

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

BACKGROUND

ITCTC staff received comments throughout the Long-Range Transportation Plan update process. Numerous ITCTC partners, municipal staff, transportation providers, NYSDOT staff, federal partners and other ITCTC members provided input in development of the LRTP draft. The ITCTC collected public comments during widely advertised public meetings held on November 7, 2018, May 6, 2019 and September 16, 2019. In addition, members of the public were encouraged to telephone, mail, and email comments to the ITCTC office. A web site for the LRTP update was established early in the update process and was maintained with the latest drafts of the evolving plan (see www.tompkinscountyny.gov/itctc). A Facebook page was also created to extend community outreach and provide another point of input. This appendix includes comments from these sources.

TRANSPORTATION RELATED COMMENTS GENERATED FROM THE 2040 LRTP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The public comments received by the ITCTC are listed below along with a response. Responses may address individual comments or related groups of comments. The comments are compiled by topic area based on their content. Comments that were similar in content were combined and received a single response. In those cases, individual comments are identified. Some comments were not legible or not applicable to the LRTP. Those comments were not included below. In general, the comments are presented in their original form. Some minor editing was made by ITCTC staff to improve readability.

In addition, the ITCTC received numerous comments related to document format and data presentation. Those comments were incorporated into the document to improve its appearance and content quality but are not included in this appendix.

Comments were compiled into transportation related topic areas based on the contents of comments themselves. Some comments may be found in more than one topic areas. The topic areas are:

- **Rail Services**
- **Public Transportation-Funding & Service**
- **Transportation Innovation**
- **Active Transportation (bicycling, walking, trails)**
- **Shared Transportation**
- **Transportation Planning and Land Use**
- **Safety**
- **Environmental**
- **Location Specific Issues**

Public comments are listed below along with a response. Responses may address individual comments or related groups of comments as shown.

RAIL SERVICES COMMENTS

Two members of the community have brought up the issue of rail freight schedules/efficiency in Tompkins County, as well as making the implementation of light, high-speed, and intercity rail a priority going forward.

- Increased rail traffic in the area soon? Is there communication with the rail road companies? Look at efficiency and timing of the trains in the city.
- If we had a high-speed rail connection to the Syracuse airport, we might not need an airport at all.

Response: The 2040 LRTP for Tompkins County does not address this form of passenger service within its time frame. Initiatives such as the restoration of rail passenger services require State and National commitment. New York State does not currently have a vision for intercity passenger service that includes Ithaca. The State Rail Plan focuses on maintenance, restoration and expansion mostly along currently established rail corridors. No specific mention is made of the rail line serving Tompkins County. For a

complete description of the NYS Department of Transportation's Rail Plan you may go to their web site at: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau/state-rail-plan>.

The ITCTC is supportive of the existing rail line and its role in freight movement. The rail right-of-way is recognized as an important transportation resource that should be preserved for future continuing rail use, be it freight or passenger.

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMENTS – FUNDING

- Increase gas tax for transportation funding.
- Implement a carbon tax on vehicle emissions– help pay for alternative transportation.
- Diversify/prioritize funding for a mixed-transportation system.
- Assign federal money according to goal mode share.
- Discuss the economic benefits of reduced car-use and its associated infrastructure with development partners.
- Transportation and health interrelation – associated healthcare cost savings.
- Explore incentives for employers to promote employee transit use (i.e. free monthly bus passes, etc.).
- Explore smaller buses/vans as a more efficient and cost-effective service to rural areas.

Response: This series of comments address the funding challenges faced in the provision of public transportation. The LRTP provides an overview of TCAT and other Tompkins County public transportation services in the Transportation Systems chapter. It is recognized that TCAT provides exceptional service considering the size of Tompkins County. Currently the agency is working at near capacity and it is important for all stakeholders to help address the fiscal challenges of providing public transportation in a community that has high expectations for service and where there is substantial unmet demand. The ITCTC will work collaboratively with other community partners to help advance solutions in this area. The LRTP is supportive of public transportation as an important component in its stated goals to reduce drive alone trips, reduce automobile dependency and increase mobility options for all travelers in Tompkins County. Maintaining existing transit infrastructure, as well as expanding and promoting new transit technologies and programs, are key implementation areas of the Action Plan in the LRTP.

