

The I-81 Challenge May 2012 Public Meeting Summary Report

August 2012

Prepared for:



The Syracuse Metropolitan
Transportation Council



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Summary Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
Meeting Content.....	ii
Key Findings	iii
Arriving at the strategies recommended for the Stage 1 screening process	iii
Possible future strategies.....	iv
Our transit system.....	vi
Evaluating future options	vii
Meeting Evaluation and Participation	vii
Next steps	viii
MEETING SUMMARY	1
Introduction	1
Meeting Content and Key Findings.....	2
Station 1: <i>The I-81 Challenge</i>	3
Station 2: Getting up to date on <i>The I-81 Challenge</i>	3
Station 3: Your visions	4
Station 4: Possible future strategies.....	5
Station 5: Our transit system.....	12
Station 6: Evaluating future options	17
Station 7: Next steps.....	18
Station 8: Staying Involved	18
Meeting Participation.....	20
Next steps	23
APPENDICES	24

The I-81 Challenge

May 2012 Public Meeting Summary Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Spring 2012, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) hosted the second public meeting for *The I-81 Challenge* – the official decision-making process for determining the future of I-81 in the greater Syracuse region. This public meeting built upon feedback received during the first series of public workshops held in early May 2011. This document summarizes the findings and input from the May 2012 public meeting.

The primary goals of the May 2012 public meeting were to:

- Educate the public
- Review materials from the May 2011 public workshops
- Present the feedback received in May 2011 and demonstrate how this feedback was developed into initial strategies for I-81
- Present and gather input on the draft strategies for I-81 before NYSDOT begins further analysis
- Present and gather input on the process for evaluating potential future strategies
- Present and gather input on long-term improvements to the regional transit system
- Explain next steps, including the environmental review process

The meeting took place at the Oncenter in downtown Syracuse on May 9, 2012 from 2 pm to 8 pm. Participants were invited to drop in at any time and stay for as long as they wished. Either free (validated) parking in the Oncenter garage or lot, or two single-use transit passes were available at the meeting. American Sign Language and Spanish interpreters were available on site, and on-call interpreters for other languages were available through a phone provided in the Oncenter atrium.

Vietnamese translators were available with advance request. No attendees used the available interpretation services.

The meeting featured eight stations with informational boards, interactive exercises and educational videos. Each station was staffed with project team members with relevant expertise. Attendees were provided informational materials at the registration area to enhance their participation in the meeting including Frequently Asked Questions, a study newsletter, and a guide to the public meeting.

Publicity for the meeting was multi-faceted and included:

- Meeting flyer distributed by various means including: within SMTC’s agency newsletter, direct mailing to over 3,800 recipients, in local coffee shops and libraries, and through a variety of community organizations. Flyer was also e-mailed to community groups and over 1,200 recipients in the I-81 stakeholder list.



Above: Sample Meeting Flyer

- Placards on Centro buses
- Promotion via the project’s website, blog, and Facebook page
- Press releases
- Interviews with local print, radio, and television media
- Paid advertising on TV, radio, and in print
- Variable message signs on I-81, I-690, and in the viaduct area

To maximize promotion of, and outreach for the public meeting, the majority of printed promotional material included pertinent information in both Spanish and Vietnamese.

Additionally, in an effort to broaden opportunities for the public to participate, a simultaneous “virtual meeting” was launched on the project website (www.thei81challenge.org). This online option provided the same material and interactive opportunities as the in-person meeting and was available to the public seven days a week, 24 hours a day starting on May 9 and continuing for several weeks after the meeting.

Over 480 people participated in the in-person public meeting, and over 250 people participated online. A complete account of all comments and input received can be found in the appendices of this summary.

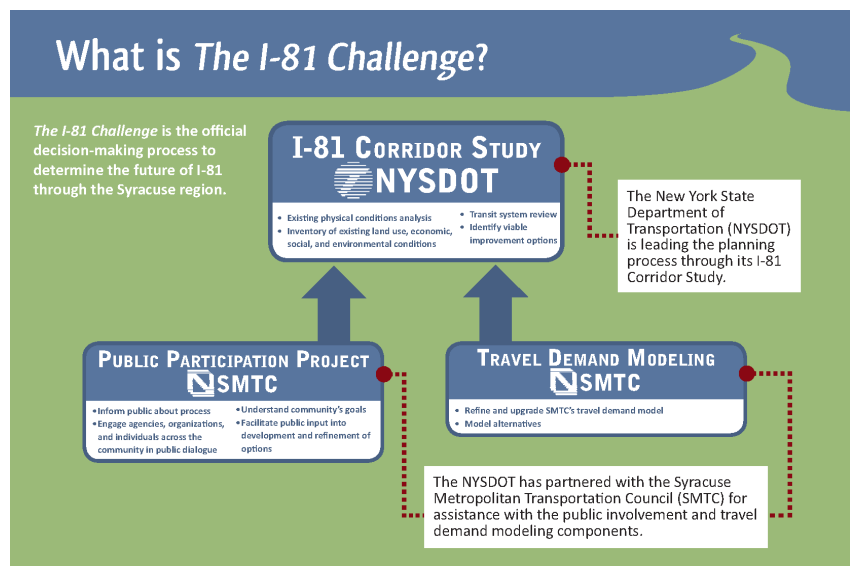
Meeting Content

The eight meeting stations included numerous display boards, the content of which is described below. Some stations included interactive components, as noted in the descriptions.

Station 1, *The I-81 Challenge*, provided information on the background, purpose, and process of *The I-81 Challenge*.

Station 2, *The I-81 Challenge to Date*, described the work completed to-date and some of the key findings. This station included an optional area to review the materials and videos presented at the previous (May 2011) workshops.

Station 3, *Your Visions*, reviewed the nearly 150 “visions” received from the public at the May 2011 workshops and illustrated the process used to categorize these visions, pre-screen some visions, and arrive at the list of strategies recommended for further study. Attendees were asked to provide their comments on the process and the recommendations for further study.



Above: Sample board from Station 1

Station 4, Possible Future Strategies, explored in more detail the five potential strategies recommended for further study. Boards in this station provided a definition and explored key characteristics and considerations for each strategy, and attendees were given the opportunity to write and post their thoughts.

Station 5, Our Transit System, provided information about our current transit system and the benefits transit offers to our region and described different potential transit improvement strategies. The public was invited to provide input about current needs and potential enhancements to the transit system and to share their views about which transit amenities were most important. Two surveys – one for transit riders and one for non-riders – were available at this station.



Above: Meeting attendee provides input on the possible future strategies in Station 4.

Station 6, Evaluating Future Strategies, described how local natural, historical, and socio-economic resources as well as the results of traffic modeling will be used in the evaluation of strategies. This station provided an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed evaluation matrix, which listed the study goals and objectives and proposed metrics that could be used to compare strategies.

Station 7, What's Next?, explained what will come next in the study process and provided an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process.

Station 8, Staying Involved, described ways to continue to participate in *The I-81 Challenge* and an opportunity to provide feedback about the meeting.

Copies of the informational boards from the public meeting can be found in Appendix B of this summary.

Key Findings

Arriving at the strategies recommended for the Stage 1 screening process

The public did not provide a high volume of comments on the strategy development or pre-screening processes. The pre-screening process resulted in recommendations to eliminate options for relocating I-81 and to consider western bypass options only as an optional component of the boulevard strategy. The resulting five strategies recommended for Stage 1 analysis were: No-Build (as required by State and Federal environmental regulations), rehabilitation, reconstruction, tunnel/depressed highway, and boulevard. To view the informational boards that describe these five strategies, see Appendix B.

The few comments received on the screening process were split between comments that supported the pre-screening of the western bypass and relocation options, and those that did not. Several comments expressed support for the retention of the western bypass option within the boulevard strategy. Feedback regarding the optional inclusion of the West Street/railroad arterial component within the boulevard strategy was also split. Some attendees supported this strategy, while others felt it would have negative impacts on quality of life in Syracuse.

