

Dutchess County Transportation Council

Planning Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

10:00 a.m. via Teams

Meeting Summary

1. **Introductions** – Mark Debald (DCTC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself and attendees. See attached list.
2. **Announcements**
 - a. Voting Membership Changes: Mark alerted the Committee to upcoming voting membership changes for the DCTC, which will take effect on January 1, 2022. The Town of Pleasant Valley and the Village of Pawling will become voting members, while the two members representing the non-urbanized towns and villages will also need to be redesignated. New members will also be invited to attend an ‘MPO 101’ presentation next year to help them gain a better understanding of the MPO and understand their role as a voting member. Other interested members and the public will also be invited.
 - b. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA): The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed by Congress earlier this month. Much of the funding will come through existing programs. While it includes funding for a reauthorization of the FAST Act, new funding will be added, and some new programs created. Approximately \$567 billion will be designated for transportation and related infrastructure.

While clarification on the IIJA is still needed, one initial, high level takeaway is that it’s not a panacea, so expectations need to be managed. A good portion of funding will likely go to already programmed, near-term projects, but there may be more opportunities for new projects in the 2024-2026 timeframe. We should also acknowledge that there are external challenges, including inflation, reduced availability of materials and labor, and the property tax cap that will impact how quickly funds are spent, especially at the local level.

What is known about IIJA is that it retains and increases the funding of many existing federal programs. New formula programs and new grant programs will also be created. It will take time for many of the formula amounts to be calculated by NYSDOT. More information and/or clarification about what will happen in our area will be shared when it becomes available.

Steve Strauss noted that Dutchess County will receive about a 25% increase in federal transit funds. Additionally, USDOT has a fact sheet on their website that shows how much money New York State will get. Mark added that Dutchess County recently received \$4M which will be used for bus garage improvements and Dutchess County Public Transit is investigating EV charging needs and EV vehicles. But the rules for the funding still need to be written and there is no official data on the actual amounts that will be received from the FTA.

- c. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSSA): Additional transit funds will be coming to the area since NY, NJ, and CT came to an agreement on the transit fund suballocations that were authorized under ARPA and CRRSSA. The suballocations have not yet been received. After the information about the funds becomes available, the three regional MPOs will need to agree to the suballocations. Numbers will likely be presented to the Committee at its January meeting, but it might not be approved until late February or early March.

3. Public Participation – Mark provided an opportunity for members to share announcements or questions; there were none.

4. Old Business

- a. Transportation Management Area (TMA) Federal Certification Review: Mark reminded the Committee that the DCTC completed a Federal Certification review in September and that we are awaiting a draft report from FHWA and FTA. We're hopeful the draft report will be done in the next two months.

In the meantime, some likely near-term recommendations actions are moving forward. Emily has been working on tribal coordination with the nations and tribes that have an interest in Dutchess County. In the future, representatives from the nations and tribes may be invited to planning meetings, so they can be included in discussions on matters that may impact them. Of the tribes she has spoken with, their biggest concern is ground disturbance. They would like to be made aware of and have an opportunity to review plans or projects that involve digging.

As part of the Certification Review, a Desk Reference is being drafted. It will summarize the TMA and MPO planning process. It should be helpful for residents as well as new members. It will be distributed and published online when ready.

We are also working on a regional freight plan with Orange and Ulster counties. Currently, freight data is being gathered and analyzed to understand freight flows and tonnages being moved throughout the region. Another large part of this initial work is gathering a list of freight stakeholders. Committee members were asked to share any information about freight stakeholders they may have. Spurred by this work on a freight plan, Orange County has created an [online ESRI GIS hub](#) to serve as a public clearinghouse on TMA activities and planning products. It includes ways to learn about the TMA and provides basic information about its projects.

