

Dutchess County Transportation Council

Planning Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

1:30 p.m. via Teams

Meeting Summary

1. **Introductions** – See attached list.
2. **Announcements**
 - a. Mark DeBald (DCTC) welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting, mentioning that everyone should have received the meeting materials with the email notice.
 - b. Mark began by announcing a well-deserved promotion for Dylan Tuttle, who was recently upgraded to Planner. He will continue to work on our long-range plan but will gradually shift away from DCTC tasks. Congratulations to Dylan!
 - c. TIP Administrative Modification 20-J: Mark alerted the committee to a minor change to our five-year capital program (i.e. TIP), to provide \$400,000 in additional detailed design funding for the roundabout at the Route 376/CR 94 (All Angels Hill Rd)/CR 104 (New Hackensack Rd) intersection.
 - d. SFY 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): Mark noted that we recently received our federal funding estimates for the 2021-2022 UPWP. The DCTC program total is \$675,000, about a \$4,000 drop from last year. This is basically flat funding.
 - e. The County's 2021 budget will be unveiled soon. All our staff positions will be maintained. However, the Planning Department will operate under an austerity budget, so we do not anticipate any new consultant contracts or new studies for next year. We will assist the department with its new housing initiative.
 - f. Mark indicated that NYSDOT still intends to issue a statewide call for projects for the TAP/CMAQ program and the Bridge NY program. One attendee mentioned that they heard the call for projects would be in February.
3. **Public Participation** – Mark opened the meeting for any comments or announcements from attendees; none were noted.
4. **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**
 - a. Mark introduced the Coordinated Plan, which focuses on the mobility needs of the elderly and disabled. DCTC has done three such plans in the past. The plan identifies needs/gaps, identifies strategies, and prioritizes strategies, with a focus on coordination between human service agencies. This plan is a key component of the FTA 5310 program (mobility needs of disabled and elderly).
 - b. A survey was issued to about 35 human service agencies that serve our elderly population and persons with disabilities. Mark summarized the findings from the 13 agencies that responded. Most agencies provide transportation directly using their own vehicles, using a demand-response model. Some serve areas outside Dutchess County. All serve people with disabilities; some also serve seniors. More than 300 vehicles are

being used for responding agencies, but less than 25% have wheelchair access. There is a need for more vehicles. There is very little coordination between agencies, due to a reluctance to share vehicles or dispatch duties. Other issues were related to coverage gaps in rural areas without DCPT service; understanding bus schedules; and cost barriers with taxis. Some agencies were not aware of the FTA 5310 program.

- c. DCTC will update the 2015 Coordinated Plan and incorporate recommendations from our long-range plan – *Moving Dutchess Forward* – and the Dutchess County Transit Plan (currently underway).

5. Mid-Hudson Valley TMA Regional Transit Study

- a. Mark gave some background on the study. It focuses on improving connections between Ulster, Orange, and Dutchess counties, as well as to Albany and the NYC metro area. Boris Palchik (Foursquare), the project consultant, gave a presentation that summarized the study.
- b. Boris noted that COVID has affected transit significantly. While the study team collected data prior to COVID, the recommendations were adjusted to account for COVID impacts. Stewart Airport may shift from a passenger-focused hub to a cargo hub, so employee access to Stewart will be more important.
- c. The study included a market analysis, service analysis, and stakeholder outreach. Outreach included an online survey, with 1,300 responses (75% riders/25% non-riders). In Dutchess, responses highlighted issues including: high fares and parking fees at train stations; limited parking at Beacon and Rhinecliff stations; limited passenger information and amenities for Dutchess County Public Transit and the Newburgh-Beacon-Stewart Shuttle; limited bus service in northern Dutchess; no off-peak service between Beacon and Newburgh.
- d. Market analysis highlights include: Transit potential is mainly along the Route 9 corridor. For regional commute trips, Dutchess has direct and frequent service between Poughkeepsie and Manhattan; other connections require at least two trips (eg, drive to a train station, then take the train). Some congestion hot spots (I-84/9D; Route 9/Route 52); some park and ride capacity issues (TSP/Route 52; Beacon station). Also, there is a need for better service monitoring of private bus companies (eg Coach USA, Trailways, Leprechaun Lines).
- e. Recommendations include: create a Transit Ombudsman position to investigate issues with private bus companies; make transit data available for open-source apps to enable coordination between transit services; explore Microtransit service (similar to Uber/Lyft but with designated vehicles and drivers overseen by a company or agency) in a few areas (northern Dutchess; southern Poughkeepsie; Beacon-Newburgh area). Other recommendations include transit signal priority at several locations (I-84/9D; Route 9/52).
- f. Ray Oberly (Town of Clinton) asked about rural areas- how would microtransit be financially viable? Boris said the microtransit areas could be expanded over time, but service is flexible: the vehicle only goes where people request a ride. Mark noted that DCPT is working with a consultant on a separate transit study also, which is focused in part on the rural areas. Bill Schwartz (Nelson Nygaard) was on the call. Steve Strauss

