

### **Appendix D**

#### **Public Outreach Summary**

The Council relied on stakeholder workshops and surveys to gather input on the transportation needs and priorities identified in *Moving Dutchess*. The Council also held a 30 day public comment period for the final draft of the Plan.

#### **Stakeholder Workshops**

The Council held a series of stakeholder workshops in support of *Moving Dutchess*. The workshops were held in six locations throughout the county and focused on identifying and prioritizing transportation needs in the five planning areas defined in the plan.

While open to the public, the workshops were targeted for town, planning, and zoning board members, highway superintendents, and conservation council members. Invitation letters were sent to chief elected officials and board secretaries, with the suggestion that each board send one or two representatives.

The workshops were held on the following dates and locations (all were from 6:00-8:00 pm):

1. June 15th - Fishkill Town Hall (Lower Hudson 1)
2. June 21st - Beekman Town Hall (Lower Taconic)
3. June 23rd - Stanford Town Hall (Upper Taconic)
4. June 28th - Poughkeepsie City Hall (Lower Hudson 2)

5. July 18th - Hyde Park Town Hall (Upper Hudson)
6. July 20th - Amenia Town Hall (Harlem Valley)

Each workshop included a short presentation about the Council and its responsibilities, followed by a review of information gathered for the plan. The workshops used the following format:

1. Introduction to the Council and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process
2. Council history, organization, planning requirements
3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Existing Conditions)
  - a. Background, organization, and purpose
  - b. Demographic overview (countywide)
  - c. Transportation system and natural resource overview (countywide)
  - d. Area plan overview
    - Demographics
    - Land use (centers, destinations, and major projects)
    - Transportation system (road and bridge conditions; transit service; sidewalks/trails)
    - Comprehensive plan findings
4. Transportation needs
  - a. Review needs identified by staff
  - b. Request concurrence on needs and identify new needs
  - c. Prioritize needs (short- mid-, and long-range priorities)
  - d. Discuss strategic disinvestment (what can we live without?)

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Large poster maps were made available, showing the planning area, road and bridge conditions, and crash data. Posters were also provided listing the transportation needs for the area that staff identified from previous Council studies, local comprehensive plans, and system data. Attendees edited and added to these lists and then prioritized the needs. The edited and prioritized lists of needs from each workshop are attached.



*Upper Hudson Workshop held on July 18, 2011.*

### **Survey**

Staff developed a survey to gather feedback on transportation issues, patterns, and priorities. The survey was primarily conducted online, using SurveyMonkey. A shorter paper version was also distributed, and pdfs created for posting on the PDCTC website. The paper and pdf versions were translated into Chinese and Spanish. Distribution included the following methods:

1. Council website (link to online version and pdfs in English, Spanish, and Chinese)
2. Technical Committee meeting announcements
3. Council public information email list
4. Dutchess County Planning Federation email list
5. Dutchess County Mayors and Supervisors email list
6. Dutchess County employees' Tie-Line newsletter article
7. Dutchess Housing Consortium email list
8. Local libraries (email and some paper copies)
9. LOOP buses (paper copies)

The survey was conducted from mid-July through early September, with completed paper surveys entered into SurveyMonkey for analysis. A total of 408 surveys were completed. The survey form and charts of the survey responses are attached.

Findings from the survey included the following:

Making Dutchess County a great place to live- 95 percent of respondents said that protecting air and water quality was either very important or somewhat important; preserving natural areas, improving public transportation, reducing energy use, and reducing traffic congestion were rated very or somewhat important by 87 to 88 percent of respondents.

Driving- Over 40 percent of respondents stated that the condition of roads in their community was excellent or good, while 40 percent said it was fair. Over 50 percent stated that bridges in their community were in excellent or good condition, while 30 percent said they were fair. Over 40

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percent said traffic flow was excellent or good, while 34 percent said it was fair and 21 percent said it was not good or poor. About 60 percent rated their feeling of safety while driving as excellent or good; 30 percent as fair, and 11 percent as not good or poor.

