

Dutchess County Transportation Safety Action Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary

August 20, 2024, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, 108 Parker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Attendees

- Emily Dozier, Senior Planner (Project Manager), Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
- Mark Debal, Transportation Program Administrator, Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
- Tara Grogan, Senior Planner, Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
- Bill Johnson, Traffic Safety Administrator, Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board (TSB)
- Hisieni Sacasa, Biostatistician, Dutchess County Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH)
- Mohammed Islam, Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator, NYSDOT Region 8
- Rich DuPilka, City Engineer, City of Poughkeepsie
- Melkorka Kjarval, Deputy Mayor, Village of Red Hook
- Jeffery Smith, Manager of Transportation Services, Bard College
- Carmine Istvan, Highway Superintendent, Town of Fishkill
- Cory Hopwood, Cambridge Systematics (CS)
- Ryan Klitzsch, (CS) (virtual)
- Russ Martin, (CS) (virtual)
- Dave Rettig, Sam Schwartz Engineering (SSE)
- Mikala Sherman-Kortright, Weston & Sampson (WS)

Welcome & Introductions

Cory Hopwood launched the meeting and introduced the Dutchess County Transportation Safety Action Plan effort. Emily Dozier introduced the DCTC team, explained its role, and previewed the meeting's content. Cory introduced the Cambridge Systematics team, and attendees introduced themselves. Emily noted the other Advisory Committee members that were not in attendance.

Introduction to Planning Process

Cory announced that the purpose of the Safety Action Plan is to eliminate traffic fatalities in Dutchess County, and he reviewed crash statistics and trends. He noted that traffic safety metrics have worsened since the pandemic and explained that safety planners focus on serious injuries and fatalities, especially for vulnerable road users. Cory previewed the data analysis planned for the effort and how it will support more thoughtful safety programming.

Cory acknowledged the ongoing work in Dutchess County to improve safety and explained that this effort is meant to incorporate and elevate that work. Emily highlighted some of DCTC's transportation plans and how they examine traffic safety. She reviewed some of the priority locations analyzed to date.

Cory reviewed the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program. The goal of this effort is to create a Safety Action Plan that will make Dutchess County and all 30 local municipalities eligible for SS4A implementation grants and other safety funding and resources. This effort will meet each of SS4A's regulatory requirements for Safety Action Plans.

Cory briefly summarized the Safe System Approach and its application to the Safety Action Plan, particularly protecting vulnerable road users, controlling crash impact angles and speed, creating countermeasure redundancy, and addressing issues systemically. He also discussed the importance of improving driver behavior and enforcement. In incorporating the Safe System Approach, the Safety Action Plan will align with NYSDOT's adoption of the Safe System in the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Project Overview/Workplan

Cory reviewed the full scope of the Plan as outlined in the Project Management Plan document. The Plan is organized into eight tasks that include public and stakeholder outreach, document review, data collection, data analysis, countermeasure selection, project identification and goal setting, study finalization, and creating the Final Safety Action Plan. For each task, major deliverables, such as reports documenting research findings and activity outcomes, will contribute to the final Plan. The Advisory Committee will review and provide input on various deliverables throughout the planning process.

Cory reviewed the planning schedule, showing when deliverables will be created and when the Advisory Committee will meet to review them. The Plan is expected to be completed in late 2025.

The Safety Action Plan will include a performance plan and a strategy to monitor progress, a countermeasure toolkit, a list of priority projects, and other useful analysis. Ultimately, the Plan will lay the groundwork to successfully secure SS4A Implementation Grants.

Advisory Committee Engagement

Cory explained that the Advisory Committee will provide overall direction, feedback on deliverables, and perspective on safety issues in the county and will help develop consensus on Safety Action Plan recommendations. The current workplan envisions six Advisory Committee meetings tied to major deliverables. The Advisory Committee will review the Final Transportation Safety Action Plan at Meeting #6 in 2025.

Advisory Committee members discussed their expectations for the process and initial areas of concern. Melkorka Kjarval asked, how does a small community that is not a major priority, in terms of high-crash locations, access grant funding? Cory assured her that the Plan will have plenty of priority locations that align with State safety priorities that address low volume and rural roads. Mark Debald noted that the crash data will be normalized by traffic volume, which will help compare locations to peer areas. The group discussed the benefits of specific treatments related to the State's Emphasis Areas, such as roundabouts to address intersection risks, and the challenges around implementing them effectively and providing education. Carmine Istvan described how heavy trucks struggle to navigate roundabouts (e.g., on Route 52) and that trucks avoiding these roundabouts are stressing local roads and communities. Dave Rettig noted that roundabouts can be designed for truck traffic. Melkorka asked about sources for crash data and analysis. Cory explained that data will be aggregated from NYSDOT's CLEAR crash database, as well as some other data sources. The data analysis will consider Potential for

Safety Improvement (PSI) and other evaluation metrics to measure the performance of specific locations.

