

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

FFY 2012

ANNUAL FEDERAL AID OBLIGATION REPORT

**Reporting Period
October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012**



January 2013

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

PO Box 1800
244 Fair Street, 3rd Floor
Kingston, New York 12402-1800

P: (845) 334-5590

F: (845) 340-3429

www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/tran.shtml

BACKGROUND

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 the 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 downturn 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 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, 2005), included a requirement that the organizations responsible for approving the Transportation Improvement Program publish an annual listing of project obligations.ⁱⁱ

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 2012: the phases for which funding was actually obligated during the federal fiscal year;
- Federal Funds Obligated in FFY 2012: 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 2012 FEDERAL AID OBLIGATIONS

As shown in the table on the following page, a total of **\$7.114 million** in Federal Highway Administration aid was obligated for various local and state highway, bridge and trail project phases in Ulster County in FFY 2012. Of that, **\$6.027** million in federal aid was obligated for state projects in 2012 – \$4.737 million in the form of emergency relief aid, \$0.343 in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and \$0.946 for various other state-sponsored TIP projects. It should be noted that the UCTC 2011-2015 TIP lists only five state highway, bridge or trail projects with phases to be obligated in 2012 (totaling \$1.353 million in federal funds).ⁱⁱⁱ

A total of **\$1.088** million in federal aid was obligated for local projects in 2012. Analysis of the UCTC 2011-2015 TIP reveals that a total of nine local highway, bridge, or trail projects have funds programmed for obligation in 2012 totaling \$4.338 million. Therefore, only roughly 25% of funds scheduled for obligation were actually obligated by local project sponsors in 2012.

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.

UCTC Federal Aid Obligations, FHWA Projects/Phases, FFY 2012							
Reporting Period: October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012							
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Funds Listed in Millions of Dollars							
PIN	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Project Sponsor	TOTAL FEDERAL PROJECT COST	FEDERAL FUNDS PROGRAMMED ON TIP FFY 2012	SOURCE	PROJECT PHASES OBLIGATED IN 2012	FEDERAL FUNDS OBLIGATED FFY 2012
State Projects							
823938	ROUTE 9W @ YOUNG AVENUE	NYS DOT	\$0.756	\$0.756	NHS	CONST	\$0.100
					NHS	CONST	\$0.256
					NHS	CONST	\$0.260
					STP FLEX	ROW	\$0.020
					STP FLEX	ROW	\$0.016
					STP FLEX	ROW	\$0.020
846059	ROUTE 32 PARK AND RIDE, TOWN OF ROSENDALE	NYS DOT	\$0.240	\$0.240	STP FLEX	PE	\$0.050
					STP FLEX	PE	\$0.012
817732	ROUTE 209 STONE RIDGE R&P	NYS DOT	\$2.803	\$0.000	ARRA FLEX	CONST	\$0.343
846049	ROUTE 32/RONDOUT CREEK	NYS DOT	ua	\$0.000	HBRR	CONST	\$0.212
870159	NYSTA DEBRIS REMOVAL ULSTER COUNTY	NYSTA	ua	\$0.000	EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$0.010
870168	HURRICANE IRENE REPAIRS ULSTER COUNTY	NYS DOT	ua	\$0.000	EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$2.176
					EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$2.181
880889	REHABILITATION/REPLACEMENT OF CULVERTS IN ULSTER COUNTY	NYS DOT	ua	\$0.000	EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$0.346
					EMERGENCY RELIEF	CONST	\$0.024
0.996					Total State		\$ 6.027
Local Projects							
875666	MUD TAVERN ROAD (COUNTY ROUTE 9)/DWAAR KILL	Ulster County DPW	\$1.334	\$1.334	HBRR	PE	\$0.204
					HBRR	ROW	\$0.012
875710	ABEEL STREET RECONSTRUCTION	City of Kingston	\$6.798	\$0.000	STP FLEX	ROW	\$0.159
875914	HUDSON VALLEY RAIL TRAIL: HAVILAND ROAD TO COMMERCIAL AVENUE	Ulster County	\$3.504	\$0.220	MIN GUARANTEE	CONST	\$0.140
					STP FLEX	PE	\$0.056
875995	WALLKILL HAMLET SIDEWALKS	Shawangunk	\$3.300	\$0.280	STP FLEX	PE	\$0.020
878021	GARDINER SIDEWALKS - RT. 44/55	Gardiner	\$0.202	\$0.202	STP SM URBAN	CONST	\$0.202
875925	D&H/O&W TRAIL:T/O ROCHESTER LINE-EASTERN STATE CORR FACILITY	Wawarsing	\$0.625	\$0.120	REDIST FUNDS	PE	\$0.176
880828	ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STUDY	LOCAL	ua	\$0.000	REDIST FUNDS	PE	\$0.020
					REDIST FUNDS	PE	\$0.020
8RT809	MOHAWK PRESERVE REC TRAILS PROJECT	LOCAL	ua	\$0.000	NATL REC TRAILS	CONST	\$0.080
2.156					Total Local		\$ 1.088
Total FHWA Funds Obligated in 2012:							\$ 7.115

ua = Information unavailable. These projects were emergency/unscheduled projects, have already been let, or had an obligation that had funding that wasn't used (which is needed to cover billing expenses or to close out phases).



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, $\$75.86\text{m}/5 = \sim \$15\text{m}/\text{year}$.
- ⁱⁱ As of October 1, 2012, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) will replace SAFTEA-LU as the governing transportation legislation in the United States; it is anticipated that Federal Aid Obligation stipulations will remain the same under this new legislation.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *UCTC 2011-2015 Transportation Improvement Program*, Highway Project Listings (as of 10/09/12) available online at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/uctc/tip/UCTC%20Highway%202011-2015%20as%20of%2010-09-12.pdf>

