

HOCTC SELF-CERTIFICATION FOR THE
2025-2029 TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

A. REQUIRED AGREEMENTS

The Herkimer Oneida Counties Transportation Council (HOCTC) is the designated MPO for urban transportation planning and programming in the rural and Urban Area Boundaries within Herkimer and Oneida Counties. Transportation planning in Herkimer and Oneida Counties is carried out by HOCTC. HOCTC is a cooperative effort by local, state, and federal agencies for conducting transportation planning activities in Herkimer and Oneida Counties. HOCTC was created during 1963 (in compliance with the Federal Highway Act of 1962) in order to establish transportation goals and objectives on a local basis. The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Governmental Policy and Liaison Committee (GP&L) has been designated as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation by the Governor of New York for the approved Ilion-Herkimer, Oneida, Rome and Utica Urban Area Boundaries.

As is the case with all MPOs in New York State, HOCTC is not a legal entity in and of itself as it depends upon a host agency to provide payroll and legal services and to contract with consultants for planning studies. The Oneida County Department of Planning acts as the HOCTC host agency. All HOCTC dedicated and shared staff are employed by the County of Oneida and works in the Department of Planning Office located at the Boehlert Center at Union Station, 321 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Utica, NY. The current HOCTC dedicated staff positions include the Director, a Principal Planner, a Senior Planner and a Planning Specialist. HOCTC shared staffing with its host agency include the positions of Commissioner of Planning, Deputy Commissioners of Planning, a GIS Coordinator, GIS Analysts, GIS Technicians II, Chief Planner, Principal Planner, Associate Planner, Graphic Design Specialist Contract Administrator, Finance Administrative Officer, and Planning Specialists. The staff has the responsibility of managing consultant studies specified in the UPWP, conducting technical analyses, purchasing supplies and equipment, and carrying out the balance of the duties necessary to function as an MPO. Oneida County serves as a member of the various HOCTC committees and provides payroll services, audits, accounting, and legal services for HOCTC. The host agency agreement between HOCTC and Oneida County was renewed in 2021 via HOCTC Resolution 2021 – 35 in December 2021 for a term of ten years lasting through March 2032.

B. PLANNING/TECHNICAL

1. UPWP

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Council adopted a Unified Planning Work Program for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year in February 2025. The work program includes ongoing public participation activities, data collection and performance measurement tasks, traffic modeling, technical assistance to municipalities, Geographic Information system (GIS) work, long-range plan development, and corridor-planning activities described in support of issues identified in the current HOCTC Long Range Plan.

2. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

HOCTC 2025 – 2045 LRTP was adopted via HOCTC Resolution 2024 – 35 in December 2024. The LRTP lists all current State and Federal planning factors and emphasis areas as well as

HOCTC's planning principles, goals, and priorities. Through an analysis of data, regional priorities and projects are identified as candidates for implementation through HOCTC Unified Planning Work Program and Transportation Improvement Program. An expanded public outreach for the LRTP was conducted which included three Technical Advisory Committee Meetings, three public open houses, 29 outreach events, and one public hearing. In addition to these events, HOCTC released a survey that was available through the project website: [HOCTC Central Project Hub](#) and was widely distributed among relevant stakeholders. All of these events allowed for public input. Additionally, HOCTC is currently working on the Transportation Atlas to complement the 2025 – 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The goal of the Transportation Atlas will be to visually show relevant information and data related to the transportation network in the Herkimer and Oneida County region. The document will be graphically rich with easily decipherable elements for use by policymakers and the general public. The projected completion of the document is June 2025.

3. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program is the current MPO capital program which was approved via HOCTC Resolution 2022 – 16 in September 2022. The draft 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was released on **May 12, 2025**, for public review and comment. As is the case with the LRTP, conformity approval is not required for the TIP on account of the classification of the approved Oneida and Herkimer Counties Urban Areas as air quality attainment. On March 6, 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency published a final rule revoking the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for all purposes including the Transportation Conformity requirements, effective April 6, 2015.

During the development of both TIP documents, the fiscal constraint was applied in coordination with NYSDOT Region 2. HOCTC worked closely with its members and NYSDOT Region 2 to identify appropriate projects that could safely be deferred as a result of program limitations. Through these and similar coordinated efforts the current TIP has remained both balanced and fiscally constrained. Individual projects are identifiable and are consistent with the adopted HOCTC LRTP. TIP amendment procedures are consistent with guidance from federal regulatory agencies. The amendment procedures are being reaffirmed with the approval of the 2025-2029 TIP. Revisions made during the adoption of the 2023-2027 TIP were necessary to streamline the management of the TIP, clarify procedures, define what qualifies for an amendment or an administrative modification, and develop a timely management system for projects listed on the TIP.