Possible future strategies

Meeting attendees provided extensive feedback on the five strategies recommended for Stage 1 screening. The volume and diversity of comments makes it difficult to identify any clear consensus of opinion. However, comments do suggest a few common themes that transcend any specific strategy. Safe, speedy access to key regional destinations is important. This includes the consideration of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. The physical impact of the viaduct is also a key issue – meeting attendees clearly expressed their desire for a more aesthetically pleasing and physically connected downtown environment. Overall, there is a strong desire to see economic development and revitalization in the downtown area. And finally, it is essential that any future solution for I-81 is financially responsible and feasible, and avoids negative impacts on the neighborhoods in the vicinity of the viaduct.

In the full meeting summary, public comments for each strategy are categorized into likes, concerns, and specific ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives. The table below summarizes primary likes and concerns about each of the strategies recommended for Stage 1 screening. It must be noted the bullets listed represent a fairly small number of actual comments (typically between five and 20 individual comments) and cannot be interpreted to be a majority opinion. Additional likes and concerns can be found in the full meeting summary.

Rehabilitation Strategy	
<i>Primary Likes</i>	<i>Primary Concerns</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains ease/speed of travel through Syracuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money could be better spent on reconstruction of I-81 • Does not address existing quality-of-life and environmental issues • Limited space to make significant modifications to the design of the highway may result in impacts to neighboring properties • Does not improve bicycle/pedestrian flow or safety under the viaduct
Reconstruction Strategy	
<i>Primary Likes</i>	<i>Primary Concerns</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could incorporate a more aesthetically pleasing design and improve the appearance of the local area • Could resolve critical safety issues for cars on the highway and for cars and pedestrian below it • Will maintain short travel times and quick access to key destinations while preventing traffic jams on local streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address key complaints about the current viaduct • Potential for significant impacts on adjacent neighborhoods due to widening right-of-way • May result in another structure that will eventually deteriorate and become obsolete • Does not encourage people to stay/visit downtown, which will continue to hurt the local economy

Tunnel/Depressed Highway Strategy	
<i>Primary Likes</i>	<i>Primary Concerns</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates or reduces the “barrier” effect of the current highway and reconnects downtown neighborhoods • Maintains Interstate highway and traffic flow through Syracuse • Improves the aesthetics of the local area through the removal of the viaduct and integration of green space • Could improve and promote walkability in downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tunnel would be prohibitively expensive • Depressed highway would create a new barrier that would be more difficult for cars and pedestrians to cross and create accessibility problems for people with disabilities • Significant impacts from the construction of a tunnel/depressed highway. • Maintenance issues related to snow removal, flooding/pumping and ventilation • Loss of key access points to downtown if built with few interchanges • A depressed highway would not improve the aesthetics of the local area
Boulevard Strategy	
<i>Primary Likes</i>	<i>Primary Concerns</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizes both construction and future maintenance costs • Supports economic development, downtown revitalization and quality of life • Improves aesthetics, creates a gateway to the city • Eliminates the barrier created by the viaduct and restores connectivity between downtown neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A boulevard wide enough to handle existing traffic will decrease safety for pedestrians and bicyclists while creating a more significant barrier between downtown and University Hill than the current viaduct. • Could not handle the necessary traffic resulting in undesirable outcomes for mobility • May have a negative impact on economic development by discouraging people to visit downtown and limiting access to major destinations in Syracuse • May be similar to the current Erie Boulevard which is unsafe and unsightly • May require a larger right-of-way resulting in the use of eminent domain • Negative quality of life impacts

In addition to the primary likes and concerns above, meeting attendees provided specific feedback regarding the optional western bypass and West Street/railroad arterial concepts within the boulevard strategy. Attendees liked that the western bypass would ease congestion and facilitate mobility, but they were concerned that it could disrupt surrounding communities, negatively impact quality of life, and fail to improve access to downtown. Comments regarding the West Street/railroad arterial option expressed concern that this strategy would create a new barrier and would have negative impacts on the Near Westside neighborhood.

The summary of ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives can be found in the body of this summary document. Although the ideas are specific to each strategy, some themes did emerge from these suggestions including:

- Improvements in access to downtown and the University Hill area
- Safety improvements
- Enhancements in the viaduct area such as better lighting and more pedestrian amenities
- Changes to the I-81/I-690 interchange to improve safety and connectivity
- New access to I-81 within the city south of downtown

Our transit system

As noted previously, a section of the meeting was devoted to presenting information about and collecting feedback on the existing transit system. Meeting attendees could comment on the items that were presented by using sticky notes on comment boards, or by completing a survey that was distributed to all meeting attendees as they left the transit section. Two versions of the survey were available – one for transit riders, and another for non-riders. Public feedback about the transit system is intended to inform *The I-81 Challenge* transit system analysis by helping to identify transit system needs, as well as factors that would enhance or encourage future transit use.

The results of the comment boards and survey provided valuable insight into how the public perceives the transit system and what enhancements/improvements may increase transit use. Based on the results of the comment boards and survey, a prioritized list of needs/enhancements that will be carried into the transit systems analysis was developed, and is shown in the table below:

Need/Enhancement	Priority
Reduce transit travel time to be more comparable with vehicles.	1
Increase frequency and hours of operation.	2
Provide more real-time system information (online, by phone, at bus stops).	3
Provide direct connections between major regional destinations.	4
Improve safety and public perception of the transit system.	5
Provide more suburban commuter options.	6
Improve on-time performance.	7
Maintain an affordable fare.	8

The rider survey was limited in value, as it did not reach a high number of daily or weekly riders, or people who do not have access to a car. However, the results of the comment board responses and non-rider/former rider survey provided crucial feedback to apply to the transit system analysis. The majority of respondents were in favor of transit enhancements, such as increased frequency, reduced travel time, and real-time information. Respondents favored both BRT (for its flexibility and ease of implementation), and LRT (for its aesthetic and economic benefits); however, both were seen as expensive. Some respondents also expressed concern regarding the feasibility and practicality of large-scale enhancements in the Syracuse metropolitan area. In particular, people expressed concern that current land use patterns, suburbanization, convenience of a car, and public perception of the transit system may make it difficult to justify larger-scale improvements. Overall, respondents appear to be looking for a balanced and practical approach to enhancing the transit system.

The full meeting summary contains details about desired service enhancements and amenities, transit needs and concerns, and input about BRT and LRT enhancements.

Evaluating future options

Finally, participants were asked to comment on the criteria which will be used to evaluate future options for I-81. The volume of comments received on the evaluation criteria was low. Of the comments received, public input suggests it is important to consider the following when developing future alternatives:

- Bike and pedestrian improvements
- Economic impacts to businesses located near the I-81/I-90 interchange and Exit 25 (7th North Street)
- Quality of life for current and future residents adjacent to I-81, as opposed to the needs of commuters
- Construction time frame for each alternative
- Seasonal traffic variations (suggestion to use summer traffic counts in the analysis, to include recreational traffic)
- The appropriate method to measure how each option might enhance the connectivity between University Hill and downtown
- The value of easy access from the suburbs to University Hill

Meeting Evaluation and Participation

Through the meeting evaluations, participants expressed an overwhelmingly positive opinion of the public meeting. The evaluation forms revealed that attendees felt the meeting was well-organized, accessible, and informative, and that it provided meaningful opportunities for input. Attendees appreciated the magnitude of information presented at the meeting, but noted that it was difficult to absorb everything at one time. Many attendees stated that the information was well-presented and that the staff members at each station were friendly and knowledgeable.

While most attendees appreciated the ongoing opportunities to be involved in *The I-81 Challenge* decision-making process, some expressed frustration with the pace of the effort, stating that they would like to see and comment on detailed information about a handful of alternatives more quickly. A number of attendees also expressed concern about how the public input would actually be used moving forward. This concern was also raised at the first round of public workshops in May 2011. The reiteration of this matter illustrates the importance of continued emphasis on transparency and public involvement in *The I-81 Challenge*.



Above: Meeting attendees complete evaluation forms at the end of the event.

The meeting evaluation revealed that attendees heard about the meeting from multiple sources, with the highest number of attendees learning about the meeting through newspaper, e-mail, and television outlets, in

that order. The overall geographic distribution of participation in the May 2012 public meeting was similar to that of the May 2011 public workshops. Participation spanned across multiple towns in the vicinity of the city of Syracuse. The 13210 ZIP code (Syracuse University-area and surrounding neighborhood) had the highest number of participants, followed by the 13202 ZIP code (downtown Syracuse).

