Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas
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NYSDOT Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas – 2016

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) recognizes the importance of public outreach and communication, especially as it relates to the transportation planning and programming process. An open exchange of information among transportation users and government officials leads to better decision-making and more publicly supported programs and projects. As part of this outreach, NYSDOT is responsible for consulting with public officials and other local stakeholders in rural areas on transportation issues and decisions that may impact their respective communities. This consultative requirement is distinct from the NYSDOT public involvement process that is described in the publication titled, “Public Involvement for Transportation Planning”.

To ensure that NYSDOT’s process is inclusive and responsive, NYSDOT periodically reviews and updates its current procedures, which were last updated in 2011. In 2015, NYSDOT Regions 1-9 (see map on page 13) reached out to local officials and other stakeholders to seek their input on the region’s consultative procedures. The purpose of this outreach was to identify any deficiencies or gaps, as well as those practices which are working well. This document reflects the input received, and includes current practices and strategies to ensure an inclusive process.

This document is structured in two parts:

- Part 1 describes the federal and state requirements for consulting with local officials in rural areas and NYSDOT’s five standards for the rural consultative process.
- Part 2 summarizes the current rural consultative procedures used by the NYSDOT Regions to comply with the requirements.

Any questions regarding Part 1 (Federal & State Requirements for Rural Consultation) should be directed to Marty Neveu, Policy & Planning Division, at marty.neveu@dot.ny.gov. Questions regarding Part 2 (Summary & Documentation of NYSDOT Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas) should be directed to the Regional contacts as identified on their respective websites - Appendix A.

Part 1 - Federal and State Requirements for Rural Consultation

A. The Importance of Consultation

*Consultation is defined as, “one party confers with another identified party in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action, considers that party's view and periodically informs that party about actions taken.”*

NYSDOT's mission is best carried out by attaining early and timely input from those who are affected by NYSDOT’s work, including the general public and elected and appointed officials. It is important that all parties are kept informed regarding NYSDOT activities and the status of their input. It is also important that all parties share pertinent information and develop plans and programs in consultation and coordination with each other. To help achieve this goal, NYSDOT’s documented procedures consist of standards that not only meet federal requirements but that strive to exceed them whenever possible.

New York's Statewide Transportation Plan, *Transportation Strategies for a New Age: New York’s Transportation Master Plan for 2030*, states in part: “Upstate regional planning and investment must focus on strategies that sustain and strengthen the region’s diverse urban centers while meeting the changing transportation demands of its extensive rural areas and growing suburbs.” This can only be accomplished through the involvement of elected officials at all levels of government in both rural and urban areas. As representatives of the communities, they provide valuable input and are an important influence on decision-making.

Each NYSDOT Region is unique, with different sizes, issues and characteristics of its rural areas. NYSDOT values a flexible approach that reflects local concerns and is responsive to

the needs and interests of the local officials. This will enable NYSDOT to make better decisions by more fully involving representatives from the rural areas in the process. The goal is to continually improve communication with rural stakeholders while increasing participation in the decision-making process.

B. The Federal Planning Process

Transportation planning and decision-making in New York State are driven by the Federal planning process, which sets the framework for the states as a requirement for receiving Federal transportation funds. In New York State, NYSDOT has the overall responsibility for the coordinated and balanced statewide transportation planning process. Part of this process requires that states have documented procedures for consulting with nonmetropolitan public officials representing units of general-purpose local governments and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation. The purpose of the consultation is to provide an opportunity for these officials to participate in the statewide transportation process and development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)4.

The specific requirements for rural consultation can be found in 23 CFR 450.210(b): (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/fapg/cfr0450b.htm). Federal regulations specify that the state shall review and solicit comments at least once every five years from nonmetropolitan local officials and other interested parties. As part of this process, NYSDOT sent letters to rural officials in November 2015, and received comments through January 2016. While officials were generally satisfied with NYSDOT’s processes, some improvement opportunities were noted. As a result, NYSDOT has formalized additional strategies to continue to be responsive to rural outreach needs.

C. Relevant State Laws

New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act

The Smart Growth Act was enacted in August 2010 and amended in 2014 and requires State infrastructure agencies to align the construction of new or expanded infrastructure projects or the reconstruction of existing projects with 11 Smart Growth criteria. As part of

4 The STIP is a 4-year statewide, multimodal program for federal transportation funds. The STIP includes a list of proposed projects for the period covered by the STIP.
this effort, State infrastructure agencies are required to solicit input from and consult with various representatives of affected communities, and give consideration to the local and environmental interests affected by NYSDOT activities. While NYSDOT also has a public involvement process at the planning and design stages of project development, this requirement reinforces the need to consult with local officials in rural areas on projects.

More information on the Smart Growth Law is available at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/smart-planning/smartgrowth-law

New York State Complete Streets Act

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed the Complete Streets Act (Chapter 398, Laws of New York) on August 15, 2011, requiring state, county and local agencies to consider the convenience and mobility of all users when developing transportation projects that receive state and federal funding. The New York State Department of Transportation and local agencies - typically counties and municipalities - are responsible for implementing Complete Streets.

The law applies to projects that are undertaken by NYSDOT, or to local projects that receive both federal and state funding and are subject to NYSDOT oversight. Projects that are 100% locally funded are not subject to the law, but local agencies can choose to adopt Complete Streets practices.

The NYSDOT Capital Projects Complete Streets Checklist is a new form that is used to help identify needs for Complete Streets design features. This tool formalizes the requirement for Complete Street considerations in the Department’s project development processes, and as such, includes questions that direct staff to consult with local officials on projects that impact their community.
D. NYSDOT’s Five Standards for the Rural Consultative Process

NYSDOT has identified five standards for conducting consultation with public officials in rural areas. All Regions utilize the standards in conducting this outreach as summarized in Part 2 of this document.