On the HOCTC's website is an interactive project viewer for the 2025-2029 TIP ([TIP Data Viewer](#).) It was developed to enhance public information and address required visualization techniques. The viewer is an ESRI ArcOnline Web Mapping Application and includes project data, financial information, maps, and aerial photographs of the project location.

4. Technical Areas

Technical studies are proceeding consistent with the current UPWP. GIS network development and road condition scoring of network roads continue to be an emphasis area, along with bicycle and

pedestrian planning for HOCTC. An enhanced emphasis is being placed on mobility management and transit operations. Overall, targeted safety evaluations and highway safety programs are emerging focus. Finally, an integrated focus is on enhancing the connection between transportation investments and economic development.

5. Special Considerations in the Transportation Planning Process

(a) Title VI – HOCTC ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in the transportation planning process. HOCTC continues to assist Oneida County in maintaining compliance with Title VI by working with the Title VI Coordinator for Oneida County. This includes preparing all updates to the Oneida County Title VI policy for review by the coordinator and preparing compliance documentation responses to be sent to NYSDOT. HOCTC provides Title VI compliance review assistance to Herkimer County, in the same manner as it works with Oneida County, to maintain compliance with the NYSDOT Office of Civil Rights.

- i. **Environmental Justice (EJ)** - The Environmental Justice/Title VI Analysis 2025 (EJ 2025) was adopted by the GP&L June 10, 2025, via Resolution 2025-12. Additionally, as a part of this update, the additional populations of disabled people, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, the elderly, households without vehicles, and renter-occupied households were also analyzed at the Census Block Group scale. The EJ 2025 analysis identifies Census Tracts that have a higher concentration of minority and/or low-income populations within our planning area. These additional categories allowed for HOCTC to more accurately identify areas in need of environmental justice planning throughout the MPA and aids in the prioritization of funding needs.
- ii. **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** – Specific outreach to senior organizations, low mobility populations, and LEP populations was conducted as part of the LRTP update and FTA 5310 and 5311 solicitations. There is a large Limited English Population (LEP) that has been identified for targeted inclusion in the transportation planning programs per the HOCTC 2025 Environmental Justice Analysis. The HOCTC website is used as the main communication tool and is continuously updated to include the current UPWP, TIP, LRTP, meeting notices, agendas, and amendments in an accessible format. The HOCTC has increased efforts to reach disadvantaged and LEP populations within the MPA through partnerships with human service agencies (The Center for Refugees, the Resource Center for Independent Living, Mohawk Valley Community Action, Utica Neighborhood & Homeownership Center, NCAA-Rome Chapter, the ARC Oneida-Lewis Chapter) and the utilization of translation services for planning documents, projects, policy updates, and program materials.
- iii. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – Special considerations for elderly and disabled persons are consistent with ADA requirements and are provided in the transportation planning process and community participation projects. HOCTC planning efforts include consideration of services for the elderly, disabled persons, and for those who are not able to travel by personal vehicle. MPO meetings are held in ADA-accessible facilities. ADA compliance is monitored through the ADA paratransit services offered by the transit

operator and staff review of federally funded projects and plans. HOCTC works to provide education and training on ADA requirements within its MPA.