Next steps

Input from the public meeting will be used to verify that *The I-81 Challenge* is moving forward with appropriate strategies for the region and refine specific components of the possible future strategies. The next step is to analyze the possible future strategies to arrive at a limited number of viable options for each strategy. Public involvement continues to be an essential part of *The I-81 Challenge*, and the Central New York community can expect to see additional opportunities for public input in the future.

MEETING SUMMARY

Introduction

In spring 2012, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) hosted a public meeting for *The I-81 Challenge* – the official decision-making process for determining the future of I-81 in the greater Syracuse region. This public meeting built upon feedback received during the first series of public workshops held in early May 2011.

The primary goals of the May 2012 public meeting were to:

- Educate the public
- Review materials from the May 2011 public workshops
- Present the feedback received in May 2011 and demonstrate how this feedback was developed into initial strategies for I-81
- Present and gather input on the draft strategies for I-81 before NYSDOT begins further analysis
- Present and gather input on the process for evaluating potential future strategies
- Present and gather input on long-term improvements to the regional transit system
- Explain next steps, including the environmental review process

The meeting took place at the Oncenter in downtown Syracuse on May 9, 2012 from 2 pm to 8 pm. Participants were invited to drop in at any time and stay for as long as they wished. Either free (validated) parking in the Oncenter garage or lot, or two single-use transit passes were available at the meeting. American Sign Language and Spanish interpreters were available on site, and on-call interpreters for other languages were available through a phone provided in the Oncenter atrium. Vietnamese translators were available with advance request. No attendees used the available interpretation services.

The meeting featured eight stations with informational boards, interactive exercises and educational videos. Each station was staffed with project team members with relevant expertise. Attendees were provided informational materials at the registration area to enhance their participation in the meeting including Frequently Asked Questions, a study newsletter, and a guide to the public meeting.

Publicity for the meeting was multi-faceted and included:

- Meeting flyer within SMTC’s agency newsletter (*Directions*) mailed to over 3,500 addresses and e-mailed to over 320 addresses
- Meeting flyer mailed to 3,850 addresses including the entire SMTC database, I-81 stakeholders database, all 2011 workshop attendees, local chambers of commerce, community centers, religious institutions, Syracuse City School District locations, and local, state, and federal elected officials
- Meeting flyer delivered to a variety of local coffee shops and distributed to all Onondaga County Public Library system branches



Above: Sample Meeting Flyer

- Distribution of flyers through community partners including the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network (included in newsletter mailing), Diocese of Syracuse (Catholic Schools), Spanish Action League, Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT), CNY Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, FOCUS Greater Syracuse, and all Study Advisory Committee (SAC), Community Liaison Committee (CLC) and Municipal Liaison Committee (MLC) members
- Placards on Centro buses
- E-mail distribution of flyer to all SAC and CLC members as well as a number of other community groups
- E-mail notification to the I-81 stakeholder list, containing over 1,200 addresses
- Promotion via the project's website, blog, and Facebook page
- Press releases
- Interviews with local print, radio, and television media
- Paid advertising, including brief spots on local public radio and cable TV news, banner ads on a local news website, and print ads in local newspapers
- Variable message signs on I-81, I-690, and in the viaduct area

To maximize promotion of, and outreach for the public meeting, the majority of printed promotional material included pertinent information in both Spanish and Vietnamese.

Additionally, in an effort to broaden opportunities for the public to participate, a simultaneous "virtual meeting" was launched on the project website (www.thei81challenge.org). This online option provided the same material and interactive opportunities as the in-person meeting and was available to the public seven days a week, 24 hours a day starting on May 9 and continuing for several weeks after the meeting.

Over 480 people participated in the in-person public meeting, and over 250 people participated online. A complete account of all comments received through the in-person and virtual meeting board stations can be found in Appendix A of this summary. Results of the meeting evaluations and comment forms can be found in Appendix D.



Above: Meeting attendees ask questions about The I-81 Challenge.

Meeting Content and Key Findings

This section summarizes the content of the public meeting stations, as well as the public input obtained through various interactive exercises. In stations where interactive exercises were offered, public input is summarized in the "key findings" sections below. A few things to note about the key findings:

- In many cases, a key findings bullet represents only one comment. In no case can a bullet be interpreted to be a majority opinion. (No bullet represents significantly more than 20 comments, and most represent fewer than five.)
- Comments have been organized based on where they are most germane. (For example, any comment directly related to a potential future strategy was summarized within the Station 4 key findings section, regardless of where it was received.)
- Comments that did not address any of the topics of the meeting are not included in this section, but all comments have been included in Appendix A of this document.

Note that copies of the informational boards from the public meeting can be found in Appendix B of this summary.

Station 1: The I-81 Challenge

The first station provided attendees with general information about *The I-81 Challenge*. Boards at this station defined *The I-81 Challenge*, explained the roles the SMTC and NYSDOT play in the process, and reviewed why *The I-81 Challenge* is needed. The boards then explained what the decision-making process would accomplish. A large image of *The I-81 Challenge* Process Graphic provided a visual aid for understanding how *The I-81 Challenge* will lead to a decision. One large board in this station explained the role of various stakeholders in the decision-making process, including NYSDOT, SMTC, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the local transit agency (i.e., Centro), local municipalities, and the public. The final board provided information about funding for *The I-81 Challenge*, and explained that capital funding for a preferred project or projects would not occur until after the planning study is complete in 2013. There was no interactive component to this station.

Station 2: Getting up to date on *The I-81 Challenge*

The second station provided a review of key information about *The I-81 Challenge* to date, including:

- The Physical Conditions Analysis, as documented in Technical Memorandum #1
- The role of transportation modeling
- Public involvement efforts to date
- Initial key findings about I-81's role in the region, as well as deficiencies and needs in the I-81 corridor
- Results from the Spring 2011 Questionnaire, as summarized in the Questionnaire Summary report

Display boards also reviewed background information from the 2011 public workshops. Review material covered the history of I-81, regional land use trends, land use challenges and opportunities, and population, employment, and commuting patterns. The station also included the short educational video created by the SMTC titled "The Evolution of Transportation in the Syracuse Region". This video traced the development of the modern transportation system from early horse trails through the construction of the Erie Canal, railroads, and the interstate highway system.



Finally, boards in this station reviewed the case studies presented during the May 2011 public workshops and highlighted public reaction to the case studies. By reviewing essential information about *The I-81 Challenge*, this station set the stage for the information and interactive activities in subsequent stations. There was no interactive component to this station.

Left: Meeting attendees watch a short educational video about the development of the modern transportation system.

Station 3: Your visions

Station three illustrated how public input and visions from the May 2011 workshops were used to arrive at the five strategies recommended for Stage 1 screening. This station included large boards displaying the individual visions submitted by the public. An informational graphic illustrated how over 100 visions were grouped into six distinct categories – rehabilitation, reconstruction, tunnel/depressed highway, boulevard, western bypass, and



Above: Meeting attendees review informational boards highlighting the individual visions submitted by members of the public.

relocate I-81 – plus a set of “common concepts” (such as improving bicycle and pedestrian connections and adding parks and open space) that could be included in any option. A board then showed that the western bypass and relocate I-81 concepts were “pre-screened” due to concerns that these concepts may not meet the goals and objectives or purpose and need of the project. The remaining categories plus the required “No-Build” strategy were recommended to progress to Stage 1 screening. A series of boards explained the pre-screening process for the western bypass and relocate I-81 concepts. This information was followed by a large informational graphic illustrating the three-stage screening process that will be used to narrow the list of possible future strategies in conformance with the project needs and goals. Finally, the public was presented with the five recommendations for Stage 1 screening, and asked to provide thoughts on this process and the end result.

Key Findings

Strategy Development Process:

- There were no comments on the process used to develop the strategies
- Things that people liked about the process included:
 - Quantity and diversity of ideas
 - Options outside of the I-81 corridor (such as the western bypass and rail)
 - Clear and understandable categorization of ideas
- Things that people did not like about the process included:
 - Repetition of same information about potential strategies
 - Lack of detailed cost information for each potential strategy
 - Oversimplification of potential strategies and potential combinations of strategies
 - Lack of detailed information about impacts to historical and structural resources

Screening:

- The few comments received on the screening process were split between comments that supported the pre-screening of the western bypass and relocation options, and those that did not.

