

## Walk Bike Dutchess

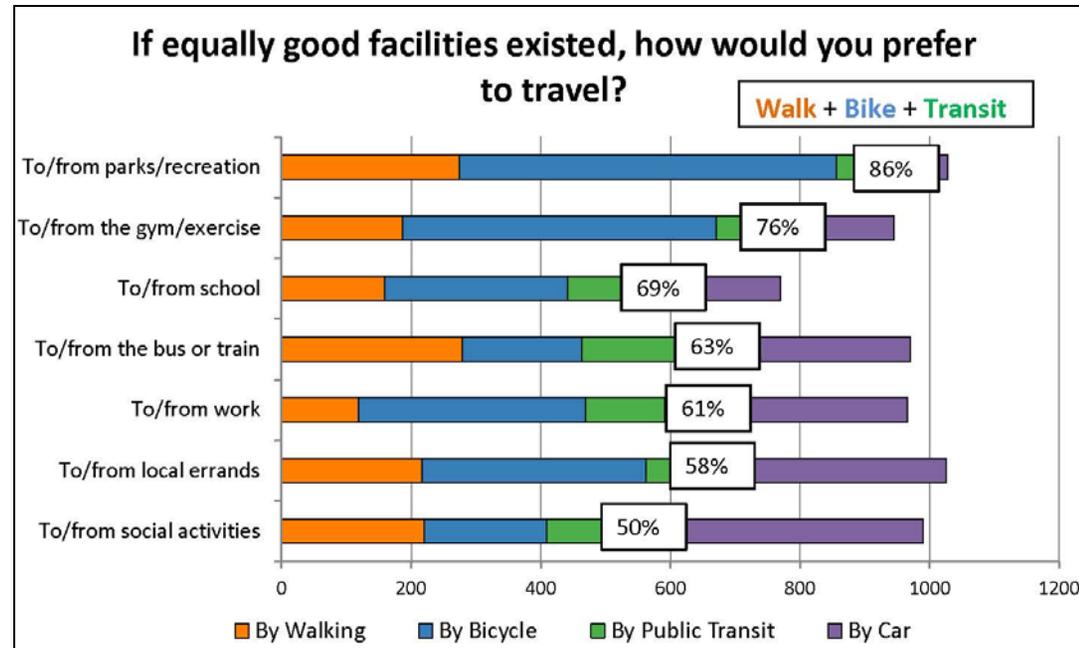
### Executive Summary

Walking and bicycling are increasingly being recognized as important elements of a complete transportation system. In Dutchess County, a number of recent projects have improved conditions for walking and bicycling. The Dutchess Rail Trail was completed and connected to the Walkway Over the Hudson, creating more than 13 miles of continuous shared-use trail. The first shared-lane markings (sharrows) in the County were installed in the City of Beacon, followed by the Village of Pawling and the Town of Amenia, increasing awareness (by both bicyclists and drivers) of bicyclists' right to ride in the travel lane. And the Town of Fishkill adopted the first [Complete Streets policy](#) in the County, affirming the Town's commitment to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all users—whether on foot, bicycle, in a bus or in a car—in the planning, design, and operation of its streets.

Dutchess County residents and visitors value walking and bicycling. The success of the Walkway (over 700,000 annual users and \$24 million in economic impact each year in Dutchess and Ulster counties), the popularity of the Dutchess and Harlem Valley Rail Trails, and the investments occurring in some of our most walkable village and city centers demonstrate the power of walk- and bicycle-friendly communities.

The *Walk-Bike Dutchess* survey, which received over 1,300 responses, clearly demonstrates residents' desire to walk and bicycle: When asked, "If equally good facilities existed, how would you prefer to travel (by bicycle, walking, public transit, or car)?" close to 60 percent would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit to

local errands or shopping, and over 60 percent of respondents said they would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit to work. Almost 70 percent would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit to school, and over 85 percent would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit to parks and recreation.



However, many communities currently lack the sidewalks, shared-use paths, paved road shoulders, and other facilities that allow safe walking and bicycling for these everyday trips. Almost 50 percent of those who responded to the survey were somewhat or very dissatisfied with how their community is designed for walking, and almost 70 percent were somewhat or very dissatisfied with how their community is designed for bicycling.

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Given the growing awareness of walking and bicycling as important elements of sustainable communities and quality of life, the Plan establishes this vision: ***In Dutchess County, walking and bicycling will be part of daily life, providing safe and convenient transportation and recreation.***