- iv. **Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)** – HOCTC reports on the utilization of DBE entities to deliver the planning and capital program. This includes provisions in all RFP for professional services to utilize DBE and MWBE entities. Reports are submitted on a semi-annual basis to NYSDOT, and HOCTC has also signed on to NYSDOT's DBE plan.
- (b) **Private Operators** - Consideration is given to private transportation providers. Private transportation operators will be considered and involved in any future planning efforts to develop additional services to rural areas, particularly as part of the implementation of the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) 2025-2028, which was updated in 2024. Additional inclusion is achieved through the Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC).
- (c) **Planning Factors** - Up-to-date State and Federal planning factors and emphasis areas are used to develop HOCTC plans and programs and to guide project selection processes. HOCTC staff continues to maintain its relationships with local land use planning organizations through communication and consultation. The development of the draft 2025-2029 TIP has incorporated programming instructions that are consistent with NYSDOT's Forward Four principles, which include: Preservation First, System Not Projects, Maximizing Return on Investment (ROI), and Make it Sustainable. Additionally, maintenance and preservation activities over "worst-first" infrastructure replacement projects are emphasized as well.
- (d) **Congestion Management Process** – No process in place (not required because HOCTC MPA is located in an attainment area).
- (e) **Public Participation Plan** – The HOCTC 2024 Public Participation Plan (PPP) was updated and approved via HOCTC Resolution 2024 -01 in February 2024. HOCTC actively solicits public involvement through media, public meetings, mailings, and events where the public gathers. HOCTC staff regularly meets with local officials, participates in public meetings, and holds public information meetings and planning forums to involve the general public and concerned businesses and agencies. Special efforts are made to involve freight and transit users in all corridor and related planning activities. All meetings of HOCTC Planning and Policy Committees are open to the public. Local newspapers are notified of meetings. The agendas for those meetings regularly include a section for "Public Comment". Legal notices are issued during the development of all core publications, announcing the opportunity for public review and comment, as prescribed by the PPP. The HOCTC website contains all recent MPO meeting agendas, work products, meeting minutes, and the most current versions of annual or recurring documents. The website allows for public comment on publications and provides opportunities for the public to contact staff to ask questions about any transportation concerns they may have and also serves as a portal for project specific input.
- (f) **Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan** – The Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) 2025-2028 was updated and approved via HOCTC Resolution 2024-22 in September 2024. The plan is required to identify projects eligible for funding under the Section 5310 program and provides a plan for the coordinated

mobility transportation options of underserved groups. A goal of the plan is to identify and assess areas of mobility gaps. The Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC) meets two to four times a year and focuses on identifying needs and as a networking resource for transportation providers as a part of the Plan's implementation.

C. Administrative/Management

1. **Progress Reports** are prepared twice per year to report on the progress of UPWP activities. They are submitted within one month of the close of Quarter 1 & 2 (April 1 to September 30) and Quarter 3 & 4 (October 1 to March 31), as Semi-Annual Reports for the current UPWP. They are submitted to the NYSDOT, FHWA, and FTA as complete and comprehensive reports.
2. **Bills** are submitted and paid based on the processing schedule of the host agency, Oneida County. Vendor inquiries for delayed reimbursements are infrequent. The Oneida County Department of Planning submits bills quarterly. Bills are paid out as they are received and generally take less than 30 days to process.
3. **Audits** are completed in a timely manner in conjunction with the host agency.
4. **Annual Program** is closed out within 3 years in cooperation with NYSDOT.
5. **MPO Budget** is regularly monitored and updated as needed.
6. **Consultant Selection Process** HOCTC utilizes its host agency's consultant selection process that is followed for all professional services agreements. HOCTC also verifies that all consultant selection is in compliance with applicable NYSDOT, FHWA, or FTA requirements for the fund source being utilized. DBE provisions are integrated into the host agency's process and for HOCTC included in all reviews prior to award.
7. **Central Staff/Host Relations** are good. MPO staff are accorded equal status as Oneida County staff. Recruitment of staff can be challenging due to Oneida County salary restrictions for planning staff positions. Quality office space and support services to accommodate HOCTC staff and activities are provided. Staff has good political support within the planning and programming area.
8. **Decision Making** ability is effective in the HOCTC MPA area. The public is outspoken on many issues and members listen and fully consider expressed public concerns. Committees are competently and sufficiently staffed. Planning Committee meetings are well attended, and reaching consensus decisions has not been a problem. The Policy Committee typically meets four times a year with additional meetings held if specific actions are required and time is of the essence. Policy Committee meetings are normally well attended and usually can reach a majority decision with a general discussion. Members are consulted frequently on regional and local matters concerning their jurisdictions.
9. **Governance:** The host agency agreement between the HOCTC and Oneida County was renewed in 2021 via HOCTC Resolution 2021 – 35 in December 2021 for a term of ten years lasting through March 2032. The format of the new agreement was consistent with a new model recently developed by NYSDOT. The hosting arrangement allows HOCTC staff to advance its work without any undue

influence from any particular member municipality. The Policy and Planning committees have consistent and balanced representation from throughout the program area, including *all* urban area municipalities.

- 10. Procurement:** HOCTC staff is aware of the procurement requirements of FTA funding recipients, including those listed within the FTA Circular Guidance 4220.1F, Third Party Contracting Requirements, and the FTA Master Agreement. HOCTC staff will be in communication with NYSDOT to ensure that the procurement process is followed, and FTA-related expenditures are documented.