Retention of Western Bypass in the Boulevard Strategy Option:

- Several comments expressed support for this option
- Things that people liked about this option included:
 - Creation of economic development opportunities
 - Elimination of I-81 as a barrier

- Reduction of maintenance needs for I-81
- Several comments stated that I-481 could serve as a bypass

Retention of West Street/railroad arterial in the Boulevard Strategy Option:

- Some comments suggest that there may be confusion over how the West Street arterial could or would be implemented. (Several people seemed to believe this option would entail re-routing the interstate highway to a West Street alignment.)
- The few number of comments received were split between general support for and dislike of this option
- Things people disliked about this option included:
 - Negative neighborhood impacts
 - Creation of a new barrier

Specific recommendations:

- Create an inner and outer loop, as in Rochester, NY
- Add a lane to I-481 to increase capacity
- Create a western bypass along the Route 173 alignment

Station 4: Possible future strategies

The fourth station provided details about the five categories of strategies that are recommended to advance through the screening process: No-build (as required by State/Federal environmental regulations), rehabilitation, reconstruction, tunnel/depressed highway, and boulevard. For the No-build strategy, a board detailed the future issues that are anticipated under this scenario. For the remaining strategies, boards in this station provided a definition and explored key characteristics and considerations. Meeting attendees were asked to provide feedback about all but the No-build option by writing thoughts on Post-It notes and attaching them to a large, blank display board for each strategy. The last board in this station presented a series of common concepts which could be incorporated into any strategy.

Key Findings

Rehabilitation Strategy

Likes:

Primary

- Maintains ease/speed of travel through Syracuse

Other

- Cost effective

Concerns:

Primary

- Money could be better spent on reconstruction of I-81
- Does not address existing quality-of-life and environmental issues:
 - Aesthetics
 - Noise
 - Air pollution
 - Division between city neighborhoods/barrier effect

- Limited space to make significant modifications to the design of the highway (such as new interchanges, lengthening ramps, widening roadway) may result in impacts to neighboring properties:
 - Use of eminent domain, loss of historic buildings downtown, impacts to public housing near the viaduct
 - Continuation of depressed property values near highway
- Does not improve bicycle/pedestrian flow or safety under the viaduct

Other

- Does not address safety issues for drivers on the highway
- Does not improve transit
- Continued emphasis on car travel (and travel time) above other modes
- Need to address development patterns (“sprawl”) that create demand for I-81
- Long-term viability
 - Does not significantly extend the useful service life of the viaduct
 - Elevated highways may not be the best option given the climate/weather in Syracuse

Specific ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives:

Downtown/University Hill/viaduct area

- Exit 17 (Colvin Street/Brighton Ave.):
 - Add a parallel frontage road
 - Include a southbound entrance ramp
 - Include a northbound exit ramp
 - Consider tunneling an on/off ramp under the railroad to Thurber Street
 - Concern: May put a lot of traffic into the Outer Comstock neighborhood
 - Improve interchange to make it simple for travelers to understand
 - Improve traffic signal timing on local streets to improve traffic flow at on/off ramps
- Castle Street area:
 - Add frontage road
 - Add new entrance/exit
- University Hill access improvements:
 - Need additional capacity for University exits
 - New, high-capacity off ramp from I-81 N to Crouse Ave. Would split the traffic load with existing off ramp.
 - Provide dedicated exit ramp for south downtown with flyover exit off I-81 N
- Safety improvements at Pearl Street on-ramp
- Safety improvements at E Genesee/Almond Street intersection
- Exit 18:
 - Replace Adams Street off-ramp with a ramp to Burt Street under the railroad
 - Improve traffic signal timing on local streets to improve traffic flow at on/off ramps
 - Improve safety of ramps and merges
- Under the viaduct
 - Ban parking
 - Include shops, parks, trees and benches
 - Think about ways to make the area under the viaduct a productive and active part of the community
 - Improve lighting (metal halide not HPS)
 - Add more signal-protected crosswalks

I-81/I-690 Interchange

- Dangerous merge (bad sight lines) I-690 E to I-81 S
- Dangerous off ramp at Harrison
- I-81 N to I-690 W is very unsafe
- I-81 N to I-690 E is unsafe because the highway is too narrow and two lanes of traffic enter I-81 just before the I-81/I-690 split
- Need I-690 E to I-81 N link

I-81/I-90 Interchange

- Not enough room for lane changes coming into and exiting the toll plaza
- Include unmanned toll booths

No location specified

- Widen to 3 lanes northbound and southbound
- Include shoulders
- Use long-life concrete to reduce ongoing maintenance

Reconstruction Strategy

Likes:

Primary

- Could incorporate a more aesthetically pleasing design and improve the appearance of the local area
- Could resolve critical safety issues for cars on the highway and for cars and pedestrian below it
- Will maintain short travel times and quick access to key destinations while preventing traffic jams on local streets

Other

- Will decrease air pollution caused by congestion on local streets
- More cost effective and economical, in the long-run, compared to the rehabilitation strategy
- Minimizes the problems caused by flooding in Syracuse

Concerns:

Primary

- Does not address key complaints about the current viaduct including:
 - Barrier/separation/disruption caused by the I-81 viaduct
 - Aesthetics and livability of the local area
 - Walkability, pedestrian safety
- Potential for significant impacts on adjacent neighborhoods due to widening right-of-way, especially if eminent domain is used
- Will result in another structure that will eventually deteriorate and become obsolete
- Does not encourage people to stay/visit downtown, which will continue to hurt the local economy

Other

- Expensive to build and maintain
- Does not help to reduce noise or air pollution
- May have a negative impact on home values and desirability of land around it
- Keeps Syracuse in a “car-centric” way of thinking
- Frontage roads will create dead zones between the road and the highway, will exacerbate walkability issues, and are not visually pleasing.

Specific ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives:

I-81/I-690 Interchange

- Build full interchange
- Eliminate left entrances
- Realign I-81 to intersect I-690 near Geddes Street, following Bear St.

Downtown/University Hill/viaduct area

- Rebuild higher than current viaduct
- Widen or double deck viaduct to increase capacity
- Build to 65 mph design standard
- Eliminate on-ramp from Harrison Street (I-81 northbound traffic should enter north of I-690)
- Keep I-81 southbound on/off ramps near hospital
- Do not reduce the number of on/off ramps
- Improve ramps and lane widths

South of downtown

- Provide access south of downtown (Colvin Street area)
 - Create alternative to East Genesee Street corridor and Harrison St. exit for traffic between University area and DeWitt/Manlius

Carousel Center/Inner Harbor

- Provide direct access to Carousel Center/Inner Harbor
- Use frontage road to connect parking areas

Regional transportation system changes

- Include a western bypass

Tunnel/Depressed Highway Strategy

Likes:

Primary

- Eliminates or reduces the “barrier” effect of the current highway and reconnects downtown neighborhoods.
- Maintains Interstate highway and traffic flow through Syracuse
- Improves the aesthetics of the local area through the removal of the viaduct and integration of green space
- Could improve and promote walkability in downtown

Other

- A tunnel would be easier to maintain in the winter
- Promotes small businesses and improves the city tax base
- Creates safer intersections above ground
- Easier to fix and create new exits

Concerns:

Primary

- A tunnel would be prohibitively expensive
- Depressed highway would create a new barrier that would be more difficult for cars and pedestrians to cross and create accessibility problems for people with disabilities
- Significant impacts from the construction of a tunnel/depressed highway including:
 - Loss of buildings to eminent domain
 - Utility relocation
 - Time required for construction

- Maintenance issues related to snow removal, flooding/pumping and ventilation
- Loss of key access points to downtown if built with few interchanges
- A depressed highway would not improve the aesthetics of the local area

Other

- New bridges over a depressed highway will need to be maintained
- Drivers passing through will not see or experience the city
- Depressed highway may lower property values
- Depressed highway consumes large swaths of land that could be put to other uses
- Depressed highway will have negative impacts on local streets and traffic flow
- There is not enough traffic to support a tunnel
- Tunnel may be dangerous in winter
- Maintains a “car-centric” way of thinking
- Does not solve access issues for University Hill

