

Although some major businesses have left downtown Syracuse over the last few years (Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield), others have relocated to the City, including O’Brien & Gere, which employs approximately 300 people. The Armory Square area continues to draw unique and significant retail development into downtown Syracuse. Significant retail centers have also developed in several suburban locations including the Route 31 corridor in the Town of Clay; Route 5 in the towns of Fayetteville and Camillus; and Route 11 in the Town of Cicero. Business parks and industrial parks also exist sporadically throughout the county, but are primarily located in the northern and western portions of the MPA.

Size of Companies
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 83% of establishments in Onondaga County employed fewer than 20 people in 2008; only 11 establishments in Onondaga County employed over 1,000 people in 2008.⁴ This represents a 35% drop from a total of 17 companies that existed in 2004. Table 6-2 shows the breakdown of size of establishments in Onondaga County based on the number of employed workers.

Job growth in Onondaga County generally comes from smaller businesses, while employment by large firms continues to decline. This trend towards smaller businesses is becoming more common. Smaller commercial and manufacturing firms have also become more prevalent in Onondaga County. Suburban multi-tenant campuses, consolidating a number of smaller businesses, are also becoming more common than large scale, single tenant campuses.

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³ New York State Department of Labor, Employment in New York State, October 2010, p 2.  

Table 6-2
Business Size in Onondaga County by Number of Employees (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>5873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>2420</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 to 19</td>
<td>1714</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 to 49</td>
<td>1259</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>416</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 to 249</td>
<td>233</td>
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<tr>
<td>250 to 499</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 999</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 or more</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2008. http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/cbpnaic/cbpsect.pl

**Estimated Employment by Sector by Municipality**

One of the variables utilized in the SMTC’s Travel Demand Model included an examination of employment by sector within each municipality in the MPA. The SMTC used the Business Location Analysis Tool (BLAT), provided by NYSDOT, to geocode business locations. These data included a range of employees by employment sector. These figures then provided a framework for the SMTC’s projection of the employment data to the horizon year. The SMTC met with various member agencies and local municipalities to further refine base year employment data (more information on how base and future year employment data were derived can be found in the SMTC Travel Demand Model Validation Report prepared by RSG (December 2010)).

Map 6-1 shows the change in employment density between 2007 and 2035, respectively. Most employment growth occurs (in absolute terms) in the City of Syracuse and towns such as DeWitt, Clay and Cicero. The growth rates of employment are lower than incorporated in the previous model, which forecasted 26% growth in employment in 24 years (2003 to 2027), which conforms to the input received from local SMTC member agencies, municipalities, and representatives.
Map 6-1: Change in Employment Density between 2007 and 2035
Table 6-3 summarizes the estimated number of employees by sector by municipality for the base year 2007, and future year 2035. It is important to note that employees may work more than one job.

According to Table 6-3, the business sectors with the highest estimated number of employees in the MPA currently are education, retail/trade industries and health. The City of Syracuse is the municipality with the highest number of employees both the education and health industries at 14,376 and 20,730 respectively. Several institutions of higher learning are located in the University Hill area. In addition, most health sector jobs are located at hospitals and medical office buildings on University Hill or at St. Joseph’s Hospital. Syracuse also has the majority of retail and trade employees at 8,358, followed by Clay and DeWitt.

The next largest number of employees works in the fields of manufacturing, financial and real estate, and business and professional. The Town of DeWitt has the highest number of employees working in the manufacturing field, followed by the City of Syracuse and the Town of Salina. The City of Syracuse is the municipality with the largest number of employees in the financial and real estate and business and professional sectors.

The job sectors with the least number of employees include mining and agriculture. Only the Towns of Cicero, Clay, DeWitt, Geddes and the City of Syracuse report employees working in the mining industry. The Towns of DeWitt, Onondaga, Salina and the City of Syracuse show the most number of employees (around 66 in each municipality) working in the agriculture sector.

