

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANS**

### **What is a Long-Range Transportation Plan?**

A Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a generalized, long-term plan for improving and maintaining the overall transportation system. The LRTP includes anticipated improvements for all modes of travel, including streets and highways, public transportation, railroads, airports, waterborne traffic, and trails.

### **Does the UCTC have a LRTP?**

The Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) does not currently have an adopted LRTP. However, the Ulster County Planning Board recently completed a countywide long-range transportation plan in April 2003. It is anticipated that when the county's LRTP is updated, the UCTC will adopt the plan.

### **Why does the UCTC need to have a LRTP?**

There are several reasons why the UCTC needs a LRTP.

Federal transportation planning regulations require all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), such as the UCTC, to have a long-range transportation plan with a minimum horizon date of twenty (20) years from the date the plan is adopted. In order to receive federal transportation funds for highways, streets, and transit projects, communities and regions with populations in excess of 50,000 persons must have a plan of action for how federal funds will be used. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, often called "TEA-21", spells out what needs to be in the LRTP as well as the need to coordinate transportation planning activities throughout the MPO area.

It makes good cents. Millions of public and private dollars are spent each year on transportation. Proper planning ensures this money is spent effectively and efficiently. These funds represent a significant community investment. It only makes good sense that we all receive a return on this investment in the form of well planned and managed transportation projects.

### **Why are we updating the LRTP now?**

Federal regulations call for MPO LRTPs to be reviewed and updated every five years. In the case of the UCTC, a LRTP has not been adopted since the UCTC's inception and will be required to do so by October of 2005. Once a LRTP is adopted by the UCTC, federal regulations stipulate that a board review and update process be conducted on a prescribed five year cycle.

Another reason for updating the LRTP is the availability of Census data and need for a countywide model update. Additional data from the Year 2000 Census has recently become available and will be incorporated into the LRTP update process to

reflect socio-economic changes that have occurred in past decade. New Census data will also assist the UCTC update the regional transportation demand forecasting model to forecast traffic conditions from Year 2020 to Year 2025.

### **How will the LRTP update be prepared?**

The LRTP update will be developed using input provided by local citizens, key stakeholders, the UCTC Committee members, and UCTC staff over a period of approximately eight (8) months. The UCTC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) currently has funds programmed for the preparation of the LRTP Update in fiscal year 2004. The UCTC staff will work closely with the UCTC Policy and Technical Committees and the State DOT to closely coordinate the update of the Ulster County Transportation Plan. The UCTC currently has funds to retain a consultant to assist with the LRTP update process.

### **What are some of the key study assumptions?**

The Long-Range Transportation Plan update process will be built upon the foundation of the current Ulster County Transportation Plan and traffic forecasting model. This includes assessing all street and roadway improvements already identified. Another key assumption of the LRTP update process is that the Ulster County Comprehensive Plan and Year 2000 Census data will be used as the basis for projecting travel demand.

### **But what about assumed street and highway improvements?**

There are several major street and highway improvements that are in various stages planning. These projects include the Town of New Paltz Transportation Study, the Town of Ulster's bypass over SR 199, and the Washington Avenue corridor study. For the purpose of preparing the LRTP update, these and other improvements are assumed as part of the future network.

### **What about other modes of transportation?**

LRTP will not only be concentrating on the street and highway improvements but also on other modes of transportation. There will be an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian networks, the transit element, freight element, and an analysis of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

### **How are these improvements going to be funded?**

An important step in the LRTP update process is to assess how projects are to be funded. Financial constraints for projects needing implementation will be identified and may result in the need to prioritize projects. Project costs, project feasibility, projected revenues, and project affordability issues will be addressed and updated to Year 2025.

## **SUMMARY OF REASONS TO UPDATE ULSTER COUNTY'S LRTP**

The following are key reasons for updating the Ulster County Long-Range Transportation Plan:

1. Federal Regulations Require MPOs to Adopt and Maintain a LRTP
2. Update Census data
3. Update the UCTC Transportation Demand Forecasting Model to Year 2025
4. Update map inserts
5. Update project priorities
6. Update financial data including project costs and projected revenues
7. Include an analysis of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
8. Consider Environmental Justice issues in the planning process
9. Perform a consistency analysis with the New York State Energy Plan