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In Reply Refer To:
TRO-02
HPM-NY

April 2, 2026

Sue Serino
County Executive, and Chair
Dutchess County Transportation Council
22 Market Street, 6th Floor
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Steven M. Neuhaus
County Executive, and Chair
Orange County Transportation Council
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Goshen, NY 10924

Jen Metzger
County Executive, and Chair
Ulster County Transportation Council
6th Floor, County Office Building
Kingston, NY 12401

RE: Federal Certification Letter and Report for
Mid-Hudson Valley Transportation Management Area

Dear County Executives Serino, Neuhaus, and Metzger,

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are pleased to submit our Certification Review report on the transportation planning process in the Mid-Hudson Valley Transportation Management Area (MHVTMA), which comprises three MPOs: Dutchess County Transportation Council, (DCTC), Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC), and Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC).

Overall, we find that the transportation planning process meets or exceeds many of the requirements contained in 23 CFR Section 450.336 and 49 USC 5303. Included in the Certification Review report are ten (10) topic areas related to the federal metropolitan transportation planning process with ten (10) recommendations for consideration in furthering

program excellence, and four (4) commendations to recognize best practices. There are no corrective actions included in the report.

We would be willing to discuss our conclusions and recommendations with DCTC, OCTC, and UCTC Policy Boards/Committees after the three MPOs have had an opportunity to review our findings. Our goal remains to help the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA fulfill the requirements for an effective metropolitan transportation planning process for the good of the public and the overall transportation system.

We would like to especially thank Mark Debald, Alan Sorensen, Dennis Doyle and the entire DCTC, OCTC, and UCTC staff for their time and assistance in working with us to conduct the Certification Review in both an in-person and virtual format, and for their work to support public engagement as part of the review. The professionalism of the MPO staff and the work they complete are clear examples of what an effective metropolitan planning processes can achieve. We also thank the members of the MPOs' committees and boards for their engagement and feedback during the review process.

If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact Gautam Mani (FHWA) at gautam.mani@dot.gov and Raymond Tomczak (FTA) at raymond.tomczak@dot.gov.

Sincerely,


3/26/26

Richard J. Marquis
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
New York Division



Michael Culotta
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
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cc:

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Mid-Hudson Valley TMA Certification Review Report

April 2026

Overview of Federal Certification Requirements

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to review, evaluate, and certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in each Transportation Management Area (TMA), an urbanized area of 200,000 population or more, at least every four years.

As a result, FHWA and FTA jointly undertook the review of metropolitan transportation planning process of the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA which includes the three Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) of Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC), Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC), and Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC). The intent of the statutory and regulatory requirements is to develop a transportation system that serves the mobility interests of people and freight through a multifaceted metropolitan planning process. The certification review is to ensure that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area, and that the planning process is being conducted in accordance with:

- (1) 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and this subpart;*
- (2) In nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506(c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93;*
- (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21;*
- (4) 49 U.S.C. 5332, which states that a person may not be excluded from participating in, denied a benefit of, or discriminated against under, a project, program, or activity receiving financial assistance under this chapter because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age.*
- (5) Section 1101(b) of the FAST Act (Pub. L. 114-357) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in DOT funded projects;*
- (6) 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts;*
- (7) The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38;*
- (8) The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance;*
- (9) Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; and*
- (10) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.*
- (11) Super Circular Reference - 2 CFR Part 200*
- (12) All other applicable provisions of Federal law.*

Background on Federal Finding Actions

The Federal certification review evaluates a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs) transportation planning process, identifies strengths and weaknesses (as appropriate), and makes recommendations for improvements. Following the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA can take one of four certification actions:

- Full certification of the transportation planning process: this allows federally funded programs and projects of any type to be approved in the TIP over the next three years in accordance with the continuing planning process.
- Certification subject to specified corrective actions being taken: this allows all projects to move forward in the process while corrective actions are taken; this option may take the form of a temporary certification for a certain number of months rather than the full three years.
- Limited certification: this allows only certain specified categories of program and project funding to move forward while corrective actions are being taken.
- Certification withheld: approval of funding in whole or in part for attributed FHWA and FTA funds that the metropolitan area receives is stopped until the deficiencies in the planning process are corrected.

Within the context of the certification review, the following terms may be used: Corrective Actions, Recommendations, and Commendations.

- Corrective Actions include those items that fail to meet the requirements of the transportation statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome of the overall process. The expected change and timeline for accomplishing it are clearly defined.
- Recommendations are those items that, while somewhat less substantial and not regulatory, are still significant enough that FHWA and FTA are hopeful that State and local officials will consider taking some action. Typically, recommendations involve the state of the practice or technical improvements instead of regulatory requirements.
- Commendations and noteworthy practices are those elements that demonstrate innovative, highly effective, well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements. Elements addressing items that have frequently posed problems nationwide could be cited as noteworthy practices.

