

MPO 101: Engaging the Public in Long-term Transportation Planning

By Lauren Burns, Planner

The Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC) is updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to understand the needs and issues facing the County's transportation system today and in the future, set goals and performance objectives that best reflect the hopes and needs of Orange County residents and businesses, and identify projects and policies to help us reach those goals. The LRTP serves as the policy foundation for decisions that the County makes about its transportation system over the next 25 years. The 2045 LRTP will comply with the latest federal requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

OCTC held its first of three public meetings on May 7, 2019 at the SUNY Orange campus in the City of Newburgh. The two afternoon and evening sessions provided an opportunity for interactive dialogue about Orange County's transportation system. Participants were asked how the current transportation system worked for them, to prioritize scenarios for the future transportation system, and to share "big ideas" that could help shape future transportation policies. For anyone that wanted to participate but could not make it, the OCTC created a survey replicating the activities from the public meeting and posted it online. There were over 100 unique responses from the online public meeting survey.

What's Next

OCTC will be holding two more public meetings in July and August to discuss the prioritization of projects, policies, and goals for Orange County's transportation system over the next 25 years.

Public Meeting #2 will be on Wednesday, June 24, 2019 from 4-6 pm at the Mulberry House Senior Center in the City of Middletown.

To comply with the latest U.S. DOT requirements for MPOs, the 2045 LRTP will:

- Adopt "a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning." This entails modifying statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes to "provide for the establishment and use of a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making to support the national goals [for the Federal-aid highway program] described in 23 U.S.C. Section 150(b) and the general purposes [for public transportation] described in 49 U.S.C. 5301";
- Consider pedestrian walkways, bicycle facilities, and intercity bus facilities as explicitly part of Orange County's "integrated multimodal transportation system";
- Consider two new federal planning factors:
 - Improve resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts on surface transportation;
 - Enhance travel and tourism.
- Expand stakeholder involvement engage with public ports and specific private transportation providers (e.g., intercity bus operators and employer-based commuting programs).

**You can stay up-to-date on the LRTP by visiting the Plan's webpage:
www.orangecountygov.com/LRTP2045**



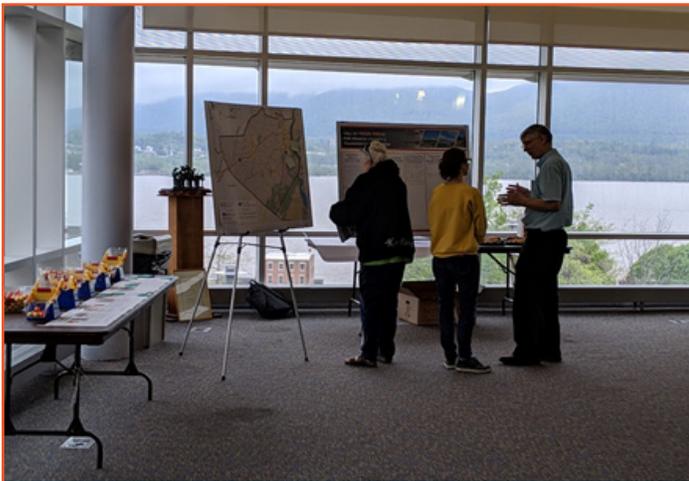
THE RESOURCE

Summer 2019

David E. Church, Commissioner of Planning

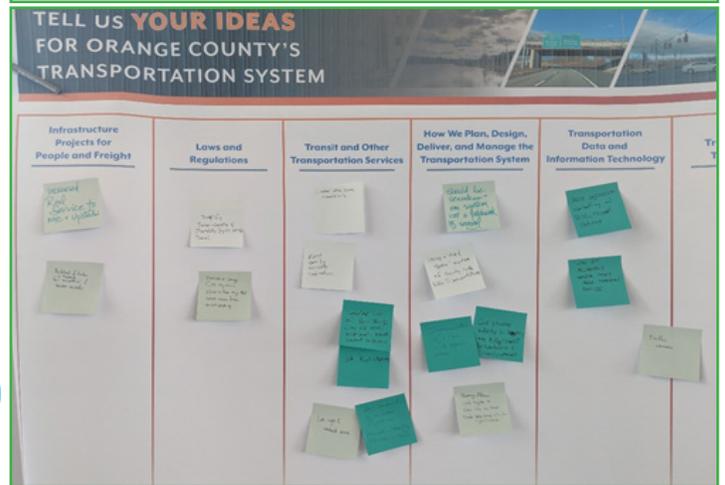
Orange County Planning Department Newsletter

Here are some of the activities that were used at the first public meeting in the City of Newburgh. Participants were asked to walk around to the four stations, each station addressing a different component of the existing and future conditions of Orange County. Setting up stations allows participants to come and go as needed, instead of following a more rigid schedule.



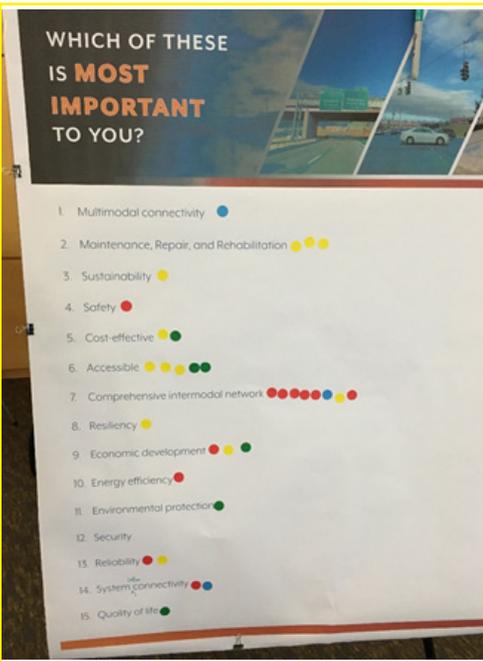
The room included multiple stations to allow participants to walk around at their own pace and helped facilitate group and one-on-one discussions.

"Big Ideas" were categorized into six themes. The public left comments on post-it notes under each theme to help guide future transportation policies. Some ideas shared included: encouraging multi-modal transportation through a more robust network and incentives, more accessible and connected transit services, promoting land use practices that combat urban sprawl, and making transportation data and services and information more readily available for users and media.



PUBLIC MEETING #1

The scale activity allowed for participants to weigh in on their preferred future scenario. Participants were given a gum ball for each of the six scenarios and voted for their preferred scenario. The scale showed which scenario was most popular by the voters.



Participants left a dot next to whichever aspect of transportation was most important to them. Comprehensive intermodal network and Accessible transportation were identified as the most important to the participants.

