



ULSTER COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

PO Box 1800
Kingston, New York 12402-1800
(845) 340-3340

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/traffic-safety-board>



Jen Metzger
County Executive

Eric Kight
Chairperson

Ulster County Traffic Safety Board

February 5, 2024 Minutes

Location: Ulster County Legislative Chambers

Approved March 4, 2024

<u>Members In Attendance:</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Giovanna Russo, MHV School Transp. Supervisors Assoc.	Egido Tinti, City of Kingston Chief of Police
Sgt. Robert Vedder, Ulster County Sheriff's Dept.	
Robert Lucchesi, Town/Village of New Paltz Chief of Police	
Tom Polk, Bicycle Program Dir, Kingston/Ulster YMCA	
Rosemary Quinn, Upstate Regional Rep, Families for Safe Streets/NYS Safe Streets Coalition/City of Kingston resident	
Steven Rice, Trails Adv. Committee	
Eric Kight, NYCDEP, Chair	
David Corrigan NYSDOT, Vice Chair	
Brendan Masterson, Ulster County DPW Commissioner	
Joseph Sinagra, NYS Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Traffic Safety Board	
Lou Klepner, Town of Saugerties	
<u>Advisory Members</u>	
Brian Slack, Coordinator of Traffic Safety	
Eric Paulding, Ulster County District Attorney's Office Accident Investigation Team	
Dennis Doyle, Ulster County Planning Dept.	
Amanda LaValle, Ulster County Executive's Office	
<u>Guests</u>	
Molly Holm, Mt. Tremper	
Geoff Baer, Mt. Tremper	
Kevin Smith	

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Approval of the December 04, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Klepner; Second by Sinagra. All in favor.

III. Public Comments

Molly Holm and Geoff Baer, residents of Mt. Tremper, spoke regarding their concerns about traffic conditions in the Mt. Tremper area, particularly on Rte 28 and Rt 212 where a recent fatal crash occurred. The new Rt 28 bridge in Mt. Tremper over the Esopus Creek seems to have limited sight distance due to the bridge arch elevation, putting left-turning vehicles at risk. Other conditions in the area including increased commercial activity, Rail Explorers crossing Rt 28 and creating platooning of vehicles due to the stops and perceived increases in post-pandemic traffic volumes overall contribute to a need for improved safety signage and consideration of lowering the posted speed limit in the area. More publicity and public safety messaging would be valuable as well. Ms. Holm's partner, Geoff Baer, added that cars passing on the shoulders in

the aforementioned area also contributes to hazardous conditions and near-misses. Both offered their thanks to and appreciation of the members of the board.

IV. Member Updates

Eric Kight, NYCDEP – Spillway Rd and Rt 28a; Ulster County has stockpiled materials at this location; logging will be taking place over the summer and this location will be used as a staging area for woody material; the location is near a turn and therefore NYCDEP have provided approval with the condition that a flagger be present to keep traffic flowing safely. Mr. Kight also took a scenic drive throughout the county in an effort to make general observations of driver behavior; he noted a general atmosphere of non-compliance with driver safety laws, including, speeding, failure to come to a full stop, passing, walking, etc. He concluded that there seems to be a strong need to improve individual driver care and compassion when behind the wheel.

Mr. Klepner noted two Transportation Alternative Program grants have been submitted by Town of Saugerties for sidepath on 9W and 32 and Woodstock has submitted a similar sidepath on Rt 212. Mr. Klepner and Miss Quinn put together a draft proposal defining the duties of the Secretary of the Board and shared those with the board. He also mentioned low-light conditions as contributing factors to two recent pedestrian fatalities and that perhaps personal reflective devices may provide a solution. He also proposed creation of a ‘vulnerable road user’ subcommittee of the traffic safety board.

[Action – add vulnerable road user proposal to the March agenda]

Mr. Rice would like to have a “be safe – be seen” focus of the TSB going forward. Mandatory training should also be considered as part of restitution for traffic violations.

Ms. Rose Quinn took a moment to mention recent victims of motor vehicle crashes: Dillon Gokey, 16, of Kingston, and Jack Noble, 17, of Port Ewen were killed in a motor vehicle crash on Rte 28 on January 8, 2024. On January 10, 2024, Starllie Swonyoung, age 21, was struck and killed by a motor vehicle while walking on the shoulder of Rte 9W in Malden. The vehicle did not stop. 22 year old Raymond Rattray was struck and killed by a hit and run motorist on January 23rd while walking on Rte 208; his body was not found until 24 hours later. Ms. Quinn indicated that municipalities need more resources to seek the funds necessary to improve the infrastructure. Local Complete Streets Advisory Committees offer insight to the issues; Kevin Smith recommended developing a ‘mobility-smart community program’ to address these safety issues; the climate-smart and housing-smart programs provide a model here.