Overview of the Certification Review

The 2025-2026 Certification Review of the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA began on June 16th, 2025 with a joint FHWA/FTA letter to County Executive Sue Serino (Dutchess), County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus (Orange), and County Executive Jen Metzger (Ulster), Chairpersons of the Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC), Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC), and Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) Policy Boards, respectively, informing the TMA of the upcoming review and identifying the primary topics for discussion and evaluation (Appendix A). The dates of the site visit were coordinated with Mark Debal, Alan Sorensen, and Dennis Doyle, the Directors of DCTC, OCTC, and UCTC, respectively, and their staff. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) also received a copy of the letter. The MPO staff notified the DCTC, OCTC, and UCTC member agencies and the public about this review.

As part of review preparation, FHWA and FTA conducted a desk review of the DCTC, OCTC, and UCTC materials available on the MPO websites and provided by MPO staff.

Hybrid Certification Review

The Federal Team consisted of Gautam Mani, Timothy Crothers, Benjamin Fischer and Nicole McGrath of the FHWA NY Division, and Raymond Tomczak, Robert Bui, and James Goveia of FTA Region 2. This review was conducted in a hybrid format. An in-person session was held on September 25th, 2025, at the SUNY Orange campus in Newburgh, NY, with all staff from the three MPOs, and representatives from Orange County Department of Planning (Transit) and NYSDOT Region 8 present on site. Additional participants from FTA Region 2 and NYSDOT Main Office attended virtually. This session covered TMA-wide issues. To cover planning products unique to each MPO in more depth, the Federal Team also held individual half-day virtual sessions with each MPO on September 29th (UCTC), September 30th (OCTC), and October 2nd (DCTC).

An agenda for the certification review and a list of participants are included in Appendices C and D.

Members, Stakeholders, and Public Input

As part of the certification review process, the Federal Team solicited input from the communities and stakeholders within the region. The Federal Team prepared a comment form to allow the public and MPO members to submit written feedback on the planning process. The MPOs posted links to the comment forms on their individual websites, along with issuing notices regarding the availability of the form. In addition, at MPO standing committee meetings, FHWA and FTA promoted the comment form and provided an opportunity for committee members and members of the public to give feedback verbally, if desired. The public comment period ran from September 15th- October 31st, 2025.

There were five (5) public comments received. The comments informed the Federal Team's findings and have been included in their entirety in Appendix E of the report, along with the public notices of the form. Where respondents chose to provide their names and contact information to FHWA and FTA, that information has been omitted.

Summary of Recommendations and Commendations

This section summarizes the recommendations and commendations that the Federal Team identified through the certification review process. Each of these comments correlate to the findings for the respective certification topics in the next section, general TMA coordination, or follow-ups from findings in the previous certification review. A status of the findings from the previous certification review in 2021/2022 can be found in Appendix B. There are ten (10) recommendations and four (4) commendations as part of this review. There are no corrective actions.

Recommendations (10)

Recommendations from the Previous Certification Review- Native Nations Consultation

- (1) The MPOs should either individually or collectively develop formal procedures for consultation with the Federally recognized Native Nations with Areas of Interest in the planning area: the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community as required by 23 CFR 450.316(c)&(e). This is a follow-up recommendation from the prior certification review. The procedures could be a general framework that provides flexibility for future engagement with the Nations. The MPOs may look to NYMTC's Native Nations Consultation procedures for an example, and they may also wish to consult NYSDOT's Statewide Consultation Procedures to ensure they have up-to-date contact information for the Nations. The Federal Team strongly recommends that these procedures exist apart from the MPOs' regular public participation plans to recognize the unique sovereign status of the Nations.

General TMA Coordination

- (2) The MPOs already do an excellent job with resource sharing, whether across the three MPOs in the TMA or via opportunities offered through NYSAMPO, NYSDOT, NYMTC, or the MAP Forum. Given ongoing staffing challenges and other resource constraints, we recommend that the MPOs continue to look for opportunities to share resources and sustain delivery of an effective planning program throughout the TMA for the long term. Possible opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Moving towards a two-year UPWP cycle to ease annual administrative burdens.
 - While maintaining unique planning documents for each MPO, consideration for how components of core planning documents (such as the LRTP financial plan, public involvement plan, and studies that cross MPO borders) might be developed jointly.
 - In future update cycles of Safety Action Plans, consideration of shared tasks in the development of individual plans or a combined TMA-wide plan. For all safety-related planning products, the MPOs should consider future opportunities for regionwide products to build on longstanding individual efforts.
 - Given OCTC's current staffing limitations, we recommend that the MPO further explore leveraging NYSAMPO shared cost initiatives and NYSDOT consultant contracts that make data and planning services available to the MPOs, in order to complete UPWP studies that have lingered across several cycles. These include some studies related to active transportation and safety, such as the City of Newburgh Sidewalk District Feasibility Study.

