

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Policy Committee Meeting

Meeting Summary

March 22, 2013

SUNY Ulster, Stone Ridge, NY

Members Present:

Anne Noonan	Adirondack Trailways
Kathy Nolan	Ulster County Trails Advisory Committee
Joel Brink	Town of Ulster
Richard Peters	NYS Dept of Transportation
Kristen Resnikoff	NYS Thruway Authority
Ralph Swenson	City of Kingston
Alan Adin	City of Kingston
Curt Lavalla	Village of New Paltz
Patrick McCaroll	NYS Thruway Authority
Jeanne Walsh	Town of Rosendale
Mary Sheeley	Village of Ellenville
Alex Wade	Village of Saugerties
Herb Litts	Town of Lloyd
Jack Hohman	NYS Thruway Authority
Jeremy Wilber	Town of Woodstock
Hector Rodriguez	Town of New Paltz
Paul Hansut	Town of Lloyd
Gloria Van Vliet	Town of Esopus
Carl Belfiglio	Town of Esopus
Diane Beitel	Ulster County Safety Officer and Traffic Coordinator
Joe Croce	Town of Plattekill
Rik Flynn	Ulster Corps
Kelly Myers	Town of Saugerties
Robert DiBella	UCAT

Staff:

Dennis Doyle	U.C. Planning Board/UCTC Staff
Chris White	U.C. Deputy Director of Planning
Brian Slack	UCTC Staff
David Staas	UCTC Staff

CALL TO ORDER

The Technical Committee portion of the meeting was called to order by Mr. Doyle at 10:00am. Roll call was conducted by Mr. Doyle. Diane Beitel, newly appoint Traffic Safety Coordinator, and Chris White, the Deputy Director of the Ulster County Planning Department, both provided descriptions of their roles and introduced themselves to the Council.

Mr. Doyle indicated that staff of the UCTC will be working on building a better relationship with the Traffic Safety Board.

CALL FOR CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Mr. Doyle asked if there were any citizen comments. Carl Belfiglio, Legislator of District 8 of the Town of Esopus, brought forward his comments on the Wurts Street Bridge.

Mr. Belfiglio noted that the town has had hopes that the bridge would be refurbished and believed that the project was scheduled to take place in 2009. As a County Legislator, Mr. Belfiglio receives numerous calls relating to the condition and appearance of the structure. Senator Tkaczyk's office informed him that due to a bond issue stemming back from 2003, funding was unavailable for the project in 2009. Other sources indicated that there was no start date on the rehabilitation project, though the surface of the bridge is slated to be repaved in the summer of 2013. With no clear start date, Mr. Belfiglio is disappointed that work is not being done. Mr. Belfiglio pointed out that the bridge is structurally deficient, and that he is concerned about the safety and appearance of the structure. According to Mr. Belfiglio's research, the bridge has been limited to 5 tons, preventing vehicles of Class 4 and above from crossing. It was also noted that with the 5 ton weight restriction, the bridge would be unable to support the world's largest gluten free pizza. Mr. Belfiglio then proceeded to go over the project listing details from NYSDOT's. Mr. Belfiglio encouraged the Council and NYSDOT officials to bring the concerns over the bridge to the highest levels, and indicated that he did not want to see the bridge closed.

In response, Mr. Doyle noted that the Wurts Street Bridge has been brought up in discussion by the council and that concerns of the council have been brought to NYSDOT. The Council is waiting for the State portion of the Transportation Improvement Program, due to come out in late May or early June, which will indicate where the project stands. The importance of the appearance and safety of the bridge has been made apparent by the Council to NYSDOT through a series of ongoing discussions. Some assurances have been made in response by NYSDOT that work will be done on the bridge.

Mr. Peters further responded, indicating that the project is slated for 2014 and will consist of safety work. The reason the State program has not been completed is due to the fact the 200 million dollars still needs to be cut from the program. The Wurts Street Bridge will remain in the program, mainly due to its condition. The bridge is currently safe and will continue to remain open, though likely at a reduced weight limit.

Gloria Van Vliet, councilperson of the Town of Esopus, echoed the comments from Mr. Belfiglio on behalf of the Town board of Esopus. She also noted that the previous painting of the structure did not last and that the decking of the bridge requires immediate attention. It was also noted that lighting on the bridge is very poor.

Rik Flynn of Ulster Corps, indicated that Robert DiBella has done an excellent job in aiding Ulster Corps as a steering board member. Mr. Flynn indicated that Mr. DiBella was instrumental in getting research performed by the group visible onboard UCAT busses.