Walking- Almost 50 percent of respondents said that the amount of sidewalks, shoulders, and crosswalks in their community was not good or poor; another 30 percent said it was fair. Forty percent said the condition of those facilities was not good or poor. However, 36 percent said the availability of paths and trails was excellent or good. Close to 40 percent rated their feeling of safety while walking as not good or poor. Over half of respondents said they sometimes walk for transportation, while almost 40 percent said they never do. About 9 percent said they often walk for transportation. The most common reasons for not walking more were distance (67%) and inadequate sidewalks or shoulders (58%).

Bicycling- Almost 60 percent of respondents said that the amount of bicycle lanes and shoulders in their community was not good or poor. Close to 50 percent said the condition of those facilities was not good or poor. While close to 40 percent said the availability of bicycle paths and trails was not good or poor, over 20 percent said it was excellent or good. However, 45 percent rated their feeling of safety while bicycling as not good or poor. Almost 70 percent of respondents said they never bicycle for transportation, while 28 percent said they sometimes do and 4 percent said they often do. The most common reasons for not bicycling more

were inadequate shoulders, bike lanes or paths (55%), and too much traffic (39%).

Bus Transit- Most respondents stated that they did not know about bus transit conditions in their community. However, of those that rated bus transit, most said they condition of buses was excellent or good, but rated the frequency and schedule, availability of information, and availability of bus stops and shelters as not good or poor. However, most rated their feeling of safety on buses as excellent or good. Over 80 percent of respondents said they never take the bus, while 17 percent said they sometimes do and 3 percent said they often do. The most common reasons for not using the bus more were that it doesn't go where they need to go (42%), bus service is not available (32%), and they don't know the route or schedule (30%).

Other Transit- Most respondents rated Metro-North highly, saying the condition of trains, frequency and schedule of service, availability of information, reliability of service, and feeling of safety was excellent or good. However, over 30 percent said availability of parking was poor, and other 30 percent said it was fair. Most respondents selected "don't know" with regard to the availability of ferry service. Over 75 percent of respondents said they sometimes take the train, while 18 percent said they never do and 6 percent said they often do. The most common reasons for not using the train more were that the cost is too high (33%) and it doesn't go where they need to go (32%).

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Transportation Overall- Over 40 percent of respondents selected “excellent” or “good” in terms of how well the transportation system overall meets their needs; 38 percent selected “fair.” Over half of respondents rated the ease of getting where they have to go as excellent or good, while 32 percent rated it as fair.

Travel Patterns- Over 20 percent of respondents said that at least one driving-age (16 or older) member of their household depends on transit or rides from others, either because they don’t have a car or don’t drive. Over 50 percent of respondents’ households use two vehicles on a daily basis; about 30 percent use one vehicle, and 12 percent use three vehicles. About five percent use zero vehicles and four percent use four or more.

Of those that commute to work, one-third commutes 5 miles or fewer. Over 75 percent commute 20 miles or fewer. When asked about their travel over the past week, the most common trip purpose was socializing or recreation, followed closely by shopping. When comparing trips by travel mode, most reported trips were drive-alone or with children. Carpool was second, followed by walking, then bus, then bicycling. The most common driving trips were driving alone or with children to shop, followed by driving to an appointment and driving to social events or recreation. The most common carpool trips were to social events or recreation, followed by shopping. The most common walking and bicycling trips were for socializing or recreation, and the most common bus trips were for work or school.

In terms of out-of-county travel, of the choices given, respondents were most likely to go to Ulster County at least once in the previous month, and least likely to go to Putnam County.

Problems- When asked about current and emerging problems, a majority of respondents said that the lack of safe and accessible sidewalks, and availability of transportation for elderly and disabled persons were current problems. These were followed by the lack of safe bicycle facilities, congestion on roadways, and the lack of bus service. In terms of emerging problems, the most commonly cited were road conditions and air quality. The most common issues deemed to be ‘not a problem’ were commercial truck traffic, air quality, and bridge conditions.

Reducing Congestion- To reduce congestion, most respondents suggested improving public transportation (37%), followed by creating communities where people don’t have to drive as much (34%).

Agree/Disagree Questions- 64 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with “I would use buses more often if the service had convenient stops and schedules,” and 54 percent strongly agreed or agreed with “To save money, I would consider carpooling, taking the bus, walking, or bicycling.” However, 55 percent strongly agreed or agreed with “I would continue to drive even if other types of travel were made more convenient.” Over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with “Commercial truck traffic negatively

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affects my quality of life” and “I experience delays daily in my travels.”

Land Use- The vast majority of respondents (84%) said that development should mostly be located within cities, town centers and villages. Almost 86 percent said that housing and buildings should be closely spaced with connecting sidewalks, rather than spread out, even if it means having smaller homes and yards and less space for parking. Over 80 percent said that infrastructure and services should be expanded primarily in and around existing town and village centers.

Top Priorities- Maintaining major roads or streets and improving public transportation were the top priorities, followed by improving transportation for seniors and disabled persons, improving sidewalks, and improving major roads.

Services to Support with Taxes- Respondents were most willing to support shuttle service for seniors and disabled persons, and walking and bicycling improvements. Improving bus service also had substantial support.

Revenue Sources- Most respondents oppose increases in taxes and other revenue sources. However, if additional revenue were necessary, the option with the highest percent of strong support was an increase in the gas tax. Combining items that respondents ‘strongly support’ and ‘somewhat support,’ the most supported option was an increase in existing tolls (42% support), followed by an increase in vehicle registration fees (34% support). A sales tax increase, a user tax based on miles driven, and adding tolls to highways all had 31 to 32 percent

support. The most opposed option was a property tax increase (88% oppose) followed by an increase in the gas tax (75% oppose).

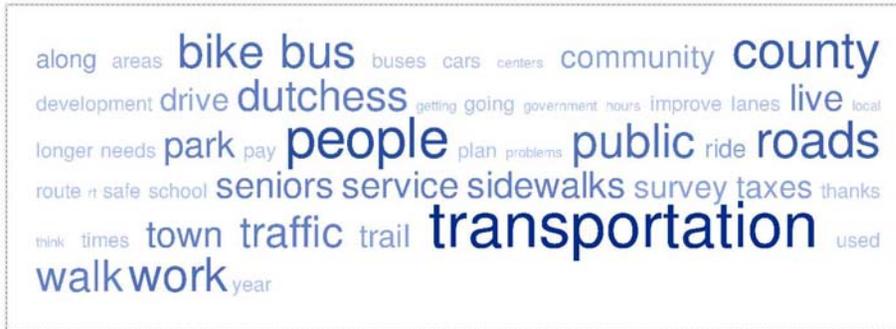
Demographics- There was at least one respondent from all 30 municipalities. The largest number of respondents was from the Town of Poughkeepsie, followed by the City of Poughkeepsie, Towns of Hyde Park and LaGrange. Respondents ranged in age from under 24 to over 85. Almost 32 percent of respondents were aged 55 to 64, and 73 percent were between ages 45 and 74. Slightly more females (54%) took the survey than males (46%). Over 90 percent of survey respondents selected White as their race, though some respondents selected Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Other. Almost 30 percent of respondents reported an annual household income of over \$100,000; another 20 percent reported from \$75,000-\$100,000 and almost 20 percent reported \$25,000-\$50,000 and \$50,000-\$75,000 each.

Comments- About 30 percent of respondents added comments at the end of the survey. The most common topics included transit issues and needs; gratitude for the survey; tax and funding concerns; bicycling safety and facility needs; land use and development patterns; seniors’ transportation needs, and sidewalks and walkability.

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Figure D-1. Word Cloud of Public Comments from Survey



### 30-Day Public Comment Period

The Council also conducted a 30-day public comment period from October 11 to November 8, 2011, which provided the public an opportunity to provide comments on the final draft Plan. This included two public meetings held on October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Council's office and Poughkeepsie Town Hall.