

ULSTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 3, 2004
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Ulster County Community College
Stone Ridge, NY

Members

Present:

Larry Cavazza*	Town of Plattekill
Linda Cook**	Town of Hurley
Sandy Cozza**	City of Kingston Citibus
John Dragan**	Village of Saugerties
Steve Finkle**	City of Kingston
Toni Hokanson**	Town of New Paltz
Albert Meyer**	Ulster County Legislature
Richard Peters**	NYS DOT Region 8
Olive Rose^	New York State Bridge Authority
Bob Shepard*	Town of Lloyd
Fred Wadnola ⁺	Town of Ulster

Others

Present:

Mircea Catona	UC Public Works Department
Nancy Hammond	Town of Lloyd
Paul Provost	Adirondack Trailways
Cynthia Ruiz	Ulster County Area Transit
Charlie Schaller	UC Traffic Safety Board
Geddy Sveikauskas	Woodstock Times

Staff

Present:

Dennis Doyle	UC Planning Board/UCTC
Jean Gunsch	NYS DOT Region 8/UCTC
Jean Shanahan	NYS DOT Region 8/UCTC
Bill Tobin	UCTC

⁺Permanent Voting Member

*Current Voting Member (Until June 5, 2005)

**Current Voting Proxy

[^]Current Advisory Member

The meeting began at 3:01 p.m. with Mr. Tobin welcoming those in attendance. Mr. Tobin presented the meeting minutes from the April 6, 2004 Technical Committee Meeting and asked for any comments or corrections. No comments to the minutes were received.

Mr. Tobin introduced the first item of new business “Draft UCTC Title VI (Civil Rights) Plan.”

Mr. Tobin explained the need and requirement for the UCTC to have a process in place for handling Title VI discrimination complaints. Mr. Tobin further explained the purpose of the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) Title VI/Environmental Justice program is to establish and implement Procedures that comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, as well as related statutes and regulations. The provisions include, but are not limited to, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, disabling condition, or being included within minority populations and/or low income populations, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity administered by NYSDOT.

Mr. Tobin also added that attached to the Draft UCTC Title VI (Civil Rights) Plan is a two-page complaint form for UCTC staff or the public to fill out and submit to NYSDOT.

Ms Ruiz asked for clarification on the definition of Environmental Justice.

Mr. Tobin responded to Ms. Ruiz’s question by stating Environmental Justice is the practice of avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

Ms. Ruiz asked why the NYSDOT was afforded 180 days to file report concerning a local discrimination complaint.

Mr. Tobin responded that 180 days is a federal requirement for NYSDOT’s Office of Equal Opportunity Development and Compliance (OEODC) Civil Rights Unit to file its report concerning a local discrimination complaint.

A consensus was reached by those in attendance to forward the Draft UCTC Title VI (Civil Rights) Plan with resolution to the Policy Committee for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Tobin moved to the next agenda item entitled Draft UCTC TIP Project Selection Methodology. Mr. Tobin presented background and scope for the reasoning behind the development of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project selection process for Ulster County.

Mr. Tobin began by explaining the purpose and need for a TIP. Mr. Tobin stated that a TIP is a federal requirement of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), such as the UCTC. Mr. Tobin further stated that a TIP is five –year fiscally constrained capital improvement program designed to implement short-term projects addressing needs identified within the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Mr. Tobin briefly described the TIP project selection process in the following sequence of events: (1) Call for Projects; (2) Applications submitted by due date (not yet determined); (3) Initial screening of applications by UCTC/NYSDOT staff; (4) Project

applications forwarded to sub-committee for preliminary review and scoring; (5) Project applications forwarded to the UCTC Technical Committee for further review and discussion; (6) Project applications then forwarded to UCTC Policy Committee for further review and project selection; (7) UCTC Policy Committee then initiates a thirty (30) day public review and comment period for the TIP; (8) Policy Committee adopts UCTC Federal Fiscal Year 2006-2010 TIP.

Mr. Tobin explained to those in attendance that the TIP project selection process helps to keep the focus on funding locally identified needs, satisfies federal requirements, maintain fiscal constraint, helps keep the process fair and equitable, and holds decision makers accountable for the projects they select.

Mr. Tobin then identified the following six (6) minimum requirements all projects must meet: (1) consistency with TEA-21 requirements and other transportation plans; (2) a provision of local matching funds; (3) defined scope and timing, (4) meets an identified need; (5) federal-aid eligibility; and (6) meets or exceeds a minimum project total of \$50,000.

Mr. Tobin then described the quantitative and qualitative phases of the “correlation” approach to evaluating TIP projects. Under the correlation approach, broad goal categories are identified based upon federal regulations coupled with specific goals and objectives found within the Ulster County Long-Range Transportation Plan. Proposed projects are then assigned a score based upon the correlation or degree of relationship a proposed project has with the broad goal category. Projects accumulate points depending on the degree of correlation they achieve for each broad goal category.

Mr. Tobin continued to explain that bridge and pavement resurfacing-related projects must be evaluated separately from all other projects when evaluating TIP projects. Mr. Tobin explained that the purpose for separating out bridge and pavement resurfacing-related projects is because they may not score the same as other projects but are highly important to the overall transportation system.

Finally, Mr. Tobin stated that after project applications are evaluated by the UCTC Sub Committee and the Technical Committee the project’s score will determine the project’s ranking for placement on the TIP. The Policy Committee will review all applications, scores, and rankings. High-ranking applications will be grouped together with other projects meeting the same high standards and selected on a merit basis by the Policy Committee. Ultimately, the UCTC Policy Committee decides which projects to select.

