

I. Introduction

Photo by: Gerald Berliner

The purposes of this subpart are to implement the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 134, 23 U.S.C. 150, and 49 U.S.C. 5303, as amended, which...Set forth the national policy that the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and a 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 (including accessible pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities, and intermodal facilities that support intercity transportation, including intercity buses and intercity bus facilities and commuter vanpool providers) fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution.

23CFR§450.300

The Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) serving the Kingston, NY, urbanized area and the entirety of Ulster County. Federal law requires that all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 people have an MPO, which is assigned certain planning responsibilities among them being the preparation and adoption of a Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (LRTP). In addition, UCTC is part of a larger Transportation Management Area (TMA) that includes both Orange and Dutchess Counties. A TMA represents urbanized areas with a population greater than 200,000. The three MPO's Ulster, Dutchess, and Orange, coordinate their planning activities for this larger area.

The LRTP must look at least twenty years into the future and be updated at no less than five-year intervals. The LRTP covers the same geographic area as the MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area, as adjusted from the U.S. Census urbanized area boundary. This long look forward is particularly valuable as transportation facilities can take a long time to move from idea to plan to design and construction. The LRTP gives citizens and decision-makers a structured means to be thoughtful about its transportation future, and it can both respond and shape the development and success of a community. The LRTP is a vision of the area's transportation future, the policies necessary to support that vision, and an investment plan for its implementation. In this era of limited financial resources, the LRTP provides the guidance on how available

funds are best used to meet regional priorities. The total of LRTP recommended investments must, by Federal law be constrained by an agreed upon estimate of reasonably available revenue. This "fiscal constraint" ensures the LRTP list of projects can be paid for. The preparation of the LRTP forces decision-makers to be explicit about their choices of strategies, programs, and projects.



Aerial View of Rosendale, New York. Taken from the Rail Trail Bridge showing Main Street, Houses and Buildings.

A DYNAMIC PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

There are several critical issues that have impacted the development of this LRTP. These include funding, transportation choices, environmental, and economic concerns as discussed below:

- ▶ **Federal transportation authorization:** The current five-year federal surface transportation law, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST), which authorizes funding for FHWA and FTA programs, expires on September 30, 2020. Congress must act prior to that date to pass new authorizing legislation or a further extension.
- ▶ **Federal transportation funding:** Programs of the FHWA and the FTA provide a significant proportion of capital funds in New York State's transportation program. All FHWA program funds, and a portion of FTA funds, come from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The primary source of revenue for the HTF is tax on gasoline and diesel fuel. These taxes have not been increased since 1993, leaving their purchasing power diminished by nearly three decades of construction cost inflation. At the same time, receipts have been diminished by use of more fuel efficient cars and alternative fuels that are not taxed. Since 2016, Congress has transferred over \$70 billion from the U.S. General Fund to the HTF so it can meet expenditure obligations. There is general agreement among policy makers that a sustainable approach to funding FHWA and FTA must be enacted.
- ▶ **State and local transportation funding:** The New York State Dedicated Highway and Bridge Fund has its own challenges, related to substantial debt service payments resulting from past borrowing, and use for non-capital purposes. Local governments receive state funds through the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), but must rely primarily on property tax and sales tax receipts to pay for transportation projects. Other states permit local option sales and gasoline taxes, but this is not the case in New York. Public transit is supported separately by the state, with operators receiving State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA), and a portion of the non-Federal share of capital project costs.
- ▶ **Aging infrastructure:** The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) points out in its Transportation Asset Management Plan that, like much of the rest of the country, our roads and bridges, transit systems, and railroads are characterized by aging infrastructure. Depending on the type of construction and materials used, each of these elements has a predictable life span. That life may be extended by preventive maintenance and rehabilitation, or decreased by neglect. Current conditions are a consequence of investment, but also of timing. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, the nation built much of the Interstate Highway System and other facilities. Fifty years later, much of this infrastructure is worn out, creating a spike in preservation program demands.
- ▶ **Focus on freight and economic development:** The trend in federal transportation policy over recent years is to pay more attention to freight movement and how it supports regional, statewide, and the national economy. NYSDOT completed its first comprehensive statewide Freight Transportation Plan in 2019. FAST Act requires that the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) develop a National Freight Strategic Plan and Primary Freight Network. The UCTC will take advantage of these activities in examining the role of freight movement in its own economy in the future.