1. **Informing Local Officials:** Public officials involved in transportation in nonmetropolitan areas will be informed about the processes involved in getting projects on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), changing and updating transportation plans, and applying for funding from New York and federally sponsored fund sources. They should also be kept informed of new programs, non-STIP-related activities and other relevant information, such as changes in Department procedures and activities in neighboring Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)\(^5\).

2. **Mechanisms to Streamline the Process:** Mechanisms will be in place to streamline the process for rural public officials to provide input and to propose candidate projects for the program. Such mechanisms also should ensure that public input and contacts with local rural elected or appointed officials will help identify the transportation problems and the transportation needs of their unique rural areas.

3. **Frequent Contact:** Frequent informal contacts will be made whenever needed by any of the parties. Officials should be informed as early as possible about activities, problems, status of projects and emerging issues during the planning phase of a project, continuing through project development and eventually to the maintenance of built projects.

4. **Joint Planning Mechanisms:** There will be joint planning mechanisms designed to share information and to provide assistance to each other and to other interested groups, such as organizations that represent the traditionally underserved populations (e.g., Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Environmental Justice (EJ) and those covered under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)). When appropriate, periodic joint meetings should be conducted that will include representatives from local governments from as many counties in the Region as feasible.

5. **Regional Procedures:** Each Region will have written procedures that meet the standards. The Regions should, as part of the update process, report on how their procedures achieve these standards.

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\(^5\) MPOs: By federal law, a metropolitan planning organization is designated by the Governor for every urban area with at least 50,000 residents, and is responsible for transportation planning and programming for the urban area.
Examples of NYSDOT’s Consultative Process

Listed below are examples of approaches NYSDOT Regions use to consult with officials in rural areas. This summary reflects the Regions’ practices that are detailed in Part 2 of this document.

1. **Informing Local Officials:**

   - The process of consultation and coordination begins well before specific transportation projects are proposed. It involves seeking information from and providing information to a variety of potentially affected officials, including appropriate contacts in related areas, such as law enforcement, economic development and emergency services. Such contacts are important for both STIP and non-STIP-related activities. This early consultation can result in better cooperation among agencies and the use of non-NYSDOT resources to assist in the planning effort. NYSDOT recognizes that the input of a variety of local officials at very early stages of the planning process can help to avoid costly corrective measures on the project later. For example, in Region 9, a meeting on capital projects with local officials and other stakeholders often is conducted prior to scheduling a public information meeting to establish consensus with the municipal leaders on the direction of the project.

   - Keeping officials informed about processes has been achieved using a variety of approaches. For example, training sessions were held to educate local representatives on various aspects of Locally Administered Federal-Aid guidelines. “Federal-Aid 101” training was mandatory for applicants for the 2013 Transportation Enhancements Program and the 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program. FTA and State Transit programs that serve the rural areas are advertised by the NYSDOT Public Transportation Bureau in the Main Office to the local officials, and webinars and workshops are held around the state to engage officials in the process.

   - Holding training classes for newly elected and long-serving local government officials can educate officials on existing practices and new laws and requirements. Quite often, the officials serve part-time and benefit from additional information, expertise and guidance. In Region 7, staff has conducted training seminars for newly elected public officials in rural areas and highway superintendents throughout the region regarding CHIPS. Topics include program overview, eligible projects, networking and the administrative process for obtaining funding.

   - NYSDOT Regions periodically brief each rural county legislature on NYSDOT’s capital program at a public meeting. Similarly, NYSDOT representatives attend meetings of the rural legislatures’ highway committee meetings when feasible. In Region 1, beginning in 2012, the Regional Director with the Regional Planning &
Program Manager and the NYSDOT County Resident Engineer have attended annual meetings with Greene County and Essex County legislative bodies/Representatives and the County Superintendent of Public Works. These meetings provide an update on the Region’s Five-Year Capital Program that includes the state and local systems.

- Using NYSDOT staff as liaisons to municipalities is an effective way to keep the communication channels open throughout the life of a project. In Region 3, the liaisons serve as a point of contact for the municipalities and follow the project from beginning to end.

- The approach for informing officials about how to obtain funds for and to develop transit projects is similar, although there is more Main Office involvement. Transit Specialists in the Public Transportation Bureau reach out to rural county and city agencies to inform and offer technical assistance on a regular basis to both prepare agencies for upcoming opportunities and to work with the agencies to improve delivery of services based on collective best practices.

NYSDOT meeting with local officials

2. Mechanisms to Streamline the Process

- Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs) are designed to make it easier for local officials to provide input and to propose projects. Such mechanisms also provide feedback to local officials about how their input was used and what tradeoffs were made as a result of their input. In highway planning, TACs have enabled NYSDOT to gain input on important issues, such as land use and economic development, not directly related to the STIP. A couple of Regions have TACs to provide guidance and public input. In Region 8, NYSDOT staff works closely with the reconstituted TAC and, in many respects, the TAC functions similarly to the MPOs in that Region.

TACs may be developed for particular projects and others may be involved in planning and programming in broader areas. Representatives are appointed by and may include rural officials. The typical TAC outreach meeting includes a discussion of
long-term planning concepts, goals/objectives, programming guidelines, available funding and the recommended program of projects.

➢ Utilizing the MPO structure is another mechanism. There are many ways for rural areas to be involved with neighboring MPOs. MPOs often share data and participate in transportation studies with rural counties and their local officials. This involvement is useful when making decisions on potential projects.

➢ The locally developed Public Transit-Human Service Coordinated Plans (posted at https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/local-dev-coordinated-plans) that are required by FTA for some of the transit funding in the rural areas have been very helpful in ensuring that organizations that are interested in furthering public transit in rural areas have a forum to participate and comment. NYSDOT regularly works with the lead agencies to develop next steps and align the process with funding opportunities and changes in Federal program rules.

