



New York State
Association of
Metropolitan
Planning Organizations
WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

WORKING GROUP: Transit Working Group (TWG)

MEETING DATE/TIME: Monday, October 24, 2016, 10:00 to 11:00AM

MEETING LOCATION: Conference Call (1-719-234-7872, Code: 6135021939)

ATTENDEES:

Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council – A/GFTC: Kate Mance
Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study – BMTS: Scott Reigle, Cassandra Gascon
Capital District Transportation Committee – CDTC: Anne Benware, Carrie Ward
Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council – ECTC: Tina Hager, Jim Arey
Genesee Transportation Council – GTC: Jody Binnix
Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council – GBNRTC: Not Present
Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study – HOCTS: Barb Hauck
Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council – ITCTC: Not Present
New York Metropolitan Transportation Council – NYMTC: Not Present
Orange County Transportation Council – OCTC: Not Present
Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council – PDCTC: Mark DeBald
Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council – SMTC: Mario Colone
Ulster County Transportation Council – UCTC: Brian Slack
Watertown Jefferson – WJCATC: Jennifer Hodge
New York State Department of Transportation – NYSDOT: Tom Vaughn, Lisa Cataldo
RSG: Christine Sherman

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Introductions (All)

2. Call for Co-Chair Nominations/Volunteers (Sherman)

Please email Mario/Christine if you would like to take on the role of TWG co-chair.

3. Review and Update of Work Plan (Colone)

The NYSAMPO Executive Directors asked that all Working Groups have their draft Work Plans sent to RSG by November 15. Please send comments/adjustments/additions to Mario/Christine in the next one and a half weeks (by November 2) to incorporate into the Work Plan. Comments from MPOs:

- ECTC: Many elements from the previous Work Plan can move forward to the next year. The development of Coordinated Plans could be a separate task.
- SMTC/CDTC: Coordinated Plan development and interfacing with the 5310 program should remain in the Work Plan. It is uncertain how/if the MPOs will have any training on coordination best practices.
- CDTC: Mobility management in New York State could be a topic—specifically how the MPOs will address the issue of mobility management within Coordinated Plans and other studies. This interfaces and works with the 5310 program. For example, CDTC has a Transportation Coordination Committee but thinks they could benefit from more information sharing.



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- NYSDOT: Most MPOs are up to date in their plans and meet requirements. NYSDOT struggles with some of the rural counties on a four-year cycle, so they are moving to a two-year cycle to create breathing room. Planning for the grant application has merit when an MPO or county lacks money to fund necessary projects. NYSDOT is always looking to make the plans more relevant and the solicitation more meaningful.
- A/GFTC: In July/August 2016, the National Aging and Disability Transit Center (NADTC) announced a grant program dealing with accessible transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities that was tied into 5310. A local agency was considering applying, but it turned out not to be relevant. The TWG should keep an eye out on this program to see how it plays out. It could be a good model or source of information once the projects get started. It could be too early for this year's Work Plan, but potentially next year's.

Please email Mario/Christine by November 2 with comments/adjustments/additions to the Work Plan.

4. Impacts of Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation Processes (Colone)

This topic is something that the TWG has discussed on several agendas. There has been little follow up from the state. Comments from MPOs who are dealing with this issue in their region:

- ECTC: ECTC is dealing with the change in the funding and approach to non-emergency Medicaid. In the state budget for 2016 to 2017, the NYS Department of Health was provided an appropriation that will be allocated at some point to the transit systems most impacted by this issue. It looks to be a one-year approach, but it is the understanding that assistance with the transition of the payments will not happen in this fiscal year. If there is no additional transition funding in state fiscal year 2017 to 2018, the Elmira region will face service cuts and will need a significant increase in funding to maintain half of their transportation service in Chemung County. The MPO will continue to work at it, as this region may be one of the most impacted in the state. They are not sure if this topic will continue to be an item that the TWG as a whole should address in a significant way.
- SMTC: This is one of the items on the 2016 to 2017 Work Plan that the TWG will need to decide whether to keep on or not. This issue is not on SMTC's radar to the degree that it is in Chemung County or the smaller MPO areas. It is a more localized issue but with statewide implications. It can continue as a discussion item to see how the MPOs continue to deal with the item.
- CDTC: CDTC is similar to Syracuse in that the issue does not impact the public transit provider but it can impact the nonprofits. This would be a good item to maintain on the Work Plan because it has a significant effect on smaller MPOs.
- BMTS: The issue impacts the Binghamton area—particularly rural-to-urban transportation. Through the 5310 application process, BMTS discovered that they lost significant funding. The ability to meet the needs of their clients impacts their 5310 operations rather than capital.