asked if there was any opposition to expanding parking at Rhinecliff station; Boris said they did not hear about that. Steve suggested some potential alternatives to improve access. Mark asked the group for feedback on the northern Dutchess Microtransit area; Steve thought it looked viable, but maybe a bit large (33 square miles).

- g. There will be a virtual public meeting about the project on 12/10 at 6pm, which will cover all three counties. It is advertised on the project website, <https://www.connectmidhudson.com/>. The presentation will be recorded and posted. DCTC will publicize the meeting. Mark will also post today's presentation on the DCTC website.

6. *Moving Dutchess Forward (2021 Transportation Plan):*

- a. Plan update & schedule: The Plan website was unveiled on 11/23 and a press release was sent out by the County. The website includes a video, survey, map viewer, and draft Plan content for Goal 1 (Learn), which discusses trends. Mark reviewed the overall schedule. The 'Goal 2' text (Assess) related to transportation barriers should be posted around the end of 2020. This is where we'll identify barriers to safety, reliability, and basic needs such as employment, housing, education, goods and services, and recreation. Goal 3 will look at policies. We will then develop a vision for future transportation and develop recommendations for investments. The draft plan should be complete by May and finalized in June. Mark noted that photos of people using transportation are still needed.
- b. Public engagement update: The online survey is open. Participants can be entered into a drawing for gift cards. We will be asking for help distributing materials to residents (via buses, public buildings, etc). A plan video is posted on the home page of the website. And we're looking for personal transportation stories for the Community Profiles piece of the plan.
- c. Website walk-through: Mark showed the website, <https://movingdutchessforward.com/>. He noted that the 'Introduction' and the 'Learn' section, which outlines various trends, are live. Other sections of the plan will be posted once available. The digital nature of the plan allows us to update it if data or trends change (such as new Census data). The site's 'Get Involved' page includes information about the survey, events, and a form to sign-up to share your personal transportation story. Mark also showed the 'Map Viewer' tool, which includes a transportation system map and a demographic data map with population and socio-economic data. Mark asked everyone to help share the website and survey.

7. Project Updates

- a. [Poughkeepsie 9.44.55](#): Mark reminded the Committee that the virtual presentation on the interchange redesign concepts was still available on the project website. The video presentation provides background on the four redesign concepts and includes some simple surveys to gauge viewer's reactions to the concepts. We're very pleased with this virtual tool, which has been well received by the public and gotten good press coverage. The study team is reviewing the input received. The Advisory Committee will meet in December to discuss the interchange. The project will then shift to looking at the arterials.

- b. [Arlington Main Street Redesign Initiative](#): We are reviewing a draft final report and hopes to present it to the Poughkeepsie Town Board in December.

8. **Final announcements** – none were noted.

9. **Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.** (note change to a Tuesday)

11/24/20 Meeting Participants:

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