Mr. Flynn went on to suggest that efforts should be made encourage youth community participation by making transit more accessible to youth engaged in community activity. It was then noted by Council members that SUNY New Paltz students ride for free and that the fare is already extremely low compared to other transit systems.

No further citizen comments were submitted.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 29, 2012 JOINT TECHNICAL/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Mr. Doyle requested a motion for discussion of the minutes from the 11/29/12 Joint Technical/Policy Committee meeting of the UCTC. Supervisor Mary Sheeley made a motion to approve the minutes; second by Mr. Alex Wade. **No further discussion. All in favor, none opposed -- Motion Carried.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Slack circulated summarized and circulated several pieces of correspondence. The first was a letter from Supervisor Jeremy Wilbur from the Town of Woodstock recognizing that his office received a letter from Congressman Gibson regarding the condition of router 212. A second piece of correspondence was from the City of Kingston, reprioritizing projects for the 2011-2015 TIP update. Both the Town and Village of New Paltz submitted letters emphasizing the need and importance of non-motorized transportation. A similar letter was received from New Yorkers for Active Transportation. Award letters were received for Safe Routes to School projects for the City of Kingston and the Village of Ellenville. Correspondence was received from the Florida Department of Transportation, recognizing UCTC's LRTP as an example of a citizen-friendly document.

Supervisor Jeremy Wilbur was present to comment on his correspondence to the Council and reiterated his concern over the lack of repairs to route 212 in the Town of Woodstock. Mr. Wilbur expressed concerns that repairs were not commensurate with the contributions made by the Town of Woodstock to the County.

NEW BUSINESS

FFY 2012 Annual Obligation Report: Federal regulations require an annual listing of bridge, highway and transit projects, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, which Federal transportation funds have been obligated in the preceding year.

Mr. Slack began by explaining the requirement of MPO's to produce an annual obligation report to provide clarity to the transportation process regarding expenditures. The report is produced to inform the public of where the money is going for transportation projects. A summary of the report indicated that for FFY 2012, approximately 25% of funds eligible were actually obligated

among the local projects. For State Projects the obligation rate was approximately 75%. The obligation rate acts as a metric indicating the ability to spend federal dollars on projects within the County. Although this is not a perfect metric, as projects often fall off schedule towards the end of TIP cycle, the Council is committed to increasing the obligation rate by scheduling projects more in line with reality in the future.

Hector Rodriguez commented on the Report citing a disproportionate amount of funding as the County resides in the same Region as Westchester County. Mr. Peters indicated that the obligation rate is independent of funding amounts. Mr. Doyle countered citing that some projects were programmed with funds that were actually not available, causing the project to fall behind or get moved off of the TIP, thus leading to a lowered obligation rate. Mr. Peters indicated that this could be caused by not keeping the TIP up to date.

Concern was expressed over how funding was lost. It was indicated the project delays cause most funding to be lost or delayed, usually during the Right of Way phases of a project. If the Right of Way Acquisition phase could be streamlined, the obligation rate would likely improve. Mr. Peters went over the requirements and reasoning behind the Right of Way phases for Federally funded projects.

No further discussion.

Resolution 2013-01: SFY2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):

Mr. Doyle requested a motion for discussion. Motion made by Hector Rodriguez; second by Mary Sheely.

A final draft of UCTC's State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2013/14 UPWP has been completed. In accordance with UCTC Operating Procedures, a 15 day public comment period was opened on March 7, 2013; no comments from the public were received. Mr. Slack briefly went over the projects in the document. Mr. Doyle noted that the projects will not change but some of the funding amounts may change slightly as there is some carryover funding that is still being calculated. Mr. Doyle expressed concerns over the amount budgeted for the Safe Routes to School project as the amount may be low and indicated that there is a possibility that staff may come to the Council with an increase in funding for the project if needed.

No further discussion. All in favor, none opposed -- Motion Carried.

Amendment to the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Include Safe Routes to School Projects in the City of Kingston and Village of Ellenville as Illustrated in Attachment 1. A draft resolution amending the 2011 TIP for SRTS projects in Kingston and Ellenville was presented to the UCTC Technical Committee at its February 22 meeting. That resolution was tabled pending further information from NYSDOT and City of Kingston staff re: engineering phases for PIN 876109. PIN 876114 which programs \$0.233 for the Village of Ellenville does not require any additional information. These Amendments cannot be acted on without 15 days prior public notice and must be deferred to the

May 22 meeting of the Policy Committee; amendments will be included under new resolution as part of the 2014-2018 program update.