Mr. Corrigan indicated that NYSDOT will be conducting pothole repair as able; he also indicated that all NYSDOT dump trucks are now equipped with front-facing cameras that have been capturing many instances of poor driver behavior on the public roads.

Ms. Russo provided an updated list of transportation supervisors that can be used to distribute the announcement for the 2024 School Bus Driver of the Year nomination form.

Mr. Slack provided UCTC updates; he and David Staas are participating in a NYSDOT data-driven traffic safety analysis training that works with the CLEAR crash query system, geometric design of highways, crash frequency rates and predictive analysis of crash rates and mitigating factors in roadway design. The next funding round for the federal Safe Streets for All program will be announced by the USDOT in February; implementation and planning grants will be made available. Check the UCTC Funding Opportunities page for more information. The GTSC has created a county GIS crash dashboard that can be used for grant applications. Anyone with a traffic safety focus and a .gov email address can request access to the dashboard through the GTSC. Ulster County Stop DWI contacted Brian to discuss participating at a future meeting. Mr. Slack mentioned that the statewide Transportation Alternatives Program application review teams have convened and are reviewing applications submitted in 2024; Slack will be reviewing 16 applications from Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester Counties; over 160 applications have been submitted statewide, making this one of the most competitive rounds in recent memory. Mr. Slack concluded with brief updates on the Rte 9W Mobility Plan, which will have draft recommendations available in March, and the Kingston RR Safety Plan, which is ongoing.

Chief Lucchesi has met with officials from SUNY, the town, the village, and state offices to discuss strategies to improve traffic safety in the town.

V. Old Business (Open Items)

- a. Ulster County Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy – Office of the County Executive

- i. Ulster County Executive has requested an update to the policy; the update will initially be an internal process carried out by county staff. He also indicated that Ulster County Area Transit will be purchasing reflective vests to distribute to their riders; a limited number may also be made available at the DMV. The Kingston YMCA also has reflective vests available at its Kingston location, free of charge (\$5 suggested donation).
- b. **Public Education Subcommittee – Slack**
 - i. Scope of work and a Request for Quotes was issued to a number of qualified marketing and graphic design agencies. The deadline for responses is 2/16/24. The County Executive will be announcing her desire for a more involved traffic safety media campaign, which may supersede the RFQ that was issued; Slack will await to receive responses and evaluate methods for moving this item forward.
- c. **Winter Public Safety Message – Slack**
 - i. Message was issued; the County Executive did issue a pared-down version of the press release; Mr. Slack encouraged TSB members to take the press release and submit it to local newspapers as a letter to the editor
- d. **2024 School Bus Driver of the Year & Charlie Schaller Awards – All**
 - i. Nomination form will be forwarded to transportation supervisors by Mr. Slack.
 - ii. **Action.** Regarding the Charlie Schaller Award, staff will prepare a statement clarifying the purpose of the award and outline a process to accept nominations.

VI. New Business

- **NYS Safe Streets Coalition: Policy on 25MPH Speed Limits – Rosemary Quinn**
 - Motion support the NYS Safe Streets Coalition Policy on 25 MPH Limits made by Mr. Klepner; Second by Mr. Polk. Discussion – Chair Kight inquired how the TSB goes about endorsing the item; a google form has been created to allow individuals or organizations to sign on; Slack recommended that the Chair sign on behalf of the full TSB. All in favor; none opposed; no abstentions.
- **Draft 2024 Annual Report – Slack**
 - The Draft 2024 Annual Report was circulated by Mr. Slack; he requested input on this year's report at the next meeting and would like to have it approved at that time.
- **NYS Institute of Traffic Safety Management and Research Data**
 - Ms. Quinn provided TSB members with an overview of the ITSMR query tool and how it can be used to inform a data-driven discussion on traffic safety or inform grant applications.

VII. Other Business

Mr. Kight noted that he did visit Radio Kingston and recorded a series of public safety messages; those messages should be released around March. Mr. Kight would like TSB members to think about spring public safety messages for discussion in March.

VIII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm; next meeting March 4, 2024.