



Capital District Transportation Committee New Visions for a Quality Region

New Visions 2040

Amended March 2016



The New Visions 2040 Plan was amended on March 31, 2016 to incorporate the Regional Freight & Goods Movement Plan.

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Overview

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy and Saratoga Springs metropolitan areas. Like MPOs nationwide, CDTC produces and regularly updates our region's long-range transportation plan. All federally-funded or federally-approved transportation actions such as highway or transit capital projects must derive from the regional plan. CDTC's regional plan, called New Visions for a Quality Region, considers the future of our region's transportation system in the next 25 years. In 2013,

CDTC began a two year effort to update the New Visions 2035 Plan. The updated plan is called New Visions 2040.

CDTC used existing advisory committees and formed new task forces to assess the 2035 Plan against recent events and current circumstances. The following nine subcommittees were charged with developing recommendations for the Plan update:

- Quality Region Task Force
- Freight Advisory Committee
- Regional Operations & Safety Advisory Committee
- Complete Streets Advisory Committee
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Environment & Technology Task Force
- Infrastructure Task Force
- Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (Human Services Transport)
- Transit Task Force

The subcommittees included Planning Committee and Policy Board members, as well as a variety of stakeholders and subject experts. Each subcommittee prepared a draft white paper which made recommendations for public review and Planning Committee approval. The final approved white



Americans now spend over **100 Hours Per Year** in their commutes to work.

Source: American Community Survey
Pedestrian and Bicyclist Information Center



papers are included in the New Visions 2040 Plan as appendices.

The CDTC New Visions 2040 Plan includes a set of principles to guide transportation planning and investment in the region for coming years. It also articulates a series of short-range and long-range recommendations and actions to help achieve broad regional goals, and provided an innovative budget approach to ensure implementation of the plan. Listed below are some of the highlights of the Plan.

Transportation Safety

New Visions offers an integrated and effective approach to reduce risk and enable safe access for all users of the transportation system — especially bicyclists, pedestrians, children, and the elderly.



CDTC will examine traffic safety data, identify high crash locations, and characteristics across roadway systems that are common to locations with a crash history, analyze potential mitigation measures and solutions, and develop a competitive funding process to make these improvements. Where the data may not be available, CDTC will work to educate all users to “coexist” and to develop strategies to improve safety.

Transit Service

New Visions works with our regional transit provider, CDTA, and incorporates CDTA’s 5-year Transit Development Plan. Beyond the 5 year period, CDTC will examine future population growth trends, forecast transit ridership, and identify future

needs. This will improve and grow a variety of transit services for the Capital District, increasing mobility and supporting economic development and smart regional growth. Transit should accomplish multiple objectives besides transportation, including transit-oriented and urban development, neighborhood revitalization, connecting communities and cities, and others.



Highways and Bridges

New Visions makes a strong commitment to keeping the region's highway and bridge system in good condition, providing billions of dollars for highway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and design and for bridge maintenance, repair, and replacement by 2040. Maintaining and replacing our existing infrastructure will be our highest priority, and will require most of our existing resources. New highways and bridges will need to compete for funding which is becoming less and less available.

Traffic Congestion

New Visions explores ways to manage congestion and to ease daily commutes by using existing technology such as incident and traffic information systems, and new technology such as traffic routing systems, new traffic signal monitoring technology and someday automated vehicles. The Plan also encourages support for more transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel, carpooling, vanpooling, carsharing

and bikesharing, which can all reduce the number of vehicles on our roads.

Complete Streets

New Visions endorses local Complete Street policies and resolutions which encourage streets that are designed and operated for all users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit users, freight deliveries, children, elderly and people with disabilities. A properly designed "Complete Street" will improve safety, encourage walking and biking, slow traffic, improve air quality, promote local business, and even encourage social interaction.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

New Visions encourages development that incorporates bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into highway and bridge construction and city, village, and town plans. It also provides for recreational opportunities through creation of bike/hike trails. The health and recreational benefits of bicycle and pedestrian facilities are well documented.



Environmental Quality

New Visions supports energy conservation and air quality in the region by advocating sustainable development patterns and site design, urban reinvestment, and community-based land use



planning. New Visions also encourages transit, bicycle, & pedestrian, carpooling, carsharing, and bikesharing investments & strong participation in the U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities program.