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

INTEGRATION Goal: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal, and coordinated, that achieves greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMENTS – SERVICES

- Need more frequent service to rural areas.
- Need more transportation choices for rural residents.
- Need to deviate more students from school buses to TCAT (i.e. Newfield students to New Roots School)
- First/last mile connections to bus routes using multiple modes (walking, bicycling, rideshare, paratransit, etc.).
- Demand for earlier and later bus service for commuters with atypical work schedules.
- The TCAT schedule now does not accommodate the custodial work force at Cornell that has to be there by 6 am.
- There is a great demand in Tompkins County for TCAT to structure their bus service in a way that better caters to multiple trip types (social, recreational, family, civic, etc.), not just work-based commuter trips at peak traffic hours.

- Possible to increase TCAT access for school district to reduce traffic from school-related activities? Afterschool activities bus pass for middle and high school students.
- Expand park-and-ride options in both suburban and rural areas for all trip types.
- Investigate ski-lift/gondola type systems to connect higher elevation areas to each other and to Downtown Ithaca.
- Implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) technologies/designs to keep buses moving efficiently.
- Look at smaller, more efficient buses/vans to service rural areas.
- Look into cutting-edge bus technologies and designs for a smoother, more enjoyable ride (Mercedes-Benz, Setra, Van Hool, Volvo, etc.).
- What happened to proposed hospital park-and-ride?
- Provide select service on TCAT Rt. 30 to the medical office building on Craft Road.
- Provide more information on TCAT Rt. 41 and its Demand and Response (DAR) Zone in order to increase ridership
- Please prioritize a “West End loop” in place by January 2020 to connect new Greenstar, Guthrie, and CMA/CMA facilities by 3rd St. and Rt.13.
- Look into Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service to move greater amounts of people faster and more reliably.
- You need to expand times and routes of buses before you (especially the City of Ithaca) make it harder for people to use and park cars, e.g. bikes are only options for a few people; buses do not yet work for most others.

Response: This series of comments provide service requests and operation ideas for TCAT. TCAT is responsible for designing and implementing public transportation services and operations in Tompkins County. Route alignments, vehicle assignments, and enhancements like Park and Ride are carefully managed by TCAT staff. Currently the county has a network of 13 well-used rural park and ride lots (see p. 58). TCAT is aware of the need to provide bicycle and pedestrian links and accommodations at their bus stops and park and ride facilities, as well as the need to better connect rural communities to their bus lines. As part of this effort to more equitably serve rural communities, TCAT announced in 2019 that the 2-zone fare pricing structure will be dropped; instead, the system will now have a single fare zone based on the Zone 1 pricing structure. TCAT has also released their “Strategic Plan 2018-2030” in which they outline their short and long-term modernization plans for the system. This strategic plan also evaluates the feasibility of incorporating the latest in transit technology and design, from electric buses and farebox alternatives to dedicated transit lanes Bus Rapid Transit. TCAT’s Strategic Plan is available at https://www.tcatbus.com/content/uploads/2019/01/Strategic-Plan_2018-to-2030.pdf. The ITCTC will work with TCAT and other community partners to advance implementation of strategic plan concepts and to monitor new technologies and service options that will expand the reach of public transportation in Tompkins County.

The ITCTC acknowledges the importance of the travel issues raised in these comments and has forwarded them directly to TCAT for their evaluation and consideration of possible actions within the services that they provide.

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

INTEGRATION Goal: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal and coordinated, that achieves greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION COMMENTS

- What roles will autonomous vehicles play, and how will Tompkins County address possible safety issues before they arrive in large numbers?
- Reach out to the college students for volunteers (rideshare drivers). Submitted by a current IC student.
- Make the economic case more clearly – how much SOV parking costs.
- Add to partners: health organizations, developers (change parking ratios) – less expensive, more economical buildings.
- On-demand App to connect drivers and riders.

- Consider how to best serve 3rd shift (off-hours) workers.
- Implement roundabout and other intersection innovations to keep traffic flowing smoothly.
- Promote telecommuting.

Response: This series of comments delves into the potential of innovative solutions in transportation. This includes not only innovations in transportation technology, but also in financing mechanisms and improved project implementation procedures. The LRTP recognizes the potential of innovation in the transportation sector. Many of the plan policies allude to future technology innovations and the planning and collaboration needed in order to address transportation challenges. Expanding and promoting new technologies and programs is one of the key implementation areas of the Action Plan in the LRTP. The Action Plan also includes specific language addressing this issue: "Much is being done in the transportation sector to bring innovative technologies into use. Numerous communication technology applications are at different levels of development and implementation. Vehicle and infrastructure innovations are constantly being developed. The ITCTC and its partners will monitor and take advantage of new technologies and program concepts that can serve the Tompkins County area."

The LRTP does not address the topic of autonomous vehicle technology specifically. The ITCTC will work with partner agencies like TCAT, NYSDOT, etc. to monitor and help plan for any safety concerns that arise as this transportation mode gains traction. In short, the ITCTC supports TCAT's position, which states that it is still too early to determine the impact of autonomous vehicle (AVs) technology and it is prudent to take a "wait and see" approach to establishing any firm policy on the subject (See page 78 of the TCAT "Strategic Plan 2018-2030" (https://www.tcatbus.com/content/uploads/2019/01/Strategic-Plan_2018-to-2030.pdf)).

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

CONNECTIVITY Goal: To maintain and improve transportation networks to enhance safety, multimodal and intermodal connectivity and facilitate the movement of people and goods.

INTEGRATION Goal: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal and coordinated, that achieves greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

ENVIRONMENT Goal: To work progressively towards a transportation system that will have zero-net negative impact on the environment.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION COMMENTS (BICYCLING, WALKING, TRAILS)

- Initiate a health initiative to promote the use of cycling and walking as transportation modes.
- Look into implementing a mile-long sidewalk segment along Rt 96, going north from the Cayuga Medical Center. Four people have been killed along this stretch of highway over the last few years.
- Continue to encourage and support the use of Lime bikes and e-bikes as a transportation mode.
- Work with Lime to ensure users understand the rules of the road, as well as how to use and park the bikes.
- Multiple people cited the need to create a comprehensive system of safe cycling infrastructure so that the bike can work as an effective, convenient, and secure form of transportation in Tompkins County.
- Multiple people brought up the need to create a cycling/pedestrian trail network that would connect the Town/City of Ithaca with outlying towns, villages, and rural areas.
 - Connect Tompkins County trail networks to the Empire State Trail, connecting the county with the Erie Canal Trailway and Geneva.
 - Make bicycle connections possible between Ithaca and the Town of Caroline.
 - Make sure Five Mile Dr. residents have access to the planned Black Diamond Trail extension.
 - Connect the Black Diamond Trail with the South Hill Recreation Way
 - Ensure park-and-ride lots are accessible to pedestrians and cyclists
- Ensure municipal responsibility for compliant infrastructure (sidewalks, roads, bus shelters, etc.).

Response: This series of comments refer to issues with active transportation, primarily defined by bicycle use and walking. Generally, comments are supportive of active transportation. Most are suggesting expanding the use of future and existing dedicated infrastructure for cycling and walking in order to connect neighborhoods across the county, including towns, villages, and rural areas. Differing views and opinions expressing both support and concern for the use of bikeshare systems have also been a popular topic of discussion. The recent arrival of the Lime bikeshare program has introduced a completely new shared transportation dynamic, as well as expanded the role of cycling as a last-mile, flexible mode of transportation for a wider population range. The LRTP offers full support for programs, strategies and/or projects that strengthen active transportation, including bike lanes, boulevards, protected lanes, as well as bikeshare, etc. Bicycling and walking are two modes that can be enhanced through local efforts, and thus offer the opportunity for expansion. In particular, bicycling has the greatest potential for expansion since there are so few dedicated facilities for this mode. Walking in Tompkins County, particularly in the City of Ithaca and adjacent urbanized area, is a mature mode with good facilities and high use. Expanding the modal share of active transportation is an important component of the multi-faceted LRTP strategy to reduce drive alone trips in Tompkins County in order to minimize the negative impacts of private automobile dependency.