- ▶ **Changing attitudes about land use:** People of all ages are making different decisions about where they choose to live, and what constitutes a positive quality of life. Whether urban or suburban, more people want a human scaled neighborhood that is walkable and bikeable, has access to schools and shopping, and has convenient public transit. Others want a rural location, but one that has access to needed services. New York State has in recent years passed both a Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act and a Complete Streets Act. These acts respond to public interests, and guide state and local government decisions about transportation projects away from a singular auto-centric view to one that looks at the accessibility and mobility needs of all users regardless of how they travel.
- ▶ **Transportation and Climate:** Transportation accounts for more than one third of greenhouse gas emissions by major economic sector. In response to the growing concern that GHGs have on the environment, New York State passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which will require the state to make major reductions in GHGs by 2050. The state will be required to enact bold initiatives to reduce transportation emissions already seen in providing funding for the installation of EV charging stations.
- ▶ **Public health and active transportation:** Transportation planners are bringing new partners into their conversations. The public health community has begun to turn its understanding of the value of physical activity into participation through calls for active transportation initiatives and opportunities. They have become valued stakeholders in supporting the construction of sidewalks and trails, and promoting Safe Routes to School and similar non-motorized programs. This is closely connected to discussions of land use planning as noted above.
- ▶ **Transportation and technology:** A twenty-five year planning cycle is a very long time in today's environment of fast changing technology, disruptor business models, and environmental challenges. We have seen that even a five year capital program cycle has difficulty responding to these changes. This LRTP is expected to see fully automated cars being in general use, electrical vehicles representing a majority of new vehicles, climate change reorienting investment in transportation infrastructure, remote work capabilities altering commuter patterns, the use of online resources changing shopping behavior and with it the need for freight and delivery services. These changes have already begun. Already, vehicles have more on-board safety features like lane departure warning and automatic brake assist, and pervasive wireless communications has enabled USDOT's Connected Vehicle program that allows cars to communicate to each other and the roadside infrastructure enhancing safety and roadway capacity. Commercial GPS guidance systems are found in cars and trucks, and on smartphones and similar devices. Drivers receive real-time traffic and road information, enabling them to make smart choices on route, mode, and time of travel. EV charging stations are now deployed on major routes, bridge replacements now require 100yr flood analysis, and Uber and Lyft are present in the region. The resulting changes in travel behavior and infrastructure design will change the need for investments and are likely to change some of the conclusions of this LRTP.



FEDERAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

The framework of the LRTP is codified in Titles 23 (FHWA) and 49 (FTA) of the Code of Federal Regulations. The LRTP must address the following ten planning factors:

- 1 Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- 2 Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 3 Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 4 Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- 5 Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- 6 Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- 7 Promote efficient system management and operation;
- 8 Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- 9 Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- 10 Enhance travel and tourism.

23 CFR 450.306

The recognition by the Federal government that every metropolitan area is different gives the UCTC flexibility to establish its own priorities among these planning factors in ways that makes the most sense for the region it serves. In doing so, UCTC relies on the shared perspectives of all stakeholders providing a collaborative forum to arrive at decision.

ABOUT UCTC

The UCTC was designated as the MPO for the Kingston Urbanized Area by the Governor of New York on April 30, 2003. The UCTC planning area includes all of Ulster County and in 2013 was expanded to include 7 Census blocks within a small portion of Greene County along the NYS Route 9W corridor. The UCTC planning area also includes portions of the Poughkeepsie -Newburgh Urbanized area where these urbanized areas extend into the southern towns in the County.



Uptown Kingston

The UCTC was formally organized with the adoption of Operating Procedures on June 4, 2003. The UCTC’s decision-making authority rests with its Policy Committee voting members. The Policy Committee is composed of chief elected officials from urbanized and non-urbanized areas throughout Ulster County along with NYSDOT and the New York State Thruway Authority.