Freight Movement

New Visions advocates congestion management and infrastructure investments that will support the movement of goods throughout the Capital District. Freight movement is about how goods get to your doorstep and to the stores' shelves, but it is also about freight's positive impact on the regional economy, growth, and employment.

Environmental Justice

New Visions ensures that both the positive and negative impacts of transportation planning conducted by CDTC and its members are fairly distributed and that defined Environmental Justice

populations do not bear disproportionately high and adverse effects. Eliminating, reducing and mitigating conflicts between land use, development and transportation are critical strategies to promoting environmental justice.

Human Services Transportation

New Visions works with the many human services transportation providers in our area to identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low income. CDTC then works to improve services for these transportation disadvantaged populations by identifying gaps and overlaps in services, and providing recommendations and funding for improvements.

Local Communities

New Visions acknowledges the importance of land use & development, and of reducing conflicts between land use, development and transportation. CDTC sponsors the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program, which provides funding for cities, towns, & villages to prepare & implement community-based transportation & land use plans consistent with New Visions principles.





Public Participation

New Visions seeks public participation and input in every stage of the planning process. It is one of the primary objectives of this plan because without public participation and input, the plan will not have public support. And without public support the other plan goals and objectives will never be implemented. CDTC receives public input from the 9 New Visions committees and their members, from the public meetings held in each of the 4 Counties, from meetings with stakeholder groups, from our website, surveys, and polls, from social media, and from other CDTC projects' meetings.

Big Idea/Big Ticket Initiatives

The New Visions 2040 Plan reaffirms support for consideration of potential “big ticket” initiatives. These initiatives would be supported by higher growth scenarios, yet they could be pursued with trend growth as well. Funding is not identified, yet the plan puts forward the vision of bold investments that could be feasible if the public supports the vision and funding can be found.



Planning and Investment Principles

The New Visions planning and investment principles guide decision-making at CDTC. As statements of principle, they provide a framework for funding decisions, project selection criteria, corridor-level planning and project implementation. The principles state when and how CDTC believes transportation investment is warranted, and when it believes such investment is not warranted.

1. Investing in a Quality Region – A great transportation system with great choices will help make our region a Quality Region.

Transportation investments will help preserve and enhance the Capital Region's existing urban form, infrastructure, and quality of place. Neighborhood-based local planning efforts are important to the success of an overall regional plan that emphasizes livable communities and smart growth.

Transportation investments will:

- Plan and build for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, cars, trucks, marine, aviation, and rail;
- Support healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities;
- Encourage concentrated development patterns and smart economic growth;



- Link transportation planning and land use planning in order to reduce conflicts and improve both;
- Protect sensitive environmental resources.

2. Economic Development – Transportation is critical to our region’s economy.

New Visions articulates the transportation investment needed for sustainable regional economic

growth. All indications are that the region’s quality assets are becoming apparent to decision makers outside the region. Transportation choices, strong urban areas, affordable and diverse housing locations, good schools, colleges and universities, ease of mobility, modern air and rail transportation facilities, cultural and recreational opportunities and a clean environment are significant criteria in location decisions of advanced technology firms. These factors support Tech Valley and the region’s economic development and business climate. CDTC will partner with New York State to encourage regional efforts to build a strong, sustainable economy.

3. Regional Equity – Transportation investments will address all needs fairly and equally.

Funding for appropriate repair, replacement and reconstruction will be based on the function and condition of the facility -- not ownership. Investments should meet the needs of all users





of the transportation system, in a manner that increases access to transportation or does not disproportionately impact people with disabilities, and minority and low-income populations.

4. Complete Streets – Street design will serve all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, freight, and drivers.

Transportation investments are made based on a complete streets framework which supports the convenient and safe travel of all people — of all ages and abilities as appropriate to a facility's community context.

Utilizing a complete streets framework ensures that transportation investments are consistently planned, programmed, designed, operated and maintained with all users in mind – including bicyclists, public

transportation vehicles and riders, pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and local delivery needs.

Successful implementation of a complete streets framework will be achieved by working with municipalities to improve communication and coordination, training and education, and design standards and other resources.