Linking Transportation and Housing

- (3) Based on the MPOs' knowledge of and access to resources on housing trends, conditions, and demand within each of their counties, the Federal Team recommends that the MPOs explore developing a formal housing and transportation coordination plan, either as a TMA or individually, to more fully integrate housing considerations into transportation decision-making. Developing a housing and transportation coordination plan may involve the following steps, as a starting point: additional data gathering and mapping of housing quantity and demand relative to the transportation network, further outreach to affordable housing organizations, and comparing goals and measures in MPO LRTPs and TIPs to those in existing housing plans.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) /Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) /Operations

- (4) The Federal Team recommends that the MPOs ensure that all of its planning deliverables are consistent with the [Region 8 ITS Architecture](#), per 23 CFR 450.306(g). FHWA can provide technical assistance in this area to MPO staff in terms of understanding the value and relevance of the ITS Architecture to planning deliverables.
- (5) In the upcoming CMP update, the Federal Team recommends including an analysis of available non-recurring event data and development of strategies to address non-recurring congestion, including around special events that impact the region. In addition, as they update the CMP to account for the post-COVID travel environment, the MPOs should look for more opportunities for combined, regionwide implementation and evaluation of CMP strategies.

TIP

- (6) The Federal Team recommends that OCTC and UCTC focus on obligating projects that have been in their TIPs for multiple cycles (sometimes referred to by the MPOs as "legacy projects"), to allow for new MPO calls for projects and evaluation of those projects based on alignment with goals and objectives of their current LRTPs. FHWA and FTA recommend that each MPO, in close coordination with NYSDOT Region 8, develop a work plan for how they will work with the appropriate project sponsors to deliver these "legacy projects," including identifying causes for project delay, and share the plan with FHWA and FTA by December 31, 2026.

UPWP

- (7) The Federal Team recommends that the MPOs continue to draw down unspent balances of FHWA PL funds for planning activities. If the available PL funds are currently unprogrammed, then we recommend that MPOs identify specific planning activities for these funds in the UPWP narrative. If PL funds are programmed for activities that have not made progress across several UPWP cycles, we recommend that the MPOs evaluate whether these tasks remain a priority for the MPOs or if they could be spent on other activities that advance current LRTP goals.

Public Involvement Plan

- (8) The Federal Team recommends that UCTC develop an updated public involvement plan for the MPO that accounts for virtual public involvement and other new techniques employed in recent years. The updated public involvement plan can draw in both format and content from public

engagement plans used for specific work products, such as the UCAT Route Optimization Plan and UCTC's most recent LRTP update.

Major Projects Planning

- (9) The Federal Team recommends that the MPOs continue to enhance their role in the planning of regionally significant or noteworthy capital projects in the area, and better assist NYSDOT and other project sponsors with meeting schedules for NEPA, by exploring the following actions:
- In corridor-level studies, the MPOs should look for opportunities to structure reports as formal PEL Studies, including developing preliminary Purpose and Need Statements and screening criteria for concepts identified. This approach would in many cases enhance elements that MPOs already have in their completed studies.
 - Ensure that consultation lists for plans and TIPs contain up-to-date contact information and use those lists to engage resource agencies at an early stage in the planning process.
 - Use environmental information resources available at the county level, some of which are already embedded in planning documents, to assist with preliminary screening of environmental impacts of developed concepts. An example of existing information is Dutchess County's Natural Resource Inventory.
 - Encourage member agencies with projects likely to require an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify adequate funding for project construction in the fiscally constrained portion of the MPO's LRTP process prior to beginning Federal environmental review.

Safety (including Active Transportation)

- (10) The Federal Team recommends that NYSDOT (both Main Office & Region 8) and the MPOs continue to explore different ways to advance the regional safety program and program HSIP funds where they would have the biggest impact on safety, particularly on the local road system. Strategies would include early scheduling coordination for any statewide funding solicitation application cycles and evaluating the opportunity for more NYSDOT technical assistance with development of HSIP-funded local safety projects.

Commendations (4)

Long Range Transportation Planning

- (1) The Federal Team commends the extent to which all three MPOs address the impacts of tourism in their planning processes, supporting the often-overlooked planning factor, "enhance travel and tourism." Working with county economic entities, the MPOs provide details in their LRTPs and bring forward extensive data on economic impacts and transportation needs of tourists and the tourism industry to their members for consideration in planning decisions. As an example, the MPOs have thoroughly quantified the positive economic impacts of the trail system and related active transportation investments in the region.
- (2) The Federal Team commends UCTC for the Financial Plan element of its most recently adopted LRTP, which organizes revenue and cost estimates into different investment target areas, including safety and National Highway System (NHS) bridge conditions, that are linked to UCTC's LRTP goals. The plan accounts for system-level Operation and Maintenance costs and assigns

specific anticipated revenue sources that would cover those costs. The Financial Plan includes a Sankey Diagram that shows how different funding streams (including Federal, state and local funds) flow to specific project types within the county. Other MPOs in NY are learning from UCTC's financial planning experience.

- (3) The Federal Team commends DCTC for the development and implementation of Resilient Ways Forward, which includes a comprehensive website, an online Adaptation Toolbox, and interactive map viewer. DCTC's two-phase Vulnerability Assessment is a national best practice for other agencies developing their own risk-based assessments of transportation assets and systems vulnerabilities. *Resilient Ways Forward* was one of the first IJA-compliant Resilience Improvement Plans (RIP) in the country and will help ensure the region has a more resilient transportation system that minimizes disruptions posed by natural disasters.