3. **Frequent Contact**

➢ NYSDOT works with county and town superintendents and other local officials early in the development of the Regions’ programs. With regard to the Regions’ Capital Program, NYSDOT will cooperatively identify a program of projects for State and local roads and bridges.

➢ A person or group in each Regional office should be available to provide professional support services to municipalities and particularly to advise rural areas on local assistance, traffic, transportation, land use and related issues. In Region 3, for example, informal “Meet and Greet” meetings are scheduled with local project sponsors to introduce any new staff from NYSDOT and the municipality and to review the status of projects.

4. **Joint Planning Mechanisms**

➢ Meetings should be open to the general public whenever possible. Joint planning outreach efforts should include regional planning boards; community groups, including those organizations that represent the traditionally underserved populations (LEP, EJ and ADA); associations of local officials; groups involved in economic development, and others, as appropriate. Regions are encouraged to have staff serve on the transportation and other committees of regional planning boards and similar bodies.
5. **Regional Procedures**

- Written descriptions of Regional processes are desirable to stimulate ideas and to suggest alternate approaches. NYSDOT has written processes (Part 2) in each of its rural regions.
Part 2- 2016 Documentation of NYSDOT Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas

The following is a current summary by individual NYSDOT Region of how each achieves effective communication with public officials in rural areas. There are a variety of approaches used by each Region to be responsive to the differing characteristics and needs of each rural area. As this summary shows, the common feature of all approaches is a spirit of cooperation and coordination. Some of the summaries contain specific examples of consultative efforts.

In each Region, the NYSDOT Standards for the consultative process are as follows:
- Informing Local Officials
- Incorporating Mechanisms to Streamline the Process
- Ensuring Frequent Contact
- Using Joint Planning Mechanisms
- Documenting the Region’s process

To ensure that NYSDOT Regions are using relevant and comprehensive communication methods, an effectiveness review of their consultative procedures is conducted every five years. From November 2015 to January 2016, NYSDOT Regions conducted this review by reaching out to 1,168 local officials, tribal nations, not-for-profit organizations and other stakeholders in rural areas. The Regions received 93 responses to their solicitations for comments on the 2011 consultative procedures. Many of the comments were positive and highlighted the excellent relationships with NYSDOT Regional Offices. Some comments included recommendations for more frequent meetings with NYSDOT officials; increased attendance at quarterly meetings with highway superintendents; additional training sessions for new public officials on NYSDOT programs; and, ensuring local officials receive advanced notice of NYSDOT construction projects. In addition, two of the respondents suggested the Department enhance the use of web technology and social media.

NYSDOT Regions responded to these comments by incorporating changes to their consultative procedures and recognizing the need to follow the existing procedures more consistently. Specific changes to procedures are reflected in the following pages for each Region.
In New York State, the consultative process is applicable to the Regions with rural areas, Regions 1-9. Region 10 (Long Island) and 11 (New York City) are considered urban areas. The NYSDOT Regions are illustrated in the map below.
Region 1- Capital District

Region 1 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region1/general-info

Region 1 Rural Area:
The eight-county Region has two MPOs, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) that covers Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga and Rensselaer counties, and the Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council (A/GFTC) that covers Washington and Warren counties. The Region has two rural counties, Greene and Essex. Most Federal-Aid highway eligible, non-State facilities, including all bridges off the State system, are under county jurisdiction. Both rural counties also operate similarly, using their highway and public works departments as the primary interface with the State to deal with transportation issues.

Rural Consultation in Region 1:
The procedures presented herein are a result of discussion with the counties and represent what is feasible and achievable given resources on their end as well as the Region.

1. Individual highway superintendent meetings are conducted when appropriate and have traditionally proven to be an effective forum for discussing transportation needs and issues - operational, immediate and long-range. The two counties outside MPO oversight, Essex and Greene, own virtually all facilities eligible for Federal-Aid highway funding that are not State-owned. Thus, the bulk of coordination and communication is with county government. For example, the Region meets on occasion with the counties to notify them of the Region’s abilities to provide detailed accident data.

2. The highway superintendents also provide the primary support and input on project scheduling, project priorities and budget issues.

3. The NYSDOT Regional Local Program Liaison is responsible for informing local officials about advancing locally administered projects, including enhancement projects and traditional infrastructure, mobility and safety projects. Information is
also provided regarding federal funding procedures, allocation of federal funds for rural counties (non-MPO areas), federal funds categories, federal funding eligibility and other fiscal issues. The now expanded Regional Local Program Unit holds routine meetings with counties, towns and villages in the two rural counties, primarily to discuss individual programmed projects. At those meetings, the Region discusses federal (and State) programs in general and provides guidance and advice on budgets, schedules, design criteria and construction requirements and issues. The group is available to local sponsors on a full time basis to provide guidance and answer questions. Members of the group have begun to occasionally attend monthly County DPW Superintendent meetings to provide information on CHIPs and Local Federal Aid programming.

4. County officials are strongly encouraged to ensure that appropriate input is solicited from their legislative bodies and the general public regarding both short-term plans and specific projects. Beginning in 2012, the Regional Director with the Regional Planning & Program Manager and the NYSDOT County Resident Engineer have attended annual meetings with Greene County and Essex County legislative bodies/Representatives and the County Superintendent of Public Works. The meetings provide an update on the Region’s Five-Year Capital Program that includes the state and local systems. NYSDOT responsibilities are highlighted and current financial status and program challenges are discussed. The meetings are held to provide a forum for the open exchange of information and a discussion of how to prioritize infrastructure needs within fiscal constraints. These meetings emphasize the importance of obtaining local input in developing the Five-Year Capital Program and partnering for the future.