Significant safety concerns noted by the Committee include protecting vulnerable road users, speeding (particularly on State roads), Routes 44/55 in Poughkeepsie and areas along Route 9 that experience a high number of crashes, and the Route 9/Merritt Boulevard and Route 52 areas in Fishkill. Cory asked the Advisory Committee to send lists of specific locations to consider. Carmine noted a lack of law enforcement staffing to enforce speed limits. Automated enforcement can be controversial but has been shown to be effective. The group discussed the pros and cons of automated enforcement programs. Bill Johnson informed the team that 800 school buses in the county were equipped with stop bar cameras, which have greatly improved compliance with vehicles not passing stopped buses. However, the program needs to include training for the bus drivers and education for the public. Bill added that several years ago, NHTSA directed the Governors Traffic Safety Committee to require individual police agencies to submit grant applications for safety programs (rather than the grants being bundled and submitted as one application by the County); this has greatly reduced the capacity of local agencies to participate in traffic safety grant programs.

Outreach Plan

Dave Rettig reviewed the Outreach Plan, which intends to make the Safety Action Plan development an inclusive process that will coordinate data-driven planning with public input. Outreach will occur throughout the process, not just at the beginning and end. The DCTC will host a webpage that will include content about the Plan. The team will carefully consider how to best identify and engage underserved communities, which are often over-represented in traffic crashes. Dave reviewed the engagement timeline, including stakeholder and public engagement, and meetings with DCTC committees.

The Outreach Plan envisions engaging key stakeholders in the County, including municipalities, advocacy groups, school districts, cultural and ethnic community organizations, local business associations, youth organizations, faith-based organizations, and others. Emily asked the committee for suggestions of other groups to consider. The Advisory Committee provided a range of stakeholders: trail committees, economic development committees, Astor Services and the Astor Head Start program, the Community Action Partnership, police agencies' School Resource Officers (SROs), school districts' Transportation Directors and the Association for Pupil Transportation, libraries (particularly youth program directors), the Dutchess County Mayors and Supervisors Association, the Highway Superintendents Association, the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents, the County's Youth Board, and the Dutchess County Association of Fire Districts/Fire Chiefs Association. The team will share a spreadsheet of contacts and would welcome leveraging any personal relationships with Advisory Committee members.

The Outreach Plan also envisions a series of "pop up" events to directly interact with members of the public. In addition to suggested locations, the group noted Red Hook's Apple Blossom Day (spring), Hardscrabble Day (September), the Arlington Street Fair (September), twice-a-year Fishkill Block Parties, larger car shows, events on the Walkway Over the Hudson, and local government public events. Mikala Sherman-Kortright explained the plan for "pop-up-in-a-box" resources that Advisory Committee members could use to easily host a pop-up event. The "box" would include instructions, invitations, evaluation forms, and other resources. Mark emphasized that the group should coordinate on consistent messaging and suggested that the team produce key talking points that can be distributed to partners. Mikala asked the group to inform the team of any need for materials in languages other than

English such as Spanish. Pop-up event materials (surveys/notices/flyers/etc.) can be translated into other languages as needed. In-person translation services can also be provided at specific events if needed.

The Outreach Plan will also include digital outreach. Dave asked Advisory Committee members to recommend additional email outreach channels. Municipal email lists and YouTube channels were suggested. Flyers or bookmarks with QR codes could also be posted at DMV offices.

Initial Tasks – Document Review and Data Analysis

Cory summarized the planned data collection procedures and the project team's experience with the State's CLEAR crash database. He asked the group for other relevant local safety data sets or analyses that might contribute to the project. The data analysis will include a network screening and equity analysis to identify emphasis areas, priority issues, and priority locations.

The study will also include a review of local, State and federal policy and planning documents. Cory asked the group to suggest any other documents to be reviewed.

Closing & Next Steps

Next steps include finalizing the Project Management Plan and Outreach Plan, starting the document review, and starting the initial data analysis. The project team will send the slide deck and meeting summary. Cory encouraged the Committee to contact the team if they think of other opportunities or challenges. When completed, Mark urged the group to leverage the Action Plan to pursue their own safety grants. The team is expecting future SS4A grant opportunities over the next two federal fiscal years (e.g., FFY 2025 and 2026).

Action Items:

- CS to produce a Meeting Summary.
- SSE to update the Outreach Plan based on feedback collected, produce a final Outreach Plan, and coordinate with the DCTC on initial outreach.
- CS to produce a final Project Management Plan.
- CS and DCTC to coordinate on sharing the Meeting Summary, Meeting Presentation, Final Project Management Plan, Final Outreach Plan, and list of stakeholders and pop-up events with the Advisory Committee, along with prompts for further input opportunities.
- CS to identify how additional Advisory Committee comments will be incorporated into other stages of the Plan development.
- The project team will launch Tasks 2 (Document Review) and 3 (Data Collection).
- CS will coordinate with the team and DCTC on scheduling Advisory Committee Meeting #2 in November 2024.