



7. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

7.1 Introductions

The presentation of facts, analyses, and projections in the preceding chapters leads this Long Range Plan to the chapter that embodies the motivation for developing such a document: the recommendations. As a 20-year plan, this LRP is obligated to identify not just the specific projects that have been identified, but to guide the region with policy and programs that will continue to identify projects, which will address the region's evolving needs. As such, this chapter is divided into several sections reflecting the three types of recommendations: studies, projects, and planning activities.

All of these recommendations derive from the diagnosis of the current system, as described in Chapter 5, and the anticipated future system, as described in Chapter 6. The recommendations reflect the goals and objectives articulated in Chapter 2, ensuring that each concept put forth here reflects that array of aspirations for the region.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 TRANSPORTATION PLANS & STUDIES

The following topics for plans and studies are responsive to issues raised during the public outreach process for the development of this LRP. The purpose of funding such studies is to develop an understanding of a specific issue in a manner that could lead to projects under subsequent Plans.

- **Performance management plan:** Nationally, performance measures have rapidly become a centerpiece of how agencies plan, operate and maintain their infrastructure and services. Performance-based management, especially in the era of Geographic Information Systems that allow vast quantities of data to be used effectively for planning as well as operations,

seems appealing. Chapter 2 of this plan, which describes eight planning goals and associated objectives, also includes several sample performance measures that could allow the ECTC to monitor its progress in achieving these goals. The purpose of this study would be to determine what areas of performance management should be pursued, based on limited resources for data gathering and organization. The study should also address the appropriate values for performance-based goals. In the development of this plan, many suggestions were made that underscore the value of such a study, including: monitoring of I-86, travel times for major origin-destination pairs, data systems for pavement conditions and roadway capacity as well as traffic counts, facility-type specific standards for accident rates and other safety characteristics, and transit system management. The ECTC performance management plan will be developed in early 2005.

- **Community master planning for bicycles and pedestrians:** Members of NYSDOT staff responsible for addressing accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in project designs indicated the value of community master plans that clearly identify the desires for nonmotorized movements on the local





network. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the status of master plans in the communities of Chemung County and the treatment of bicycles and pedestrians in each. The outcome is likely to include recommendations to communities whose plans provide inadequate guidance to traffic engineers working on local projects.

- **Transit facility assessment:** During many discussions about the transit system in Chemung County and the impacts of lower frequency service, the importance of adequate shelters was raised. The purpose of this study is to examine what facilities are currently in place and their condition. The study should identify where facilities would be most useful/valuable and identify best practices for design and siting of appropriate shelters, benches, etc.
- **Pedestrian activity analysis:** With very limited information about the role walking plays in work and non-work related trips in Chemung County, it appears that the region would be well served by understanding where walking is used to reach transit facilities, jobs, shopping, recreation, etc. The purpose of the study is to investigate walking activity in the region as a basis for making investments to improve infrastructure for pedestrians.
- **Bike infrastructure inventory:** With the completion of NYSDOT's "Bike Level-of-service (BLOS) Study," it would be valuable to have a clearer understanding of roadway conditions for cycling within Chemung County, especially for connections among the multi-use trails in existence and under development. The purpose of this study would be to build on the findings of NYSDOT's BLOS study and the Cornell Cooperative Extension's riverfront study to identify the specific investments needed to complete a bicycle network, such as addressing the gap between the Catharine Valley and Lackawanna Trails.

- **Transit survey:** Over the last ten years, the ECTC has conducted three transit ridership surveys. Based on feedback about the recently-completed Transit Evaluation Study, there should be a separate survey of work sites and employers to identify new ridership opportunities and unmet needs. Strategies to attract discretionary riders should be developed and the existing system needs should be monitored more effectively.



- **Transportation signage and information analysis:** Because of concerns about the growing elderly population and also because of concerns voiced during the public outreach process over schedule and route information for the transit service, it is important to study and address the needs for improved signage and information provision around the county. The City of Elmira recently completed a signage study. Building upon these recommendations, looking to NYSDOT, FHWA, and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) regarding the national trend of aging populations, and considering best practices from similar communities around the country, the ECTC should adopt future signage standards and information materials, and identify critical information needs.



- **Tourist corridor plan:** With the tourism industry as a major driver of the region's identity and economy over the span of this LRP, there are several areas of need regarding transportation facilities aimed specifically at visitors to the region. From signage to interactive information systems to infrastructure that allows people visiting for the trail network to visit the entire region, this plan would identify opportunities to develop a regional corridor concept built around the tourism activities.

7.2.2 PROJECTS

A long-range transportation plan should provide a detailed vision of the future transportation system and identify potential projects. Projects that are adequately defined for such detailed discussion are generally limited to the short-term context, which is why the studies identified above are important, because they will lead to the projects for implementing in the medium- and long-term future.