Unified Planning Work Program

- (4) The Federal Team recognizes all three MPOs' efforts to successfully use completed studies from their UPWPs to leverage statewide solicitations for capital projects, particularly TAP/CMAQ solicitations. The MPOs often look to supplement funding from statewide solicitations with allocated formula funding to deliver on recommendations from these studies, keeping the planning products relevant even when sufficient funding is not available at the time a study is completed. One notable example, among many, of this success is the Hopewell Hamlet Pedestrian Study, funded through DCTC's UPWP and completed in 2002, which saw projects awarded through TAP/CMAQ more than twenty years later.

2025/2026 Certification Review Findings

The Federal Team selected nine topics to discuss with the MPOs during the certification review. The Federal Team selected these topics based on a risk assessment, being sure to address areas of emphasis and recurring challenges as well as providing opportunities to highlight potential best practices. Information on the Federal regulatory requirements for these topics can be found in Appendix F.

The following are the findings from our assessment of these activities and are the basis for *Recommendations* and *Commendations* found in the previous *Summary* section. Where the Federal Team identified planning practices or products that were worthy of recognition but perhaps did not rise to the level of a commendation, we have marked these as **Notable Practices**. The Federal Team recognizes seven (7) Notable Practices in this report.

Core Transportation Planning Process

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- The three MPOs each have an LRTP that meets Federal requirements, including financial plans, fiscal constraint demonstrations, and public involvement.
- Through extensive information in their LRTPs and other planning products, the MPOs are well positioned to develop a coordination plan that links housing to transportation. Such a planning effort would not supplant or encroach on the roles of other entities already working on housing in

the three counties, but further connect those efforts with the transportation planning process. The MPOs could each develop such a plan individually, or on a TMA-wide basis. At the county level, the MPOs already have access to data resources that would assist with development of a plan, such as Dutchess County's annual Major Projects Report. An example of a county-hosted MPO that may have helpful practices in effective housing coordination is the [Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission \(GCMPC\)](#) in Michigan. FHWA and FTA offer additional resources on [housing and transportation](#) and can continue to provide relevant case studies as they become available.

- All three MPOs have substantial information in their plans about natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas, drawing in many cases from data compiled by the County. This information can form a baseline for early consultation with resource agencies as promoted by the Planning and Environment Linkage (PEL) approach. The MPOs reported that they sent their plans to resource agencies as part of required LRTP consultation, but they have not received responses or substantive comments in recent cycles.
- All three MPOs have, to an extent, assessed the vulnerability of their infrastructure to extreme weather events and other hazards, as well as impacts that have already occurred. All of the MPOs have woven this information into their LRTPs. UCTC completed a formal, highly interactive vulnerability assessment in 2023 and continues to seek out funding sources to advance work in this area. In 2024, DCTC became the second MPO in New York to complete a formal resilience improvement plan under IIJA, known as *Resilient Ways Forward*. DCTC's plan was recognized nationally as an example for other MPOs to follow.
- *DCTC*: DCTC continues to maintain its LRTP, *Moving Dutchess Forward*, that was adopted on July 27, 2021 in a highly visual, online format. DCTC has begun its 2026 LRTP update, using the themes and trends identified in the 2021 Plan as a starting point. DCTC has conducted initial outreach with its members to gather their input on trends they are seeing in Dutchess County. DCTC's outreach consultant is also hiring paid Community Ambassadors to help ensure that public engagement for the Plan reaches a broad set of populations in Dutchess County. In continuing to improve upon its digital plan format for the next plan cycle, DCTC is also conscious about providing the plan to those with limited internet access and others who need an alternative to the web-based format.
- *OCTC*: OCTC adopted its 2050 LRTP on December 12, 2023, with an effective date of January 4, 2024 for transportation conformity purposes. The plan acknowledges the high rate of population growth Orange County is experiencing in the post-pandemic era and its impact on the transportation network, housing demand, and access to employment centers. In addition, the LRTP formally incorporates Orange County's Bikeway Vision as a desired project for the MPO. The Plan contains vast data on safety performance and impacts of recent flooding events on the transportation network.
- **Notable Practice 1**: The Federal Team recognizes OCTC for the attention it pays to the transportation needs of the agriculture sector, including food processing and value-added facilities, which constitutes a significant portion of economic activity in Orange County. This includes consideration for movement of goods via the Middletown-New Jersey Railroad, a short-line railroad that runs through Orange County.
- *UCTC*: UCTC adopted its new LRTP, *Mobility 2050*, on September 23, 2025. The Plan is the result of substantial public involvement, including an online survey and workshop tool called ARNIE that allowed participants to take part in a budgeting exercise on how they would allocate transportation funds in Ulster County. The Plan also contains detailed information about trends in the region,

including anticipated housing development and economic activity. The Plan creates a framework for UCTC to update the County's 2008 Non-Motorized Plan and transform it into an Active Transportation Plan. UCTC's plan format also has call-out boxes that identify projects and studies completed since the last LRTP update, concisely communicating tangible value that the planning process has yielded.