Specific ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives:

I-81/I-690 Interchange

- Create full interchange

Design

- Tunnel entrances and exits for either I-81 or I-690 should be built at the Franklin Square and University Hill areas
- Maintain the current exits/entrances
- Include a boulevard (above a tunnel) to serve local traffic
- Include green space on top of tunnel
- Design for 45-55 mph minimum

Construction

- Construct a tunnel by cut-and-cover rather than boring
- Build a capped depressed highway

Transit

- Include a transit strategy

Boulevard Strategy

Likes:

Primary

- Minimizes both construction and future maintenance costs
- Supports economic development, downtown revitalization, and quality of life by
 - Providing more traffic to local business
 - Attracting new residents downtown
 - Enhancing walkability/bikability
 - Creating a sense of place and vibrant urban neighborhoods
 - Eliminating noise and air pollution caused by the viaduct
- Improves aesthetics, creates a gateway to the city
- Eliminates the barrier created by the viaduct and restores connectivity between downtown neighborhoods

Other

- Maintains access to downtown
- Connects to the street grid to provide more options for motorists in heavy traffic
- Would facilitate east-west travel through the city by eliminating traffic jams along Harrison St

Concerns:

Primary

- A boulevard wide enough to handle existing traffic will decrease safety for pedestrians and bicyclists while creating a more significant barrier between downtown and University Hill than the current viaduct.
- Could not handle the necessary traffic resulting in:
 - Increased travel times
 - Congestion and gridlock downtown
 - Increased traffic/congestion along I-690
 - Increased traffic along I-481 (particularly in Cicero and Dewitt)
- May have a negative impact on economic development by discouraging people to visit downtown and limiting access to major destinations in Syracuse
- May be similar to the current Erie Boulevard which is unsafe and unsightly
- May require a larger right-of-way resulting in the use of eminent domain
- Quality of life impacts including
 - Traffic, noise, and air pollution at ground level
 - Negative impact on home value
 - Diversion of air pollution to other areas in the region

Other

- Would need to be combined with a comprehensive transit solution
- Would create difficulties for people with disabilities
- Pedestrian bridge would be needed but likely not well used
- Would not improve the aesthetics of the area

Boulevard with western bypass concept

Likes:

- Quick access from small communities
- Will ease traffic congestion

Concerns:

- Not needed
- Will disrupt communities
- Negative impact on quality of life
- Does not address access to downtown

Boulevard with West Street arterial concept

Concerns:

- Would create another barrier and have significant negative impacts to Near Westside and Armory Square
- Not necessary; Taylor Street and Castle Street already provide fast travel times
- Near Westside community is already working to make West Street less intrusive in the neighborhood and to facilitate better pedestrian/bicyclist connections to downtown; upgrading West Street runs counter to these efforts
- Near Westside needs to be connected to downtown

Specific ideas for consideration in the development of alternatives:

I-81/I-690 interchange

- Connect I-81 to I-690 along Hiawatha Blvd
- Eliminate current interchange

Boulevard north/south limits:

- Downtown area only (Adams Street to I-690)
- Northern end at Carousel Center
- Route along former OnTrack right-of-way

Boulevard design

Traffic

- Apply appropriate signal timing
- Use “exit ramps” to prevent congestion from vehicles entering and exiting
- Use flyovers at intersections to avoid traffic problems
- Install roundabouts at the Adams St, Water St, and Erie Blvd intersections
- Include a service road for local access
- Use existing right-of-way and State Street
- Improve Adams and Harrison Streets to provide better east-west connections

Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations

- Bike lanes along, and bike tunnels under/next to boulevard
- Signal controlled crosswalks
- Foot bridges
- Wide median
- No “right on red” for bike/pedestrian safety
- Ensure ADA compliance
- Bulb-outs to create shorter crossing distances

Transit accommodations

- Dedicated bus lanes
- Dedicated train or tram right of way

Other amenities

- Incorporate vegetation, pocket parks and sidewalks
- Leave viaduct as hanging garden/elevated park

Western bypass

- Follow Route 20 to Navarino north and west of Marcellus and Camillus. Intersect I-90 at Peru [Road, near Jordan]

West Street arterial

- Connect West Street to boulevard via a tunnel under Fayette Street
- Redesign West Street as a “complete street” not a major through street, return to former (narrower) width, disconnect from the highway system

Other regional transportation system changes

- New road from Lafayette, east of Jamesville to connection at Woodchuck Hill Road
- Light rail with stops at Carrier Dome, Carousel Center, Regional Transportation Center, and the airport. Extension to Binghamton.

- Do not make changes in the Exit 17 area (Brighton/Calthrop)
- Permit two-way traffic on Erie Boulevard
- Create a one way loop around city center with a constantly curving roadway to limit speed

General deficiencies and needs: (not strategy specific):

- Lack of full I-81/I690 interchange
- Lane reduction in downtown Syracuse (3 lanes to 2)
- Need more speed limit signs on I-81
- Need better maintenance of street lights
- Barrier impact of the highway deprives downtown Syracuse of the energy and purchasing power of SU students
- Outer Comstock (Ainsley Drive, Thurber Street and Comstock) cannot support additional traffic
- Route 31 interchange needs to be moved further north
- Drag racing on city streets

Station 5: Our transit system

Station five focused on the transit system. The first set of boards in this station provided information about the existing transit system, and explored the benefits of transit from the standpoint of the economy, the environment, quality of life, and energy resources. Boards explained the role of transit system analysis in *The I-81 Challenge*, and asked meeting attendees to share any additional needs they felt the analysis should consider. The boards presented information about urban and suburban ridership and explained four key transit enhancements: bus-only lanes, bus pull-outs, queue jump lanes, and transit signal priority. Then, large interactive boards invited the public to provide input about current needs and potential enhancements to the transit system. Attendees were also invited to share their views about which transit amenities were most important.



Above: At Station 5, meeting attendees were able to learn about and provide input on the transit system.

Key Findings

Transit Needs and Enhancements

Transit needs:

- Better access to city for suburban residents
- Reduced transit travel time through bus stop consolidation and more express bus options
- Alternative fuels for buses
- Improved safety at bus stops and on-board
- Lower fares (including free fares for city residents)
- Better connections to other modes of transportation (including park and ride lots) and key destinations (including grocery stores)
- Extended hours of service
- Improvements to demand-responsive transportation services

Transit concerns:

- Practicality of transit for Syracuse because of
 - Travel time, cost and convenience advantages of the car
 - Low population density
 - Low ridership
 - Local climate
 - Current land use
- Frequency of service
- Accessibility and convenience of existing routes
- Negative image/stigma of the bus system
- Lack of funding to support transit improvements
- Intensive maintenance requirements for transit

Desired transit service enhancements:

- Operations
 - Rail/light rail improvements including:
 - Revival and expansion of former OnTrack service
 - Improved frequency and routing of buses including:
 - Direct connections between key regional destinations
 - Express and long-distance routes
 - Re-instatement of the Stolp Strathmore Route
 - Reduced travel times:
 - Implementation of transit signal priority
 - Use of bus “pull-offs”
 - Development of a monorail system
 - In conjunction with a boulevard strategy
- Vehicles
 - Smaller buses for routes with lower ridership
 - Triple-decker buses
 - Cars that drive themselves
- Locations
 - Eastwood
 - James Street Corridor
 - Geddes Street Corridor

- Lemoyne and Onondaga Community College
- Downtown Syracuse

Transit Amenities

Desired transit amenities:

- Better communication of transit information
 - Use of technology for transit information, such as real-time bus arrival notification or call-in hotline
 - Rider information cannot rely solely on smartphone technology as not all riders have smartphones
 - Better notification of schedules and schedule changes
 - More information at bus stops and bus shelters, including route maps
 - Better education about the transit system
 - Resources and information on carpooling
- Improved and more frequent bus shelters
- Improved bus stops
 - Better lighting
 - Public restrooms at key stops
- Wireless internet for transit riders
- Better payment options
 - Swipe cards
 - E-payment
- Car seats for children
- Improved customer service from CENTRO
- On-board entertainment
- Bike racks at stops and on buses and bus stops at major trail heads
- ADA accessibility improvements

A second set of boards explored the details of potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) corridor enhancements. The boards presented high, medium, and low-intensity examples of how the BRT or LRT enhancements might be implemented. Through interactive boards, the public provided input on BRT and LRT and the locations where transit enhancements are most needed.

