Since the LRTP was adopted in 2015, the SMTC has conducted numerous studies to examine issues that are important to residents in our planning area. These studies have also yielded significant public input over the past five years, all of which is considered in our LRTP update. The Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (SMART 1) – which recommended a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for the region – included three public meetings in Downtown Syracuse, multiple focus group meetings, and a series of pop-up meetings at bus stops. SMTC also conducted two surveys for Centro in 2017: a mailed survey for people who do not currently use the bus, and an in-person survey on Centro buses. Both of these surveys received over 1,100 responses. The Work Link study examined access to jobs in the region, and included a series of focus group meetings, stakeholder meetings, a survey, and a public meeting. Many recent SMTC studies – and public engagement efforts – have focused on bicycle and pedestrian mobility concerns; for a listing of all these studies see Publications > Planning Studies > Bike/Ped Planning on our website, www.smtcmpo.org.

LRTP GOALS

Taking into consideration federal requirements, local planning efforts, and feedback from the LRTP Study Advisory Committee and the public, we identified three sets of goals that transportation investments should achieve:

- **Community Planning** - Transportation investments should support the planning goals of the region and local communities.
- **Transportation System Performance** - Transportation investments should contribute to the achievement of transportation system performance goals.
- **Significant Projects** - Transportation investments should advance regionally significant public infrastructure projects that have already been the subject of substantial community discussion.

Achieving these goals is critical to making progress toward our vision for the region.

SMTC STUDIES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Since the LRTP was adopted in 2015, the SMTC has conducted numerous studies to examine issues that are important to residents in our planning area. These studies have also yielded significant public input over the past five years, all of which is considered in our LRTP update. The Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (SMART 1) – which recommended a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for the region – included three public meetings in Downtown Syracuse, multiple focus group meetings, and a series of pop-up meetings at bus stops. SMTC also conducted two surveys for Centro in 2017: a mailed survey for people who do not currently use the bus, and an in-person survey on Centro buses. Both of these surveys received over 1,100 responses. The Work Link study examined access to jobs in the region, and included a series of focus group meetings, stakeholder meetings, a survey, and a public meeting. Many recent SMTC studies – and public engagement efforts – have focused on bicycle and pedestrian mobility concerns; for a listing of all these studies see Publications > Planning Studies > Bike/Ped Planning on our website, www.smtcmpo.org.
The LRTP does not specify how significant.

The I-81 Viaduct Project: The LRTP does not specify a solution for I-81, since the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), at the time of this writing, is still progressing the environmental review. Whatever solution is chosen, we know that I-81 will require a huge investment in the coming decades. Our financial plan assumes that the I-81 project will be financed with ‘non-traditional’ funds, meaning those funds will be in addition to our ‘traditional’ allotment of federal funding and that money will be allocated specifically for I-81.

Enhanced transit system: The SMTC completed the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 in 2018, which identified Bus Rapid Transit as the locally-preferred alternative for enhanced transit along two corridors: Eastwood to Onondaga Community College, and Syracuse University to DestinyUSA. One of our financial challenges is finding funding – particularly operating funds – for this system.

Expanded regional trail network: We will continue to progress projects identified in existing plans, such as the Onondaga Lake Trail and Onondaga Creekwalk. Significant progress has been made on the Erie Canalway Trail, with construction beginning to close the local gap as part of the Empire State Trail.

Current federal legislation for metropolitan transportation planning emphasizes a ‘performance based planning’ approach, which requires a rigorous examination of impacts of transportation investments over time. Newer federal guidance since 2015 has detailed specific requirements for performance measures, target setting, and tracking progress, so we are updating our LRTP to comply with these requirements. In a few instances, this means slight modifications to our objectives and performance measures, or incorporating new data into our plan. See our website for a full list of the LRTP’s Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures.

The LRTP must be ‘fiscally-constrained.’ This means that we must show that we expect to be able to fund all of the projects that are included in our future plan. To determine whether our plan is ‘fiscally-constrained,’ we have to develop two numbers: an estimate of future revenues and an estimate of future costs.

Future revenue estimates were developed based on current federal funding programs and recent trends. We also have considered state funding and local (municipal) funding that is used on federal aid eligible roads and for transit.

Our member agencies provided lists of future projects that they would like to complete to address capacity or accessibility concerns over the life of this plan, in addition to the maintenance needs of the current system. Cost estimates were developed for all these projects.

Our revenue projection is approximately $3.30 billion for years 2020-2030, and the total project costs during this timeframe are estimated at about $3.26 billion. It is highly likely that any additional money that may be available would be spent on the substantial maintenance needs of the transportation system. We know that the condition of our system (roads, bridges, and transit) has been declining faster than we can fix it, so additional money will be needed to bring the majority of the system into good condition. We estimate that an additional $2 billion would be necessary to bring a substantial portion of our roads and bridges into good condition over the next 15 years.

As part of the LRTP development in 2015, an online survey was conducted to collect feedback from the public on the LRTP’s proposed goals and objectives, and regional priority projects. A total of 380 responses were received. Some themes emerged from this survey:

- Ensure that our transportation system is safe, efficient, and reliable.
- Provide more facilities for biking and walking.
- Expand and improve transit service, including more reliable service, improved bus stops, more routes, and consideration of new modes such as light rail.
- Find a solution for the aging I-81 viaduct.

Enhanced transit system: The Regional Priority Projects and Themes from 2015 Survey Results for the LRTP provide a list of the projects that were identified by the public as priorities. We will continue to progress projects identified in existing plans, such as the Onondaga Lake Trail and Onondaga Creekwalk. Significant progress has been made on the Erie Canalway Trail, with construction beginning to close the local gap as part of the Empire State Trail.
REMAINING MILESTONES
IN THE LRTP PROCESS

- Run future conditions model (VMT, emissions and energy analysis)
- Draft document for Advisory Committee review
- Draft document for public and agency review
- Public comment period (including public meeting)
- Final updated LRTP for adoption by Policy Committee

Our LRTP Update must be adopted by September 30, 2020.
For more information about the LRTP process, check out our website www.smtcmpo.org.
Also be sure to follow us on Facebook!