Ralph Swenson indicated that the City of Kingston was waiting on engineering numbers from NYSDOT which they could then determine if it fits into the City budget. Mr. Peters indicated that the estimate from NYSDOT should be forthcoming as an internal meeting had been conducted. May 7th was established as a deadline for the engineering information in order to ensure that 15 day public notice is met for the TIP update.

No further discussion.

UCTC TIP Subcommittee – Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update: The UCTC TIP Subcommittee began meeting in November to address the most recent program update; that work was completed in December. NYSDOT will provide an update to the MPO on TIP status. The final 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update must be completed no later than June 29, 2013. UCTC awaits NYSDOT's state programs (Highway and bridges, Thruway, and Multi-County projects) for Ulster County.

Mr. Slack provided estimates of the program and explained the reductions and postponements utilized by the TIP Subcommittee in order to meet the allocation amount. Work on the TIP is ongoing and progress is being made. Mr. Slack and Mr. Doyle then went over the following phases:

- Draft TIP brought to Technical Committee
- 15 day public comment period
- Final Draft brought to Policy Committee

Mr. Doyle noted that as a result of the voluntary removal of projects by Ulster County, the County is now working to establish a capital project working on the Glasco Turnpike Bridge over the Esopus Creek, given the lack of Federal funding available. Kelly Meyers expressed gratitude to the County that the bridge work would be undertaken despite the lack of Federal funds.

Revisions to Federal-Aid Urban Area Boundaries and Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries. The urbanized area designations based on the 2010 Census are available; NYSDOT has requested that MPOs coordinate revisions to urban area and Metropolitan Planning Area boundaries. MPO staff will show proposed boundary changes and explain the process.

Mr. Staas explained the process of adjusting the Urban Area Boundary and Metropolitan Planning area Boundaries. Draft boundaries have been supplied to NYSDOT and staff is currently awaiting their review.

Supervisor Jeremy Wilbur requested clarification on the consequences of accepting the Urban Area Boundary. Acceptance of the FHWA Urban Area Boundary has no affect on the DEC MS4 designation. The Town of Woodstock will accept the FHWA Urban Area Boundary as long as their acceptance has no impact on MS4 designation.

Mr. Doyle responded noting that MS4 designations solely utilize the Census defined Urbanized Area and do not use the FHWA Urban Area Boundary. Changes to an FHWA Urban Area Boundary have no affect on the Census defined Urbanized Area.

Mr. Doyle noted that the boundaries can be revised in the future by going through the same process and that he had reached out to the Planning Commissioner of Greene County to discuss the required extension of the FHWA Urban Area Boundary into Green County. Despite the extension, no additional member will be added to the Council. MPO materials will be shared with Green County and they are urged to attend and participate in the Technical Committee meetings of the Council.

Supervisor Jeanne Walsh requested a more detailed map of the Town of Rosendale which will be provided by staff.

No further discussion.

Competitive Transportation Funding Opportunities. NYSDOT has made two recent announcements of large competitive funding sources –the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the Strategic Transportation Enhancements Program (STEP).

Mr. Peters indicated that the STEP program should not be confused with the Transportation Enhancement Program which is a Federal program for sidewalk, drainage, and historic structures. The STEP program is designed to provide competitive funding for projects that enhance the existing infrastructure. Mr. Peters went over the projects forwarded to NYSDOT main office for consideration from the region. One of the projects was for park and ride facilities in Ulster County which would also utilize funds flexed over from the FTA.

Mr. Peters then discussed the HSIP program. The program is designed to do safety improvements for projects to be let in late August / early September of 2014. This funding opportunity is recommended for projects with minimal complexity.

Kelly Meyers indicated that she would like to help advocate for the transfer of money from the FTA over to DOT.

No further discussion.

Announcements

Mr. Doyle announced that the Boices Lane Rail Safety Study is coming up with a recommendation that may be included on the upcoming TIP update. Mr. Doyle wanted to thank all of the entities involved with the project

Mr. Doyle noted that the City of Kingston has submitted an application through the transportation funding opportunities for approximately 10 million dollars in transportation funding with initiatives in Uptown, Midtown, and Downtown. The Council continues to support the application.

Mr. Doyle thanked the members of the Council for their continued support and trust. He also thanked the Council staff for their ongoing hard work.

Jeanne Walsh thanked the Council for awarding the Town of Rosendale a circulation study and hopes that the study will help avoid confusion in the Town with the upcoming opening of the Rosendale trestle.

Alex Wade expressed gratitude towards UCAT for information on changes being implemented in the Town and Village of Saugerties as a result of the Transit Development Plan.

No further discussion.

MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 11:30.

~DS