5. The monthly STIP project listings are made available to facilitate local transportation programming efforts. The STIP update process includes extensive contact with both counties to solicit new federal projects. Starting with the 2013 TIP/STIP development effort, goals for targeted infrastructure preservation were implemented, and extensive outreach was undertaken by the Regional Local Program Liaison to assure there was an understanding of how these criteria were to be applied to future programs. The Rural Local program met the set goals through a collaborative and cooperative program development process. New programs will continue to be developed to include both local preservation and renewal type projects.

6. The Regional Local Program Liaison advises or participates in local program development efforts as needed by the counties. In particular, staff works with both counties to review/revamp existing project schedules and discuss potential highway and safety projects. During the last five year period, a special effort was made to assist the counties in incorporating the new requirements of the Federal Transportation Act passed in 2012, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). MAP-21 introduced new funding criteria that had a major impact on the
eligibility of rural locally owned roads and bridges. Regional representatives met with local county representatives to develop programming priorities that met local needs and adhere to the new federal requirements. Road and bridge projects, many emphasizing preservation, were added to the program based on the meetings and resulted in a positive and successful partnership.

7. As part of the solicitation process for specific candidate projects, local transportation officials also will be assisted in completing Project Justification Packages for the STIP candidate projects. Generally speaking, the documentation and evaluation of candidate projects is equivalent to that performed by the two MPOs operating in our Region.

8. The Region and counties exchange information on a regular basis to negotiate and to coordinate the STIP development as discussed with the examples above.

9. NYSDOT will conduct general public outreach under special circumstances. These may include public information meetings or other open forums to increase awareness of the new federal highway act and its implications for the transportation system in these counties. The counties will advise the Region whether meetings are desirable.

10. In general, meetings will be conducted in conjunction with county planning and public works officials and the county legislatures or boards of supervisors. At these meetings, NYSDOT will disseminate information on transportation programs and solicit project candidates and input for overall priorities. Rural transit needs and funding will be discussed as well.

11. To address rural transit issues and projects, our contacts hold quarterly meetings with the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (transit roundtables) to which local operators are invited. Both counties are addressed on a case-by-case basis for transit issues. The Region participates in the Clean Communities meetings with the Capital District Transportation Committee in which the information is passed on to the two rural counties as needed. For most financial details, the Main Office handles the contacts directly. There may be more opportunities in the future to work with the rural counties on transit issues.

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6 The Capital District Clean Communities organization is part of a national effort called Clean Cities formed to advance the nation’s economic, environmental, and energy security by supporting local decisions to adopt practices that contribute to the reduction of petroleum consumption.
Region 2 - Mohawk Valley

The Region 2 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region2/general-info

Region 2 Rural Area:

Region 2 includes six counties, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery and Oneida, encompassing 6,146 square miles. The Region has an MPO, the Herkimer-Oneida County Transportation Study (HOCTS), which covers Herkimer and Oneida counties. The remaining four counties are rural.

Rural Consultation in Region 2:

Regional staff contact and work with elected and appointed officials in the Region’s four rural counties: Fulton, Montgomery, Hamilton and Madison. Among the Region’s many activities:

1. The Region maintains and updates names, addresses and phone numbers of county, town, city and village contacts, officials and directors of each county planning department, as elections or other changes, occur.

2. The Region maintains communication with first-line contacts to reiterate the need for consolidated rural planning efforts. County meetings are held as needed to present NYSDOT’s vision for Rural Planning Assistance, to share ideas and concerns and to provide a summary of identified needs and goals. The Region continues the process with additional meetings to identify information, data and services that already exist for sharing and defines the types of information still needed to assist in rural planning efforts.

3. The Region meets with the county highway superintendents on an annual basis to discuss capital projects and timely issues of concern to the locals. For example, the Region periodically provides a listing of proposed capital projects to local rural officials and NYSDOT provides traffic count devices and training to county highway superintendents and staff.
4. The Region works with various groups to examine local transportation issues. For example, the region worked with the MPO to provide consultant services to study alternative routing for traffic in the Town and Village of Boonville. The “Boonville Alternative Routing Study” analyzed five routes to alleviate the truck traffic through the village traveling to and from the recently built Solid Waste Authority site.

Dolgeville Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) Project

Additional outreach efforts include:

- The Region continuously coordinates with the highway superintendents to provide the primary support and input on project scheduling, project priorities and budget issues, with respect to the Locally Administered Federal-Aid Program.

- Regional Local Project Liaisons continue to assist local officials who are administering Federal-Aid projects, helping by answering their questions and providing guidance as needed.

- The Region provides for outreach, support and continual exchange of information for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Consolidated Highway Improvement Programs (CHIPS) and Multimodal Program.

- Regional staff advises or participates as requested at county and local meetings that include local public officials, including county highway officials.

- Regional staff members conduct general public outreach in a variety of ways. These may include public information meetings, planning board meetings or other open forums to increase awareness of capital projects and corridor studies.
• The Region, through a cooperative effort, works with local rural officials to assist in developing planning documents.

• Resident Engineers are available to local elected public officials and/or county highway staff on an as-needed basis.

• The Region has a single contact person assigned as liaison with the Oneida Tribal Nation. The liaison regularly reaches out to the Oneida Indian Nation for programming and project related issues.

Shore Rd. over 4th Lake Inlet
Region 3 - Central New York

The Region 3 website:  https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region3/general-info

Region 3 Rural Area:

The six-county Region has two MPOs, the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) that covers all of Onondaga County and part of Oswego and Madison Counties, and the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) that covers Tompkins County. The four rural counties in the Region are Seneca, Cayuga, Cortland and most of Oswego. A mailing list allows staff to reach out to local officials in the rural counties on a variety of issues. This list contains county legislators; city and village mayors; town supervisors; highway superintendents and city engineers; city and county planners; Native American representatives; staff of county offices of Aging, Health and Human Services, Emergency Management and Parks; transit providers; and regional planning boards. County officials have agreed to represent the minor civil divisions in each county when it comes to understanding transportation needs and issues.