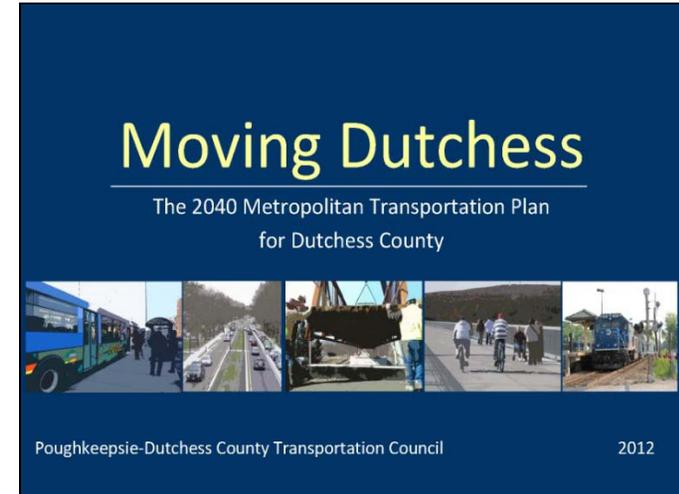
The Plan aims to address the gap between our desire to make walking and bicycling part of everyday life, and the current limitations of our built environment—specifically in centers such as our cities, villages, town centers, and hamlets. The Plan is intended to serve as a resource for municipalities by summarizing design guidelines, analyzing data, highlighting best practices, recommending projects, and identifying funding sources and implementation steps to make walking and bicycling safer, more convenient forms of transportation and recreation in Dutchess County.

The Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC) developed the Plan in coordination with a Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) made up of residents as



*Members of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee analyzed maps, identified issues, developed project recommendations, and reviewed draft chapters of the Plan.*

well as representatives from municipalities, County departments, NYSDOT-Region 8, and local organizations. It builds upon the first [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) for the County, completed in 1996, and *Moving Dutchess*, the long-range [Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#) completed in 2011. It is also consistent with the [Centers and Greenspaces strategy](#) developed by the County Planning Department.



The Plan recommends over one hundred specific projects to make walking and bicycling a safer, more convenient part of everyday life in our county. These include new sidewalks and crosswalks; road shoulder improvements; shared-use paths and trails; sharrows, bicycle lanes, and bicycle boulevards; traffic calming; specific studies; and others. These recommendations were developed through a review of previous plans, an analysis of issues by the BPAC, and suggestions by municipal officials, the public, and staff from NYSDOT-Region 8, Dutchess County Public Works, and Dutchess County Planning and Development. A 30-day public comment period was held from January 15 to February 14, 2014 and 14 comments were received. Please see Appendix A for a

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summary of the comments and the public outreach methods used for the Plan.

Below is a sample of the project recommendations, organized by location:

- **Amenia & North East:** Extend the Harlem Valley Rail Trail south to the Wassaic hamlet and north to Columbia County.
- **Beacon:** Install additional bicycle parking along Main Street and at key destinations.
- **East Fishkill:** Install sidewalks on Route 376 and Route 82 to connect the Dutchess Rail Trail to the Hopewell recreation center, library, Town Hall, and Gayhead Elementary School.
- **Hyde Park:** Develop a demonstration project for bicycle lanes on a County road, using St. Andrews Road (CR 40A).
- **Pawling:** Install sidewalks on Route 22, Reservoir Road, and Wagner Drive to connect the Village of Pawling to the Pawling Middle/High School campus.
- **Pleasant Valley:** Fill sidewalk gaps and improve pedestrian crossings on Main Street (Route 44) in the Town Center.
- **Poughkeepsie (City):** Implement the City's bicycle route network with sharrows, bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, or simply as shared lanes.
- **Poughkeepsie (City & Town):** Redesign the Smith Street/Creek Road/Little George Street intersection and install sidewalks along Creek Road to improve walking access to Dutchess Community College.

- **Red Hook:** Widen shoulders on Route 199 between Route 9G and the Village line to improve bicycle access between the Town, Bard College, and the Village of Red Hook.

The Plan's five Planning Area chapters (Upper and Lower Hudson; Upper and Lower Taconic; and Harlem Valley) each include a list of project recommendations and details. In addition to these specific project recommendations, the Plan includes a series of county-wide recommendations related to engineering practices, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, policy, and personnel.

Funding for implementation is a critical constraint. While the Plan does identify potential funding sources, it does not provide any funding. Given this limitation, **the project ideas should be recognized as recommendations only**. They are intended to help municipalities and other agencies identify priorities, refine project ideas, and develop applications for federal, state, and other funding programs. Since the facility owner(s) will ultimately decide whether or not to implement a project, the Plan cannot and is not intended to require specific action by any municipality or agency.

The Plan sets ambitious goals to improve walking and bicycling in Dutchess County. Long-term goals (for 2040) include:

- Double the length of shared-use path in the county, from 25 to 50 miles.
- Build over 50 miles of sidewalks (from 435 to 486 miles).
- Install 20 miles of on-street bicycle facilities (bicycle lanes, sharrows, and bicycle boulevards).
- Add bicycle parking racks at 500 key destinations.

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- Increase walking trips from 8.5 percent of all trips to 15 percent.
- Increase bicycle trips from less than 1 percent of all trips to 5 percent.
- Pass a Complete Streets policy in each municipality in the county.
- Increase the number of Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day events from 4 per year to 20.

With concerted efforts by municipal leaders, County and State staff, and residents, coupled with federal and State funding support, these goals are achievable – and we will help make walking and bicycling a part of everyday life in Dutchess County.