As a mature urban area, a large portion of the transportation investments will be devoted to maintenance and repair of the existing systems. As Chapters 5 and 6 discussed in great detail, evaluations of the road and bridge networks prompted the identification of elements of those networks that require a certain degree of work, based on a scoring system of pavement conditions and bridge sufficiency.



Additionally, as discussed in Section 5.2.3, the LRP Steering Committee has defined five regional corridors as important trade and intercity passenger connectors. These corridors are:

- (1) Elmira-Watkins Glen-Geneva-I-90
- (2) Elmira-Ithaca-Cortland-I-81
- (3) Elmira-Waverly-Binghamton-I-81
- (4) Elmira-Corning-Rochester-I-390
- (5) Elmira-Tioga Junction-Williamsport-I-99

Future project prioritization will be weighed more heavily toward projects that maintain and strengthen these areas. The following recommendations identify projects within one or more of the five regional corridors.

Road & Bridge Network:

- **Completion of I-86:** As called for in previous LRP's and described in detail here, the completion of Route 17's conversion to interstate standards and designation of I-86 will bring significant benefits to the region. The ECTC should continue to support for the completion of this project by participating in the I-86 coalition. Once complete, the ECTC should remain engaged to ensure the proper maintenance of the facility. While completion of Interstate I-86 corresponds with two regional corridors, this highway is also an important northeast US and statewide trade and tourism corridor.
- **Sing Sing Road (and Airport security issues):** Because of new security regulations brought about by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, a number of desirable infrastructure changes have been identified in the vicinity of the airport, including the relocation of Sing Sing Road to accommodate a new terminal parking lot. The project also has economic development benefits in and around the airport.
- **Northern Arterial:** There has long been local support for extending the Elmira Arterial northward. The studies for the Route 17 (I-86) improvement in



Horseheads, and engineering studies of the cost to complete Corridor U of the Appalachia Development Highway System, have identified social, economic and environmental issues related to this corridor. Recent and ongoing improvements to the transportation system will have significant impacts on local travel patterns. Following the completion of these projects, NYSDOT has committed to undertaking the necessary studies to determine and implement the appropriate connection to I-86.

- **Route 13/14 Solutions:** To advance the Route 13/14 recommendations, local municipalities will need to update their Master Plans and coordinate plans regarding Route 13/14 with adjacent communities. The ECTC is willing to be engaged in this process. Private sector companies moving freight by truck have also indicated willingness to participate in ongoing study regarding these highways.
- **Intersections identified in the 2000 Big Flats/Horseheads Network Evaluation Study:** This study identified a range of intersection improvements that may be prompted by increasing traffic related to the area's continued economic development. These locations should be monitored carefully by State, County and local agencies. Appropriate traffic operational improvements should be implemented when found justified by traffic engineering studies. These improvements can range from the addition of turn lanes, four-way stop control, traffic signals and signal systems, where warranted.

Other/Multimodal Infrastructure:

- **Expansion of multi-use trail network:** The instant popularity of the first half of the Catharine Valley Trail indicates how important these projects are to the region, especially as I-86 opens the area to significant growth in tourism. The identified routes should be prioritized, and completion of on- or off-road

connections among the trails and to key destinations should be addressed, especially during any relevant reconstruction projects.

- **Transit shelters and benches:** Funding should be allocated to install shelters along bus routes or improve existing facilities. Improved service information and bike racks should also be added where appropriate to improve the quality of service, the comfort and convenience of the patrons, and the visibility of the system towards attracting discretionary ridership.
- **Roadway condition reporting system:** The Operating Agencies (City, Town, Village and State) have indicated that their ability to perform spot repairs and routine sweeping is limited but that it is very able to respond to specific requests for problems with roadway conditions. To expedite this process, the ECTC should help develop a system, utilizing the internet or other information technology, to help users, including bicyclists, notify the operating agencies of problems.
- **Elmira Promenade:** This project, which aims to improve the pedestrian walkway under the railroad viaduct between Second St. and Water St., should advance, using stakeholder involvement and the momentum created by the planning activities around the riverfront. The ECTC is committed to enhancing this public walkway in order to improve the connectivity of pedestrian infrastructure and link regional facilities in the urban core.





- **Operation and Management-** This work should focus on the existing and emerging technologies such as ITS to help agencies operate and manage its facilities. The ITS architecture report identifies implementation of these devices and should be used as a guide.