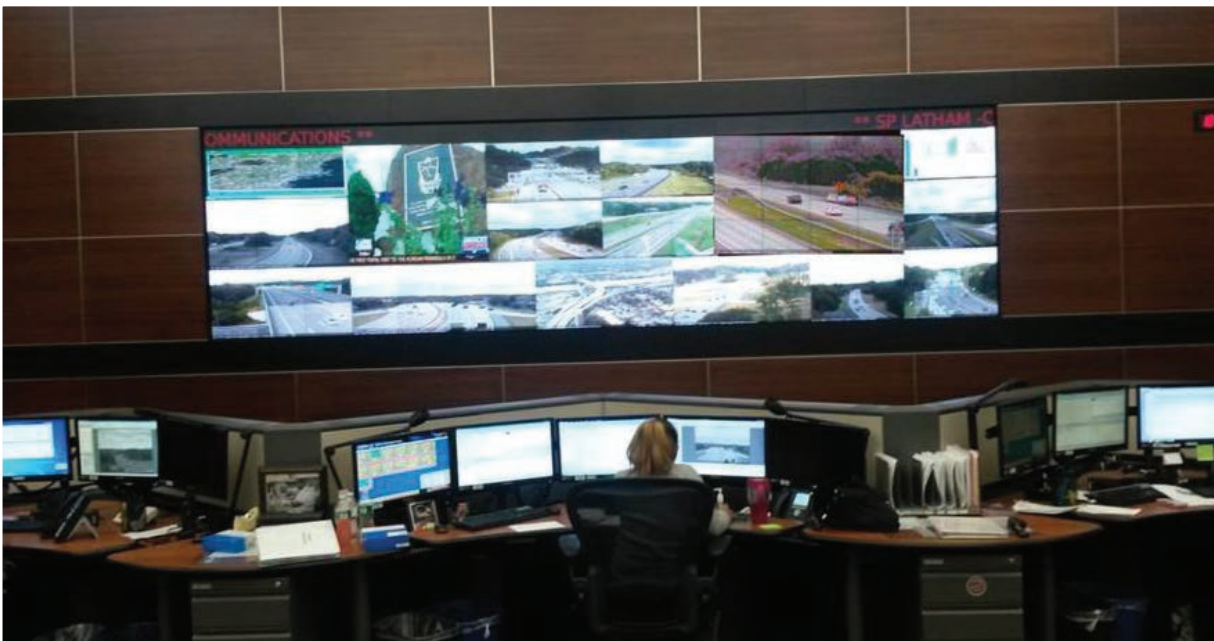
5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation –

Bicycle and pedestrian travel is vital to the region's public health, transportation, and the economy.

Encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel is a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible and healthy approach to improving the performance of our transportation system. Possible bicycle/pedestrian related improvements will be considered from the perspective of developing a system – not just based on whether a particular facility is currently used. That system of sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails will encourage safe bicycle and pedestrian use and will increase accessibility.

6. Transit – Our transit services will provide modern, innovative, and viable travel options.

Because transit facilities and services are an essential element of the social, economic, and cultural fabric, sufficient operating and capital funding and supportive





policies must be in place. Innovative services and transit supportive investment are critical to developing a high quality transit system. The future transit system will:

- Promote transit supportive land use patterns and infrastructure;
- Contribute to congestion management, air quality, and energy savings;
- Form the backbone for managing travel demand;
- Provide essential mobility for those who do not operate a private vehicle;
- Capitalize on market trends and attract choice riders.

7. Infrastructure – Transportation funding must be sufficient to both repair and sometimes replace our highway, bridge, and transit infrastructure.

New Visions remains committed to the maintenance, repair, replacement, reconstruction and right-sizing of the existing freight and passenger transportation facilities in a cost-effective manner that protects and enhances rideability, public safety, accessibility, and serviceability.

Currently the needs for replacing bridges, reconstructing pavement, and investing in transit and port facilities outweigh available funding. Renewing

existing infrastructure in our communities is fiscally responsible and consistent with smart growth.

CDTC needs to ensure that system preservation and system reconstruction are balanced, and that roads and bridges in our cities and rural communities are equitably considered. Continued capital investment in our transit system, ports, and airport and their connections to other surface transportation will remain a priority.





8. Safety and Security – We can significantly save lives and reduce injuries when we decrease traffic crashes and better respond to traffic emergencies.

CDTC and its members need to improve the safety of the regional transportation system by creating a travel environment that is consistent with the community context and reduces risk. Safety considerations will be integrated into all investment decisions.

