



Executive Summary

The Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC) conducted a multi-phase public engagement process Fall 2025 through summer 2026 to inform Moving Dutchess Forward, the countywide, long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The Plan guides transportation planning and investment through 2050, addressing road and bridge conditions, public transit, walking and bicycling infrastructure, access to essential destinations, and emerging transportation needs.

The engagement process sought to make participation accessible to all people across Dutchess County and to ensure that the Plan reflected a broad range of transportation experiences and needs.





Moving Dutchess Forward was developed through an integrated planning and engagement process from fall 2025 through summer 2026.

A flexible approach was intended to make participation easier for residents across the county with different schedules, language needs, and levels of familiarity with transportation planning.

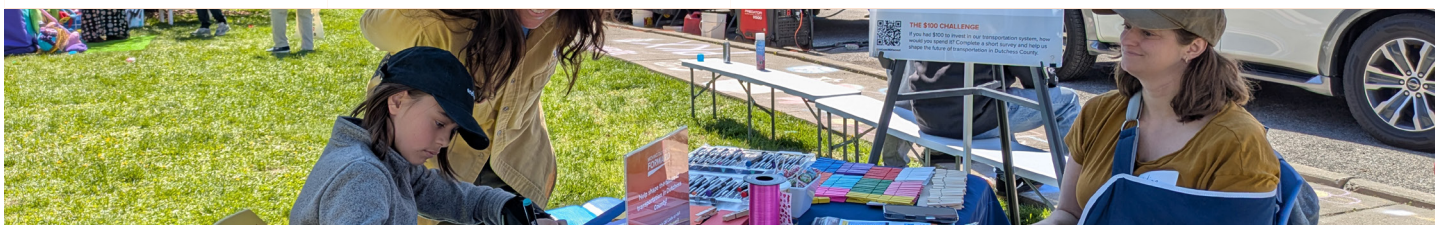
Rather than relying on traditional public meetings, the engagement team met residents at familiar community destinations and existing events in urban, suburban, and rural areas. This included:

- Community Events Pop-Ups with interactive activities
- Virtual Public Meetings
- Online Surveys
- Community Ambassadors
- Plain Language materials available in English and Spanish

Engagement Phase	Event Type	Event Location
Phase 1: Listening	Pop-Ups	Pawling Food Distribution
		Beacon Farmers Market
		Millerton Farmers Market
		Poughkeepsie's Market Fresh
	Survey #1	Online with hard copies available
	Public Meeting #1	Virtual



Phase 2: Recommendations Review	Pop-Ups	PKX Festival in the City of Poughkeepsie
		Repair Café and Clothing Closet Event at the Red Hook Community Center
		Dutchess County Health Fair at Dutchess County Community College
	Survey #2	Online with hard copies available
	Public Meeting #2	Virtual



Phase 3: Plan Review	Pop-Ups	Fishkill Farmers Market
		Dutchess Outreach Food Distribution Town of Poughkeepsie
	Transportation Stories	Online submissions/Email Communication
	Public Meeting #3	Virtual

What We Heard

Across the engagement process, residents consistently emphasized the importance of a transportation system that provides safe, reliable, and accessible options for everyone, especially older adults, people with disabilities, students, low-income households, and residents of rural communities where transportation choices are more limited.

Community input demonstrated strong support for expanding transportation choices, particularly pedestrian, bicycle, and bus infrastructure, while maintaining and improving the systems people rely on today. The sections below summarize public input by geography and identify countywide themes.



Northern Dutchess

- Improved access to public transportation (increased frequency and expanded routes), especially for rural residents, seniors, and people traveling to medical services.
- Stronger regional connections between northern Dutchess, Ulster County, train stations, and other major destinations.
- Road maintenance and safety concerns, including potholes, truck traffic, traffic signal violations, and difficult roadway conditions.
- Transportation options should not depend only on ridership levels, since low-density rural communities still need access to essential services.

Harlem Valley

- Limited or nonexistent public transportation was one of the strongest concerns, particularly for people who do not drive.
- Better access to train service, especially reliable connections to the Wassaic station.
- Improved access to medical care and essential destinations, including trips outside Dutchess County to places such as Sharon, CT and Danbury, CT.
- Safer roads, intersections, and trail connections, particularly along Route 22 and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail; participants mentioned signage, guiderails, intersection design, and snow/ice removal.
- Concern about rural communities being overlooked compared with more populated areas of Dutchess County.

What We Heard

Southern Dutchess

- Pedestrian safety was a major concern, including missing or uneven sidewalks, unsafe crossings, short crossing times, and conflicts with high-speed traffic.
- More frequent and reliable bus service, including weekend service, additional stops and shelters, real-time arrival information, and better connections to Metro-North.
- Better bicycling connections, including protected bike lanes, bicycle parking, rail-trail connections, and safer linkages to schools, colleges, parks, and downtown destinations.
- Traffic congestion and roadway safety, particularly along Routes 9, 9D, and 44/55, the Mid-Hudson Bridge, and major intersections.
- Road and bridge maintenance, including potholes, speeding, reckless driving, and concerns about bridge conditions.

Countywide

Across all three geographic areas, residents consistently called for safer walking and bicycling infrastructure, more reliable public transit, better-maintained roads and bridges, and transportation choices that improve access to jobs, health care, education, shopping, and other essential destinations.

Impact of the Engagement Process

Moving Dutchess Forward engaged with at least 1,141 participants across Dutchess County through surveys, community pop-ups, virtual meetings, stakeholder interviews, and transportation stories. Outreach included in-person engagement in Pawling, Beacon, Millerton, Poughkeepsie, Red Hook, and East Fishkill, while surveys extended the Plan's geographic reach across dozens of ZIP codes.

Overall, the Moving Dutchess Forward engagement process provided multiple ways for residents and stakeholders to help shape the county's transportation future.

The feedback gathered throughout the process underscored a shared desire for a transportation system that is safer, more reliable, better connected, and accessible to all, while responding to the different needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities across Dutchess County.

Engagement Phase	People Reached
Pre-engagement interviews	22
Phase 1	691
Phase 2	344
Phase 3	84
TOTAL	1,141

