

# CHAPTER

# 1 >>>>>

# PLAN INTRODUCTION



# 1.1 Overview

The long range transportation plan is key to helping achieve our region’s vision for the future while ensuring that we grow and invest in a manner that complements federal and state strategies. The current national and state transportation funding crises and the competition for discretionary funding requires the Erie County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to make the best use of available transportation funding.

## *Why a New Erie County Transportation Plan?*

With strategic investments in our current transportation system, Erie County can improve the vitality, safety, and security of the region while providing transportation choices, encouraging sustainability, and focusing on system efficiency and preservation. The Erie County 2040 LRTP is dictated by a number of factors, but is primarily regulated by federal legislation. The 2040 LRTP development is governed by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990, which set the minimum standards and requirements for regional plans and define conformity with clean air goals. These laws require a planning process that considers all transportation systems and the movement of both people and goods.



## SAFETEA-LU

### *Federal Planning Factors*

#### **1. VITALITY ▶**

Support economic vibrancy

#### **2. SAFETY ▶**

Increase safety of the system

#### **3. SECURITY ▶**

Increase security of the system

#### **4. CHOICES ▶**

Improve accessibility and mobility

#### **5. SUSTAINABILITY & LIVABILITY ▶**

Protect the environment, conserve energy, improve quality of life, make improvements consistent with growth

#### **6. CONNECTEDNESS ▶**

Enhance integration and connectivity

#### **7. EFFICIENCY ▶**

Promote economical operations

#### **8. PRESERVATION ▶**

Keep what's working

SAFETEA-LU lists eight planning factors that all metropolitan plans must address; they serve as a basic set of guidelines for the 2040 LRTP:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility for people and for freight
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity across and between modes, for people and freight
7. Promote efficient system management and operation
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

The Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 mandate compliance with achieving designated air quality standard goals, as defined and enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). As a result, the Erie MPO has collaborated with the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (the "e") as the responsible agencies to address clean air and mobility requirements. The Erie region is currently in air quality 'maintenance' status; therefore, the 2040 LRTP recommendations must also be evaluated through an air quality conformity determination to assess impacts to the region's air quality and ensure that CAAA goals are being met.

The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan serves a number of purposes for Erie County. It provides a vision of the region's future growth and development; identifies deficiencies in capacity, safety and access in order to locate and implement future transportation facilities and services; and provides guidance and direction for municipal, county and state agencies to make infrastructure and development investments. The plan sets the foundation and priorities for the distribution of federal transportation funds, and specifically serves as the framework for the development of the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the capital and transit operating program of all federally funded transportation projects.

## What Does the 2040 LRTP Do?

The Erie County 2040 LRTP is a locally-derived, smart transportation oriented, multi-modal plan that is built upon the performance based evaluation of individual project and system wide improvements. The plan builds upon prior LRTP's by enhancing the following areas:

- **Locally Derived:** the plan was the result of extensive public outreach including public meetings, stakeholder interviews, economic development surveys, and two web-based public surveys
- **Security:** the evaluation of transportation security was significantly enhanced
- **Improved evaluation tools:** enhanced capability to evaluate detailed intersection-level improvements which allows a stronger focus on operating the existing system more effectively
- **Performance based planning:** evaluated each potential project based upon project evaluation criteria developed specifically for Erie County
- **Blueprint Planning:** evaluated three fiscally constrained scenarios, one funding alternate future, and one land use alternate future in order to evaluate system wide performance measures
- **Improved Integration:** incorporated the objectives of the PA Mobility Plan, the Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Keystone Principles, and Linking Planning & NEPA

A formal prioritization process is included with this plan to align the county with constrained fiscal realities. The 2040 LRTP includes recommendations for improving the existing highway network, transit system, rail, air and port transportation, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities and amenities. The program of recommendations in the plan is confined to the expected available funding for the Erie region and contains only those projects that can be implemented using current expected revenues while the existing system is being adequately operated and maintained.

Finally, the plan recognizes the shift in transportation projects from major roadway investments to smaller, targeted improvements to solve safety and congestion problems. The Erie County 2040 LRTP offers performance measures to gauge the effectiveness of each scenario or project in meeting the County's goals and objectives. The 2040 LRTP positions the Erie MPO to be prepared to adapt to changes in federal reauthorization, meet the long terms needs of all users of the county's transportation system, spur economic growth, and reduce mobile source emissions.



### Developing Regional Long Range Plans

Resource Guidance for Pennsylvania Planning Partners





Center for Program Development and Management  
PO Box 3365  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3365  
PHONE: 717.787.2862  
FAX: 717.787.5274  
PUB - 575 (September 2010)





## *Coordinated Planning Initiatives*

The Erie County 2040 LRTP must be coordinated with statewide, regional, and local planning initiatives. These planning initiatives were reviewed and considered while developing the 2040 LRTP to ensure consistency.

### *STATE LEVEL*

At the State level, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has developed its Long Range Transportation Plan, called the Pennsylvania Mobility Plan. The plan is a product of collaboration between PennDOT and its planning partners. While the plan leaves the identification and development of specific projects and programs to its partners, it does provide a context and framework for the development of those programs that help achieve the goals of the PA Mobility Plan.



Also on the State level, PennDOT developed the Comprehensive Strategic Highway Safety Improvement Plan with the goal of reducing highway-related fatalities. The plan takes a comprehensive approach by not only identifying specific roadway locations that could be eligible for targeted SAFETEA-LU funded programs, but also presents strategies for changing how planners, designers, and road users approach their respective responsibilities.

### *COUNTY LEVEL*

The Erie County Department of Planning and the Erie MPO are responsible for all transportation-related planning in the County. The Erie County Comprehensive Plan includes a land use plan, a housing plan, a community facilities and utilities plan, and a historic and natural resources plan. When adopted, the 2040 LRTP becomes an element of the Erie County Comprehensive Plan.

All elements of the Comprehensive Plan are being developed in a manner that ensures each element is coordinated with and complementary to the other. The Erie County 2040 LRTP made use of 2010 U.S. Census, as well as projected land use and development patterns. The LRTP also coordinated closely with the County's economic development initiatives, in particular, the proposed Erie Inland Port project and targeted growth areas throughout the County.

### *LOCAL LEVEL*

At the local level, each municipal government adopts a Comprehensive Plan. These municipal plans provide an insight into local issues and initiatives that are of concern to municipal officials. These plans cover the same elements as the County Comprehensive Plan, but from a local perspective. Each municipal comprehensive plan in place in Erie County was reviewed for initiatives and needs affected by the regional transportation system.