The number of jobs in the MPA region is projected to grow by 12% from 252,753 in 2007 to 282,753 in 2035.
### SMTCT Travel Demand Model 2007 - 2035 Employment

#### SMCT MPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th>Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>25253</td>
<td>28733</td>
<td>3480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>13518</td>
<td>13596</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>12207</td>
<td>12289</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaughan</td>
<td>37100</td>
<td>37395</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markham</td>
<td>37100</td>
<td>37395</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Hill</td>
<td>6064</td>
<td>6084</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>24019</td>
<td>24250</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 6-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employees by Sector by Municipality</th>
<th>SMTC MPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2011 Long Range Transportation Plan

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2011 Long Range Transportation Plan 6-8
Targeted Commercial/Industrial Sites
In an effort to encourage new business and expansion within the Upstate New York Region, New York State created its Empire Zone Program in 1987. This program was created to stimulate economic growth through a variety of tax incentives and utility reductions to facilitate business growth in selected target areas in New York State. This program closed to new entrants in June 2010. Businesses already certified in the program (prior to June 30, 2010) will continue to receive all Empire Zone benefits for rest of their 10-year benefit period as long as they remain in compliance with the law and Empire Zone regulations.

In September 2010, New York State announced the launch of the new Excelsior Jobs Program that will take the place of Empire Zone tax credits. Excelsior Jobs will provide tax credits to businesses to address payroll, facility investments, R&D work and property taxes, only after a company has actually made those investments. Benefits will be limited to specific sectors, and companies will need to create and maintain a minimum number of new jobs. Companies will be able to receive the new credits for five years. Investment Zones in Central New York include Syracuse, Auburn, Oswego, Fulton and Cortland.

An added business development incentive for the City of Syracuse was announced in 2002, with the designation of the City as a Federal Empowerment Zone by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shown in Map 9. The designation entitles eligible business owners in targeted areas to receive regulatory relief and tax breaks to promote job growth and economic opportunity in order stimulate community revitalization. The Syracuse Empowerment Zone includes census tracts within the City of Syracuse and three "developable sites" outside the city. Census tracts include the Lakefront and former Oil City, the North Salina Street corridor, the near West Side to Geddes Street, part of the South Side to Brighton Avenue and an area south from I-690 which includes most of the University Hill. Development sites include Hancock Air Park, Electronics Park and the former GM Fisher Guide site. This program remains intact.

The following are some of the significant sites that Onondaga County has marketed for industrial and commercial development in Onondaga County and shown in Map 6-2:

- Salina Power Park
- Hancock Air Park
- Route 298 Corridor
- Clay Business Park
- Radisson Industrial Park

Proposed Economic Development Projects

In addition to the abovementioned commercial corridors and sites, intended for large scale industrial and commercial tenants, several projects are also underway or proposed which are intended to serve as economic development stimulants and anchors for their respective communities and the region. The following is a brief synopsis of projects either recently built or under proposal in a public forum, keyed to Map 6-2.

A. Lakefront Development District:
The project involves the ongoing redevelopment of a former industrial district to include retail/entertainment and mixed-use development of the Inner Harbor, historic Franklin Square, and on additional available land within the Lakefront area.

B. Downtown Syracuse / University Hill Redevelopment:
Several economic development initiatives are being pursued to maintain occupancy of existing office structures, encourage new residential conversion of buildings, and create an inviting urban core. Downtown Syracuse has seen a variety of activity, centering around new green office space and downtown housing options. Two new buildings representing approximately $50 million in investment were constructed in recent years at the edges of the Armory Square District, while the upper floors of several existing downtown buildings have been converted into hundreds of new market rate housing units, and the Landmark Theater is undergoing a $16 million expansion.

On University Hill, Syracuse University, SUNY-ESF, and SUNY Upstate Medical University are all investing in several ventures, including new academic buildings, student housing; research facilities and associated office and support services. Syracuse University is spearheading a West Campus multi-building initiative and the creation of a ‘Connective Corridor’, physically and conceptually linking cultural institutions between Downtown, and the University area. Area hospitals also continue to reinvest in their facilities, with several expansion/upgrade projects, including the newly opened Children’s Hospital and plans for a Cancer Center addition to the SUNY Upstate Medical Center. More than $700 million of new capital projects are planned on University Hill, of which $380 million is already underway.