Roundabouts and road diets will be considered in proposed highway and intersection projects to address safety concerns as well as low cost safety improvements.

Examination of security issues and incorporation of security actions using computer modeling and scenario planning will be considered in transportation planning and investment decisions.

9. Travel Reliability – Reliable traffic flow is more important than reducing congestion – traffic congestion is often a sign of an area's economic vitality.

Managing traffic flows on the Capital Region expressway and arterial system is critical for both economic and social reasons.

- Congestion Management is much more cost effective than highway capacity increases or new lanes. Congestion alone does not justify increasing highway capacity or adding new lanes.
- Congestion management actions will include traffic management center improvements, incident management, managed lanes, managed tolls, traffic information technology, traffic signal coordination, parking management, and travel demand management strategies such as

1,087

NUMBER OF BRIDGES
IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

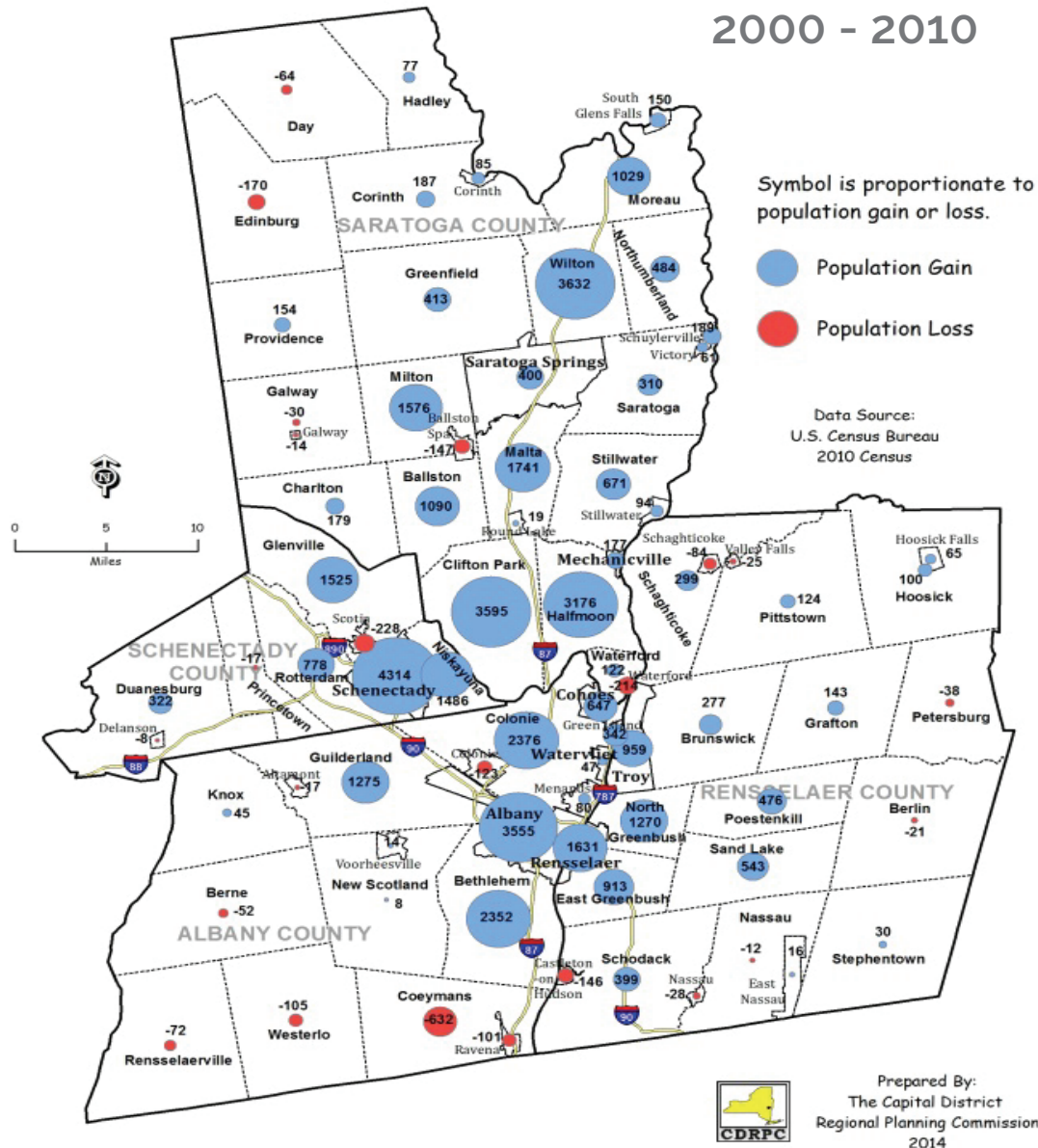
263

BRIDGES ARE FUNCTIONALLY
DEFICIENT - BUT SAFE

92

BRIDGES ARE STRUCTURALLY
DEFICIENT - BUT SAFE

CAPITAL DISTRICT NET POPULATION CHANGE 2000 - 2010



supporting more transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel, carpooling, vanpooling, carsharing, bikesharing, and flexible work hours.

- Some congestion is acceptable when the community deems it acceptable, or when it results from balancing the needs of other transportation modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.

