

REPORT OF MEETING

To:	Brian Slack, UCTC	Project:	Ulster County Transportation Council Long-Range Transportation Plan
From:	Arnold Bloch, FHI	Date:	3/31/15
Subject:	Stakeholder meetings		

Attendees:

Project Team

Brian Slack (UCTC)
 David Staas (UCTC)
 Arnie Bloch (Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI))
 Shawn Callaghan (FHI)

Stakeholders

Trevonne Gillard (A2B Taxi)
 Jaime Cathcart (A2B Taxi)
 Steve Noble (City of Kingston)
 Julie Noble (City of Kingston)
 John Grossbohlín (City of Kingston Complete Streets)
 Steve Rice (Trails Advisory Committee)
 Kathy Nolan (Catskill Mt. Keeper/UC Trails Advisory Committee)
 Kurt Seitz
 Kevin Smith (Woodstock Land Conservancy/Friends of Catskill Mt. Rail Trail)

Session 2: Environmental Conservation

11AM – 12:30PM

Arnie Bloch conducted an ice-breaker exercise where he asked participants to write down their answers to: “In 2040, my vision for the environment in Ulster County is _____.” The answers to this exercise are included below.

In 2040, my vision for the environment in Ulster County is:
Conservation is Critical
To preserve existing resources and increase access for the community
Conservation of the environment is fully considered in all planning, policy & programs
My vision is for the environment in Ulster County to be a self-sustaining environment that respects the beauty that is our county
Is healthy and resilient
Not ancillary but at the forefront of concerns
A major driver for economic development
Unobstructed, self-sustaining, self-purifying, and nurturing to human and non-human realms
Is accessible to all, no matter their income or where they live
Ulster County is a model for environmental conservation, including both climate change adaptation and mitigation
Transportation
Has created a robust transportation system (including non-motorized), connecting natural resources and people
Better/more non-motorized transportation infrastructure
A switch of focus from fossil fuels to renewable sources
Transportation corridors better/faster/cheaper
Better internet to facilitate telecommuting
Air
Clean air standards enforced
Water
Clean waterways
Better stormwater management
That Ulster County is leading the way to utilize green infrastructure to help stormwater, reduce energy and lead by example
Fauna
Bee kill ended
Wildlife habitat development/rehabilitation
More logging for habitat
Fracking
Fracking to be no more!

Brain Slack conducted introductions around the room for all participants.

Facilitated discussion as follows:

The group was asked “Sustainability is important to Ulster County. How do you see transportation contributing to or detracting from creating a sustainable place?”

Stakeholder responses included:

- Sprawl:
 - Ulster County is characterized by sprawl due in part to the transportation system, but now it’s time to leverage our transportation system for better planning.
 - Land trusts should be brought into the planning process.
 - Do not incentivize or encourage sprawl. The county can play a role by looking to possible eliminate some county roads.
 - Need marketing campaign about non-sprawl development and build that mindset in our youth.
 - Certain communities are given a death certificate with road construction.
 - Incentives to develop in certain areas.
 - The county can require environmental elements in developments.
 - Farmlands are gone, woodlands are mature and there is a need to develop wildlife areas away from roads. Should look to overcome political barriers to taking down mature trees. Cutting some tress is the healthy way to manage the forest lands to make successional forests. There would be more cover and food, which would lead to fewer road accidents with deer.
 - Ulster County has 350 years of history with crazy roads that didn’t have much planning. It’s a big constraint to the county.
- Resiliency:
 - Need to get smarter and make infrastructure more resilient. With floods and the extreme weather, that is where the funding should go.
- Complete Streets and Roads:
 - Look to increase shoulder for bike/ped and traffic calming. Stop spending money on auto-centric roads and think “complete streets”.
 - We have to accept the automobile, but let’s use roadways and the right-of-way (ROW) to implement sustainable solutions, such as:
 - Ways to maintain stormwater on-site (e.g., green infrastructure)
 - Road diets
 - LED lights
 - Underground utilities.
 - Need to think holistically. Roads are a barrier to wildlife and waterways, with many wildlife strikes. Human elements need to be in harmony with nature.

- Local highway supervisors are not all knowledgeable or supportive of Complete Streets.
- Environmental Alternatives for/to Motor Vehicles:
 - Need an integrative approach across all government agencies. For example, can all agencies use greener vehicle fleets?
 - Upgrade the county vehicles with efficient vehicles with a smaller environmental footprint.
 - Natural areas are great, but now you can only get to them with cars. There's a need to connect people to natural resources in non-motorized ways.
 - To reduce county trucking use, we should use more local food sources.
 - The county should look to incentives, for example:
 - Energy efficiency,
 - Vehicle type,
 - Mass transit.
 - Bus should be free or low cost, and need to make the system easy and reliable.
 - Need policies to combat fossil fuel use, for example: mass transit, more bikes, electric cars, carpooling.
 - A gas tax could pay for bike/ped elements.
 - Build out high speed internet system and people will have to use transportation less.
 - Best practice: California uses 1.5% of their transportation budget for non-motorized modes.
 - Look to commuter rail.
- Who Pays For Improved Environment?
 - Users should pay for the system, and there's a need to reconsider how the system gets funded.
 - Don't view bicyclists or pedestrians as "freeloaders". Transportation funding should be for all modes for all users.
 - Need to link in energy providers and tax by electrons for electric vehicles.
- Other
 - County government should push to make utilities work with local transportation folks.
 - Ulster County quiet zone study was paid for by the railroad.
- Rail to trail as an emergency or secondary route.

Brian thanked the group for participating.