Mr. Tobin then provided hypothetical examples of how projects might be scored using the draft TIP project selection process proposed. Mr. Tobin used the following hypothetical examples: (1) Saugerties Advanced Detour System; (2) New Paltz Bypass; (3) Marlborough 9w Intersection Improvement project; (4) Repaving of 9w in the Town of Ulster; (5) Roundabout at the intersection of 212/375 in the Town of Woodstock; (6) Repaving 32 within the City of Kingston; (7) City of Kingston Intermodal Transportation Center; (8) City of Kingston to Shokan Reservoir off road trail system.

Mr. Tobin summarized the TIP project selection process by stating that it contains two phases: (1) assigning a numerical score to projects by the Technical Committee based upon the project's degree of relatedness to TEA-21 legislation and the goals of the long-range transportation plan and (2) the Policy Committee's review of each project's score and its overall merit.

Mr. Tobin further stated that the TIP project selection process proposed is not perfect and is not "air tight" in its objectivity. Mr. Tobin further stated that the process is not intended to be permanent and should be periodically reviewed and updated especially upon the completed update of the Ulster County Transportation Council's Long-Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Tobin stated that he does believe the TIP project selection process presented strives to achieve fairness, equity, and demonstrates a level of accountability needed in the TIP project selection process.

Mr. Tobin presented the following two recommendations to the Technical Committee: (1) Appoint a Technical Sub-Committee to review and preliminarily score TIP project applications. It was recommended that four to seven UCTC members sit on the Technical Sub Committee and (2) Recommend the Policy Committee adopt the draft project selection process presented but recognize that the process itself may be updated and modified over time once the process is tested under real world situations.

After some discussion concerning the appointment of a sub committee, the Technical Committee agreed to forward a recommendation to the Policy Committee to appoint the following individuals to serve on the TIP project application scoring sub-committee:

Recommended UCTC TIP Project Application Scoring Sub-Committee	
Name	Representation
Larry Cavazza	Town of Plattekill
John Dragan	Village of Saugerties
Steve Finkle	City of Kingston
Al Meyer	County of Ulster
Rich Peters	NYSDOT Region 8
Bob Shepard	Town of Lloyd

After some discussion, the Technical Committee agreed to forward a recommendation to the Policy Committee to adopt the TIP project selection process as presented recognizing the process is untested under real world situations, is not perfect, and is subject to future modifications, when necessary.

Mr. Tobin introduced the next item on the agenda as "Other Business and Announcements."

Mr. Tobin provided a brief status report on the UCTC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update. Mr. Tobin stated that the UCTC's LRTP advisory group recently completed a consultant selection process to retain the services of Edwards & Kelcey (EK) of Saratoga Springs, New York, and their sub consultant, Fitzgerald & Halliday

Associates, to help with the updates to the Ulster County LRTP and travel demand forecasting model. The UCTC LRTP advisory group received a total of five (5) proposals from interested consulting firms for the eight (8) month project. If time permits, UCTC staff may invite EK to present their scope of work and meet with Technical Committee members at the December UCTC Technical Committee meeting.

Mr. Tobin provided a brief update on the countywide transit study currently underway. Mr. Tobin stated that a consultant selection process was recently completed by the UCTC's Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC received seven (7) proposals for the eight (8) month project and selected Abrams-Cherwony of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, along with their sub consultant Eng-Wong, Taub & Associates. The study will look at coordination opportunities of fixed route bus transportation services among public and private transit providers as well as look at the City of Kingston intermodal transportation center and regional sub centers in terms of their function and locations.

Mr. Tobin provided a brief update on the Washington Avenue Corridor study. Mr. Tobin stated that the Town of Ulster is preparing to hire a consultant to assist with an alternatives analysis study to include a traffic forecasting analysis to help determine the best access management system design for Washington Avenue between the current traffic circle and Esopus Creek.

Mr. Tobin provided a brief update on the New Paltz Transportation and Land Use Study. Mr. Tobin stated that a series of public meetings have been conducted over the past few months by the retained consultant, Resource Systems Group. The consultant is currently working on responding to comments submitted by the Technical and Citizen Advisory Committees related to the June 2004 Phase "A" Existing Conditions Report. The consultant is also preparing the Phase "B" report to contain an evaluation of future land uses and alternative transportation improvements. The project completion percentage is approximately 40% and the overall study is expected to be completed by June 2005. More information can be found at the project web site as follows:
www.newpaltztransportation.com/index.html

Mr. Tobin provided a brief update on the status of the 9w construction project within the Town of Lloyd. Mr. Tobin stated the scope of the project is to add a center turning lane on 9w between South Chapel Hill Road and Vineyard Avenue. Currently, the project is in its utilities relocation phase. The project, currently at 18% completion, is expected to be completed by November of 2005 at a cost of approximately \$10 million.

Mr. Doyle provided a brief update of the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) recent public hearing. Mr. Doyle explained that NYSDOT is currently updating the Statewide Transportation Plan and is currently holding public hearings throughout the State to gather input concerning transportation issues and problems. Mr. Doyle stated the he gave testimony on behalf of the UCTC and the Ulster County Planning Board.

Mr. Tobin provided a brief update on Transportation Management Area (TMA) staff activities. Mr. Tobin explained that as a result of the 2000 Census, portions of Ulster County now belong to a TMA shared with Dutchess and Orange counties which total a population in excess of 200,000. The recently formed TMA is comprised of staff representing the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC), the Newburgh-Orange County Transportation Council (NOCTC), UCTC, NYSDOT Region 8, and the Federal Highway Administration. In addition to federal requirements, the MHVTMA was formed so that the three MPOs can work together to address regional traffic congestion and transit coordination issues. Currently, the MHVTMA is the process of defining measures for congestion, mapping congested corridors with regional significance, and investigating opportunities and methods to collect and share data.

A consensus was reached to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Bill Tobin