

SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

# 2050

## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### 2020 Update



# Moving Towards a Greater Syracuse



DRAFT

# SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

# 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

September 2020



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SMTC Policy  
Resolution to be  
inserted after  
adoption



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# Executive Summary

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council is the state-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Syracuse area, responsible for administering comprehensive, continuous, and cooperative transportation planning. Creation of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is one of the core functions of every MPO. The LRTP spells out a vision and goals that guide annual transportation planning activities and capital funding within the MPO's jurisdiction.

The 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan – *Moving Towards a Greater Syracuse* - was adopted in 2015 and was the first entirely new long range plan prepared by the SMTC since 1995. Federal rules require that the SMTC update the LRTP at least every 5 years. This document is the first update to the 2050 LRTP. The goals and objectives remain mostly unchanged since 2015. The 2020 update includes newer demographic and economic data where available, and describes progress made on the regionally-significant projects that were identified in 2015, and remain priorities today. To develop the 2050 plan and this update, the SMTC drew upon other plans and planning processes that have recently been prepared for Central New York, as well as recent SMTC studies. As the SMTC programs federal transportation dollars toward the reconstruction of the region's transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years, the goals and objectives in this plan will serve as its guiding principles.

This LRTP was prepared in keeping with the requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, signed into law in 2015. The FAST Act includes a requirement that states and MPOs track and periodically measure specific aspects of their transportation facilities and how they perform, like pavement conditions, accident rates, and traffic congestion, and make progress in improving them.

The LRTP Update includes a system performance report with all of the Federally-required performance measures, plus additional measures tailored to local planning goals. The SMTC will provide updates to this report every five years. Measuring performance provides valuable insight into where to direct limited resources to achieve targets and advance national goals.

This plan does not specify an outcome for the I-81 viaduct. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is currently progressing The I-81 Viaduct Project through an environmental review. Once a decision is made, the SMTC will update this LRTP to reflect the chosen option for the future of I-81. This plan identifies three other regionally significant projects: an enhanced transit system, a regional trail system, and an inland port. The Syracuse Metropolitan Area Regional Transit Study Phase 1 (SMART 1), which was completed by the SMTC in 2018, identified Bus Rapid Transit in mixed-traffic on two corridors as the locally-preferred alternative for enhanced transit. This Update also notes progress on the regional trail network, and recent investments to expand capacity at the DeWitt Rail Yard. This LRTP acknowledges that specific proposals and funding sources for I-81 construction and for major additions to the transit system have not been identified yet.

Funding sources, generally, will play a major role in whether or not the region is able to make significant progress in improving its performance measures. A total of nearly \$3.30 billion is expected to be available for capital projects on Federal-Aid eligible roads and our transit system through the year 2050, including federal, state, and local funds. The SMTC anticipates needing a total of \$3.26 billion to both maintain and improve the existing highway and transit systems,

with the bulk of this funding (about 88 percent) going to maintenance. (This \$3.26 billion estimate does not include funding for either the I-81 Viaduct Project selected alternative or an enhanced transit system.) Given the maintenance needs of the existing system, limited financial resources, and the fact that our existing road system generally operates very well, we do not anticipate spending significant funds to substantially expand the existing transportation system beyond the efforts noted above at this time.

Our projections indicate that, for the most part, the existing transportation system will continue to serve the region's population well. Over the next 30 years demographic and economic growth is expected to largely continue along lines established in previous decades, although more population growth is expected in the City of Syracuse than in the recent past. Existing commuting trends based on single-occupant vehicles are likely to continue. But the 2050 LRTP also envisions a region of robust villages and town centers anchored by a revitalized and growing City of Syracuse, connected by roads, trails, bike lanes, and an enhanced transit system. By pursuing the goals and objectives in this plan, and utilizing them to prioritize which transportation projects are funded, we will move toward a greater Syracuse region.

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