

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

FFY 2013

ANNUAL FEDERAL AID OBLIGATION REPORT

**Reporting Period
October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013**



January 2014

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

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BACKGROUND

UCTC is responsible for the development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight in the county and the region. In addition, UCTC is responsible for the development of a **Unified Planning Work Program** that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the Metropolitan Planning Area. The intent of such a work plan is to coordinate all transportation-related planning activities in Ulster County.

The U.S. Department of Transportation requires every metropolitan area with a population over 50,000 to have a designated MPO in order to qualify for the receipt of Federal highway and public transportation funds. In 2003, the Governor of New York State designated the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) as the MPO responsible for transportation planning in Ulster County. As the designated MPO, the UCTC is responsible for making final decisions for programming transportation improvements in the Kingston Urbanized Area and a portion of the Poughkeepsie-Newburgh Transportation Management Area (TMA).

Federal regulations require an annual listing of bridge and highway projects, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, for which Federal transportation funds have been obligated in the preceding year. An obligation is the U.S. Department of Transportation's legal commitment to pay the Federal share of a project's cost. Projects for which funds have been obligated are not necessarily initiated or completed in a given program year and the amount of the obligation in a single year will not necessarily equal the total cost of the project. This annual listing of Federal aid obligations must be made available for public review by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The listing must be consistent with the funding categories identified in the adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The TIP is a five-year financial plan that identifies the project costs, funding sources, phase types and implementation schedule of federally funded transportation improvements. TIP projects must be consistent with the overall goals and objectives identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan. The TIP can be viewed online at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/tip.html>.

The TIP typically receives a number of amendments and revisions throughout its 5-year lifecycle. Other data sources include information provided by the New York State Department of Transportation Region 8 office and data from local departments and agencies.



LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A Federal Aid Obligation Report together with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) helps to evaluate an MPO's overall performance. Financial forecasts from the LRTP help establish a baseline for which Federal aid obligations can be compared and help measure an MPO's ability to implement projects. The current annual LRTP Federal aid target for Ulster County is approximately \$15 million per year during the 2011 to 2015 five year cycle.ⁱ The LRTP update for Ulster County for year 2035 can be viewed online at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/lrtp.html>.

A continuation of underperforming Federal Aid Obligation Reports may indicate one or more of the following: 1) financial forecasts improperly calculated; 2) a down turn in the economy resulting in less Federal aid available for programming; 3) the complexity of the Federal aid process; 4) insufficient local funding to match the Federal aid projects programmed; and 5) changing priorities and project schedules.

FEDERAL AID OBLIGATIONS

To ensure that the public has an accurate understanding of how federal funds are actually being spent on transportation projects, Congress, in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998) and continuing in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21, 2013), included a requirement that the organizations responsible for approving the Transportation Improvement Program publish an annual listing of project obligations.

Obligation in the context of this report is the Federal government's legal commitment to pay the Federal share of a project's cost. An obligated project is one that has been authorized by the Federal agency as meeting eligibility requirements for federal funds. Projects for which funds have been obligated are not necessarily initiated or completed in the program year. For obligations on a construction project, typically the project needs to complete a competitive bid process and begin construction if an acceptable bid is received. Alternatively, projects may have obtained permission to proceed to construction using local funds, with the ability to be obligated and reimbursed with federal funds at a later date. Some of the projects or project phases listed in this report may already have been completed.

The amount of the obligation usually does not equal the total cost of the project. This is because an obligation is typically for only one phase of a multi-phased project. The obligation only accounts for federal funds allocated to the project. The figures exclude any matching state and local funds that are likely necessary as well.



Once funds have been obligated, the project sponsor/lead agency begins incurring eligible project expenses and then requests reimbursement from the eligible grant recipient. The reimbursement request must demonstrate that the recipient incurred the costs consistent with the project agreement and all federal requirements.

The list of obligated projects is organized in a manner consistent with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For each project identified, the list includes the following:

- **PIN**: a Project Identification Number (PIN) that NYSDOT uses to track projects;
- **Project Description**: a narrative description used to define the nature and location of the project;
- **Project Sponsor**: the lead agency in charge of carrying out the project;
- **Total Federal Project Cost**: the total amount of federal funds budgeted for the project in its entirety, excluding state and local funds;
- **Federal Funds Programmed on TIP**: the planned amount of funding programmed for obligation on the TIP that year;
- **Source**: the federal program from which funding was derived;
- **Project Phases Obligated in FFY 2013**: the phases for which funding was actually obligated during the federal fiscal year;
- **Federal Funds Obligated in FFY 2013**: the amount obligated (in millions of dollars)

Project Phases

Phases of TIP projects are categorized in the following manner:

- **Scoping**: This phase includes meetings with project developers and designers, local government representatives, and other involved parties. Decisions are made regarding specific elements that will be included in the project and the range of design alternatives that will be investigated.
- **Preliminary Design/Engineering (PD)**: This phase includes basic engineering work on each alternative, traffic studies, environmental analyses, and other work specific to the project. Public outreach in accordance with state and Federal requirements is used to gain community input on the project. A preferred alternative is selected to advance the project.
- **Detailed Design (DD)**: This phase includes detailed engineering work on the preferred alternative. This phase results in the development of plans and specifications that a construction contractor will work from.
 - (PE: covers all phases for design – Scoping, Preliminary Design & Detail Design)
- **Right-of-Way Incidentals (RI)**: This phase includes preparation work required prior to right-of-way acquisition.



- **Right-of-Way Acquisition (RA):** This phase includes the acquisition of right-of-way (property) necessary to complete the project. Acquisition can be achieved through the purchase of property or an easement.
 - (ROW: covers both RI and RA phases)
- **Construction (CONST):** This phase includes all work necessary to build the project.
- **Construction Inspection (CI):** This phase includes ongoing inspection to ensure construction is performed properly and conforms to specifications.
- **Miscellaneous/Other (MISC):** This phase is usually associated with public transportation projects. It involves the purchase and acquisition of vehicles and associated preventive maintenance, though in some cases, such as for station, parking, and maintenance/storage facilities, the construction of fixed or permanent facilities is undertaken. This phase type also includes funding for agency staff and/or contractors to perform work that supports the transportation system (e.g., bridge inspection, traffic center operations, etc.).

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2013 FEDERAL AID OBLIGATIONS

As shown in the table on the following page, a total of \$10.718 million in Federal Highway Administration aid was obligated for various local and state highway, bridge and trail project phases in Ulster County in FFY 2013. Of that, \$4.023 million in federal aid was obligated for state projects in 2013. \$3.3 million of this state share was allocated through the NY Works Accelerated Pavement Preservation (APP) Program, with \$0.708 for various other state-sponsored projects. A total of \$6.695 million in federal aid was obligated for local highway, bridge and enhancement projects in 2013 across a variety of Federal fund sources.

The UCTC 2011-2015 TIP lists a total of 12 state and local highway, bridge, or enhancement projects that had funds programmed for obligation in 2013, totaling \$7.291 million in federal dollars. The FFY13 obligation total of \$10.718 million in Federal dollars would therefore seem to indicate that UCTC and NYSDOT are over-performing with regard to its annual obligations. However, supplemental and emergency funds such as the APP program, ARRA, or emergency relief tend to skew the analysis. When these supplemental funds are accounted and controlled for, actual UCTC obligations for FFY13 seem to be closer in line with those scheduled. However, it is important to note that the projects that are shown in the table below do not necessarily correspond to those which were scheduled for obligation in the 2011-2015 TIP. This is primarily because TIP project listings were developed in 2011 or earlier and no longer provide an accurate or meaningful measure of UCTC fiscal program performance, as most project schedules and budgets have been amended to reflect project scope changes or cost and schedule overruns. Furthermore, revisions were made to certain projects during the 2014 TIP update to address certain scheduling abnormalities. It is therefore anticipated that the new 2014-2018 TIP (effective October 2013) will provide a more accurate assessment of UCTC program performance in FFY14.



UCTC Federal Aid Obligations, FHWA Projects/Phases, FFY 2013

Reporting Period: October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Funds Listed in Millions of Dollars

PIN	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Project Sponsor	TOTAL FEDERAL PROJECT COST	FEDERAL FUNDS PROGRAMMED ON 2011-15 TIP	FUND SOURCE	PROJECT PHASES OBLIGATED IN 2013	FEDERAL FUNDS OBLIGATED FFY 2013
State Projects							
8APP05	ROUTE 9W RESURFACING: LLOYD/ESOPUS TN. LINE TO CLAY RD	NYSTA	The NY Works Accelerated Pavement Preservation Program (APP) provided \$12m in STP SM URBAN funds for various projects across NYS		STP SM URBAN	CONST	\$3.315
817732	ROUTE 209 STONE RIDGE BRIDGE REHABILITATION	NYS DOT	n.a.	\$0.122	ARRA FLEX	CONST	\$0.302
823938	ROUTE 9W AT YOUNG AVENUE	NYS DOT	\$0.756	\$0.756	STP FLEX, NHPP	ROW	\$0.220
846059	TOWN OF ROSENDALE PARK AND RIDE LOT	NYS DOT	\$0.240	\$0.240	STP FLEX	OTHER	\$0.032
870185	FEBRUARY 2010 SNOW STORM 187 ULSTER COUNTY NYSTA	NYS DOT	\$0.026	\$0.000	EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$0.026
881215	SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS SCENIC BYWAY OVERLOOK REHABILITATIONS	NYS DOT	\$0.672	\$0.128	SCENIC BYWAYS	CONST	\$0.128
Total State							\$ 4.023
Local Projects							
870191	HURRICANE IRENE EMERGENCY REPAIRS ON THE LOCAL SYSTEM	Local	\$0.224	\$0.000	EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$0.224
875514	NEW PALTZ RD / CONRAIL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	Ulster County DPW	\$1.225	\$0.000	STP FLEX	CONST	\$0.237
875666	BRIDGE REPLACEMENT: MUD TAVERN ROAD (CR 9) / DWAARKILL	Ulster County DPW	\$1.333	\$1.333	HBRR	ROW	\$0.015
875801	HICKORY ST OVER BEER KILL BRIDGE REHABILITATION, ELLENVILLE	Village of Ellenville	\$1.238	\$1.238	STP SM URBAN	CONST	\$1.238
875802	BECKLEY DRIVE/FANTINE KILL BRIDGE REHAB	Village of Ellenville	n.a.	\$0.000	Multiple	PE, ROW	\$0.067
875879	DENNING RD/EAST BRANCH NEVERSINK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	Ulster County DPW	\$2.040	\$2.040	HBRR	ROW	\$0.012
875995	WALKKILL HAMLET SIDEWALKS	Town of Shawangunk	\$1.655	\$1.655	STP FLEX	ROW, PE	\$0.167
876008	VILLAGE OF SAUGERTIES PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS	Village of Saugerties	\$0.847	\$0.847	HPP	CONST	\$0.699
876027	ABEEL STREET: DOCK STREET TO HUDSON STREET (STAGE 1)	City of Kingston	\$3.230	\$3.230	STP FLEX	ROW	\$0.202
876028	ABEEL STREET: BROADWAY TO DOCK STREET	City of Kingston	\$3.168	\$3.168	HPP	CONST	\$3.834
Total Local							\$ 6.695
Total FHWA Funds Obligated in 2013:							\$ 10.718

n.a. = not available. These projects have already been let, had an obligation that had funding that wasn't used (which is needed to cover billing expenses or to close out phases), or were emergency in nature. These projects typically have already been included on past reports.

Federal funding for projects programmed goes unobligated for various reasons. Unobligated federal funding does not carry over into the next FFY, rather, it expires at the end FFY if unclaimed by the project sponsor. Unobligated federal funds represent an opportunity cost for other Ulster County municipalities that may be waiting to receive federal aid for a project. In this sense, projects programmed but not acted upon hold up federal funding that could otherwise be utilized by other project sponsors waiting for federal aid. UCTC staff will continue to work closely with NYSDOT and local project sponsors to stay on top of project priorities and help sponsors move their projects to implementation. Staff will also continue to assist project sponsors with the identification of unused federal aid and process TIP amendments to modify transportation priorities to help utilize federal aid obligation authority before it expires.



Endnotes:

ⁱ Refer to Year 2035 UCTC LRTP, *Table 6-2: Total Anticipated Funding Resources Compared to Needs*, page 6-13. \$15m is calculated by adding the Federal Highway Administration Funds 2011-2015 column (omitting IM and STP Rail) and dividing across the five-year program span. Therefore, $\$75.86\text{m}/5 = \sim\$15\text{m}/\text{year}$.