Congestion Management Process/Intelligent Transportation Systems/Operations

- *Congestion Management Process (CMP)*: During the previous Certification Review, the Federal Team found the 2019 CMP to be a "data-driven, performance-based approach to congestion reduction, safety improvement, and mobility enhancement that is thoroughly integrated into the planning process." The MHVTMA MPOs have begun the process of updating their CMP now that 2023 data is available, which can more fully capture the post-pandemic travel environment. An updated CMP could identify additional strategies and tools for addressing non-recurring congestion; this would not only include congestion due to extreme weather events, but also traffic impacts from "mega-events" that may occur within or beyond the boundaries of the TMA.
- While DCTC incorporates highly congested locations identified in the CMP into its project selection framework and MTP, there may be further opportunities to integrate data and strategies from the CMP into MPO project decision-making. There may also be further opportunities for the MPOs to take combined action to implement some of the strategies on a regionwide basis.
- *Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)*: While NYSDOT Region 8 engages the MPOs in updates of the Region's ITS Architecture, the Federal Team observed that there are further opportunities for the MPOs to evaluate their planning deliverables, including LRTPs, TIPs, UPWPs and other planning studies, for consistency with the Regional ITS Architecture. Given NYMTC's presence in Region 8, there may be opportunities for all four MPOs to work together to effectively evaluate consistency with the ITS Architecture, in close coordination with the NYSDOT Region. FHWA can provide technical assistance in this area.
- Each of the MPOs has been able to identify opportunities to reduce delay within their counties through travel studies that, when implemented, will optimize traffic signal timing on key corridors.
- **Notable Practice 2**: The Federal Team recognizes as a best practice the Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis that UCTC completed for the City of Kingston. The Analysis provided an extremely thorough evaluation of traffic signals in the area, and the City of Kingston subsequently implemented the recommendations.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- All three MPOs adopted their new 2026-2030 TIPs in 2025 as part of the triennial STIP update process in New York. The MPOs worked with NYSDOT Region 8 to determine their funding targets. The MPOs thoroughly describe funding sources that are used to finance projects, and all three contain an adequate fiscal constraint demonstration.
- **Notable Practice 3**: DCTC used its new Project Selection Framework for the first time during this TIP development cycle after issuing a Call for Projects. DCTC examined best practices from other MPOs in New York when developing this framework. The Project Selection Framework directly links to DCTC's LRTP goals, scoring TIP projects on the extent to which they improve quality of life, safety, multimodal access, and advancement of transformative projects from the LRTP. Overall, the Framework has helped make DCTC's LRTP goals more applicable to transportation decision-making for capital projects.

- UCTC and OCTC did not issue a Call for Projects this TIP cycle, as they continue to clear a backlog of “legacy” projects from prior TIP cycles. OCTC reported an interest from its members in holding a Call for Projects sometime in calendar year 2026.
- *Obligation and Delivery of Programmed TIP Projects:* While delivery of TIP projects in the MHVTMA can fluctuate from year to year based on a variety of factors, the MPOs have each made concerted efforts to improve obligation of TIP projects in their respective counties. First, all three MPOs have taken time to educate members on the steps needed to deliver a Federal-aid project, so that potential project sponsors know the challenges of navigating a project through to construction prior to requesting funding. In addition, the MPOs have each taken steps to more closely monitor obligation of projects and hold check-ins with project sponsors when projects are at risk of not being obligated. The MPOs recognize that some member agencies have capacity challenges or previous issues with delivering Federal-aid projects and allocate staffing and technical assistance resources accordingly.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- All three MPOs have unspent balances of FHWA PL funds that they carry over from year to year. At the time of SFY 2025-2026 UPWP approval, UCTC had an unprogrammed balance of funds in the amount of \$279,491. By contrast, DCTC and OCTC programmed all of their carryover funds in their 2025-2026 UPWPs but had substantial carryover balances of \$690,388 and \$1,939,094, respectively. Historical and current staffing limitations, delays in initiating consultant contracts, and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic have all posed challenges in the timely spend-down of FHWA PL funds.
- *OCTC:* Due to staffing shortages, there are several studies in the UPWP that OCTC has been unable to advance that the MPO aims to complete in the near-term, including: The SS4A-compliant Orange County Roadway Safety Action Plan, the New York State Route 17M and US-6 Corridor Management Plan, the City of Newburgh Sidewalk Improvement District Feasibility Study, and the Countywide Transit Feasibility Study. OCTC plans to procure an on-call consultant who may be able to assist with completion of these planning products and/or further procurements as needed.
- *UCTC:* UCTC completed a Rail Grade Crossing Study in 2024 that was notable in using high-resolution drone imagery to effectively communicate the conditions and design of at-grade crossings.
- **Notable Practice 4:** The Federal Team recognizes DCTC’s strategic approach to identifying where consultant contracts are most suitable to fill a specific need within a planning process or add additional value to a planning study. One example of this was the Beacon Hopewell Rail Trail Feasibility Study, where DCTC procured consultant services to fill a specific need for experience conducting an effective feasibility analysis.
- All three MPOs have had particular success with leveraging completed UPWP studies related to non-motorized transportation and safety into capital investments via the statewide TAP/CMAQ solicitation. The MPOs have made concerted efforts to keep these studies relevant and accessible to committee members even when funding is not immediately available for projects.

