
6. TEA-21 NARRATIVE

SEVEN PLANNING FACTORS

The TEA-21 legislation (P.L. 105-178, Section 1203(f)) specifies seven factors to be considered in the transportation planning process. These factors must be explicitly reflected in the planning process products, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The ITCTC has made a good faith effort to consider and address these factors throughout the planning process. A brief review of the success of these efforts follows.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;

Response: The ITCTC participated in the process of generating an economic development plan for the county. The ITCTC continues to be an active member of the Tompkins County Area Development agency Economic Development Strategy Coordinating Committee. The ITCTC will continue to coordinate its transportation planning efforts with economic development agencies whose mission is strengthening the economic vitality of Tompkins County.

2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;

Response: The ITCTC recognizes the importance of safety and security in the transportation system. As such, the agency has supported efforts in pedestrian and bicycle planning, intersection improvement programs and transportation enhancement projects that provide a safer environment for non-motorized users. Since its first LRTP the ITCTC has identified safety as one of the overarching concerns that pervade all objectives and strategies in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. In addition, in cooperation with NYSDOT, the ITCTC has programmed a substantial number of bridge rehabilitation/replacement projects and railroad crossing safety improvement projects. The ITCTC will continue to prioritize safety and security in its transportation planning and project funding efforts.

The ITCTC has identified the creation of a coordinated traffic accident reporting system as a priority project. Accurate accident reporting data would be invaluable in order to address transportation safety planning and law enforcement concerns. Currently Tompkins County is applying for participation in a NY State Department of Motor Vehicles project designed to implement such a

system. The ITCTC will be an active participant in this effort.

3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;

Response: The ITCTC was supportive of the consolidation of transit services in Tompkins County, which resulted in improvements in overall public transportation service. The ITCTC continues to work closely with TCAT in a cooperative manner to promote enhanced public transportation in Tompkins County. The ITCTC also cooperates with Gadabout, the only paratransit service available in Tompkins County, to ensure continued effective implementation of their critical transportation service.

The ITCTC coordinated implementation of a multijurisdictional transit study project – the Northeast Subarea Transportation Study Transit Planning Project (NTPP) – completed in February 2003. The NTPP provided a detailed analysis of public transportation services in the fastest growing area of Tompkins County and made a series of recommendations to improve efficiency and enhance service. The ITCTC will work with TCAT to advance the recommendations of this study as appropriate, with the final goal of providing the best possible transit service to residents of Tompkins County.

The ITCTC recognizes the importance of the impacts of land use decisions on the transportation system. As such it works closely with local governments in efforts to promote decisions that will enhance intermodal connectivity, transit operations, and the livability of communities in the planning area.

4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;

Response: Since the initial LRTP in 1994 the ITCTC has expressed specific concern over the apparent lack of balance in the local planning realm with regard to the relationships between transportation and development, land use, economic, and environmental impacts. The ITCTC has recommended that the county and local governments complete such planning efforts as traditional land use plans, economic development plans, and local thoroughfare plans. The existence of these documents is important to the regional transportation planning efforts of the MPO.

The role of the ITCTC has been to, first, encourage intergovernmental cooperation on specific development and transportation issues, second, to offer technical advice to help resolve transportation/development conflicts, and third, to work towards more coordinated transportation planning between local governments and the MPO intended to

enhance the linkages between transportation and development.

The ITCTC has worked closely with Tompkins County in development of a countywide comprehensive plan. The principal objective of that cooperative effort was to ensure the Comprehensive Plan and the LRTP were mutually supportive.

The ITCTC is continuously refining its travel demand model, which can be an important tool to assist local governments in predicting the transportation impacts of both transportation and land use development decisions.

Through its trails development initiative the ITCTC seeks to impact all areas of the TEA-21 Planning Factors. Experience nationwide has made it clear that having an interconnected trails network increases the opportunity for non-automobile travel thus reducing the negative environmental impacts of auto use and promoting energy conservation. Multiuse trails increase community livability and contribute positively to the quality of life.

5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;

Response: A number of local initiatives and projects are in place that assist Tompkins County in achieving greater integration between modes. All the Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) buses are equipped with bicycle racks. It is the policy of TCAT, the county's public transportation agency, to continue to provide bicycle racks in all their routes. In addition, TCAT is aggressively pursuing ADA compliance for its facilities and multiple other projects aimed at improving the efficiency of transit service. Tompkins County was a participant in the New York State Canal System Recreationway Study. The ITCTC completed a Transportation Trail/Corridor Study for Tompkins County and is participating with the Tompkins County Planning Department in a trails development technical assistance program. The City of Ithaca has adopted a Bicycle Plan, a downtown design plan, and plans for Inlet Island, the West End and Southwest Park. Various other communities continue to work on local planning initiatives that contain projects that will be eligible for the TEA-21 Transportation Enhancement Program. All of these local planning efforts will assist the MPO in the identification and prioritization of enhancement projects and will supplement this plan.

The ITCTC completed a Freight Transportation Study in April 2002. The data from that study was integrated into the development of the 2025 LRTP. The ITCTC will work on implementation of the recommendations included in the Freight Transportation Study, which focused on improving the safety and efficiency of freight transportation in

Tompkins County while minimizing the negative impacts to residents.

Currently, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Airport is served by public transit (TCAT) and by private transportation providers (i.e. taxi and limousine services). The airport access road (Brown Road) provides effective vehicular access to the facility.

6. Promote efficient system management and operation;

Response: The 2025 LRTP recognizes the importance of transportation system management (TSM) and operations initiatives in securing the integrity of the transportation system in Tompkins County. Specific goals and objectives and recommendations for projects for implementation seek to improve efficiency through TSM options. Specifically, the plan identifies support for the City of Ithaca's traffic signal upgrade program, which is in its initial implementation stages, and an intersections study.

7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;

Response: The transportation programming processes of the New York State Department of Transportation and the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council place special emphasis on maintaining the operational capability and safety of existing roads, bridges, and transit operations. Projects currently programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program demonstrate this commitment.

Since the initial Transportation Task Team reports one of the primary principles evident in the LRTP has been to improve the performance of the existing transportation system through TSM and transportation demand management (TDM) efforts. ITCTC staff have worked with the member agencies, particularly the City of Ithaca and Cornell University, to study and implement appropriate TDM strategies.

The *ITCTC* has worked with TCAT to plan and program a variety of projects that will enhance public transportation service and should help to increase use of transit. Examples of these projects include: enhanced passenger information systems, enhanced fare collection system, improvements to and additional bus shelters, improved bicycle/pedestrian access to bus routes.

Tompkins County has a substantial network of abandoned railroad corridors. The ITCTC is actively involved in advancing development of these right-of-ways into multi-use trails in conjunction with municipal partners countywide. Developing these trails efficiently preserves the corridors as transportation facilities. Multiuse trails encourage and facilitate fast and efficient non-motorized

transportation, and thus provide a much needed alternative to the automobile. Although bicycling and walking may never meet all the transportation needs currently met by motor vehicles they, in combination with transit and efficient land use development, provide a viable alternative for many automobile based trips. Thus reducing congestion, enhancing the effectiveness of the existing transportation system overall, and reducing the pressure to expend resources on additional or enlarged roadways.

ELEVEN PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The federal metropolitan planning rule (§450.322, page 58075) specifies eleven planning requirements to be considered in the process of developing the long-range transportation plan. The *ITCTC* has made a good faith effort to consider and address these requirements throughout the planning process. A brief review of this effort follows.

1. Identify the projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the plan;

Response: The current plan assumes that the transportation demands of persons and goods will remain relatively stable and a function of any growth in population. While this is a simplistic view, it does consider the following: (a) The population trends in the area are relatively stable growing at a rate of .3% per year between 1990 and 2000; and (b) the *ITCTC* recognizes the importance of modifying individual travel behavior as a means of avoiding the undesired impacts of an expanding the highway system (e.g., the impacts of new facilities on the topography or other environmentally sensitive areas).

The *ITCTC* is currently in the process of refining a newly acquired travel demand model that will serve as an important tool to identify projected demands on the transportation system. This plan includes some of the results from model runs in the analysis of alternative development scenarios developed for the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan.

The Tompkins County Freight Transportation Study completed in April 2002 described the freight movement patterns in the county. These are expected to remain relatively unchanged. There are currently no major proposals that would affect freight movement in the county. The low rate of population growth will also help demand for freight services relatively steady.