C. St. Joseph’s Hospital/Prospect Hill
Prospect Hill refers to the immediate neighborhood surrounding St. Joseph's Hospital (SJH), one of the largest employers in Syracuse and the economic anchor of Syracuse's Northside. The Prospect Hill Development Initiative is a collaborative effort to expand existing businesses, attract new business, stabilize housing, and make significant upgrades to the hospital facility.
D. Near Westside Initiative
The Near Westside neighborhood in Syracuse is the focus of a comprehensive redevelopment strategy aimed at improving the quality of the housing stock and rehab of older buildings, as well as incorporating focused social programming for residents in this concentrated area near Downtown Syracuse. Significant reinvestment in the area has already occurred and is expected to continue.

E. Baldwinsville Waterfront
For the last several years, the Village of Baldwinsville has been aggressively developing a master plan for the riverfront and canal areas around the Seneca River and Lock 24 of the New York State Canal System, including new retail, parks and trails and a public amphitheater.

F. Three Rivers Redevelopment
The Town of Clay is working to reclaim brownfield sites, and encourage the transformation of the Three Rivers Point in the northern portion of the town into a mixed-use hamlet, consisting of waterfront shops, office buildings, and a mix of housing types.

G. Van Buren Action Sports Complex
Owners have received approvals to rezone 48-acres to allow for the creation of a $70 million Sports Complex to host 2 hotels, a water park, restaurants and retail, and various indoor and outdoor sports activities. The site is adjacent to the NYS Thruway and Interstate 690, and is anticipated to attract up to 350,000 people annually when fully developed.

H. Township 5
Township 5 is being proposed as a mixed use 'lifestyle' development with up to 150 residential units, 70,000 square feet of office, hotel, retail and entertainment with significant frontage along Route 5 in the Town of Camillus.

I. Camillus Cutlery Redevelopment
The Village of Camillus is working to revitalize and repopulate the former Camillus Cutlery building, which anchors the village at its centerpoint. A proposal is being pursued to redevelop the site into a mixed use project including senior housing and related medical and community support facilities on site.

J. Village of Liverpool Lakeside Business District Redevelopment
A number of vacant and underutilized properties in the Village’s lakeside business district are the focus of planning and redevelopment activity, capitalizing on the historic village character, pedestrian scale and proximity to Onondaga lake Park users. New and proposed uses include retail, restaurant and apartments.

K. Brewerton Redevelopment
The Town of Cicero recently undertook a significant planning effort to establish a redevelopment strategy for the hamlet of Brewerton in Northern Cicero, along the Oneida River at the gateway to
Oneida Lake. The plan and associated zoning is aimed at making strategic public investments to improve access to the waterfront and revitalize its existing traditional building stock to serve residents and visitors and provide community services to the surrounding community.

L. Madison Row Mixed Use Redevelopment
Work has recently begun to transform a block of land along Route 92 in the Village of Manlius into a $16 million retail and residential mixed use development, designed in context to the traditional village setting and to encourage pedestrian traffic.

Map 6-2 also indicates the approximate extent of major retail corridors and significant residential subdivision activity in the Syracuse metropolitan area.

The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board’s (CNYRPDB) Central New York Initiative: A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Central New York (CEDS), a document prepared annually to recommend short-term projects that will support economic growth in CNY, contains more detail on several of the projects noted above. The document’s project priority list includes projects in Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego Counties.

6.3 Planning Efforts

6.3.1 Member Agency Action Plans Related to Economy
Part of the process for updating the 2020 LRTP during 2001 included the identification of action plans that had been implemented under each of the six goals since 1995, including community economy. This 2011 Update will emulate the 2001, 2004, and 2007 LRTP Updates by addressing and updating the implementation actions associated with the Plan’s specific goals and objectives (the 1998 Update did not address implementation actions). The identification of implemented action plans involved discussions with the member agencies responsible for their respective TIP projects. In the section that follows, the implemented community economy related action plans are presented. The implemented action plans are summaries rather than complete descriptions. In many cases, overlap exists because a particular action plan may apply to multiple goals.