The Ulster County Executive serves as Chair of the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee is supported by non-voting Advisory and Technical Committees comprised of municipal and transportation agency officials. In addition to permanent voting members, the UCTC voting structure includes alternating two-year voter membership. Less urbanized municipalities are paired together based upon geographic location and municipal population and alternate every two years on June 4. In addition to permanent and two-year alternating voter members, the UCTC Operating Procedures identify seven rural municipalities to collectively serve as one rural voting member (also known as the “7 as 1” rural voter arrangement). In accordance with UCTC Operating Procedures, the Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors (UCATS) appoints one Supervisor to represent the seven municipalities. Term limits for the individual serving in “7 as 1” rural voting seat is determined by UCATS. UCTC meetings are scheduled and held “as needed” and typically occur every two months.

The UCTC Policy Committee is supported by a Technical Committee comprising appointed municipal and transportation agency staff representing Ulster County municipalities and transportation agency interests. The Technical Committee serves as an advisory body to the Policy Committee. The Technical Committee monitors the operational aspects of the UCTC planning program for consistency with Federal, State, and local planning requirements, reviews technical and policy-oriented projects and programs, makes

recommendations to the Policy Committee for consideration, and monitors the activities of staff.

UCTC also has a joint cooperative transportation planning agreement with the public transit operators in its jurisdiction. In addition, UCTC is supported by Non-Voting Advisory Members to assist with the planning process and help guide the Technical and Policy Committees with decision-making and policy formulation.

The day-to-day activities of UCTC are supported by two full-time and several part-time staffⁱⁱ to ensure the overall planning program is executed in a timely and efficient manner and in accordance with Federal regulations. Ulster County is the host agency for all UCTC-related staffing and planning studies. Staff is housed within the Ulster County Planning Department located in the Ulster County Office Building in Uptown Kingston.

MID-HUDSON VALLEY TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA

Urbanized areas with a population of at least 200,000 or more persons are classified as Transportation Management Areas (TMA) subject to additional Federal requirements and scrutiny. The Poughkeepsie Newburgh urbanized area encompasses large portions of south-eastern Ulster County representing over 300,000 people. Figure 1.1 provides a map of the TMA. The fusion of the three counties into a single planning area became known as the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA. The TMA is governed collaboratively by three separate MPOs – the Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC), the Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC), and the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC). Each of these

UCTC POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

PERMANENT VOTING MEMBERS

- Ulster County Executive, Chair
- City of Kingston Mayor
- Town of Saugerties Supervisor
- Town of Ulster Supervisor
- NYS Thruway Authority Executive Director
- NYSDOT Commissioner, Secretary

TWO-YEAR VOTING MEMBERS

(Alternate biennially)

- Village of Saugerties Mayor*
- Town of Hurley Supervisor
- Town of Rosendale Supervisor*
- Town of Esopus Supervisor
- Town of Lloyd Supervisor*
- Town of Marlborough Supervisor
- Town of Plattekill Supervisor*
- Town of Shawangunk Supervisor
- Village of Ellenville Mayor*
- Village of New Paltz Mayor
- Town of New Paltz Supervisor*
- Town of Wawarsing Supervisor
- Town of Woodstock Supervisor*
- Town of Kingston Supervisor

*Current Voting Representative through June 4, 2021

7 AS 1 RURAL VOTING MEMBERSHIP

(Appointed by Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors)

- Town of Denning Supervisor
- Town of Gardiner Supervisor
- Town of Hardenburgh Supervisor
- Town of Marletown Supervisor
- Town of Olive Supervisor
- Town of Rochester Supervisor*
- Town of Shandaken Supervisor

*Current Voting Representative

NON-VOTING ADVISORY MEMBERS

- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- NYS Bridge Authority



Mid-Hudson Bridge crossing the Hudson River in Poughkeepsie, New York.
 Photo Credit: Connect Mid Hudson