10. Freight – Our freight system is crucial to the economy; it will be efficient and automated, and will

minimize its impact to communities.

CDTC's freight planning efforts will be comprehensive enough to encompass all modes, including air, water, rail, and highway. Maintaining the health and improving the efficiency of freight facilities in the region through public/private partnerships is a high priority. CDTC's planning efforts will embrace freight's key contributions to regional prosperity, while also trying to mitigate the negative impacts of all modes of freight movement on local communities.

11. Environment – Transportation choices should improve our environment, not harm it.

Environmental stewardship is crucial to the success of and quality of life in this region. Transportation investments must improve or preserve the region's cultural and natural environment. Transportation investments will not encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and will help to preserve rural character. Transportation investments will support alternative fuel vehicles and greenhouse gas reduction. Environmental best practices will be incorporated into all projects.

12. Technology – We must plan for new, smarter, better, and rapidly-changing transportation technology.

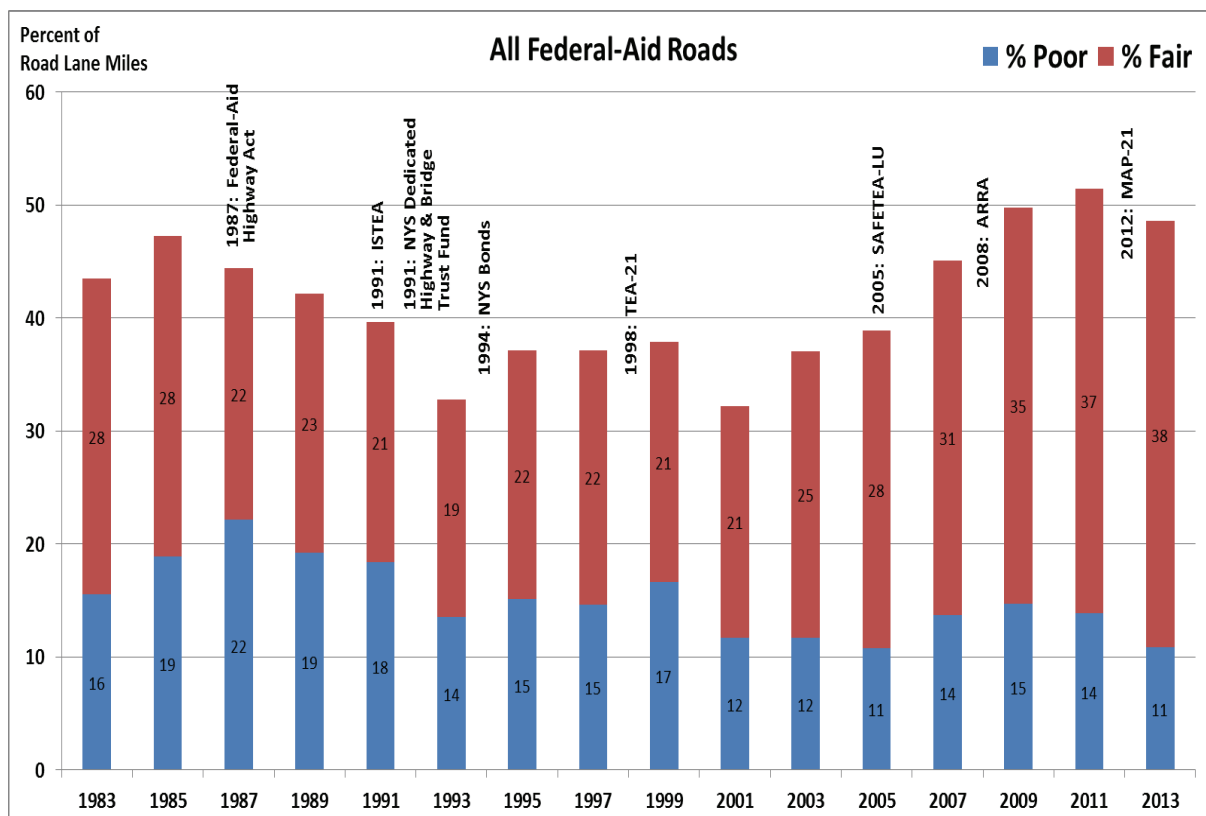
Advancements in technology, such as self-driving cars, self-adjusting traffic signals, smart phone apps, ridesharing, carsharing, and bikesharing will have tremendous and wide-reaching impacts on future transportation. These impacts include, but are not limited to, decreasing congestion, providing transportation to more seniors and people with disabilities, reducing traffic crashes, and more.