Specific active transportation initiatives listed in the LRTP include: complete streets network (Ch.3&4) and Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy (Ch.4 and Appendices). Chapter 4, Projects for Implementation, also includes bike/pedestrian promotion and bike/pedestrian facilities planning and improvements. Expanding and promoting active transportation is one of the key implementation areas of the LRTP Action Plan (Ch. 1). There are several federal surface transportation funding lines that are available for bicycle and pedestrian projects such as the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Surface Transportation Block Grant-Flexible funds. The ITCTC will work with local partners to continue to provide for active transportation facilities.

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

CONNECTIVITY Goal: To maintain and improve transportation networks to enhance safety, multimodal and intermodal connectivity and facilitate the movement of people and goods.

PROXIMITY Goal: To achieve land development patterns that enable the efficient provision of multimodal transportation services.

INTEGRATION Goal: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal and coordinated to achieve greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

SHARED TRANSPORTATION COMMENTS

- Need to do more to move away from a single rider car use transportation system and culture than what is being done.
- Need to capture more rideshare riders, particularly in more rural areas with longer distances.
- Ithaca Car Share is a fun idea but not accessible for many.
- Need to encourage and improve the incorporation of Lime bikeshare into the existing community transportation system.

Response: Depending on the definition shared transportation can include public transportation, taxis, van pools, and car share, bike share, and ride share services. All these options are currently available in Tompkins County. Shared bicycles, cars and rides are all rapidly evolving services. New business formats and strategies are being developed and mobile technology continues to grow and expand in reach and capability. The ITCTC is working with Way2Go, Ithaca Carshare, the Tompkins County Rideshare Coalition and other civic and municipal partners to actively monitor and adapt the existing services to be able to provide the best possible options for Tompkins County. Expanding and promoting shared transportation is one of the key implementation areas of the LRTP Action Plan.

Related goals in the LRTP:

MOBILITY Goal: To promote implementation of transportation services, programs and projects that enhance mobility.

CONNECTIVITY Goal: To maintain and improve transportation networks to enhance safety, multimodal and intermodal connectivity and facilitate the movement of people and goods.

INTEGRATION Goal: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal and coordinated to achieve greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & LAND USE COMMENTS

- Can 20-year objective be “I don’t have to own a car” to get around?
- Discuss the economic benefits of reduced car-use and its associated infrastructure with development partners.
- What about the projections from the 2008 Cornell transportation study? A lot has happened with parameters that defined projections-like economic downturn. Some projects are still on the list to do
- So much growth! We really have to be smart planners for the future.
- There is opportunity with new development. Transportation for the future must be part of the early conversations and plans for every development now, especially the waterfront.

Response: The above series of comments relate to the land use regulatory role of local municipalities and its impacts on transportation. The ITCTC recognizes the importance of our urban form and how it affects transportation patterns. Although the ITCTC has no land-use regulatory authority, it is committed to working with its local partners to promote lands use development patterns that facilitate implementation of the Sustainable Accessibility goals in the LRTP. There is no question that so called ‘sprawl’ development patterns generate more automobile-based trips by reducing or eliminating the feasibility of other modes. Mixed use, usually higher density, development patterns facilitate the use of bicycles, walking, transit and other forms of shared transportation to accomplish many trip needs. Changing development patterns is a long-term proposition, therefore it is important act now to promote and implement land use regulations that facilitate a broader range of mobility options. Municipalities that are successful will fare better in a future that will demand greater efficiency in the use of transportation resources. In order to achieve a modal shift away from car dependency, land use development patterns must take a more efficient form, as described in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan (<http://tompkinscountyny.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan>). This will facilitate the use of transit, walking, bicycling, car pools, vanpools, car sharing and ride sharing. All these currently available alternatives work best when land uses are integrated and in close proximity.

Related goals in the LRTP:

PROXIMITY Goal: To achieve land development patterns that enable the efficient provision of multimodal transportation services.

SAFETY COMMENTS

- The intersection of Route 13 and Brown-Sapsucker Woods Roads is much too dangerous.
- The Thurston Avenue bridge is one of the most dangerous places for cyclists.
- We need an overpass over Route 13 at Warren road.
- Rt 96, a mile above the hospital, can we get a sidewalk there? Four people have been killed there over the last few years.
- Need to plan for and address the safety issues tied directly into autonomous vehicles before allowing them to come to Tompkins County.
- The traffic on Route 13A (Town of Ithaca) in the evening combined with 45mph speed limit and straightaway makes for VERY dangerous conditions for walking, biking and going to our mailboxes to check mail. People are frustrated, going very fast. Our shrubs are taken out regularly by out of control vehicles.
- Require Lime bike users to view a 2-minute rules-of-the-road and bicycle safety video before they can start renting bikes.
- We need a truck/slow vehicle climbing lane Rt. 13 north from Tompkins-Cortland Community College (TC3) to top of the hill.

