

What is *The I-81 Challenge*?

The I-81 Challenge is the official decision-making process to determine the future of I-81 through the Syracuse region.

I-81 CORRIDOR STUDY NYSDOT

- Existing physical conditions analysis
- Inventory of existing land use, economic, social, and environmental conditions
- Transit system review
- Identify viable improvement options

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is leading the planning process through its I-81 Corridor Study.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROJECT SMTC

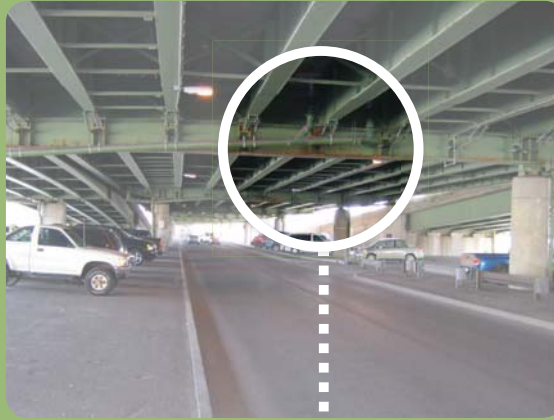
- Inform public about process
- Engage agencies, organizations, and individuals across the community in public dialogue
- Understand community's goals
- Facilitate public input into development and refinement of options

TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING SMTC

- Refine and upgrade SMTC's travel demand model
- Model alternatives

The NYSDOT has partnered with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) for assistance with the public involvement and travel demand modeling components.

Why is *The I-81 Challenge* needed?



AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Sections of I-81—particularly sections of the viaduct in downtown Syracuse—are nearing the end of their lifespan.



LOOKING FORWARD

Over the coming decades, portions of the highway will need to be replaced, reconstructed, removed, or otherwise changed.

What will *The I-81 Challenge* accomplish?



UNDERSTANDING

A clear understanding of our collective transportation needs and problems.



GOALS

A set of goals that identify what we want to accomplish with I-81 and the measures by which we will know we have succeeded.



OPTIONS

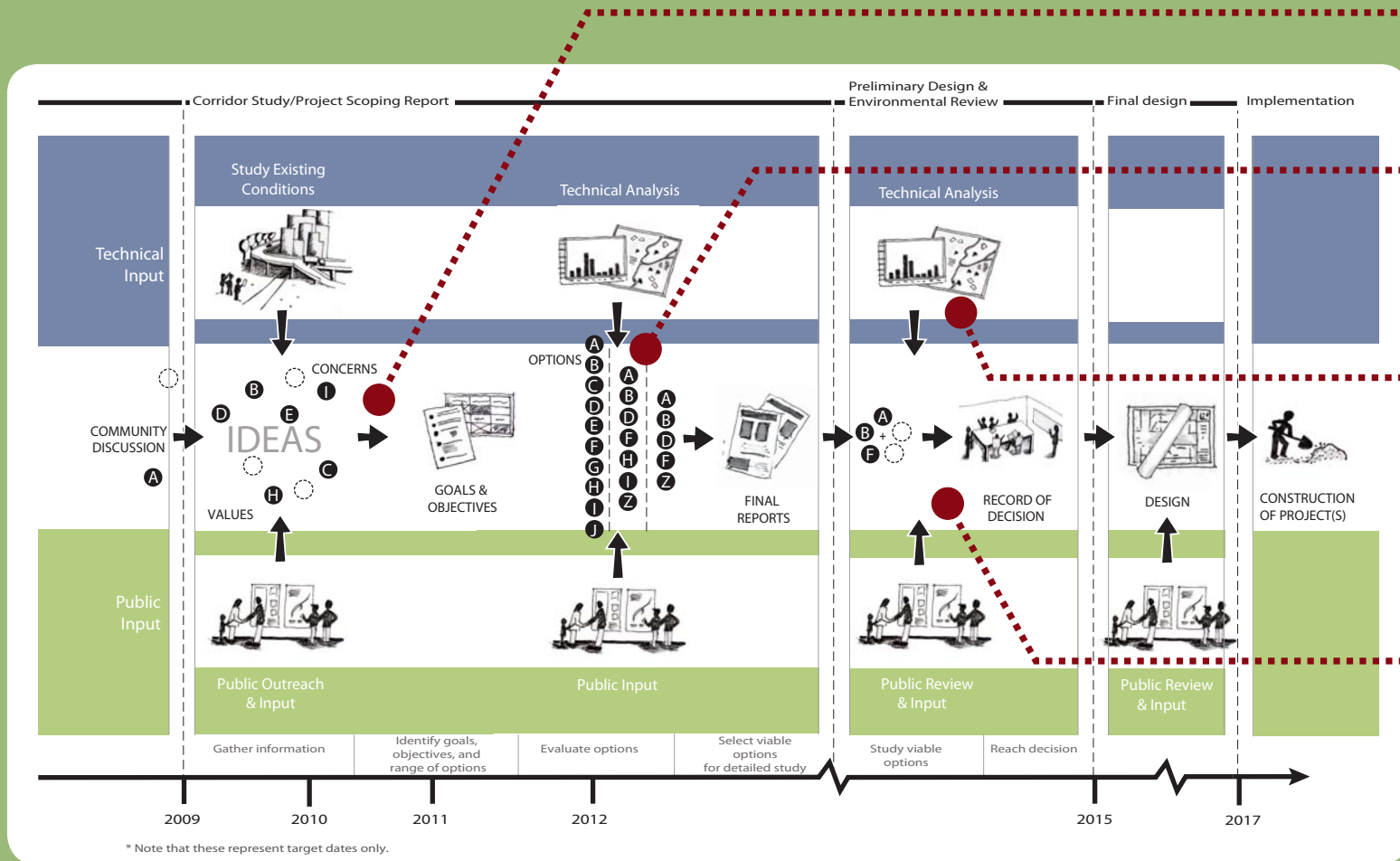
A short list of viable future options that will go through a formal environmental review.