5. New Business

- a. Upcoming FFY 2023-2027 TIP Update: The 14 MPOs in NYS and NYSDOT are getting ready for a TIP update next year. The TIP is our capital program of federally funded transportation projects in Dutchess County. It is a five-year program based on the federal fiscal year calendar. Right now, we are looking at existing projects in the current TIP (2020-2024) to make sure their scopes, schedules, and budgets are still in line with project sponsors' priorities and needs. We should receive our funding targets early next year, as we develop the new TIP. The new Infrastructure Act may delay the issuance of these targets, but they should include that new IJA funding. Meanwhile, the TIP

narrative will get underway, with the goal of having a draft TIP by next May.

- i. New project selection criteria: One part of the TIP update includes examining how the MPO selects new projects. Keeping in line with the themes and goals of [Moving Dutchess Forward](#), we are looking at reshaping our project selection criteria to address future trends, safety and reliability barriers, and access to basic needs. A draft version of the project selection criteria with a two-tier eligibility process was shared with the group. Mark provided a brief overview of the document and asked members to review the document and share their feedback or ask questions. It will continue to be refined and likely presented at the January Planning Committee meeting for discussion.
- ii. Review programming options: There are four possible approaches that could be taken to update the TIP. Mark presented brief descriptions of all four options. Members were given an opportunity to share their opinions about which would be best using an online collaboration tool. Afterward, a brief discussion about the different options ensued.
- iii. Tentative Schedule: As mentioned, we will need to approve the new TIP by June 2022.
- iv. TIP/STIP obligation rates: Mark reviewed statewide data on construction obligations for FFY 2021. At 40%, DCTC is well below the state's goal of having 75% of scheduled highway projects obligated for construction at the close of the FFY. Orange and Ulster counties' rates are also about the same. Some of the challenges in obligating projects include the extra amount of time and resources it takes when using federal highway funds. Herb Litts (GPI) agreed and added that if the federal process was streamlined, the obligation rate would likely go up. In addition, when project sponsors are not familiar with the federal aid process, the process can take even longer. Steve Strauss (ESPA) suggested that communities pool their resources to handle paperwork and concentrate the federal funds on larger projects, because it may not be worthwhile for smaller projects.

After the discussion, which featured an interactive pro/con Padlet, a Slido poll was introduced to see which TIP update strategies the group preferred. The majority preferred to program projects from the long-range plan (see poll and Padlet results at end of this summary). Mark also noted that there are already four local projects scheduled for the TIP capital program for 2023, which will probably use most of the funding available for that year.

- b. Call for Planning Proposals: A Call for Planning Proposals is currently out to local municipalities and interested agencies for transportation-focused, federally funded planning assistance. The call letter, application form, and basic guidelines are on the website, with a due date of November 30, 2021. So far, one request has been received. For a list of the type of work that has been done in the past, see the [Publications page](#) and the reports on our website.

- c. DCTC logo and rebranding: We are going to develop a new logo and style guide for the DCTC. We received seven proposals from design firms and are currently evaluating the proposals. The goal is to have a contract and to start the work on the new logo in early 2022.
- d. Vulnerability Assessment RFI: The RFI closed on November 16th with two responses, which are being reviewed by staff.
- e. Automated Pavement Scoring RFI: We are still assessing whether to do an RFI for automated pavement scoring and continuing our research on the topic. We have also spoken with a software company that uses smartphones to assess pavement quality. Our legal department is also looking into piggybacking off a City of Albany contract.

6. Planning Updates

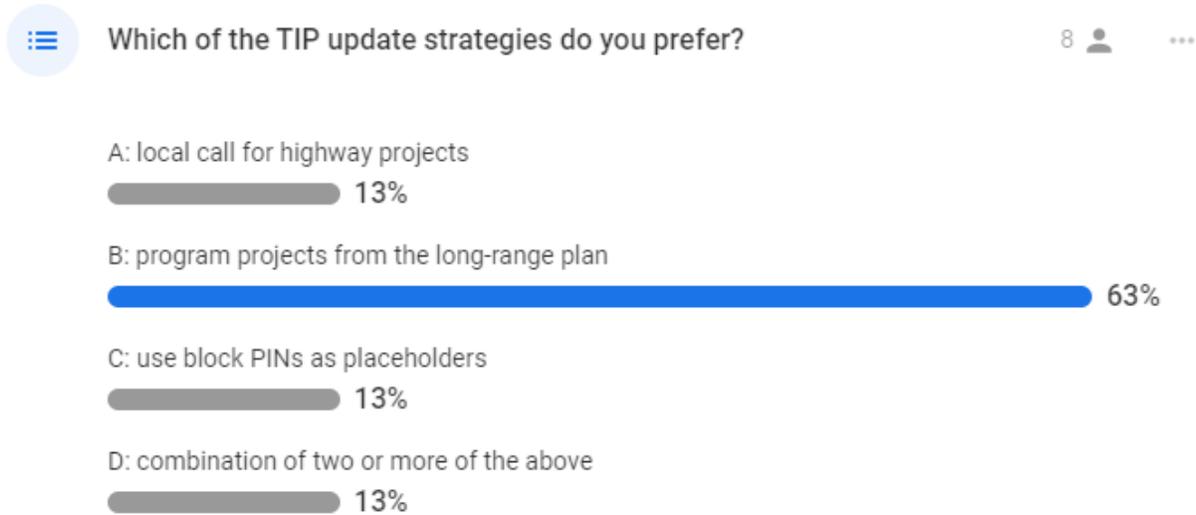
- a. Poughkeepsie 9.44.55: We are nearing the end of the arterial concepts portion of the study. A first draft of Chapter 4-Arterials Concept is complete; Advisory Committee members are providing their comments. We're hoping to release it to the public as a final draft in early 2022. Outreach to the public and presentations to the City and Town of Poughkeepsie will also take place next year. In the meantime, additional traffic modeling is underway based on comments received from NYSDOT.
- b. CR 14-Hollow Road Safety Assessment: The draft report of the Hollow Road safety assessment in the Town of Clinton is complete and has been sent to the safety assessment team for their feedback. It will likely be completed by the end of the year and sent to the assessment team for implementation.
- c. Traffic Count Program: Tara shared that traffic counts were completed as of November 19, 2021 and the data is currently being processed. It will be posted to our [traffic data viewer](#) when it is ready.

7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. (virtual)

11/23/2021 Meeting Participants:

Name	Organization	Address or Email	Phone
Mark Debald	DCTC	mdebald@dutchessny.gov	845-486-3600
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Michael Whitton	Town of Clinton	whittontownboard@gmail.com	646-824-6912
Robert Mortell	NYMTC-MHSTCC	robert.mortell@dot.ny.gov	845-431-5710
Nathan Briggs	North East Community Center Transportation Program	nathan@neccmillerton.org	518-789-4259
Herb Litts	GPI	hlitts@gpinet.com	845-741-1997
Steve Strauss	Empire State Passengers Association	straussnyc@verizon.net	

11/23/2021 Poll and Padlet results:



TIP update strategies

Pros and cons

Option A: Local call for highway projects

Pros

- Anonymous 1h allows locals to suggest projects not previously identified in the plan
- Anonymous 1h Local Buy-in.
- Add comment

Cons

- Anonymous 1h Violates the MPO long-term planning process.
- Add comment

Option B: Program projects from the long-range plan

Pros

- Anonymous 1h projects have already been vetted by the MPO
- Anonymous 1h Best supports the MPO planning process
- Anonymous 1h Best option for following the MPO planning process
- Add comment

Cons

- Anonymous 1h may not leave room for other projects
- Anonymous 1h May not include new IIJA \$\$\$ and programs.
- Add comment

Option C: Use block PINs as placeholders (e.g. PIN 8BLK05)

Pros

- Anonymous 1h flexibility; buys us time
- Add comment

Cons

- Anonymous 1h no defined project
- Add comment

Option D: Combination of two or more strategies

Ideas

- Anonymous 1h A & B
- Add comment