Public Involvement Plan/Public Participation Plan

- *DCTC*: DCTC's latest Public Participation Plan was adopted in 2022 and contains a mix of in-person and virtual strategies, many of which were successfully deployed during the development of *Moving Dutchess Forward* during the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan identifies barriers to participation for different populations in the County and strategies for eliminating those barriers.
- **Notable Practice 5**: The Federal Team recognizes DCTC's efforts to "plan in plain language" through its efforts to de-jargonize the names of its planning products (e.g., referring to the TIP as a "capital program") and other acronyms in the transportation planning process. DCTC has helped the public ease into long-term participation in the transportation planning process by first engaging them through meetings on smaller studies or projects and then building their understanding of DCTC's role and core products.
- *OCTC*: OCTC updated its Public Participation Plan in 2025 to align with new Federal priorities and update additional information. The plan contains a mix of in-person and virtual strategies to inform the public, gain feedback, and enhance participation. OCTC continues to also play a key role in educating the public about the transportation planning process when they approach the MPO about the Route 17 Mobility and Access Improvements Project.
- *UCTC*: UCTC's public involvement procedures were last updated in 2015 and are housed within the MPO's overall Operating Procedures. The public involvement section speaks to how the public will receive notice about planning products and meetings, the lengths of various comment periods, and a baseline number of opportunities for them to provide feedback via meetings and events. There is no specific reference to virtual public involvement techniques, or metrics for evaluation of success. UCTC has created public engagement plans for individual projects, like the recent LRTP update (*Mobility 2050*) and the UCAT Route Optimization Plan, which provide detailed information about specific techniques, goals of public involvement, and metrics for evaluating success.

Performance-Based Planning and Programming

- All three MPOs continue to meet Federal requirements for Performance Based Planning and Programming. Each MPO continues to deliver the required LRTP System Performance Report and language about anticipated effects of the TIP, and they each update these components on the required cycle. The standalone performance-based planning and programming agreements between each MPO, NYSDOT, and the transit provider(s) continue to function well in terms of target reporting and data sharing. The MPOs have continued to support state targets for the FHWA performance measures, where applicable. OCTC also met the newly applicable requirement for the second performance period to set targets for the Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) and percent non-SOV travel for the Poughkeepsie-Newburgh Urban Area.
- While still supporting statewide targets for the Federally required measures, the MPOs have significantly enhanced the extent of local data presented in their planning documents. This emphasis on local data is particularly notable for all three MPOs in the area of safety. The use of smaller-scale safety data helps increase relevance of the planning documents to the public.
- The three MPOs have also continued to develop dashboards, infographics, and the TMA's ArcGIS hub site to make performance data more comprehensible and accessible. For example, UCTC has created ArcGIS Dashboards for its completed Sidewalk Inventory and Crash Inventory.
- Beyond the Federally required measures, the MPOs have continued to streamline the number of measures they identify and report, in order to better align with LRTP goals and performance areas

that MPOs are able to measure over the long-term and actually impact through their investment decisions.

MPO Role in Regionally Significant Projects

- *DCTC*: In its LRTP, DCTC identifies long-term transformative projects such as the Route 9/44/55 Interchange as well as improvements to the arterials in the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, including anticipated Federal formula funding sources. DCTC completed a corridor-level Route 9/44/55 Study in 2022. In the short-term, DCTC has worked with NYSDOT to address immediate safety issues in these areas and has conducted a follow-up study of for a redesign of Columbus Drive, which concluded in 2024. The Federal Team observed that both studies developed preliminary concepts and the beginnings of purpose and need statements, which could be further developed to formally set up a PEL Study.
- *OCTC*: OCTC continues to monitor developments and provide input into the environmental review process for the Route 17 Mobility and Access Improvements Project, and it continues to monitor project progress on other efforts to improve Route 17, including the Route 17 at Exit 122 Reconstruction Project. For example, due to OCTC's efforts, the Orange County Bikeway Vision helped to inform the draft EIS for the Route 17 Mobility and Access Improvements Project. This Project remains outside the fiscally constrained portion of the LRTP. The LRTP additionally identifies nine "Needs Assessment and Concept Development Studies" for various corridors in Orange County, where the MPO has an opportunity to play a leadership role and potentially institutionalize a PEL approach in Orange County.
- *UCTC*: UCTC has been involved in corridor-level planning efforts for Route 9W, one of the most critical travel corridors in Ulster County for both commercial and personal travel. In 2024, UCTC completed the Route 9W Mobility Plan for the Town of Ulster. The Plan identifies specific conditions related to safety, access, and congestion in the corridor and recommends possible project concepts for the long and short term. Of note, the Plan includes an ArcGIS StoryMap that clearly explains each of the issues along the corridor and describes recommended projects and strategies concisely and visually. Planning efforts on Route 9W are expected to continue in the City of Kingston through a recently awarded Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant.