Key Findings

Bus Rapid Transit

Likes:

- Affordable
- Flexible and easy to implement
 - More feasible than light rail, and if successful could be upgraded to light rail in the future
- Efficient
- Supports economic development around routes
- Environmentally friendly
- Routes are easy to understand
- Reduces dependency on cars
- Reduces congestion
- Faster travel time

Dislikes:

- More expensive than a typical bus route
- High maintenance costs
- Not feasible within current right-of-way
- Maintains dependency on fossil fuel
- Cannot be supported with current population density
- Too slow
- Not aesthetically pleasing

Specific recommendations for BRT:

- Implement a BRT route on Erie Blvd.
- Implement a BRT along Salina Street north to the transportation center, with service to the South Side
- Use BRT as a precursor to light rail routes in the future
- Study the BRT system in Albany
- Provide BRT to the suburbs

Light Rail Transit

Likes:

- Reduces fossil fuel consumption
- More attractive than buses
- Historic/aesthetic value
- Faster travel time
- Can utilize existing rail infrastructure
- Supports economic development around routes
- Has proven track record of economic benefits
- Feasible within current right-of-way
- Routes are easy to understand

Dislikes:

- Expensive
- Transit demand does not support LRT
- Inflexible routes
- Current road right-of-way cannot accommodate it
- Not appropriate for weather conditions in Syracuse
- Possible negative impacts on local traffic safety and congestion

Specific recommendations for LRT:

- Suggestions for locations to service:
 - Downtown
 - Syracuse University
 - Hospitals
 - Destiny USA
 - The Dome
 - Regional Transportation Center
 - Airport
 - Alliance Bank Stadium
 - Regional Market
 - Jamesville Beach

- Eastern suburbs
- Suggestions for LRT routes:
 - I-81
 - I-690
 - Salina Street
 - Erie Boulevard
 - Euclid Avenue
 - Genesee Street
 - Crouse Avenue
 - James Street
 - West Onondaga Street
 - South Avenue
 - Grant Boulevard/Butternut Street



Above: A transit survey was available at the end of Station 5 for both riders and non-riders.

Transit Survey

The final activity in this station was a transit survey, which was available for both riders and non-riders. The surveys were also available online through the study website. A detailed summary of the transit survey methodology and results is available in a separate report titled “Syracuse Transit System Analysis Survey Results,” created by Stantec for the NYSDOT as part of the I-81 Corridor Study. Key Findings from the survey are summarized below.

Key Findings

Non-Riders/Former Riders

The primary reason why non-riders and former rider respondents do not currently use the CENTRO transit system is that they have access to a vehicle and prefer driving. In addition, many respondents listed free parking and the long transit travel times as reasons why they do not use transit. These responses highlight several factors within the Syracuse metropolitan area that point to a “car-centric” culture that consists of relatively low-cost parking in the downtown core, suburbanization of many businesses, and very short peak periods of congestion (compared to other cities where transit ridership is higher). These three factors play a significant role in mode choice. In cities where transit ridership is much higher, parking is typically much more expensive than in the City of Syracuse, and congestion is such that transit travel times are comparable, or sometimes even faster than, vehicle travel time. Furthermore, a higher ridership typically allows the transit agency to operate more frequently and for longer hours.

It is unlikely that these factors will change to support transit use without significant land use changes within the City that increases density for both commercial and residential uses. An increase in density would also likely result in an increase in congestion, and an increase in parking fees as competition for parking increases, making transit a more comparable option.

Another significant factor for non-riders/former riders is that they need access to a vehicle while at work. This is a common concern for commuters in many cities who have jobs that require them to travel to meetings or other locations throughout the day. Some cities have implemented services such as carsharing (Zipcar, Philly Carshare, etc.), or guaranteed ride programs to provide commuters with an option of a vehicle during the day if needed. An analysis of the feasibility of a carshare program should be incorporated into any transit improvement evaluation that is designed to increase suburban ridership.

In terms of increasing transit use among non-riders and former riders, approximately 48% of the non-rider respondents and 66% of former rider respondents stated that they would likely consider using transit if improvements were made to the current system. The largest factors that may increase transit use in this group include: increased frequency and expanded service hours, adding route options and decreased travel times. Implementing Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit were also popular among respondents.

Outside factors may also increase the likelihood that non-riders and former riders would consider using transit. The most noted factor was an increase in gas price to an average of \$6 per gallon. Non-riders were more likely (24%) than former riders (16%) to use transit if employers provided incentives, while former riders were more likely (22%) than non-riders (10%) to use the bus if parking fees increase. Both groups agreed (13% average) that they may use transit if congestion on the roadway increases.

Current Riders

This survey did not capture the true results to most rider questions, because it did not reach a high number of daily or weekly riders, or people who do not have access to a car. This is evident in some survey responses, such as those indicating that the primary reasons for using transit were for environmental purpose, convenience, and a reduction in stress. Furthermore, 43% of respondents reported only using the transit system once per month or less. Therefore, the results of the rider survey should not be considered as an average representation of a typical transit user.

It is recommended that CENTRO and/or SMTC obtain more accurate results from frequent transit riders in order to correctly analyze the current transit system. Surveys should be given to riders at bus stops, or on the bus, to reach a wider variety of transit riders, particularly those who utilize the system on a more frequent basis.

The most important transit service features to the current rider respondents were that the buses are on time, and the service is frequent. Having an affordable bus fare was the third-most important feature to respondents. Fifty-nine percent of respondents are less than satisfied with the CENTRO bus system. Increasing bus frequency/expanding operation hours was the top improvement that would enhance transit use among rider respondents. Implementing Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit were also popular choices among rider respondents, as well as non-riders and former rider respondents. Making spot improvements to existing bus routes was among the top improvement options to enhance use.

Station 6: Evaluating future options

Station six explored the process for evaluating future options for I-81. The boards in this station provided background information about the role of environmental and community resources, noise and air quality considerations, and the Regional Travel Demand Model in the evaluation process. They also outlined and explained the use of goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria in *The I-81 Challenge* process. The final board in this station provided an opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts about the evaluation criteria.

Key Findings

The volume of comments received on the evaluation criteria was low. Of the comments received, public input suggests it is important to consider the following when developing future alternatives:

- Bike and pedestrian improvements
- Economic impacts to businesses located near the I-81/I-90 interchange and Exit 25 (7th North Street)
- Quality of life for current and future residents adjacent to I-81, as opposed to the needs of commuters
- Construction time frame for each alternative
- Seasonal traffic variations (suggestion to use summer traffic counts in the analysis, to include recreational traffic)
- The appropriate method to measure how each option might enhance the connectivity between University Hill and downtown
- The value of easy access from the suburbs to University Hill

Station 7: Next steps

This station explained how public input has been used thus far and outlined the next steps for *The I-81 Challenge*. This included a detailed explanation of the environmental review process, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). There was no interactive component to this station.

Right: Informational boards at Station 7 explained the NEPA process.