Key Recommendations

Listed below are key New Visions 2040 recommendations in summary form.

Quality Region

- **Continue to seek adequate funding to fully implement the plan** – CDTC should program adequate funding to maintain the existing infrastructure and to make small improvements as our population and our needs grow. The current flat funding will lead to serious, unacceptable declines in physical and service conditions and make even modest improvements difficult to accomplish.
- **Increase funding for transit, travel demand management, bicycle/pedestrian, complete streets, traffic operations, freight, and human services transportation** – Our country and our region are changing. We are moving to the cities, driving less, buying fewer vehicles and homes, using more transit and bicycles, becoming older and more disabled, and buying more goods from all over the world. In order to address the issues that evolve from these trends, we need to increase funding in the above programs.





- **Explore the use of innovative funding sources** – Because federal funding is not keeping up with transportation needs, other sources of funding should be explored, including impact or mitigation fees, user fees, dedicated transportation fees, public/private partnerships, time-based (higher for congested times) and impact-based (higher for heavy vehicles) fee structures, etc.
- **Improve CDTC public outreach and marketing efforts** – Too many transportation users, municipalities, businesses, etc. are not aware of the scope and impact of New Visions 2040. CDTC should improve and increase efforts to engage all users, to educate them and to obtain their input.
- **Update and upgrade project selection criteria** – The existing project selection criteria is relatively technical, relies too heavily on the benefit/cost ratio, does not reflect current priorities or recently emphasized criteria (e.g. economic development, freight, environmental justice, etc.), and is not easily understood by all our members. It also needs to be more directly related to the implementation of the current New Visions principles and performance measures.
- **Develop a training program that specifically targets local planners, local planning board members and other local stakeholders** – CDTC should provide training to local decision makers so that they can make informed and educated planning decisions. Potential training topics should include:
 - a. Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning & Strategies

- b. Transportation Safety Planning & Strategies
- c. Smart Growth
- d. Complete Streets
- e. Road Diets
- f. Traffic Safety
- g. Transportation and Land Use
- h. Transportation Economic Development
- i. Environmental Justice

- **Complete the I-87 Exit 4 Airport Connector Project Phase II**– Albany International Airport is a regional facility, and Phase II of this project would significantly improve access to the airport. CDTC has a long history of supporting this very important project.

Environment & Technology

- **Focus on greenhouse gas emissions** – CDTC should consider expanding its project review process to further evaluate greenhouse gas emission impacts during TIP project selection.
- **Consider the significant impacts of totally automated vehicles** – Totally automated vehicles (connected and self-driving) have the potential to increase road capacity and reduce traffic congestion without constructing new lanes, significantly reduce traffic crashes, increase mobility for people with disabilities and seniors, decrease parking needs, reduce the number of cars, etc. These changes will have a dramatic impact on transportation and transportation planning in the future.