Rural Consultation in Region 3:

The approaches and techniques used and some examples are as follows:

1. The regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is made up of county highway superintendents, city engineers, and county planners from six counties. The TAC’s purpose is to be involved in solicitation, review, and ranking of STIP projects in the Region. The committee provided input during the development of the STIP, and discussed programming guidelines, goals and objectives, funding availability and program strategies. After the 2006-2007 STIP update, the Region’s two MPOs chose to receive a sub-allocation of federal funds from the Region and use their own process to choose projects for their TIPs, thereby removing themselves from the TAC. The rural counties remain in the TAC and the process operates much the same as before.

2. For the 2010 STIP update, the Region communicated with the local officials regarding inquiries to obtain updated project costs and schedules for projects on
the current STIP; notification of funding availability and a request for submission of candidate projects; notification that a guidebook is available to assist with the preparation of project applications; inquiries about the accuracy of the estimated costs provided; and a public outreach effort in each rural county seeking input to the development of the STIP. Invitations to the meeting were issued via mailings (using the list above) and public notice. At the meetings, Regional staff addressed questions and comments and provided the opportunity for written comment. These meetings were held in the cities of Auburn, Cortland and Oswego and Village of Waterloo.

3. For the 2012-13 STIP update, the Region once again reached out to the local officials to update project costs and schedules, solicited for new projects, and held a public meeting with rural county and city highway representatives to announce results of project selection. The 2013 TAC meeting was held in Auburn.

4. For the 2016 STIP update, communication with local officials ensured that projects on the program were properly scoped, funded and scheduled. This update included an additional outreach for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects that would provide the greatest safety benefit regardless of highway ownership. Regional staff assisted local officials with the HSIP application and benefit/cost calculations.

5. Public meetings as part of projects or studies are intended to engage the public, often attended by local officials, enabling them to hear public reaction. The meetings take place on many occasions throughout the Region.

6. Periodic meetings with county highway superintendents are intended to discuss issues of mutual concern in an attempt to improve long established partnerships.
7. The Region has specialists who are liaisons and serve as a point of contact for municipalities. These specialists ensure that state and federal funds are spent in accordance with regulations. Examples of frequent activities that occur include conversations and/or meetings with officials to discuss administrative matters, project costs, scope and schedule issues, construction issues and any other issues or problems that might develop. In effect, these specialists follow a project from beginning to end, providing local officials the ability to seek guidance from one source throughout the life of a project. For those programs that do not require beginning-to-end oversight, such as CHIPS, the specialist answers questions and gives guidance as required.

8. Informal “Meet and Greet” meetings are scheduled with local project sponsors to introduce any new staff from NYSDOT and the municipality and to review the status of projects. Current projects are discussed and project procedures, schedule and costs are reviewed. This also offers an opportunity to discuss other issues or needs.

9. New York State provides state funding to counties, villages, cities, and towns via the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs). The regional CHIPs coordinator assists local officials as needed with program questions. He has represented the Department at several county highway superintendent meetings and at the annual training for the Cornell Local Roads Program (New York’s branch of the Local Technical Assistance Program [LTAP] of the Federal Highway Administration.)

10. The Region provides assistance to local officials with nontraditional transportation funding programs. For example, the Region worked to help support local submissions for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and fielded questions about the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program. The Region also helped local officials with the federal Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP), Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) by hosting informational workshops, making staff available to answer questions by phone and e-mail during application preparation, providing an optional pre-review of applications before the final deadline, and administering the projects selected for federal aid.

11. Outreach meetings with local officials are conducted for all projects that are more than maintenance actions. These meetings inform officials that NYSDOT is commencing a project in their community; to solicit information from a local perspective about conditions and concerns; and, generally, to seek their assistance with developing the scope of work. It is common for local officials to inform the Region of issues that it would not be aware of through NYSDOT sources. Examples
include drainage problems, pedestrian concerns and plans for development. During these meetings, officials are asked about the extent of involvement they would like to have in project development. Some indicate a desire for a review function while others want to be active project team members. Active involvement can include attending project team meetings, participating in advisory committees and reviewing project reports.

12. Other meetings are conducted to obtain specific information on projects. This involves coordinating with local officials to plan public outreach or meetings with special-interest groups.

13. Training sessions are held to educate local representatives on various aspects of Locally Administered Federal-Aid guidelines. For example, Federal-Aid 101 training was mandatory for applicants for the 2013 Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) and the 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

14. A Regional point of contact has been established to engage and coordinate with Tribal Nations on transportation issues. Region 3 engages the Onondaga Nation, the Cayuga Nation, the Oneida Nation, and the Seneca Nation.
Region 4 - Genesee Valley

The Region 4 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region4/general-info

Region 4 Rural Area:

The Region covers the counties of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne and Wyoming. The primary tool used to communicate with elected public officials in rural areas is the MPO process. All rural counties are represented as members of the MPO, the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC), and participate appropriately in the process. As such, they also contact the Regional staff directly as needed. Because the Rochester-area MPO covers all seven counties in Region 4, it is the primary forum for interaction with elected and appointed officials. The following are descriptions of some interactions:

Rural Consultation in Region 4:

1. Either a Planning or Policy meeting is held every month. The Region staff also participates with MPO members on numerous subcommittees.

2. Additionally, public information and committee meetings for MPO studies are usually held in the individual counties, providing opportunities for local officials to consult with the NYSDOT staff attending the meeting.

3. The Region and the GTC jointly conduct the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) application process. The individual project applications are scored by a joint committee of MPO and NYSDOT representatives and the lists of projects are reviewed by a TIP advisory committee before going to the MPO Planning and Policy committees.