Additional Planning Topics

Transportation Safety Planning (including Active Transportation)

- *MHVTMA Safety Planning*: All three MPOs are meeting or exceeding federal requirements when it comes to safety planning. Their project prioritization processes for their TIPs include safety criteria and data analyses, and LRTPs include a discussion of transportation safety needs.
- *Safety Action Plans*: All three MPOs are in the process of developing SS4A-compliant Safety Action Plans. UCTC completed a county-wide Road Safety Plan in 2019 and is in the process of making enhancements to the plan to make it SS4A compliant. DCTC is nearing completion of its Safety Action Plan, while OCTC anticipates beginning its plan shortly, once it obtains on-call consultant services. In addition, many municipalities throughout the region have been awarded SS4A Planning Grants. All of these Action Plans will offer the MPOs recommendations to improve safety and possible access to additional funding sources for implementation, and the Federal Team encourages the MPOs to incorporate findings from these plans back into their planning processes.

- The MPOs noted that the development of individual SS4A Safety Action Plans for each MPO afforded them with more flexibility and specificity in identifying local hot spots and projects. However, given the strong interest from both the MPOs and their members in developing Safety Action Plans, a more comprehensive regional safety approach to future Safety Action Plans and other safety planning studies related to specific areas of concern such as rail grade crossing safety. A comprehensive regional approach might make more efficient use of scarce staff and financial resources and could draw from best practices of each MPO or municipality in their initial Safety Action Plans.
- *Identifying and Programming of Safety Projects:* As noted in the TIP section of this report, OCTC and UCTC continue to focus on clearing a backlog of “legacy projects” from prior TIP cycles. A continued focus on obligating these projects will allow these two MPOs to more rapidly program priority safety projects that are identified in their Safety Action Plans, once completed.
- MPO staff noted that the recent implementation of NYSDOT’s Crash Location and Engineering Analysis (CLEAR) repository has been extremely valuable in safety planning and increasing the ability to spend HSIP funds on the local road system, where a majority of fatalities and serious injuries occur.
- MPO staff commented that the timing of NYSDOT’s Call for Roadway Departure Safety Action Plan (RwDSAP) Local Call for Projects conflicted with the timeline for development of their 2026-2030 TIPs, which, along with other factors, contributed to a lack of applications by members. Staff from NYSDOT Main Office, Region 8, and the MPOs discussed improved coordination of schedules for future Calls for Projects, which will help the region access additional safety funds.
- *MHVTMA Active Transportation Planning:* All three of the MPOs are meeting or exceeding Federal requirements to consider the needs of active transportation users in the transportation planning process and in conjunction with any construction or reconstruction of transportation facilities.
- **Notable Practice 6:** During the previous Certification Review, the Federal Team commended the MHVTMA for planning and implementation in support of active transportation infrastructure, including their role in the completion of the Empire State Trail and provision of local connections. The Federal Team now recognizes the MPOs’ continued efforts to improve upon the trail network. The MPOs have quantified the positive economic impacts that the trail network has on local communities, not just in driving tourism but also as critical, safe infrastructure for commuting and other daily needs of regional residents. The MPOs continue to leverage excellent relationships with advocacy groups, human services non-profits, and other interested stakeholders to develop plans and studies that identify further opportunities for trail infrastructure.
- *Relationship to Congestion Management Process:* As part of the TMA’s 2019 CMP update, the MPOs developed a Multi-Modal Accessibility Analysis that evaluates measures for bicycle network mileage, bike parking availability, bike racks on buses, and pedestrian networks near transit. All three MPOs noted that data from this analysis is incorporated into their individual planning processes. The Federal Team highly encourages the three MPOs to continue to incorporate this kind of analysis into their upcoming update of the CMP.
- *MPO Involvement in Projects:* All three MPOs provided examples of situations where they coordinated with NYSDOT Region 8 and/or local project sponsors to add active transportation enhancements to projects in development, from major projects such as Route 17 Mobility and Access Improvements to smaller bridge projects outside urban cores.