SOLUTION(S)

A project or projects that can be implemented.

How will *The I-81 Challenge* lead to a decision?



PUBLIC + TECHNICAL INPUT

Generate a wide range of options for the future of I-81 as well as a set of criteria to narrow down options based on broad public participation and technical analysis.

VARIABLE OPTIONS

Narrow the options through more public involvement and technical analysis.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Establish a set of viable options for formal environmental review required by federal and New York State law.

REFINING ALTERNATIVES

Further refine options through a formal environmental review process— ultimately leading to a decision and a project or projects that can be implemented.

Who makes the final decision?

The decision about what happens to I-81 involves many parties:



The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT):

The NYSDOT owns the road and will therefore have ultimate responsibility for any decision about the future of I-81. NYSDOT will be responsible for overseeing the decision-making process and, eventually, construction.



The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC):

The SMTC is the federally designated agency responsible for planning and allocating federal funding for transportation projects in our region. Based on current Federal transportation legislation, project(s) that emerge from *The I-81 Challenge* requiring federal funds will have to be included in the SMTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of regional improvement priorities. Approval of the TIP requires a consensus of SMTC member agencies. The TIP is also made available for public comment prior to approval.



Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

Because federal money will be expended, the federal government, through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal agencies, will also have a role in the I-81 decision-making process. The FHWA will oversee the adherence to federal transportation planning and design regulations throughout the process as well as ensuring that the environmental review is conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Centro, the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, and others:



Any decisions that involve transit solutions and/or alterations to local streets will involve Centro, our local transit agency, and our local municipalities. These entities have ultimate responsibility for transportation decisions within their jurisdictions.



You (the public):

Because this project has the potential to profoundly impact everyone who lives in the Syracuse metropolitan area, the public will also play a role in the ultimate decision about I-81. The public will be involved in the development of options for the future of the highway, as well as the iterative process to narrow those options down to the preferred solution(s).

Budgeted funding for planning activities for *The I-81 Challenge*

AGENCY	FUNDS	
 NYSDOT	Statewide Planning & Research (SPR): SAFETEA-LU: TOTAL:	\$ 1,500,000 \$ 5,000,000 \$ 6,500,000
 SMTC	SPR: Metropolitan Planning: TOTAL:	\$ 450,000 \$ 608,130 \$ 1,058,130

Securing capital funding requires identifying a preferred project or projects which will not occur until after the planning study is complete in 2013.

To put in perspective, it is estimated to cost \$500 million to replace the bridge deck on the elevated portion of I-81 in Syracuse.