4. Region 4 holds quarterly meetings with the county highway superintendents for all seven counties in the Region on such topics as Pass-Through Project administration, construction detour coordination, Snow and Ice agreements, CHIPS and Multimodal funding. The Region continuously coordinates with the highway superintendents and local municipality officials to discuss the CHIPS Program, Multimodal Program, Local Highway Inventory and other Capital Program issues. Usually these meetings are held with the Region’s Local Government Assistance Engineer; however, at the county highway superintendents meetings, the Region generally includes the Regional Director, Program Managers from Planning, Construction and Maintenance and the Regional Local Projects Liaisons.
5. The Region 4 Local Assistance Engineer is in regular (often several times per week) contact with both county and town officials and attends the monthly meetings of town highway officials in each county to be available to answer questions and to provide information.

6. The Regional Local Program Liaisons are in daily contact with the local officials who are administering Federal-Aid projects and can answer general questions and provide information. Resident Engineers are located in the counties themselves and are often the first contact for problems and questions. For example, over the last few years several meetings were held with rural municipal officials (the lead agencies) to discuss the development and reconstruction of major streets in the City of Batavia, City of Geneva and the Village of Median. These multimillion-dollar Federal-Aid highway projects required hands-on involvement with our Regional Local Projects Liaisons to provide guidance to them and to assure that Federal-Aid standards were met. In addition to the projects noted above, the Regional Local Projects Liaisons also have worked with the rural counties to coordinate a number of the Pass-Through Federal-Aid projects. Region 4’s four liaisons handle approximately 30 projects per year.

7. In addition to the MPO process, the Genesee-Orleans Resident Engineer maintains direct contact with the Chairman of the Council of Chiefs to discuss transportation concerns and schedule improvements within the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The Genesee-Orleans Resident Engineer has maintained continuous contact with the Chairman of Council of Chiefs to discuss transportation concerns in the Reservation.
Region 5 - Western New York

The Region 5 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region5/general-info

Region 5 Rural Area:

The Region covers four counties: Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara. Erie and Niagara counties are covered by a Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Region Transportation Committee (GBNRTC). Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties are outside of the MPO boundaries and are the subject of Region 5 rural outreach and consultation.

The Region utilizes a variety of tools to work with elected officials, appointed transportation officials and human service agencies in rural areas. This document identifies the updated consultation procedures and activities undertaken in response to input from the “2011-15 Rural Consultation Process”.

Rural consultation in Region 5:

Region 5 has undertaken numerous rural consultation activities on a regular basis. Rural consultation with public officials since February 2011 includes: transportation policy discussions; capital program solicitation; community outreach; and public involvement/consultation events. Specific activities are summarized below:

1. **Monthly Seneca Nation of Indians (Seneca Nation) Update meetings:** The Region consults with Seneca Nation Transportation Department officials on transportation needs on the Allegany, Cattaraugus and Oil Spring Territories. Staff provides project-specific updates to the Seneca Nation Director of Transportation and NYSDOT policy information to Seneca Nation leadership and members. The Region discusses NYSDOT initiatives with appropriate Seneca Nation personnel.

2. **Scheduled consultation meetings with Tuscarora Nation of Indians:** The Region coordinates the consultation between NYSDOT Niagara Residency and the Tuscarora Council of Chiefs. Staff consults with the Chiefs about transportation
3. **Quarterly Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board (STW) Transportation Committee Meetings**: The Region actively participate in the STW subcommittee process designed to implement the Regional Transportation Strategy for Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties. Subcommittees include: Mobility Management; Highway; Railroad; Aviation; Planning. These committees facilitate dialogue among NYSDOT, local government officials and the business community.

4. **Monthly Highway Superintendent Consultation Meetings**: Technical assistance is provided based upon the information needs of the Highway Superintendents. Appropriate Region 5 staff provides annual technical assistance on: CHIPS; environmental issues; capital program; traffic; and current projects. Opportunities are provided for questions and answers.

5. **Annual Rural Capital Program Outreach**: Region 5 Planning and Program Management staff provides updates on current state projects; existing local projects; Federal-Aid eligible projects; candidate local highway and bridge projects; and presentation of maintenance strategies. Opportunities are provided for questions and answers.

The Capital Program Outreach is targeted at the county and city leadership in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus County including:
- Cattaraugus County, City of Olean, City of Salamanca
- Chautauqua County, City of Dunkirk, City of Olean
- Seneca Nation of Indians, Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development

6. **NYSDOT Program Update 2015**: Region 5 Planning and Program Management staff scheduled consultation visits to cities, counties and the Seneca Nation in the rural southern tier in order to discuss the TIP/STIP Policy Guidance and Instructions for the Program Update Period Beginning October 2016. The consultation effort identified transportation needs and potential projects for the NYSDOT STIP.

**Rural Program Initiatives**
Region 5 consults with public officials on potential funding opportunities:

1. **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)/Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP)**: Two rounds of program funding were made available during the 2011 – 2015 Rural Consultation period. The Region provided program guidance,
outreach and project specific consultation to potential program applicants in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties.

2. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program under SAFETEA-LU: One round of program funding was made available during the 2011 – 2015 Rural Consultation period. The Program was absorbed under the Transportation Alternatives Program after the 2012 grant round. The Region provided program guidance outreach and project specific consultation to potential program applicants in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties. Eleven projects were funded.

3. High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRP)/Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP): HRRP funding had been made available on an annual basis. While the HRRP was in existence, the Region consulted with local public officials in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties to identify potential safety projects. The HRRP has been replaced by the HSIP. The Region consults with public officials for eligible HSIP projects. Projects are usually solicited on an annual basis.

4. Surplus Property Direct Conveyance: Region ROW initiated the disposition of surplus property through conveyance of a remnant parcel. The conveyance will allow for the development of a planned project by St. Bonaventure University in Cattaraugus County.