Response: Safety is one of the overarching goals of the Long-Range Transportation Plan as indicated in the Plan Goals and Objectives (Ch. 1). Many of the comments address location specific highway, traffic, and bicycle facilities design issues that are handled at the local level during project implementation or through changes in local policies. These comments will be forwarded to the appropriate jurisdictions.

The ITCTC assists local, county and state project sponsors with data and analysis, outreach and coordination, and by facilitating the programming of safety projects and projects with safety components. The ITCTC has access to NY State crash reports and prepares reports and analyses for use by local partners. ITCTC staff works collaboratively with local agencies, municipalities and civic groups to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety through a variety of projects including development of bike/pedestrian facilities (trails, bike boulevards and bike lanes, etc.), safe routes to school and bicycling education projects. An additional example is the ongoing SR-13 Corridor Study, which includes a significant safety component, including reviewing safety options for the Warren Road and Brown Road intersections.

Related goals in the LRTP:

OVERARCHING Goal: To improve the safety of the transportation system.

CONNECTIVITY Goal: To maintain and improve transportation networks to enhance safety, multimodal and intermodal connectivity and facilitate the movement of people and goods.

INTEGRATION, Goal V: To develop an integrated transportation system for Tompkins County that is seamless, multimodal and coordinated to achieve greater operational efficiencies and increase the safety and convenience of users.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

- Impacts from climate change can drive human migration North and increase our population-does the long-range plan consider this potential increase in population?
- GOAL – 40% reduction in GHG is needed and very challenging. We need intense cultural support for habit change.
- GOAL – 50% reduction in carbon emissions in transportation should be at least 50% of the plan, 50% of the analysis, 50% of our goals, and receive 50% of all related funding.
- GOAL – Doing everything humanly and governmentally possible to reduce GHG emissions by 50% by the end of the decade – include a major restructuring and redistribution of transportation funds.
- Culture change – change expectations vis `a vis SOVs.
- Go big and all out for planet. IPCC 2030.
- Transportation and health interrelation.

Response: The above comments relate primarily to the impacts of the transportation sector on Climate Change. Air quality and climate change impacts from transportation originate primarily from the use of fossil fuel based internal combustion engines in the vast majority of motor vehicle of all types. The ITCTC is working with the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability in efforts to meet the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan emission goals. Previous analysis by the ITCTC has identified the need to address air quality and energy impacts of transportation with a multi-faceted strategy of having lower emission/higher efficiency vehicles, reducing the number of trips, particularly drive –alone trips, promoting active and shared transportation (bicycling, walking, transit, ride share, car share, etc.), and encouraging more efficient land use development patterns. Programs and initiatives supporting these actions are included throughout the LRTP.

Related goals in the LRTP:

ENVIRONMENT Goal: To work progressively towards a transportation system that will have zero-net negative impact on the environment.

LOCATION SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- Rt 96, a mile above the hospital, can we get a sidewalk there? 4 people have been killed there over the last few years.
- The traffic on route 13A (Town of Ithaca in the evening, combined with 45mph speed limit and straightaway makes, for VERY dangerous conditions for walking, biking and checking our mailboxes. Our shrubs are taken out regularly by out of control vehicles.
- Create a climbing lane going north on Rt. 13 from TC3 to the hilltop.
- Create an overpass on Warren Rd. going over Rt. 13.
- Look for ways to implement greater safety measures at the Rt. 13 and Brown-Sapsucker Woods Rd. Intersection.

Response: The LRTP does not address location specific issues as addressed in these comments. These are handled by the responsible jurisdiction (local, county or state) during project planning and implementation or through changes in local policies. However, the ITCTC acknowledges the importance of the travel and safety issues raised in these comments and has forwarded your comments directly to the appropriate agencies for their evaluation and consideration of possible actions.



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