7.2.3 PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The two sections above have identified studies and projects recommended by this plan. All of those recommendations emerged from analyzing the current and future conditions, the goals and objectives, and the input received from the public. The outcomes of the planning process, however, extend beyond what the MPO should fund others to do, build, or examine. The development of the LRP also pointed to activities in which The ECTC staff should be engaged. While the studies and projects will be addressed in the agency's capital program, the following activities should be included in the agency's own resource allocation, known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

- **Expansion of Crash Reporting System Functionality:** The system has been an important accomplishment for the ECTC and the region. In tandem with efforts to develop performance measures and a performance management plan for the region, the ECTC should develop average accident rates specific to local infrastructure to allow time-series analysis of facilities throughout the county; for the same reason, roadway inventories and traffic volume data should be updated on a regular basis to facilitate safety analyses.
- **Establish and maintain a regional travel model:** In most metropolitan areas, transportation planning relies on computer models of travel activity based on the locations of homes, jobs, the transportation network, and socioeconomic data. A qualitative approach has been necessary for this plan because such a model does not exist for Chemung County, because the transportation network is undergoing such dramatic changes with the I-86 conversion

project, the City of Elmira one-way two-way conversion, the City's coordinated signal implementation, the completion of the Southern Arterial, and the construction of Woodlawn Avenue and Link Road. It would be prudent to develop a travel model for the region once these projects are complete (approximately 2010) and use it for all future transportation planning exercises. The development of a regional travel model should be addressed in the ECTC operations plan but is clearly a longer term priority.

- **Safe Routes to School Program:** For many reasons, from congestion to widespread childhood obesity, there is increasing advocacy of kids walking or biking to school. The greatest obstacle to this, however, is safety, prompting a need in every community to evaluate how kids reach their schools and whether those routes are safe. By its nature, Chemung County is very well suited for this type of a program; in conjunction with schools, public safety agencies, the county's Traffic Safety Board and other interested parties, the ECTC should take the lead on developing a Safe Routes to School program. Abundant information sources exist and new federal transportation legislation is expected to provide specific funds for relevant programs.
- **Bicycle safety training, education and signage:** With the promotion of bicycling activities and the expansion of infrastructure on and off the road network, the perennial need to provide information and training on bicycle safety is greater than ever. Such efforts should be aimed at both cyclists (of all ages) and drivers. Signage is an important part of this so that residents and visitors alike can be well informed about the presence of bicyclists and how to drive responsibly around them.
- **Safety-Related Design Parameters:** In collaboration with other entities, such as the Traffic Safety Board, the ECTC should develop a set of safety-related design assessment items for transportation project design that will facilitate a standardized review of new projects. These should apply



to projects from various modes, including transit, bicycles, and roadway and should address important issues, including the elderly, students, and ADA compliance.

- **ITS Implementation Committee:** This Committee should monitor the operation of existing communication of ITS and make recommendations for the use and coordination of future technology.
- **Ongoing committee/board engagements:** The ECTC should continue to assist local officials, planning boards and municipalities on an ongoing, project-by-project basis regarding the transportation implications of land development. The ECTC staff has maintained a high level of involvement with local and regional partners, such as the Chemung County Transit Board, Chemung County GIS Cooperative, Chemung County Commission on Human Relations, Friends of the Catharine Valley Trail, Traffic Safety Board and the Steuben-Schuyler Transportation Committee. This involvement should be maintained. Other committees or groups may require re-invigoration, as in the case of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, or initiation, in such areas as transit driver and rider advocacy, and freight transportation.

7.3 Performance Measures & Management

7.3.1 OVERVIEW

While the recommendations speak to *what* studies, projects and initiatives deserve attention and financial support, there are also important questions about *how* an agency such as the ECTC and its partners should go about their planning and operational activities. Throughout the planning process, frequent mention was made of performance measures and performance-based management for the transportation system. These concepts reflect a growing trend in government, not limited to transportation, to collect and use much more data in the decision-making process.

The New York State Department of Transportation, for example, has identified a

set of performance measures to support the implementation of their five emphasis areas. Many transit agencies use performance measures to analyze the supply of and demand for their services. The use of performance measures is more limited in the planning arena than in operational contexts but the increasing sophistication of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has created more opportunities to apply data for planning decisions.

While promising in theory, performance-based management has some challenges. The collection and management of significant data stores are very resource-intensive activities and the relevant agencies in Elmira, Chemung and nearby communities have limited abilities to allocate more effort to the cause. Emphasizing performance measures therefore requires care so that resources are carefully allocated to the areas where the collection and use of data offer the greatest rewards.

7.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The development of this plan stimulated discussion about the use of performance measures in almost every mode. From park-and-ride lots to travel times between major origin-destination pairs, various stakeholders supported the gathering of data so that the system can be better understood and analyzed.

Some of the more promising opportunities apply to collecting, sharing, and organizing data that is needed to make decisions about conventional issues, such as roadway conditions. Whether new data is needed or multiple data collections need to be better organized, there was a widely shared desire for attention in the areas of pavement condition, roadway capacity, traffic volumes, and travel time characteristics between major origin-destination pairs.

There was also support in the transit realm for widespread use of performance measures to better understand when and where the system is well utilized and where it



is not. Performance measures might also be useful in helping CCTS plan for replacing its equipment and for managing park-and-ride lots. Performance measures may also be helpful as the costs of providing transit services increase and prioritization of services is needed in order to control costs.



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