Other outreach activities include:

- Route 5 and 20 Roundabout, Seneca Nation/Cattaraugus County, “Negotiating a Roundabout.” In anticipation of the construction of a roundabout on Seneca Nation Territory, NYSDOT subject matter expert provided four (4) presentations to the public on the benefits and use of a modern roundabout.
- Region 5 provided transportation technical assistance to local Complete Streets planning efforts in the rural communities of Gowanda, Hinsdale and Salamanca.
- Facilitated the Jamestown Complete Streets and Healthy Communities project with the development of Complete Streets projects in the Village and Town of Allegany and the Village of Little Valley.
- Actively participated on the steering committee for the Community Transformation Grant in Chautauqua County.
Region 6 - Central Southern Tier

The Region 6 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region6/general-info

Region 6 Rural Area:

The Region contains five counties, Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates. The Elmira/Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Elmira urban area in Chemung County.

Rural Consultation in Region 6:

The Region utilizes a variety of approaches to reach out to elected and appointed officials. These include:

1. Conducting quarterly meetings with the county highway superintendents of each of the five rural counties. In addition, the Region will look to provide each County Superintendent with an annual list of DOT projects scheduled for the year, individualized for the County. If such a list is not available, the Region will direct the Counties to the online STIP location.

2. Serving on the Transportation Committee of each of the Regional Planning Boards in the Region (Southern Tier West and Southern Tier Central).

3. Participating in the annual Local Government Conferences sponsored by the Regional Planning Boards, the Cornell Local Roads program, and various industry conferences.

4. Making Region 6 staff available, as requested, to address the county legislatures and/or their committees.

5. Working with local officials, ad hoc committees and advocacy groups on issues, concerns and projects.
6. Attending and presenting or otherwise participating in meetings on particular topics such as ongoing or proposed projects.

7. Coordinating with the Tribal Nations through communication at the Southern Tier West Planning Board (see 2 above) and through their cultural resource liaisons as needed for specific projects.

8. Initiating a pilot outreach effort with cities not represented by an MPO, and the county where the cities are located, to foster communication about their infrastructure needs and to share concerns and information.
Region 7- North Country

The Region 7 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region7/general-info

Region 7 Rural Area:
The Region has five counties, and four of the counties are rural - Clinton, Franklin, Lewis and St. Lawrence. Jefferson County is partially rural with the exception of the Watertown area which is served by the Watertown Jefferson County Transportation Council (WJCTC).

Rural Consultation in Region 7:
The Region employs a number of approaches in reaching out to elected and appointed officials and other individuals as it makes transportation decisions affecting local communities. Examples of these techniques include:

1. Distributing a public outreach survey to more than 200 local officials, interest groups and individuals to determine interest in the Region's program development process and to help establish a mailing list.

2. Holding project meetings at the city, county, village and town levels designed to elicit public comments and suggestions from individuals, local government officials, the traveling public, property owners and local interest groups.

3. Region staff conducts TAP workshops at three different locations within the Region. These workshops provide background information on project eligibility and funding requirements. The workshops are open to all the municipalities interested in the program.

4. Meeting with county highway superintendents, city engineers, local officials, planning boards and community groups to discuss local project selection for the Region's Capital Program and other issues of mutual concern.

5. Holding regional workshops attended by Regional staff and local officials to discuss local highway and bridge projects.
6. Arranging meetings between the Region’s CHIPS Coordinator and the town highway superintendents to discuss the use of CHIPS funding to improve the overall transportation system.

7. Conducting annual training seminars for newly elected public officials in rural areas and highway superintendents throughout the region regarding CHIPS. Topics include program overview, eligible projects, networking and the administrative process for obtaining funding.

8. During the scoping phase of each major highway/bridge project, the Planning Department issues an outreach letter to obtain input from municipalities and those with political interest in the proposed project. Where economically feasible, implementing the local needs of the municipality is considered.

9. Appointment of a single contact person for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe to facilitate meetings and communications to address/resolve issues and concerns.

10. Attending public informational meetings for local and state highway projects.

11. Participating as an exhibitor in the annual Local Government Conference.
Region 8 - Hudson Valley

The Region 8 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region8/general-info

Region 8 Rural Area:

The Region has seven counties, Columbia, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester. In Columbia County, the Region’s only rural area, Region 8 works with the Columbia County Transportation Advisory Committee (CCTAC). The CCTAC is jointly administered by Columbia County through the Columbia County Planning Department. In general, the CCTAC will function similarly to an MPO as that model has worked well in the Region. In day-to-day planning and programming matters, the Region works directly with the county and municipalities.

Rural Consultation in Region 8:

NYSDOT provides technical and administrative support to the CCTAC. The Region and Columbia County revitalized the CCTAC starting in February 2010 and have been meeting since then. During this period, staff helped the CCTAC to review the status of the current Federal-Aid projects from the municipalities in Columbia County. The Region provided project information from the STIP, NYSDOT’s capital program database and from the Region 8 Local Projects Unit. The CCTAC also participated in the development of the FFY 2011 – 2014 STIP. The Region served as a resource for discussions of the role of the CCTAC, the federal planning process, the federal funding process and the federal project development and environmental process as part of getting members up to speed. The CCTAC is in the process of meeting with project sponsors to determine current project status and to develop priorities for future scheduling of the development and construction of these projects.

Region staff also meets with municipalities at their request. For example, staff has worked with the Town of Austerlitz concerning Smart Growth, pedestrian/bike improvements and particular concerns with State highways. The Region has also been working with the Town and Village of Kinderhook concerning sidewalks and development issues.

Other activities include:

1. Staff meets with municipalities as appropriate and when requested.

2. The Region routinely coordinates with municipalities to provide the primary support and input on project scheduling, project priorities and budget issues, with respect to the Locally Administered Federal-Aid Program.
3. The Regional Local Projects Unit continues to assist local officials who are administering Federal-Aid projects, answering their questions and providing guidance as needed.