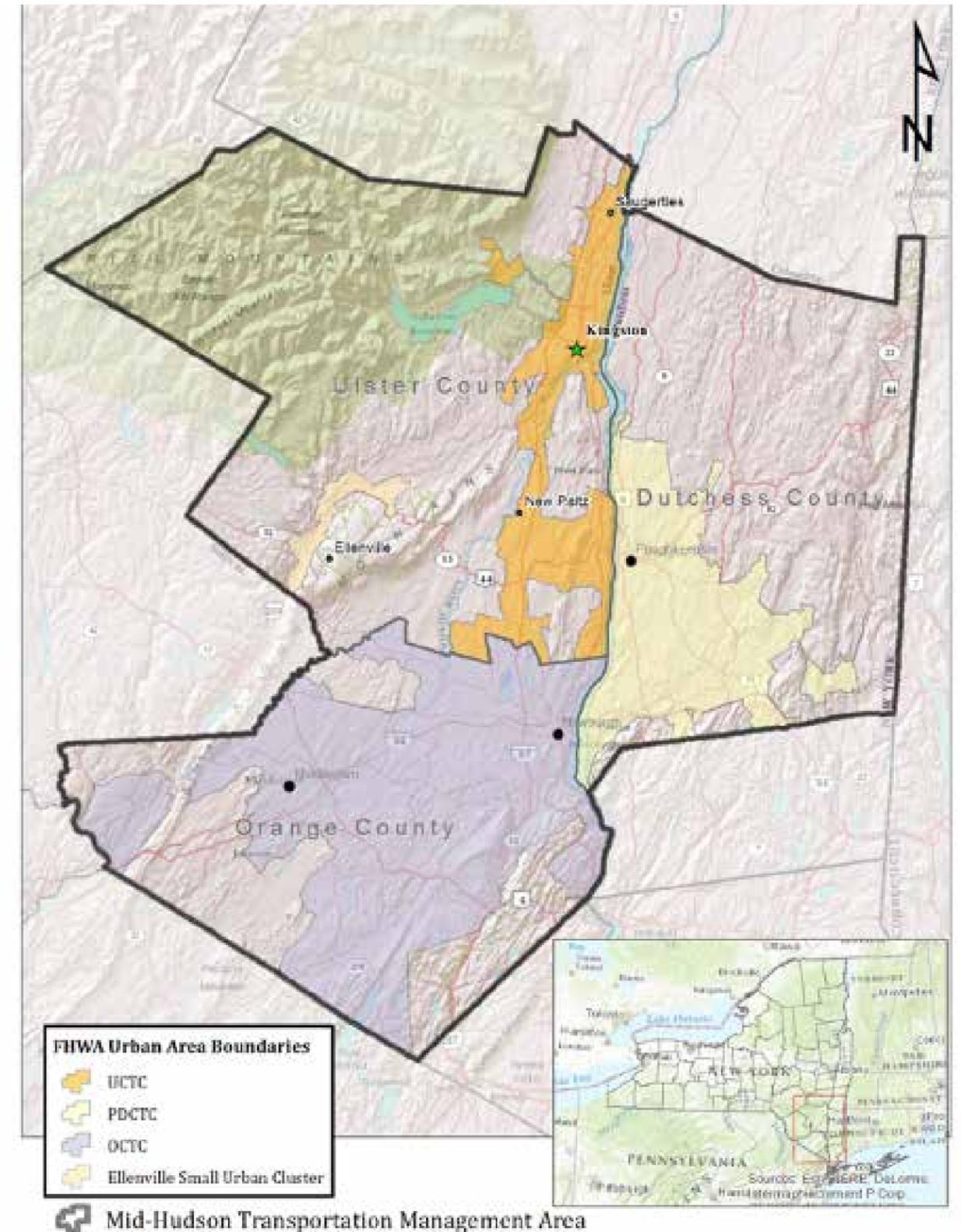
MPOs is hosted by their county’s planning department and each of the MPO membership structures, committee structures, and voting procedures are similar.

The Mid-Hudson Valley TMA experiences a high level of cooperation among the three MPOs and their state partners. In March 2006, the three MPOs and NYSDOT Region 8 signed a Memorandum of Understanding which covers the following areas: Shared Products, such as the Congestion Management Process; the allocation of FTA 5307 funds; data and information sharing, such as traffic counts, travel time surveys, geographic information systems products and federal highway classifications; decision making; staffing; professional services; and financial support.

The three MPOs meet regularly concerning TMA requirements, and coordinate on work activities such as planning studies, TIP development, long range transportation plans and other work products that impact the region. The MPOs individually meet their federal requirements such as preparation and adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In each of these work products, the three MPOs take into account the TMA’s function and highlight relevant information regarding areas of collaboration. Specific collaborative work products involve freight, transit, and congestion management planning and mitigation activities.

