



2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the Ulster County Transportation Council?

The Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) is the Federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Ulster County, New York planning area. Ulster County is located midway between New York City and Albany. Created as a result of the population growth documented in the year 2000 Census, UCTC is one of the newest designated MPOs in the United States. An MPO is a federally required transportation policy and decision-making organization made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies. MPOs were federally mandated in 1973 for areas with a population greater than 50,000 people. The Ulster County planning area, or urban boundary, includes the county boundary limits of Ulster County.

MPOs are responsible for the allocation of federal transportation funds within their planning area and to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” planning process. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process.

UCTC is also responsible for guiding the metropolitan planning process for Ulster County by coordinating the information, tools and public input needed for improving and enhancing the transportation system of the region. The metropolitan planning process is designed to foster involvement by all interested parties, such as the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, and the general public, through a proactive public participation process conducted in coordination with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and local transit operators.

UCTC is a policy and decision making organization that includes local government and transportation agencies that have developed this Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The plans and programs developed are required to be in conformance with laws and guidelines that include Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), Title IV/Environmental Justice, American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The UCTC is comprised of voting and non-voting members that include:

Ulster County Transportation Council Members (UCTC)		
Technical / Policy (Voting)		Advisory (Non-Voting)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Ellenville • Village of Saugerties • Town of Gardiner • Town of Lloyd • Town of New Paltz • Town of Plattekill • Town of Rosendale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Saugerties • Town of Ulster • Town of Woodstock • City of Kingston • Ulster County • NYSDOT Region 8 • NYS Thruway Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Highway Administration • Federal Transit Administration • NYS Department of Environmental Conservation • NYS Bridge Authority • Federal Railroad Administration

Why is a Long Range Transportation Plan Needed?

The Ulster County Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a cooperative and comprehensive plan to guide transportation investments over a twenty-five (25) year horizon to the year 2030. Since the UCTC is a new MPO, this is the first MPO Long Range Transportation Plan to be prepared. As per the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, a Long-Range Transportation Plan is required of every MPO in the United States and is to include long and short-term multi-modal transportation improvement strategies and guidelines that focus on the mobility of people and goods. The LRTP will also serve as a blueprint that guides transportation development within the county over a twenty-five year period. The LRTP specifically looks at strategies that help to maintain the existing transportation infrastructure, identify alternative modes of transportation, address urban transportation concerns, the linking of transportation and land use development and environmental quality. A LRTP also must protect the value of investments already made in developing the present transportation system, while providing resources to pursue innovative solutions to mobility constraints and strategies to enhance multi-modal mobility throughout the county.

Valid technical analysis and transportation issues as presented in the previously completed 2003 Ulster County Transportation Plan, Year 2020 serve as a basis for the Ulster County Long Range Transportation Plan, Year 2030. Other completed or ongoing plans and studies that complement this LRTP include the 2000 Ulster County Transit Plan and the New Paltz Transportation / Land Use Study.

The Goals of the Long Range Transportation Plan

In conjunction with the UCTC and stakeholders, the following Goals for the LRTP were developed:

Long Range Transportation Plan Goals	
Theme	Goal
Facilities	Provide safe, clean, well maintained and efficient transportation infrastructure
Mobility	Increase the mobility options for residents and visitors of Ulster County
Safety	Enhance the safety and security of the people using the transportation system
Environment	Encourage environmentally sensitive transportation practices and policies for current and future residents
Economy	Direct Ulster County’s economic growth into sustainable areas and preserve the rural economy
Quality Communities	Promote efficient land use and a sense of community through transportation planning
Equity	Promote equity for system users

All recommendations considered as part of the LRTP were measured against their ability to meet these goals.

Public Involvement Included as part of the Plan

A significant Public Outreach Program was included as part of the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan. The program included the following:

- Project Website (www.ulstertransportationplan.org) - The website provided information on the purpose of the Plan, Plan status, schedules, and meeting times and locations. The Draft Plan was available on the website for downloading and comments could be submitted.
- Public Meetings - Two Public Meetings were conducted during the preparation of the Plan. The first was held on November 30, 2004 to introduce the purpose of the plan and to solicit input from the public through several breakout groups. The second Public Meeting was held on June 16, 2005 and presented the Draft LRTP.