The *ITCTC* recognizes that any number of activities (i.e. new retail centers, manufacturing facilities, etc.) could induce increased demand for freight transportation. The

ITCTC will monitor economic and land use activities to identify such changes and address them through the planning process.

In addition, the *ITCTC* continuously seeks the input and participation of affected and interested parties. Individuals who represent organizations such as neighborhood councils, advisory committees, and planning boards are regular participants in the activities and deliberations of the MPO.

The *ITCTC* and its staff maintain close working relationships with the other planning professionals, both public and private, working in Tompkins County. While this contact may be "informal" (through such organizations as the American Planning Association or through "brown bag" meetings), the result is the exchange of information, ideas, and viewpoints on transportation and development that keep *ITCTC* staff informed on issues that may affect demand for transportation services and facilities.

2. Identify adopted congestion management strategies including, as appropriate, traffic operations, ridesharing, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, alternative work schedules, freight movement options, high occupancy vehicle treatments, telecommuting, and public transportation improvements (including regulatory, pricing, management, and operational options), that demonstrate a systematic approach in addressing current and future transportation demand;

Response: There are a number of existing and future initiatives that serve to mitigate congestion locally. *ITCTC* partner agencies play a key role in implementing congestion management strategies. Cornell University, the largest employer in Tompkins County has an exemplary program for its faculty and staff, which promotes the use of carpools, and public transportation use for the commute to the university. TCAT has been very aggressive in improving its scheduling, pricing and management structure to improve service. As a result, TCAT leads its upstate NY counterpart agencies in most measures of ridership and operational efficiency. The NESTS Transit Planning Project (NTPP) coordinated by the *ITCTC* provides a framework for future improvements to public transportation in the highest growth corridor in the Ithaca Urbanized Area.

The *ITCTC* and partnering municipalities are promoting development of a countywide multiuse trail system. This system will provide a significant off road network of trails connecting many of the key trip generators in the county, thus providing a bicycling and walking transportation that currently does not exist. There is strong potential for bicycling to become an important mode of transportation in Tompkins County. The *ITCTC* seeks to promote this through the construction of bicycle friendly facilities and seeking explicit consideration of bicycle and pedestrian

issues in the implementation of transportation and land use development projects.

Census 2000 showed that pedestrian are already an important component of the Journey-to-Work trips in Tompkins County. The ITCTC seeks to strengthen the role of pedestrians by encouraging the construction of pedestrian facilities, including improvement in pedestrian safety features.

Numerous other projects listed the Projects for Implementation section of the plan will have the direct or indirect result of alleviating congestion. The reader is directed to that section of the plan, which provides descriptions of specific recommended strategies.

3. Identify pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 USC 217(g);

Response: The 2025 LRTP includes specific goals, objectives, strategies and actions intended to meet this requirement. Maps have been provided showing the general location of proposed facilities.

The *ITCTC* intends to continue its involvement with local government committees and other advocacy groups for these modes. This will include interfacing with the City of Ithaca, which has adopted a detailed bicycle system plan and is currently addressing implementation issues, Cornell University, which has developed a specific bicycle/pedestrian plan, and other local governments that currently have or will soon produce detailed, local-level bicycle and pedestrian plans. In addition, the *ITCTC* will continue to promote development of a countywide network of multiuse trails. The role of the MPO in this area is principally that of coordinator and facilitator, and as a source of technical information and expertise.

Furthermore, activities identified in the Unified Planning Work Program include consideration of bicycle and pedestrian issues to a level commensurate with the state-of-the-practice, local priorities, and available MPO planning resources and capabilities.

4. Reflect the consideration given to the results of the management systems, including in TMAs that are nonattainment areas for carbon monoxide and ozone, identification of SOV projects that result from a congestion management system that meets the requirements of 23 CFR part 500, subpart E;

Response: The Management Systems are not fully developed. TMA requirements are not applicable to this area.

5. Assess capital investment and other measures necessary to preserve the existing metropolitan transportation system (including requirements for operational improvements, resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation of existing and future major roadways, as well as operations, maintenance, modernization, and rehabilitation of existing and future transit facilities) and make the most efficient use of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods;

Response: The *ITCTC*, with the assistance of NYSDOT and TCAT, will continue to refine its assessments of these issues. The current process, as discussed in the **Financial** section in the **Transportation System** chapter, relies on generalized cost and revenue estimates.