In 2014, the three MPOs in the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA began to work with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) – the MPO responsible for the Federal transportation planning

Figure 1.1: Ulster County Transportation Council Metropolitan Planning Area and the Mid-Hudson Transportation Management Area



process in Passaic County, NJ – on meeting the planning requirements for the Poughkeepsie-Newburgh NY-NJ Urbanized Area (UA). This relationship was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding between OCTC and NJTPA in early 2015ⁱⁱⁱ.

UCTC existing plans were also reviewed and their influence is found throughout the LRTP. This includes the Congestion Management Plan for the Region, various transit studies, and corridor-specific safety studies to name a few.

CONNECT MID-HUDSON

The Mid-Hudson Valley Transportation Management Area (MHVTMA) includes the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Orange, Dutchess, and Ulster Counties. The three MPOs are charged with leading a comprehensive approach to transportation planning in the region, with a special focus on congestion management and transit coordination.

The Connect Mid-Hudson Transit Study is focused on identifying opportunities to improve transit connections between the three counties of the Mid-Hudson Valley study area, as well as between the three-county region and major employment hubs outside the region. Key areas of analysis include the effectiveness of intercity coach services; opportunities for new technologies and service models such as app-based microtransit service; capital improvements to alleviate congestion or capacity constraints at park-and-rides and along transit corridors; and a review of service performance and customer satisfaction monitoring.

A virtual public meeting was held on December 10th at 6:00 PM to present the key findings and recommendations of the study. The meeting presentation was recorded for those who were unable to join live. A video of the meeting is posted on the service recommendations page.

2045 LRTP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The 2045 LRTP builds upon the adopted 2040 Plan, related plans from other agencies such as the NYSDOT, and the initiatives at the state level regarding climate change and resilience.

Public Input on the LRTP played an important role in its development. The UCTC conducted four (4) stakeholder meetings, a community survey and four (4) outreach meetings to the general public regarding the Plan as part of the development of the LRTP. These were timed to get response to the draft plan. These combined efforts provided meaningful input into the Plan’s policies and priorities and are detailed in Section 2 of this report.

UCTC staff reviewed the **required related plans** at both the federal and state level as part of the LRTP development as well as noting the impact of changes to state law and the implementation of state initiatives that impact the transportation future and land use patterns associated with the Plan. One result of these efforts can be seen in Section 5 on Sustainability.

LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLANNING

A local road safety plan (LRSP) provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads. The LRSP development process and content are tailored to local issues and needs. The process results in a prioritized list of issues, risks, actions, and improvements that can be used to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the local road network.

While local roads are less traveled than State highways, they have a much higher rate of fatal and serious injury crashes. Developing an LRSP is an effective strategy to improve local road safety for all road users and support the goals of a State’s overall strategic highway safety plan.

To date, UCTC has conducted safety checks at nearly 50 locations across its planning area and more in-depth safety plans at many of these locations. The MPO works with local municipal staff and first responders to develop clear data-driven strategies for improving traffic safety in our communities.



THE REGIONAL VISION

A shared vision of the future of Ulster County is a necessary starting point for the LRTP. Input from the public and the Technical Advisory Committee helped to answer the question: “What will Ulster County look like in 2045?” This vision will create a foundation for setting goals and objectives for the Plan, which in turn was used to select and enumerate the priority projects, actions, and strategies to carry out the plan.

The vision statement supports the following objectives and key results.

2045 LRTP VISION STATEMENT

In the year 2045, Ulster County's transportation system is capable of affordably supporting its vibrant communities, which are attractive to businesses and to people of all ages and stages of life. The transportation system provides appropriate links to the region and beyond, and is viewed by all as an economic and environmental asset and a major contributor to quality of life. Communities are supported by a transportation system that provides safe access by all modes of travel. There is a robust economy, with diverse businesses whose need for efficient freight and personal transportation service is routinely met.

LAND USE

- ▶ UCTC's transportation planning work is cognizant of new trends in Ulster County development, and the value of strategic investments in activity areas in and around our villages and hamlets to create a more sustainable land use pattern while providing for economic development and growth.
- ▶ Ulster County is characterized by vibrant business districts of both regional and local importance. These contribute to quality of life and provide retail and entrepreneurial space that creates employment opportunities.
- ▶ Ulster County is the home of, and attractive to, a population characterized by diversity of race, ethnicity, income, and skills that make it a great place to live, work, and play.
- ▶ Services oriented to the ability of seniors and disabled persons to live in their homes are widely available, as are opportunities to relocate to more convenient and accessible living facilities.
- ▶ The "second home" market in Ulster County is longstanding and likely to continue.
- ▶ The challenges and opportunities created by this trend as noted below are met with appropriate public policies.
 - ▶ Increases in the property tax base without costly demand on services.
 - ▶ Competition for housing that can have a negative impact on the housing market and affordability.
 - ▶ Seasonal traffic congestion in specific locations like Woodstock and New Paltz.
 - ▶ Opportunities for economic growth as second homes become work centers driven by technology and quality of life.

TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ Ulster County has a more sustainable and resilient transportation system in which:
 - ▶ Investments focus on maintaining the existing system of roads and bridges.

- ▶ Key investments are made that support the creation of economic activity and desired land use patterns.
- ▶ Key roads and bridges provide an adequate level of service to residents and businesses for evacuation, emergency response, and recovery in extreme weather events.
- ▶ Sustainable practices in road construction techniques are becoming standard practice by road owners.
- ▶ Areas of congestion exist at the County's southern boundary with Orange County, the Mid-Hudson Bridge Crossing, and in the New Paltz area. Other areas of congestion are strongly tied to the County's tourism base. This is recognized as a consequence of healthy economic activity.
- ▶ Complete streets and safe routes to school allow communities to re-envision how transportation fits in their neighborhoods.
- ▶ An active system of trails provides both transportation and recreation activities linking built places with each other and with open spaces that is heavily used.
- ▶ Ulster County has improved transit service as:
 - ▶ Transit's commuting mode share continues to increase.
 - ▶ Transit service is offered along all major corridors.
 - ▶ Adequate transit service remains a challenge in the rural areas, but mobility is facilitated by technology-based vehicle sharing services.
 - ▶ Transit service operates more frequently and uses the best available traveler information technology.
 - ▶ Transit links provide critical access to out of county passenger rail service where there are robust offerings of inter-regional and intercity travel.
 - ▶ Transit services exist for people traveling between Ulster, Orange, and Dutchess Counties.
 - ▶ Enhanced transit service exists in the urban areas of Kingston and New Paltz and is being considered for other activity centers or destinations.
- ▶ The Port of Kingston is improved, well-maintained, and recognized as a key facility in a multimodal transportation system.
- ▶ The transportation system is responsive to technological change with real time congestion avoidance, integration of autonomous vehicle technology, and providing robust information on freight movements for all modes in its transportation system.
- ▶ Safety and security continue to improve with responsive investments based on better accident data and higher levels of awareness.
- ▶ Rail safety is improved with investment in physical infrastructure and rolling stock combined with more robust inspections.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Ulster County has an excellent economic development climate, where diverse business opportunities create a strong local economy.
- ▶ Businesses can rely on convenient access for their workforce and their customers.
- ▶ Businesses can rely on efficient and seamless freight movement that supports their goods movement needs.



Bread Alone Delivery Truck parked in the bakery's newest location in Lake Katrine, NY.

ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Communities are networked into the countywide non-motorized transportation and transit systems.
- ▶ There is a continuous reduction of transportation-related energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- ▶ Non-point source discharges to waterways from the transportation system are greatly reduced.
- ▶ Noise abatement from railroad operations is achieved through wide use of Federal Railway Administration (FRA) Quiet Zone technology.

¹ For more information, visit the NYSDOT DBE Certification Program webpage, online at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/main/business-center/civil-rights/general-info/dbe-certification>

² See Ulster County Transportation Council Operating Procedures as approved May 26, 2015. Online at http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/uctc/documents/mpo_op.pdf

³ Memorandum of Understanding on MPO Boundaries and Coordination of Transportation Planning and Programming between OCTC and NJTPA (February 17, 2015).