- Stakeholder Meetings -- A series of stakeholders meetings were held over a two-day period in February 2005 to seek input and perspective from a broad range of stakeholders of the transportation system within and serving the county.
- Public Comment Period -- A public comment period was established to allow all interested persons, groups, etc., an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the Draft Plan. The comment period extended from June 3, 2005 to July 5, 2005. During this time the plan was available at the Ulster County Offices, local libraries and on the LRTP website.

The feedback received through the Public Outreach Program played a significant part in the development of the Plans recommendations.

A Corridor Based Plan

Corridor-oriented planning considers the transportation systems, land uses, and travel markets between urbanized areas, communities, and other destinations throughout Ulster County. Corridors identified represent dominant directional movements of persons and goods, as well as movement in localized travel markets. Delineations of the corridors as identified below are based on the analysis of existing and emerging travel and land use patterns within Ulster County and are tied to the various trip origins and destinations both within and outside the county. Building the Long-Range Transportation Plan around these corridors facilitated a regional and local understanding of transportation conditions and priorities within the county and will assist decision makers with accessing the transportation needs of the region.

The Ulster County corridors include the following:

Long Range Transportation Plan Corridors	
Corridor	Figure Representation of Corridor
1. US-9W - Hudson River/CSX	Figure 8: US-9W - Hudson River Corridor
2. I-87/NY-32/NY-208 - Wallkill Valley	Figure 12: I-87/NY-32/NY-208 - Wallkill Valley Corridor
3. US-209 - Rondout-Esopus	Figure 16: US-209 - Rondout-Esopus Corridor
4. NY-28 Catskills	Figure 20: NY-28 Catskills Corridor
5. US-44/NY-55/NY-299 - Shawangunk Mountain Corridor	Figure 24: US-44/NY-55/NY-299 - Shawangunk Mtn. Corridor

In addition to specific recommendations for each of these corridors, the LRTP also identified transportation needs on a countywide basis. Recommendations to address these countywide needs were also provided. Recommendations for strategies, studies and improvements for each corridor, and where appropriate countywide, were made based on a review of:

- The findings of the 2003 Ulster County Transportation Plan,
- The results of the Updated Travel Demand Forecasting for the year 2030 and
- Feedback received as part of the Public Outreach conducted.

While the County has several similar elements that are considered in the LRTP, the corridors are unique and as a result have their own needs and recommended initiatives to meet the Goals and Objectives.

Financial Plan

The LRTP includes a financial plan consistent with existing and proposed transportation investments. The financial plan also demonstrates implementation costs of the projects, public and private financing and additional financing necessary for the LRTP. Federal, state and local governments primarily provide the funding. The total estimated cost for the recommended initiatives for the 25-year life of the Plan, including the maintenance on the State and Local System is \$1,153,880,000 compared to the funds available of \$888,200,000. Without additional funding, decisions will need to be made to delay projects or to delay desired maintenance on the existing highway system.

Summary of Findings

The key findings of the Long Range Transportation Plan are:

- Significant population, housing and employment growth is forecasted in Ulster County between 2005 and 2030.
- Total Vehicle Miles of Travel is expected to increase by over 50% by 2030.
- The major Transportation Needs include maintaining the existing system, evaluate improvements to the CSX rail corridor, improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities and to study, document and prioritize all other needs in the County.
- The Plan is fiscally constrained in that not the entire desired initiatives can be accomplished without obtaining additional funding beyond what has been identified.

What Happens Next?

The UCTC will use the recommendations contained in the LRTP to prioritize the allocation of the limited transportation funds that are available. This can be accomplished by identifying the projects and studies that are advanced in the annual work program the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Federal regulations also require that the LRTP be updated at least every five years to insure current transportation trends and funding are considered.

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