

Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC)

Why a UCTC?

The federal government requires urbanized areas with a population over 50,000 to have a continuing, collaborative and cooperative transportation planning and decision-making council of governments known as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) was designated as the MPO for Ulster County as a result of the 2000 Census.

What Does UCTC Do?

UCTC is responsible for (1) the development and maintenance of a multi-modal long range transportation plan (LRTP), (2) a five-year transportation improvement program (TIP), and (3) a unified planning work program (UPWP). UCTC also supports other transportation planning activities, including: corridor studies, transportation data collection and multi-modal transportation planning (transit, bicycle and pedestrian) related to its primary responsibilities.



Who is UCTC?

Decision-making rests with the Policy Committee, comprised of the chief elected officials from communities throughout the County. The Ulster County Legislature Chair serves as head of the Policy Committee. The Committee has agreed to act by consensus. *[Consensus is defined as unanimity of affected parties.]*

UCTC is supported by a Technical Committee and additional sub-committees as needed. The Technical Committee is responsible for coordinating and managing UCTC's transportation planning program activities and providing guidance, advice, support, and recommendations to the Policy Committee. Members of the Technical Committee are appointed by the Policy Committee and include municipal and transportation agency staff.

UCTC also has responsibilities to a larger area known as a Transportation Management Area that includes both Orange and Dutchess Counties. The Council works cooperatively with the MPO's in these counties on regional issues such as Congestion Management.



UCTC is sponsored by Ulster County and housed in the Ulster County Planning Department. The Council has access to two full-time transportation planners and other department staff.

GET INVOLVED!

The Process Involves You

Public involvement in the transportation planning process is a key element to its success. UCTC actively seeks public participation in all of its activities including scheduled meetings and planning studies. The public is encouraged to attend UCTC meetings, participate in the transportation planning process and offer comments and suggestion on transportation issues and problems.

UCTC announcements are made through the local media and are posted on our website. The website also contains information on all UCTC activities including project updates and publications such as the TIP and the LRTP. Contacts are provided and you may phone or email us to request project information.

To stay informed, visit the website at:

ulstercountyny.gov/planning/tran.html

UCTC is responsible for developing and maintaining three primary documents and programs supporting the transportation planning process in Ulster County: (1) the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); (2) the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and (3) the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Together with public involvement, these three documents and programs facilitate the transportation planning process and help UCTC meet Federal requirements.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is developed and maintained by UCTC. The LRTP offers a minimum 20 year strategy for maintaining and improving the overall transportation system. The LRTP is required to be updated every 5 years to reflect changing conditions and priorities. Included in the LRTP are projections of growth and travel demand as well as funding availability. The Council's LRTP is a corridor based plan that focuses on major transportation planning concerns including: environmental/air quality, access to transportation, alternative transportation modes (especially bicycle and pedestrian), the impact of land development on the transportation system, highway traffic congestion, and maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

The LRTP considers and integrates the following planning factors into the overall transportation planning process:

1. Support the economic vitality of Ulster County.
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
4. Protect and enhance the environment; promote energy conservation and improve quality of life.
5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
6. Promote efficient system management and operation.
7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing system.



Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is the agreed-upon five-year list of prioritized projects for which federal funds are anticipated. Required by federal law, the TIP represents the near-term transportation improvement priorities of Ulster County. The TIP is multi-modal and includes highway and public transit projects, as well as bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The TIP facilitates the implementation of UCTC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) recommendations into a short-term program of tangible transportation improvements. All TIP projects are evaluated to assure consistency with the goals and objectives established in the LRTP. A majority of TIP projects are aimed at ensuring the continued efficiency and maintenance of the existing transportation system as a priority over the construction of new facilities. UCTC utilizes a "fix it first" philosophy in the development of its most current TIP.



TIP projects are subject to competition and public comment. Project proposals generally exceed funding availability. To determine which projects should be funded, the Council has developed an application package and process, including review by members of the Council, that ranks projects for funding based on adopted policies. The public is given an opportunity to comment on the TIP prior to its adoption by the Policy Committee of the Council.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) summarizes the transportation planning activities to be undertaken by UCTC in support of the Long Range Transportation Plan. It represents the work to be carried out by the Council over the course of several funding cycles.

The UPWP serves as the basis for the expenditure of planning funds by UCTC. The budget is presented by program area and by project, including any funds to be utilized for consultant services.

The UPWP responds to federal requirements. The UPWP must be consistent with the Council's adopted Long Range Plan. In addition, other federal requirements such as National Planning Emphasis Areas must also be addressed within the work program. Inclusion of additional planning priorities may be mandated by the funding sources. In general, the Council's UPWP will include ongoing planning activities such as traffic counts or safety audits, as well as long range plans that address corridor issues, and coordination plans that include multi-modal activities or link land use and transportation. The UPWP will also contain the necessary administrative requirements.

The UPWP planning studies are integrated with implementation of transportation improvements. Recommendations contained in UPWP studies are developed in coordination with UCTC members who have authority to implement. UCTC seeks to include planning activities in its UPWP that result in project implementation requests for inclusion on the TIP.



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A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning

