

Executive Summary

Moving Dutchess Forward is the [Dutchess County Transportation Council's](#) long-range Transportation Plan for Dutchess County. The Plan serves as the strategic vision for improving transportation across the county over the next 25 years. It establishes goals for the county's transportation system, supported by policy and project recommendations that are grounded in data and research, and shaped by our 45 years of experience as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Dutchess County.

Our Approach

This iteration of [Moving Dutchess Forward](#) builds on our work for the [2021 version of Moving Dutchess Forward](#): it remains an online product, built to be flexible and interactive, with maps and visuals so readers can easily understand ideas and information. It also maintains a focus on how our transportation system enables or prevents people from accessing the basics of life (such as housing, work, education, etc.). The Plan looks at the policies and investments needed to maintain the transportation system and improve access, considering safety, reliability, and basic needs.

Our Vision: By 2050,
 Dutchess County's
 transportation system will
 be safer, more reliable,
 and more resilient for all.

Public Outreach

Before we began the Plan, we developed a public engagement strategy to outline our outreach process and desired outcomes. Informed by our [Public Participation Plan](#) and experiences with previous studies, we developed a process to provide the public with clear and accessible information about the Plan. We used a mix of virtual and in-person tools. This included three virtual public meetings, two online surveys (with almost 650 responses), ten in-person events, five short videos and fact sheets, emails, and social media posts, plus a mix of printed material. We also provided updates at our monthly Planning Committee meetings. To help us connect with hard-to-reach communities and deepen our ties with vulnerable populations, three community ambassadors represented the project team at local events and shared updates with their networks. These tools helped us engage with diverse populations across the county and gather feedback on their transportation needs and priorities as we developed the Plan.

Planning Goals

After an introduction to our region, a summary of our population, and an inventory of our transportation system, we organized the Plan around four goals:

Goal 1: Learn

This section describes trends related to demographics, travel behavior, housing, economy, freight, climate, and transportation technology. Analyzing these trends can help us adapt our transportation system to shifts in the nature of and demand for transportation in the county and region. At the end of each topic, we outline our role: how we (the DCTC) can respond to trends in our transportation planning work.

Prepare a transportation system that can anticipate and adapt to changes in the population, economy, technology, climate, and travel behavior.

Goal 2: Assess

This section identifies transportation barriers related to safety, reliability, and access to basic needs, looking at how our transportation system enables or prevents people from accessing housing, work, education, and other needs. We look at how access to transportation varies across population groups and identify focus areas where people are especially vulnerable to transportation decisions. Our discussion about barriers is complemented by a series of interactive maps and concludes with how we (the DCTC) can address those barriers.

Provide safe and convenient access for all people to housing, jobs, goods, services, and recreational amenities, regardless of age, ability, race, income, location, or mode of transportation.

Goal 3: Advocate

This section focuses on actions that the DCTC, Dutchess County government, and local municipalities can pursue to address the barriers identified in our Assess section. For DCTC and Dutchess County actions, we outline high-level objectives with sub-bullets for specific actions, framed in the context of our central themes - improving safety, reliability, and access to basic needs. We organize the local actions as a series of questions for residents to ask about their municipality, with best practice actions to address each question.

Promote smart transportation and land use policies and practices to remove barriers to access and support economic opportunity, environmental preservation, and improved quality of life.

Goal 4: Invest

This section describes how transportation funding works in our area, how much we expect to be available through 2050, and what investments we will prioritize. We focus on how much funding is needed to keep our system functioning at a basic level, such as repaving roads, repairing bridges, repairing sidewalks and trails, and running buses. We provide a Financial Plan that supports two sets of recommendations: a list of Investment Priorities that addresses broad goals for our system (maintaining our infrastructure, reducing crashes, improving transit service, and increasing access), and a short list of Illustrative Projects. Both sets of recommendations focus our efforts and resources on helping communities create a safer, more reliable, and more resilient future.

Invest in our regional transportation system to maintain existing infrastructure and improve safety, reliability, and access to basic needs, while maintaining fiscal constraint.

Investment Priorities

Our investment priorities address the trends, barriers, and needs outlined in the Plan, with an emphasis on maintaining the transportation system and continuing existing services. Projects within these priorities would be implemented in cooperation with the road owner or relevant agency, while funding for specific, standalone projects that meet the intent of these priorities would be prioritized based on how well they meet our goals of safe and reliable access for all. Because we assume flat future funding and continued inflation, and given our aging infrastructure, our Plan prioritizes preservation. Our Investment Priorities include:

- Road Maintenance & Operations
- Bridge Maintenance & Replacements
- Transportation Safety Improvements
- Sidewalks & Other Walking Improvements
- Rail Trail Maintenance
- Bus Service Maintenance & Operations
- Train Service Maintenance & Operations
- Congestion Management & Traffic Operations

We estimate that over \$2 billion is needed to maintain existing transportation infrastructure and services through 2050.

Illustrative Projects

Though our funding assumptions force us to focus on preservation, we also identify eight projects that address the needs and barriers identified in the Plan and would have large-scale impacts. Most have been planned or are actively being planned. We call these Illustrative Projects because we haven't identified specific funding for them. However, it is possible that

additional resources will be available in the future, including new funding programs, grants, earmarks, or innovative financing models. Our Illustrative Projects include:

- Market Street Two-way Redesign, City of Poughkeepsie
- Human Services Transportation, Dutchess County
- Route 44/55 Arterials Redesign, City & Town of Poughkeepsie
- Beacon-Hopewell Rail Trail, City of Beacon, Village of Fishkill, and Towns of Fishkill & East Fishkill
- Redesigning State Routes through Town & Village Centers
- Route 9/44/55 Interchange Redesign, City of Poughkeepsie
- I-84/Route 9D Interchange Improvements, Town of Fishkill
- Zero-Emission Bus Fleet, Dutchess County

Measuring Progress

We establish a series of [Performance Objectives](#) to gauge our progress in improving safety, reliability, access to basic needs, and transportation for all. These measures were selected based on our data analysis in the Plan and data that we expect to be consistently available. We also completed a federally required [System Performance Report](#) to show how we're meeting federal and state performance targets. We expect that the investment priorities in Moving Dutchess Forward will help us achieve the established targets for safety, road and bridge conditions, system reliability, and transit systems.

Moving Dutchess Forward

In developing this Plan, we sought to humanize the narrative around transportation – turning our focus away from the infrastructure itself and towards why we have infrastructure in the first place. We strove to better understand how people interact with our transportation system, acknowledging its failings, but also its opportunities. We also wanted a Plan that resonated with the public and would stand the test of time. Moving Dutchess Forward is a resource for us as practitioners but also for you, and we intend to update it as needs and conditions change. We're excited to work on Moving Dutchess Forward with you.