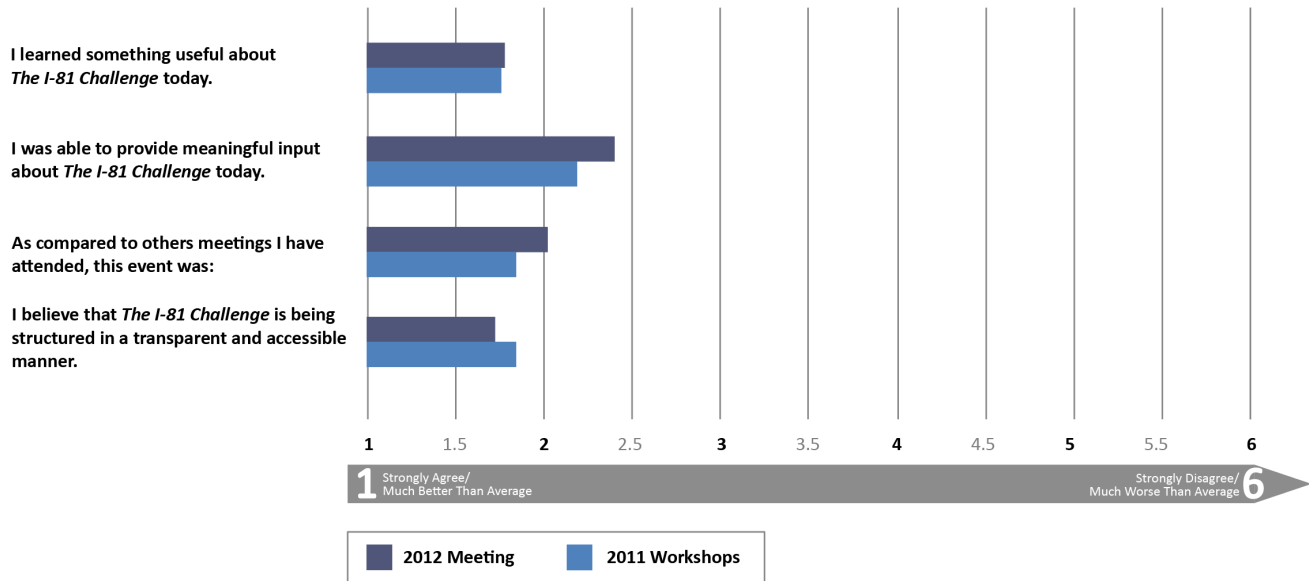


Station 8: Staying Involved

The final station presented the public with information about how to stay involved in *The I-81 Challenge*. The public provided additional feedback through comment sheets and a meeting evaluation.

Through the meeting evaluations, participants expressed an overwhelmingly positive opinion of the public meeting. The evaluation forms revealed that attendees felt the meeting was well-organized, accessible, and informative, and that it provided meaningful opportunities for input. The graph below illustrates that the average numerical ratings for each of the four questions were similar for the 2012 public meeting and the 2011 public workshops.

Figure 1: Meeting Evaluation Result Comparison



Attendees appreciated the magnitude of information presented at the meeting, but noted that it was difficult to absorb everything at one time. Many attendees stated that the information was well-presented and that the staff members at each station were friendly and knowledgeable. Other things people liked about the meeting included:

- Convenient hours
- Free parking
- Inclusive tone
- Personal attention from staff members at each station
- Online availability of information through the virtual meeting

Attendees also made suggestions about how the meeting could be improved. Several attendees stated that they would have liked to provide feedback through organized discussions, such as break-out groups or roundtable sessions, which were not offered at the meeting. Other suggestions included:

- Starting the meeting mid-day to allow people to attend during lunch break hours
- Bringing information to key regional events, such as the NY State Fair, to get more people involved
- Holding more than one meeting
- Providing key information in advance of the meeting to allow people to review it and prepare questions
- Holding additional focus group meetings with key stakeholder groups

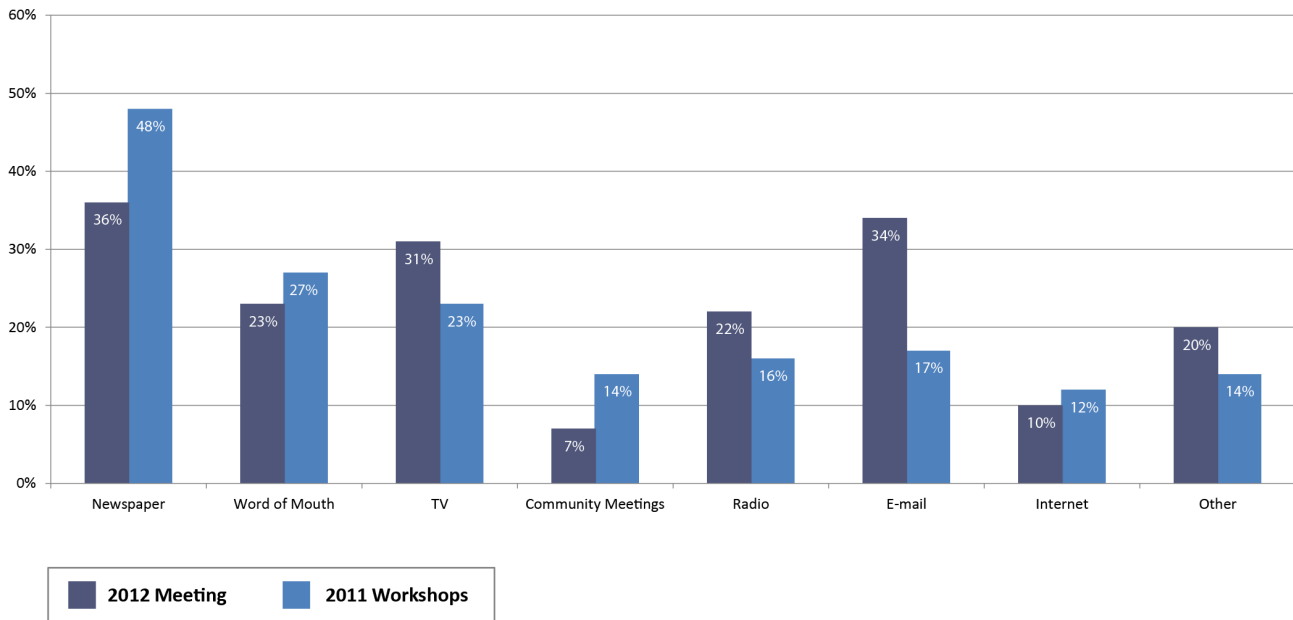
While most attendees appreciated the ongoing opportunities to be involved in *The I-81 Challenge* decision-making process, some expressed frustration with the pace of the effort, stating that they would like to see detailed information about a handful of alternatives more quickly. Several attendees also expressed concern about how the public input would actually be used moving forward, illustrating the importance of continued emphasis on transparency and public involvement in *The I-81 Challenge*.

Meeting Participation

As noted earlier, over 480 people participated in the in-person public meeting, and over 250 people participated online. Attendees at the in-person meeting were asked to indicate on the sign-in sheets whether or not they had attended the May 2011 Public Workshops. Approximately 130 people reported that they had attended the May 2011 Public Workshop, 250 people reported that they had not attended the May 2011 Public Workshop, and nearly 100 people did not provide a response to this question. A comparison of names (and, if necessary, street or email addresses) from the public meeting sign-in sheets and the online registration information indicated that fewer than 20 people attended the in-person meeting *and* participated in the virtual meeting. Though it cannot be known how many more people might have attended in-person if a virtual option had not been available, the relatively large number of people that only participated online suggests that there is significant value in providing this option.

The meeting evaluation revealed that attendees heard about the meeting from multiple sources, with the highest number of attendees learning about the meeting through newspaper, e-mail, and television outlets, in that order. The chart below shows the effectiveness of outreach approaches for the May 2012 public meeting as compared to the May 2011 public workshops.