- *Set-Aside Funds*: All three MPOs have programmed their “Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options” Set-Aside of PL funds under Section 11206 of the IJA for eligible activities. The MPOs are encouraged to continue to program and expend these funds in future UPWP cycles.
- *DCTC*: DCTC weaves considerations for safety and active transportation throughout its planning process. Four of the ten identified “Transformative Packages” in the LRTP are directly related to Active Transportation or Safety Needs in Dutchess County. In addition, DCTC’s TIP Project Selection Framework is an excellent model for prioritizing projects based on linkages to Active Transportation and Safety goals from the LRTP.
- DCTC used some of their PL “set-aside” funds to complete the Beacon-Hopewell Rail Trail Study. The Study takes a comprehensive approach to studying feasibility of the rail trail and is highly actionable in considering implementation phasing and long-term maintenance needs.
- DCTC staff continue to play a leadership role in statewide Active Transportation efforts, including serving as Chair of the NYSAMPO Pedestrian and Bicycle Working Group. DCTC continues to expand pedestrian and bicycle count data and incorporate it into the planning process.
- *OCTC*: OCTC continues to implement and promote Orange County’s Bikeway Vision, which envisions a separated non-motorized transportation network for commuting purposes across long distances, especially for vulnerable road users. The Federal Team encourages continued implementation of the Vision via the MPO process. Orange County’s Planning Department has also recently completed Connector Trails Studies, which are incorporated into OCTC’s planning process.
- OCTC has unique Active Transportation-focused studies programmed in its UPWP, such as the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and the City of Newburgh Sidewalk Improvement District Study. However, OCTC’s staffing constraints are currently delaying these potentially innovative studies from starting.
- *UCTC*: As briefly noted in the LRTP section, UCTC’s recently adopted LRTP has a new standalone section that sets a framework for the MPO to shift from a non-motorized plan to a comprehensive active transportation plan. The framework recommends an approach that pro-actively addresses new trends in transportation, including micromobility. UCTC intends to implement the active transportation recommendations from the LRTP in the near future.
- UCTC has completed a number of active transportation studies through its UPWP in recent years. As noted in the Performance Based Planning and Programming section above, UCTC has digitally mapped its sidewalk and crash inventories, and staff also serve on the County’s traffic safety board. All of these efforts have helped UCTC to support active transportation and safety projects in Ulster County.

Regional Transit Planning (Connect Mid-Hudson Study Implementation)

- The MPOs continue to consider recommendations from the 2019 Connect Mid-Hudson Study, recognizing that impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic on public transit slowed implementation.
- OCTC and UCTC have expressed interest in advancing microtransit services in their respective areas to supplement existing fixed-route service. The MPOs have explored the concept of a “turnkey” service where operations are contracted to a private vendor but have chosen not to move in that direction.
- The MPOs, particularly OCTC, anticipate participating in the MTA-led Study examining the expansion of rail service west of the Hudson River and potentially enhancing connectivity to Stewart International Airport. In addition, OCTC and DCTC are beginning work on the Orange & Dutchess Transportation Access and Mobility Study to connect Metro-North’s Beacon Station with

- Stewart International Airport, and to study opportunities for cross-river transportation after the discontinuation of the Newburgh-Beacon Ferry.
- *OCTC*: Orange County continues to navigate the challenge of providing transit service in areas of the County that have experienced extremely rapid population growth since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and have a high-level of dependency on walking, biking, and transit. Due to this localized population growth, OCTC did not experience the same transit ridership reductions during and immediately after the pandemic as other areas of the state and nation.
 - *UCTC*: UCTC worked with UCAT and a consultant team to deliver the Route Optimization Plan in 2025, with the aim of increasing ridership, making efficient use of resources due to shortages of bus equipment and labor, and leverage new technology to deliver reliable transit service in the county.
 - The MPOs continue to consider the recommendation from the Connect Mid-Hudson Study for a regional transit ombudsman or transit authority to oversee capital and operating costs and allocating Federal revenue across the TMA. In the short term, the MPOs continue to work towards allowing their county transit providers to operate across county lines at increased frequency.

Integrating Freight into the Transportation Planning Process

- *MHVTMA*: The MPOs completed a TMA-wide Regional Freight Analysis in 2023. The Analysis included detailed information on industrial employment, commodity flows, freight origins and destinations, and modal split. The plan defines seven key issues that impact freight in the region, including safety, curbside management, truck parking, and freight-related congestion. The plan identifies eleven recommendations for further action on freight planning for the MPOs. The Analysis communicates all of this information in a concise, digestible, and highly visual manner.
- ***Notable Practice 7***: In 2024, in response to the Regional Freight Analysis recommendation on safety, the TMA developed a Large Truck Crash Analysis. The Large Truck Crash Analysis used NYSDOT's CLEAR system to identify the types and locations of large truck crashes and compare regional crash data to state and national trends. The Analysis provides further details on fourteen regional roadway segments that the MPOs identified as highest risk for severe truck crashes. The level of attention to safety of truck movements at the early stages of regional freight planning is noteworthy. DCTC is currently incorporating the Large Truck Crash Analysis as an emphasis area of its SS4A Safety Action Plan. As part of the Regional Freight Analysis, the MHVTMA developed a Freight Data Dashboard with interactive maps and dashboards of data elements presented in the Regional Freight Analysis, including visualization of the Large Truck Crash Analysis.
- *Coordination with NYSDOT and NYS MPOs*: MPO staff were actively involved in development of the 2024 New York State Freight Plan, participating in working group meetings and regional breakout sessions. NYSDOT Region 8 is developing new truck parking facilities using the truck parking set-aside in the State Freight Plan, and the MPOs have been proactive in coordinating with NYSDOT and communicating with their members about the facilities. The MPOs continue to use the State Freight Plan as a source of data and take advantage of other data that NYSDOT purchases and makes available to the NY MPOs, such as TRANSEARCH. The MPOs continue to be active in the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group and have contributed significantly to the development of the Truck Routing Resource Guide that will help NY MPOs address community concerns around truck movements.