Action Plans Implemented:

1. A regionally significant economic development organization, the CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity (CEO) was recently formed to combine the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA), along with various partners across the Central New York area. The CenterState CEO is a twelve-county business leadership and economic development organization, based in Syracuse, New York that serves as the region's primary economic, community and business development catalyst8. CenterState CEO was formed as a

result of the *Essential New York Initiative* (published in 2004), a major work effort of the MDA to “transform Central Upstate to a Knowledge-Based Economy”.

2. Potential TIP projects must meet a variety of transportation and economic criteria. For example, a project related to capacity/mobility that displays characteristics beneficial to the community may be ranked higher, based on its 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 received through the IAP for $950,000 plus $300,000 in multimodal 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 that secured over 1,000 jobs for Central New York. The construction project, coupled with the designation of Willet Parkway, West Entry Road and Henle 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. Handheld products in the Town of Skaneateles received $750,000 IAP for construction of 3,500 feet of new roadway to provide truck and employee access to their office and manufacturing facilities. The IAP commitment triggered $10.5 million investment and the creation/retention of 400 jobs in the community.

In the Town of DeWitt is the recently completed $14 million Sensis Corporation facility at Collamer Business Park, with the promise of 200 jobs. The industrial access program has delivered $1 million for construction of 4,200 feet of interior roadways and will require intersection improvements at State Route 298.

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

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connectivity of the National Highway System 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 OCDOT oversaw the Kirkville Road / Fly Road Intersection Project (2002 Completion) that added dedicated turn lanes on all approaches, channelization improvements, signing improvements and upgraded signalization to improve an intersection with an accident rate well above the State Mean Accident Rate. Additional left turn lanes southbound and a right turn lane westbound were added to improve mobility through the intersection during New Venture Gear rush hours. The project was initiated due to requests from New Venture Gear on behalf of their employees.

7. The CNYRTA has acquired land and is in the construction process to move its Common Center in the City of Syracuse to an alternate weather-protected location where buses can load and transfers may be made out of the general traffic flow. This project will be completed in winter 2011/2012.

8. In May 2009 CNYRTA implemented service changes and a fare increase in response to a budgetary shortfall. In January and April 2011 further major service reductions were implemented in response to ongoing reductions in State aid and shortfalls in Mortgage Recordings Tax fees. These changes are imperative to ensure that the Authority remain fiscally solvent.

9. The CNYRTA has reviewed the factors affecting mode choice in the SMTC urbanized area in its continuing efforts to increase transit ridership. Several factors continue to impact the agency’s ability to increase ridership including a low density regional development pattern that minimizes opportunities for creating the type of critical mass needed to support transit service; low levels of 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 improving air quality; and a high capacity roadway network. The January and April 2011 service reductions largely target routes serving suburban and exurban areas where ridership is poor.

10. In 2009, the CNYRTA initiated a study to determine the potential benefits, costs and feasibility of implementing a new system of park-and-ride lots in suburban Syracuse transit corridors. This study was completed in fall 2010.

11. The CNYRTA has committed to acquiring low emission buses as part of the region's effort to comply with the provisions of the Clean Air Act. The majority of the CNYRTA's fleet is powered by compressed natural gas. In addition, a limited number of
hybrid-electric vehicles have been acquired. No further hybrid-electric vehicles will be purchased as their additional cost, in a severely constrained fiscal environment, has been found to exceed their minor environmental benefit. In addition, where diesel fueled vehicles are employed a bio-fuels mix is utilized.

12. In 2009, in response to recommendations developed in its University Hill Transportation Study, the CNYRTA has suggested that the SMTC conduct a transit study to determine the potential benefits, costs and feasibility of implementing a BRT or LRT system to serve the Syracuse region. The initial work efforts will be examined through The I-81 Challenge.

13. The CNYRTA efforts such as the Employer Fare Deal and Welfare-to-Work Transportation Programs contribute to making the region economically competitive as business served are able to recruit employees from a wide range of socio-economic groups, including the disabled population. These groups are able to be income productive due to the mobility afforded them by the CNYRTA system.