6. Include design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail, regardless of the source of funding, in nonattainment and maintenance areas to permit conformity determinations under the U.S. EPA conformity regulations at 40 CFR part 51. In all areas, all proposed improvements shall be described in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates;

Response: The Ithaca Urbanized Area and Tompkins County are in attainment with regards to air quality conformity regulations. Nonattainment/maintenance requirements are not applicable to this area. Other proposed improvements are described in the **Transportation System** chapter, and where applicable, included in the **Project for Implementation** chapter.

7. Reflect a multimodal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan, including all major transportation investments in accordance with Section 450.318;

Response: The requirements of this section are met by the narratives in the **Transportation System** chapter.

8. For major transportation investments for which analyses are not complete, indicate that the design concept and scope (mode and alignment) have not been fully determined and will require further analysis. The plan shall identify such study corridors and subareas and may stipulate either a set of assumptions (assumed alternatives) concerning the proposed improvements or a no-build condition pending the completion of a corridor or subarea level analysis under Section 450.318. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the set of assumed alternatives shall be in sufficient detail to permit plan conformity determinations under the U.S. EPA conformity regulations (40 CFR part 51);

Response: The Northeast Subarea Transportation Study (NESTS) carried out by the *ITCTC* recommended the implementation of a multimodal plan that include a high level of transit service, improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the implementation of land use development that reduced the number and length of automobile trips. The NEST study also recommended studying the need and feasibility of a north-south roadway corridor serving the northeast section of the Ithaca Urbanized area. This latter recommendation will require further planning analysis (i.e. travel demand forecast analysis and right of way feasibility and design study) before it may be considered as a "proposed improvement".

9. Reflect, to the extent that they exist, consideration of: the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives; national, State, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, State, and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities; and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives;

Response: Applicable local documents were reviewed and are included in the Inventory of Transportation Documents (APPENDIX B). The planning process used in development of the plan was intended to assist by bringing local expertise in these areas to the table. The Transportation System chapter includes discussion of mobility, environmental and infrastructure issues as they relate to transportation and their impacts.

ITCTC staff worked in close consultation with the Tompkins County Planning Department staff to coordinate data gathering and analysis with the new Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives of the LRTP support those of the Comprehensive Plan and vice-versa. The LRTP was incorporated by reference to the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan to address transportation issues in the County.

The Scenarios Analysis chapter, much of it based on work performed for the County Comprehensive Plan, addresses the energy, greenhouse gas and air quality criteria emissions requirements of the NY State Energy Plan.

10. Indicate, as appropriate, proposed transportation enhancement activities as defined in 23 USC 101(a);

Response: Transportation enhancement activities, as currently proposed by the local sponsors, include development of multi-use trail facilities, pedestrian safety improvements, and streetscape improvements for central

business district areas. The ITCTC works closely with local communities to help develop eligible projects for the transportation enhancement program.

At the time of writing this document there were three transportation enhancement projects at different stages of implementation in Tompkins County – the Cayuga Waterfront Trail-Phase 2; the Pew Memorial Trail; the Village of Trumansburg Main Street Project.

11. Include a financial plan that demonstrates the consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and projected sources of revenue. The financial plan shall compare the estimated revenue from existing and proposed funding sources that can reasonably be expected to be available for transportation uses, and the estimated costs of constructing, maintaining and operating the total (existing plus planned) transportation system over the period of the plan. The estimated revenue by existing revenue source (local, State, and Federal and private) available for transportation projects shall be determined and any shortfalls identified. Proposed new revenues and/or revenue sources to cover shortfalls shall be identified, including strategies for ensuring their availability for proposed investments. Existing and proposed revenues shall cover all forecasted capital, operating, and maintenance costs. All cost and revenue projections shall be based on the data reflecting the existing situation and historical trends. For non-attainment and maintenance areas, the financial plan shall address the specific financial strategies required to ensure the implementation of projects and programs to reach air quality compliance.

Response: This requirement is addressed in the **Financial** section in the **Transportation System** chapter, and in the Projects for Implementation sections of this Plan.