

REPORT OF MEETING

To:	Brian Slack, UCTC	Project:	Ulster County Transportation Council Long-Range Transportation Plan
From:	Arnold Bloch, FHI	Date:	4/1/15
Subject:	Stakeholder meetings		

Attendees:

Project Team

Brian Slack (UCTC)

David Staas (UCTC)

Arnie Bloch (Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI))

Shawn Callaghan (FHI)

Stakeholders

Dave Corrigan (NYSDOT)

Trevonne Gillard (A2B Taxi)

Jaime Cathcart (A2B Taxi)

Cathy Canzian (RSVP)

Shelley O'Riley (UGARC)

Session 2: Transportation Safety

2:00 – 3:30 PM

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

In 2040, my vision for transportation safety in Ulster County is:
Programs
Safe Routes to Schools
Systematic identification and treatment of problematic areas
Eliminate roadside hazards
Solve distracted driving
Universal driver training
More stringent license requirements
Fatalities
Vision Zero: No traffic related fatalities
Technology
Computer assisted smart cars to minimize for human error
Countywide radio system

Brian Slack conducted introductions around the room for all participants.

Facilitated discussion follows:

The group was asked “Where are safety improvements most needed in Ulster County?”

Stakeholder responses included:

- Intersections are the least safe part of the road network.
- Safety issues at “5 Corners” in Kingston; a roundabout would be good there.
- Broadway/Albany Avenue is a bad intersection. (There will be a roundabout there next year.)
- On I-587 a woman uses a motorized wheelchair, which is very dangerous.
- At Kingston Plaza people won’t use the sidewalks (which are in terrible shape), so wheelchairs and the elderly are in the street, which is very dangerous.

Next question “What are the most pressing safety needs in Ulster County across the “4E’s” of traffic safety: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Emergency Response?”

- Education
 - Education for pedestrians, especially at a young age.
 - Bike safety should be taught, so that kids and others understand the rules of the road. This should be brought back as part of the curriculum in schools.
 - County should survey the public about locations that are safety hazards; many people don’t report incidents so the current accident data doesn’t capture everything.
 - Education and driving simulators are coming to Ulster County for high school kids.

- Enforcement
 - Red light cameras are slowing people down.
 - School bus drivers should report cars that disobey “stop sign” rule; currently there is no real follow through.
 - Traffic related repeat offenders often have a little fine to pay and/or plea down their tickets to a lower offense. They really aren’t going to change behavior without consequences. Instead of being able to plea down tickets, it should be made real for people by making them go to class or volunteer at a hospital.
 - Camera on the bus to prove wrongdoers.
- Engineering
 - Rumble strips along the median dividing line on state highways is good. This was just done on Rt. 9W.
 - Shoulders on the county roads should have:
 - No trees
 - Softened slopes
 - Increased clear zones
 - South Puck Corners Rd. is a current shoulder project.
 - Spot intersections should be widened to improve safety.
 - Rt. 209 needs to be widened to 2 lanes in each direction. Currently, vehicles get stuck behind slow vehicles and attempt to make dangerous passes.
 - Computers in cars now so the insurance company can pull that data and raise your rates. This tracks things like when you’re not wearing a seatbelt.

Next question: “Which is the most important group in Ulster County to focus on?”

Stakeholder responses included:

- Kids:
 - Kids are the most vulnerable, so we need to reach them at school.
 - Make kids’ education fun and interesting.
 - Do an assembly at schools throughout the county.
- Elderly:
 - The elderly population is increasing. It is difficult when they cannot safely drive anymore.
 - On foot traffic roads there should be benches provided for the elderly to rest. You can also move traffic to other roads and add more traffic signals.
- Bicyclists:
 - Educate them: bikes are not allowed on sidewalks
 - Bicyclist offenders should be made to go to a safety class.

- Drivers
 - They should be made to take a refresher driver course.
 - Have a *yearly*, required, one-hour refresher course for drivers where they can choose one topic each year.
 - Increase the driver's license fee for all drivers to pay for the course.

Final question: "Are there any technological advances that you consider beneficial for increased safety?"

Stakeholder responses included:

- Blind spot cameras in automobiles.
- Directional signal lights on automobile side mirrors to show when cars are turning.
- Vehicle back-up cameras.
- Fix current broken pedestrian signals.
- There needs to be a balance between technology and human action. Just don't let technology replace education and common sense. That human aspect is important to keep.

Brian thanked the group for participating.