5. Roundtable Discussion (All)

- SMTC: SMTC has been actively working with the Transit Authority on work tasks in the UPWP. One of the projects going on now evaluates the concept of bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT) along a few corridors in the city of Syracuse. The project team is nearing recommendations for the modes and routes. SMTC is preparing for a public meeting on the project next month intended to bring the options to the public and keep them informed of the process as they continue with the analysis. SMTC hopes to have the final report of this Phase 1 effort completed in 2017, at which time they can talk locally with the City of Syracuse



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- and the Transit Authority about moving into Phase 2. Project development would involve an application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts funding program—a resource that FTA makes available for capital-intensive transit activities. SMTC is also conducting several surveys for the Transit Authority. This includes rider surveys and non-rider surveys. They are also doing a third survey, which they never done for the Transit Authority. This is an employer-specific survey intended to identify employers and businesses throughout Onondaga County. SMTC is interested in geographic coverage in Onondaga County; however, there are temporal and spatial gaps that occur, which are impacted both on the capital and operating side. If the Transit Authority wants to add service and/or frequencies, it would require an uplift from the operations side. The survey will get information from the business community to determine how important transit is to local businesses and if they would be open to the discussion of subsidizing transit services.
- A/GFTC: A/GFTC recently started a rural transportation survey, for which they hired a consultant out of Vermont to help inventory the public on human service transportation providers. A/GFTC hopes to identify nontraditional methods like rural ridesharing or volunteer drivers. They would like to obtain fresh ideas to address transportation issues—especially in rural areas, which have a unique set of difficulties. Once A/GFTC has draft results, they will share it with the TWG. There was also a workshop that took place in April that had a variety of sessions that could be interesting to the group. Anne will send to Christine to distribute.
 - UCTC: UCTC recently hired a consultant (TransPro Consulting) to evaluate consolidation of merging the two public transit providers in Ulster County. UCTC Transit has eight or nine routes, and Kingston City Bus has three routes. The new mayor in Kingston is interested in improving transit service in the city. The County is also on board and optimistic they will be able to improve ridership and service with the merge. Ridership in the City of Kingston has been on the decline for some time, while county ridership has increased steadily in the past decade. UCTC anticipates that this will be a difficult study, as it is likely to encounter resistance from key stakeholder groups. (Note, the study was first discussed in 2006, but did not go anywhere based on political reasons.) UCTC hopes to put forward solid recommendations on an expedited timeline of about six to eight months. UCTC will provide an update to the TWG on the project in the spring.
 - NYSDOT: NYSDOT hired a consultant to assist with getting and maintaining current transit route and schedule information into the 511 system, as well as other outlets that agencies want to try. NYSDOT is working on getting non-urbanized areas' transit route and schedule data into the 511 system and providing accurate 511 trip planner information/access. This may involve entering data for agencies who do not have resources, going through modifications with software, increasing tools on accessibility, or addressing temporal or spatial mismatches. Transit MPO discussions should involve NYSDOT. The rideshare is also still moving along. Elmira's 511 rideshare is doing well. CDTC also using the 511 system. NYSDOT hopes that these programs will help mobility management programs. NYSDOT encourages MPOs to think about how to reach out for rideshare options. Jim Davis is another great resource.
 - CDTC: CDTC would like a list of the smaller transit agencies that NYSDOT is contacting to obtain route information for the 511 transit planner. CDTC is available to help make the connection to help with the update. Tom will send the list that he has to Carrie who will follow up with any updates/contacts.
 - CDTC: 5310 applicants have requested that the MPO share the evaluation committee's information. Is that allowed? Are other MPOs getting similar requests?
 - SMTC: Noted that this is the first time that they are aware that MPO staff and others (DOT or outside MPO staff) were asked to sign nondisclosure agreements relating to TAP and CMAQ. For the next 5310 solicitations, is that something that the MPOs will be expected to sign, as well?



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- NYSDOT: The 2016 solicitation process is public information, so if someone requests the evaluation information, the MPO should disclose it. NYSDOT hopes to get the final results of the 2016 solicitation this week. The grants are approved. NYSDOT needs to send contracts out once the letters go out. NYSDOT is not sure what the 2017 solicitation will look like. NYSDOT has a group of volunteers from the TWG to assist with this. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA are two different modes, so NYSDOT has different relationships with these two agencies. If an MPO's process allows the MPO to give out information, the MPO should follow that process.

6. Action Items/Adjourn (All)

- TWG members interested in volunteering as TWG co-chair should email Mario and Christine ASAP.
- TWG Members should review the 2016 to 2017 Work Plan and send comments to Mario and Christine by Nov. 2.
- Anne will send workshop materials to Christine for distribution.
- TWG members should continue to suggest topics of interest or exemplary project work for content in future meetings.
- Next meeting will take place in early 2017.