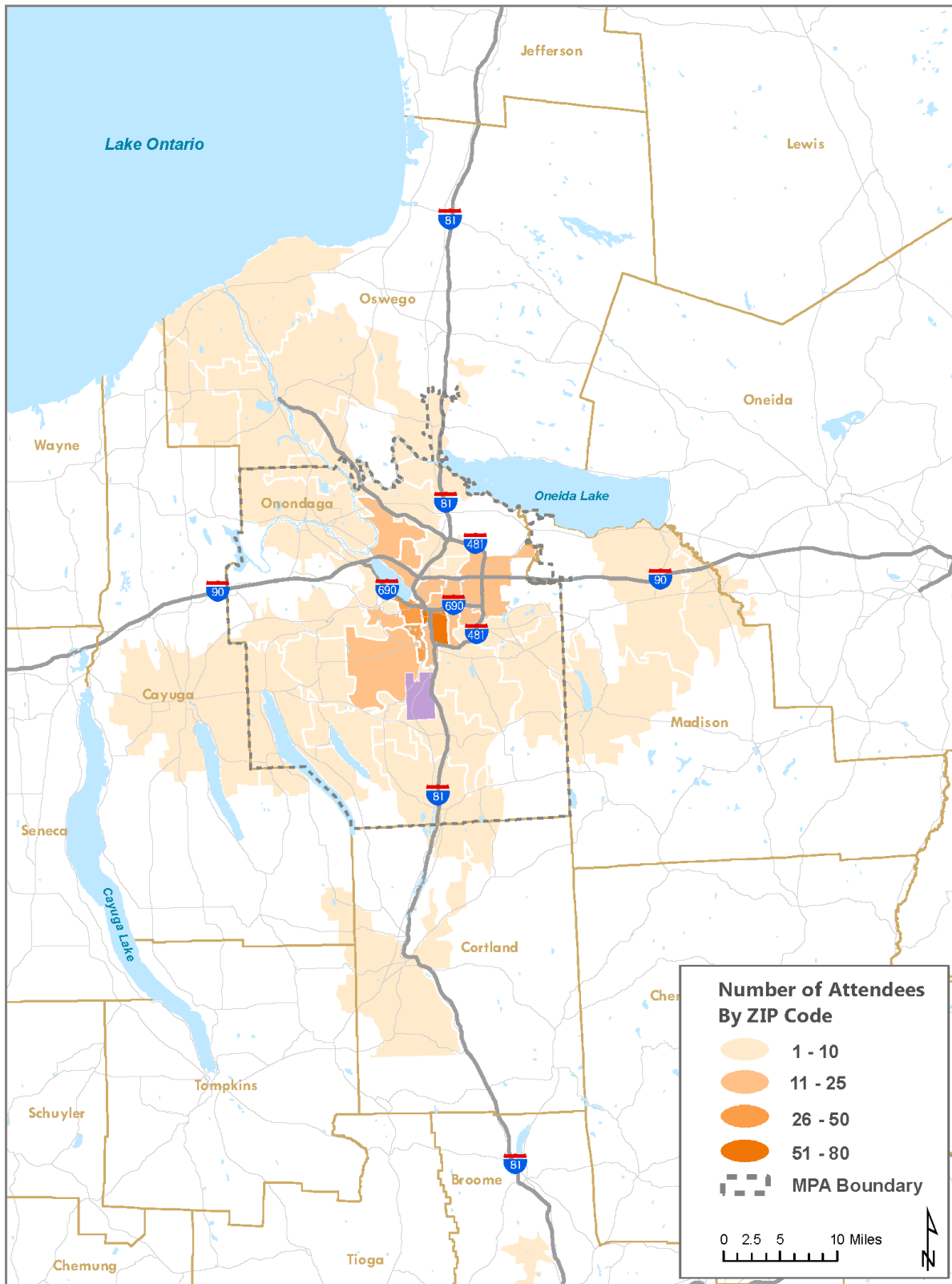
Figure 2: How did you hear about this meeting?



Note: Because attendees were able to select more than one method, total percentages do not add to 100%

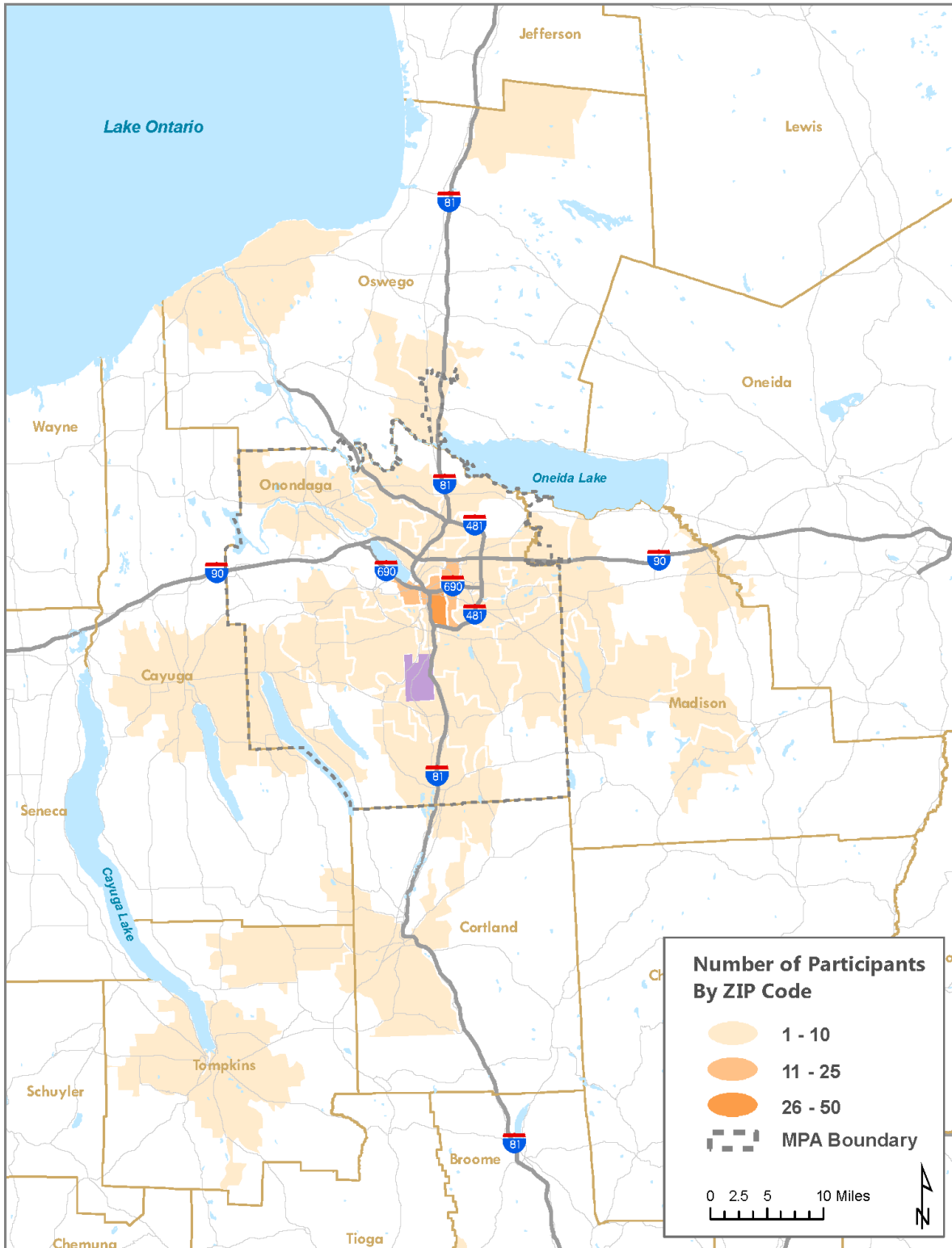
The overall geographic distribution of participation in the May 2012 public meeting was similar to that of the May 2011 public workshops. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the distribution of 2012 in-person and virtual meeting participation based on ZIP codes provided at sign-in or registration. The overall extent and distribution of participation were very similar for the in-person and virtual meetings. The 13210 ZIP code (Syracuse University-area and surrounding neighborhood) had the highest number of participants, followed by the 13202 ZIP code (downtown Syracuse). While the maps certainly show concentrated participation in a few areas, in general, participation spanned across multiple towns in the vicinity of the city of Syracuse.

Figure 3: Attendance (in-person) at May 2012 public meeting by ZIP code



Note: This map shows 465 of the total 481 in-person attendees. Besides four attendees who did not provide zip codes, those not shown include: 3 outside map limits, 2 P.O. boxes, 3 Syracuse University addresses, and 4 Federal Building addresses.

Figure 4: Participation in May 2012 virtual public meeting by ZIP code



Note: This map shows 235 of the total 255 virtual meeting participants. Besides two participants who did not provide zip codes, those not shown include: 11 outside map limits, 5 P.O. boxes, and 2 Syracuse University addresses.

Next steps

Input from the public meeting will be used to verify that *The I-81 Challenge* is moving forward with appropriate strategies for the region and refine specific components of the possible future strategies. The next step is to analyze the possible future strategies to arrive at a limited number of viable options for each strategy. Public involvement continues to be an essential part of *The I-81 Challenge*, and the Central New York community can expect to see additional opportunities for public input in the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Workshop participant comments

Appendix B: Workshop information boards

Appendix C: Publicity materials

Appendix D: Meeting evaluation results