4. The Region provides for outreach, support and continual exchange of information for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Safe Routes to School (SRTS), CHIPS, Local Highway Inventory, Emergency Relief and Multimodal Program.

5. Regional staff advises or participates as requested at county and local meetings that include local public officials, including the Region's county highway and planning officials.

6. The Region conducts general public outreach in a variety of ways that may include public information meetings, planning board meetings or other open forums to increase awareness of capital projects and corridor studies.

7. The Region, through a cooperative effort, works with local rural officials to develop long-range plan development, including specific county and municipal needs, while incorporating the Region's long-range plans toward a total comprehensive plan.

8. The Columbia County Resident Engineer assists local elected public officials, county highway staff and others on an as-needed basis and participates in the Columbia County TAC.

9. The Region periodically provides a listing of proposed capital projects to local rural officials.

10. The Department provides traffic count devices and training to county highway superintendents and staff.

11. The Region maintains and updates names, addresses, phone numbers of county contacts, county officials and directors, as elections or other changes occur.
Region 9 - Southern Tier

The Region 9 website: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region9/general-info

Region 9 Rural Area:

Region 9 has seven counties: Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Tioga. Portions of Broome County and Tioga County are part of the Binghamton MPO, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS).

Rural Consultation in Region 9:

Region 9 conducts outreach to local officials outside of the MPO through various means. The primary contact with local officials is through regular phone calls and via frequent e-mail with the Regional Local Project Liaisons. Less frequently, and generally when new federal requirements are announced, meetings with the highway superintendents of the seven counties are scheduled. At those meetings, other issues of common interest are also discussed - such as funding allocations, project programming, and the status of on-system and off-system projects. The Region also conducts project solicitations to all municipalities for projects based on select fund availability such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Additionally, the Region maintains an active project outreach program whereby affected municipalities are invited to participate in the project development process for projects scheduled to take place during the ensuing year.

Other activities involving local officials are undertaken on a regular basis and include the following:

1. The Region has a Local Projects Team that provides guidance to municipal officials in the programming, development, design and construction of local projects -- locally administered projects that are off the State highway system. These projects are
primarily federally funded highway and highway bridge projects, projects funded by TAP and Safe Routes to School (SRTS).

2. The Region has a cross-functional public involvement team to ensure that the appropriate level of public involvement is executed for a given project. In addition, each capital project includes a public involvement plan that is written in the scoping phase and updated as necessary during the development of the project. In recent years, the Regional Public Involvement Team has worked to increase outreach for maintenance type projects in addition to outreach that was already done on larger capital project. The Region has three staff members whose primary responsibilities include public outreach on capital projects. At a minimum, public outreach letters are sent to local officials during the scoping phase of a capital project. The letters go beyond project specifics to solicit comments and suggestions pertaining to any transportation-related problems or issues in the Region, and, thus, provide more local officials with an opportunity to participate in the planning process. A copy of each letter is sent to the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board, the Region’s intergovernmental clearinghouse. For many NYSDOT’s capital projects, a meeting with local officials and other stakeholders also is conducted prior to scheduling a public information meeting to establish consensus with the municipal leaders on the project’s direction. In many cases, follow-up meetings or phone calls/e-mails are necessary as project specifics become known and are shared with the local officials. This consultation with local officials continues throughout the entire project development process as warranted.

NYS Route 7 in Bainbridge, NY

Meetings are often held with local officials to discuss projects throughout the scoping and design phases. Local officials are included in public meetings and hearings to solicit their input. Some projects can benefit from additional outreach with the formation of various stakeholder groups. Local officials are invited to participate in these groups, such as citizen’s advisory committees, focus groups or workshops, to
allow for further discussion of issues and concerns to develop the best project possible.

3. The NYSDOT is required to review the transportation impacts of all commercial developments proposed to be built within 500 feet of a State highway. The reviews are initiated by the individual towns within which the development will take place. As such, the Region is in frequent contact regarding transportation matters with most of the town supervisors within the region.

4. Additionally, the Regional Site Plan Review Committee meets on a weekly basis to discuss and to seek input from local officials on transportation and development issues of regional or local significance.

5. The Region also assists local officials in developing specific small urban area plans and regional transportation corridor plans. For example, Program and Planning Management staff attends regular meetings of the Route 7 Plan Corridor Team in Schoharie County.

6. The Region solicits recommendations and offers proposals on jurisdictional realignment. Negotiations may produce draft agreements that are subject to the established review and approval process.

7. Regional staff meets with the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board (STERPDB) on a quarterly basis to discuss regional aviation and airport infrastructure as well as other transportation issues. STERPDB is responsible for conducting the intergovernmental review process for Federal-Aid projects in the region.

The Regional staff also attends the quarterly Planners Roundtable technical committee meetings. Local and regional planning staffs from eight counties
participate in these meetings and discuss topics such as Federal and State transportation programs, the 239 review process, stormwater management programs and regional brownfield initiatives. The Planners Roundtable provides an opportunity for Regional staff to interact with other planners in an open, informal manner.

8. Regional staff meets irregularly with municipalities regarding projects that entail other modes, such as air/rail/transit and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Staffs participate on technical committees that prepare airport or Transit System Master Plans, terminal design and capital needs reports. Staff also participates in preparation and review of planning studies, such as Regional Freight and Economic Development and reconfiguration of the Binghamton Rail Yard.

9. In addition to the contacts described above, municipal officials often initiate contact with NYSDOT personnel. A list of Regional contacts is available on the NYSDOT public website at https://www.nysdot.gov/regional-offices/region9/contacts. Regional staff responds to these contacts as quickly as resources allow.
APPENDIX

Region 1: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region1/general-info
Region 2: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region2/general-info
Region 3: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region3/general-info
Region 4: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region4/general-info
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Region 8: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region8/general-info
Region 9: https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region9/general-info

For information on NYSDOT Local Programs:
www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau