

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

Carl Pezzino (O&W Rail Trail)
 Karl Beard (NPS Rivers & Trails)
 Sheldon Quimby (O&W Trail)
 Nick Mercurio (Cycling stakeholder)
 Steve Noble (City of Kingston)
 Julie Noble (City of Kingston)
 John Grossbohlín (City of Kingston Complete Streets)
 Steve Rice (Trails Advisory Committee)
 Bill Weinstein (New Paltz Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee)
 Kurt Seitz
 Kevin Smith (Woodstock Land Conservancy/Friends of Catskill Mt. Rail Trail)
 Kathy Nolan (Catskill Mt. Keeper/UC Trails Advisory Committee)
 Bob DiBella (UCAT)

Session 1: Non-Motorized Transportation

9AM – 10:30AM

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

In 2040, my vision for non-motorized transportation in Ulster County is:
Transportation for everyone
A system that utilizes current and existing assets to their highest potential
Less than 5 minutes from my door
For it to be as easy to get around town without a car as it is with a car
The default method of transport to not only be cars
Possible for all age groups
Full acceptance by all motorists of rights of pedestrians and cyclists
Is a major component of Ulster County's Greenhouse Gas Emissions policy, with a high percentage of trips by bike/ped
A connected network of safe, accessible trails, walkways, bike lanes in an environment open to everyone
Inter-connected trail system throughout the county, properly signed, maintained and promoted
Link communities and education facilities with bike/ped routes
A seamless system of off-street bikeways reaching all main communities
A vibrant, interconnected network reaching all parts of Ulster County – including connectivity both within and between cities as well as connecting people with a) other forms of transport; b) commercial and recreation purposes, and c) natural resources
An interconnected network of greenway trails that connect all communities
Easy access to trails and dedicated roads for non-motorized
Healthy, sustainable, universal access
Road equity
Continuous and connected
Seamless
Safe streets all county streets
Connected non-motorized county-wide route
Specific Improvements
Bike racks/parking in shopping areas
Off-street connection from Uptown Kingston to Ulster shopping areas
Complete the Greenline
That the 1996, 2003, 2007 plans will be completed
Protected bike lanes on all highways

Brian Slack conducted introductions around the room for all participants.

Facilitated discussion follows:

The group was asked “How can UCTC best capture the range of needs for all modes of non-motorized transportation?”

Stakeholder responses included:

- The message about non-motorized transportation in Ulster County should be the following:
 - Safety is biggest impediment to bike usage and pedestrian activity.
 - People want convenient access.
 - There should be socioeconomic equality.
 - There should be universal accessibility.
 - The priority for funding bicycle and pedestrian needs should be as high as for other modes.
- Drivers need education that everyone belongs on the road – this is a critical principle.
- Non-motorized modes should be used for all types of trips: commuting, recreation, health, and tourism. This will have multiple benefits and serve multiple purposes.
- Get kids to school safely via alternative modes.
- Using ROWs for bicycles:
 - County has hodgepodge on roads in terms of safe bicycling; would like to see complete streets policy for all roads and streets.
 - Need an appropriate approach to work with landowners, especially in rural areas where there are longer connections needed.
 - County roads need to have shared, safe bicycle use. “Scary to ride on county roads, especially in the winter when snow eliminates shoulders.”
 - Lucas Tpke. (County Rt. 1) has no shoulder.
 - Rt. 26 & 26A – 8.5’ lanes and no shoulder.
 - On many roads the sight lines bad due to vegetation & grading, future roadwork should open that up, especially on trailheads and driveways.
 - Glasgow Tpke. & 212 – bad potholes are dangerous for bicycles.
 - Construction on Ulster Ave. needs to have access for bicycles and pedestrians, otherwise there will be lost opportunities once it is built
 - Town-owned ROWs should be considered as well.
 - “It’s not a questions of ownership, but of motivation.” For example, in New Paltz, along South Putt Corner Rd., local impetus has led to ROW being acquired for non-motorized use. Very successful effort.
 - Consider integrating stormwater ditches with trails over them.
 - It’s time to require overhead utilities move underground and use surface for bicycles.

- There is a real issue with the transition between municipalities in terms of connectivity of sidewalks and bicycle access.
- Lack of sidewalks is a real problem:
 - In Kingston, for example, some neighborhoods have no sidewalks. Many people walk in the streets.
 - This is a real problem for safe access to schools.
 - This is also a problem for buses, which find it difficult to stop for riders along Rtes. 9W and 28 due to lack of sidewalks.
 - Even with sidewalks, problems of disrepair, snow, and illegal parking make walking difficult.
- It was acknowledged that the East Coast Greenway was getting better.
- “We need to get more word out about non-motorized modes. People don’t understand or know why it’s important.”
 - Need to network more so voice gets out there.
 - Concerned parents need to be called upon as advocates for safe routes to schools.
 - Issue at Bailey School: dangerous for kids with buses/cars picking up and dropping off in a confusing manner. There is no crossing guard there anymore.
 - Students are not even allowed to bike to school at Rondout Valley Central School complex.
 - Larger numbers of people are getting older, graying population; they need to be heard. Council for Aging should be part of the discussion.
 - “We need to beat up legislators to gets plans enacted.”
- No more ghost bikes – i.e., painted area on roads where a biker has been killed
 - Pedestrian fatalities happen; professor killed on Lucas Ave last year, driver not ticketed
- Non-motorized transportation and the economy:
 - Want people to stay or move here but need amenities for bike/ped.
 - Better-paved roads – for vehicles and bicycles – is an economic necessity, not a luxury.
 - Road surfaces – materials make huge difference for bicycles (i.e., rolling resistance). What are we paving roads with?
- When road improvements are planned, we need to include folks that represent non-motorized option
 - Sullivan and Ulster counties have no shoulders but other counties do.

- Highway Superintendents need to be included; New Paltz has a great one.
- In Phoenicia and other rural areas, Complete Streets doesn't always include sidewalks.
- Other:
 - Park to walk – don't need to park close as possible to destination.
 - Scenic byways – There is a conflict between open views and shoulders.
 - Town of Marbletown striped roads (in part to make it safer for bicycle use) and this angered Town residents.
 - County needs to help with signage.

Final question “What is the one thing that could be done to be sure that bike/ped becomes a more seamless part of the county transportation network?”

Stakeholder responses included:

- Complete trail network.
- Put bike/ped policy/funding on par with other modes.
- Map showing non-motorized access throughout the county.
- Raise federal gas tax and use money on bike/ped projects.
- Build pilot projects with all the good complete street elements to show what can work.
- People and government needs to see bike/ped are transportation, just like automobiles.
- Finish Kingston Point rail-trail to high quality, AASHTO standards (like Hurley rail trail).
- Funding availability needs to change.
- Better and more sidewalks and drainage.
- Bike consciousness signs.
- Change law so motor vehicle/non-motor vehicle accidents are the motorists fault, with serious legal consequences.
- Need more public advocacy.
- Complete Streets approach, show model at roadway connector, *but don't include roundabouts.*
- Start educating now to get equal respect for bike/ped.
- Cars should be shown as the alternative transportation.
- Bike racks on the buses = great accomplishment.

Brian thanked the group for participating.