Bicycle/Pedestrian

- **Promote the development of dedicated bicycle and protected bicycle lanes** – Many bicycle riders do not feel safe in a shared use travel lane, and many vehicle drivers are not considerate of bicycle riders in a shared use travel lane. In order to provide a safer environment to ride and to encourage more bicycle riders, we need to construct more of these bicycles lanes.
- **Measure the economic impacts of bicycling, walking, and transit infrastructure** – The beneficial impacts of bicycling, walking, and transit to businesses and public health are well understood, but not well quantified. We will use the latest analytical techniques to better measure and consider these benefits.
- **Complete the following trail/greenway projects:**
 - a. Uncle Sam Bikeway
 - b. Patroon Creek Greenway
 - c. Mickey Mahar Trail
 - d. Zim Smith Trail
 - e. Albany County Rail Trail with a connection to the Corning Preserve trail
 - f. Livingston Avenue Bridge bicycle/pedestrian facility

- g. The Watervliet connection to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail/ Canalway Trail
- h. A connection from the western end of the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail/ Canalway Trail in Rotterdam Junction (at the RR tracks) to the continued trail in Amsterdam

Complete Streets

- **Promote the use of Complete Streets design and implementation guidelines** – The number of entities developing and adopting complete streets design standards and guidance continues to grow across the US. Some of these standards and guidelines include:
 - a. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide
 - b. FHWA Guide for Maintaining Pedestrian Facilities for Enhanced Safety
 - c. AASHTO Bicycle Facilities Design Guide, 2012
 - d. NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide
 - e. Cornell Local Roads Program Complete Streets Manual

Transit

- **Investigate new funding mechanisms to support CDTA transit operations**
 - a. Novel sales tax concepts such as an alcoholic beverage pouring fee.
 - b. Appropriate level of fare increase for the base fare on fixed route services to increase the share of revenue provided by transit customers.
 - c. New and expanded transit access agreements for employees in the technology, casino, and non-profit sectors.
- **Expand BusPlus** to include the Washington/ Western and River corridors and continue to enhance the Route 5 corridor to improve reliability and efficiency.
- **Promote bus/transit only travel lanes** – Beyond those already planned for the Washington/Western BRT Corridor, encourage road owners to consider these lanes in various locations throughout the region. Particular attention should be paid to roadways included



in the 40 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (Bus Plus).

- **Use established national criteria to identify transit corridors** that may have the potential to support streetcar or light rail transit. Monitor and re-evaluate these corridors at regular intervals.
- **Encourage improved intermodal connections** among transit providers including Amtrak, intercity bus carriers, and the Albany International Airport as well as connections to walking, bicycling, and driving. Work with CDTA and regional transit carriers, including Amtrak, on the development of shared intermodal stations and transit centers.

Human Services Transit

- **Organize and hold a workshop within 6 months** focused on Tools to Improve Human Service Agency Transportation Service Quality and Efficiency. Conduct a day-long workshop with multiple sessions to support providers of human services transportation in providing quality and efficient services.
- **Improve coordination of services by all providers** – In many cases human service transportation providers have no incentive to cooperate or coordinate their

services, and in many cases they do not. We need to develop a system which encourages these providers to cooperate and coordinate and not to just compete. Explore opportunities for coordination for other federal programs that are not funded through FTA or FHWA.

- **Assist communities with ADA compliance requirements:** Facilitate completion of ADA Transition Plans and associated physical improvements to continue to work toward an accessible regional transportation system. Include a method to incentivize and prioritize inclusion of accessible features in federally funded transportation projects through changes to CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project selection criteria.

Operations, Safety, and Security

- **Not Support increasing road capacity by constructing new lanes** – Americans are driving less, not obtaining drivers licenses, not buying cars, moving to urban areas, and biking and using transit more. These trends along with the deployment of totally automated vehicles will decrease traffic congestion and decrease the need for more road capacity.
- **Right-size our existing roadways** – Because some of the roads in our region were built years ago based on higher-than-actual forecasted traffic, some of these roads have unused capacity. These roads should be right-sized so that underutilized right-of-way can be used to improve access for other modes of transportation, such as pedestrian, bicycling, and transit.





- **Encourage use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Active Traffic Management Strategies (ATM) to address congestion** – These systems and strategies can reduce traffic congestion without constructing new lanes. CDTC should further evaluate and eventually recommend ITS and ATM strategies, including speed harmonization and Dynamic Lane Assignment (DLA) for local interstate highways as national experience increases.
- **Establish a Community Traffic Engineering and Safety Evaluation Services Program** – CDTC would partner with a municipality to hire a traffic engineering consultant to provide intersection signal analysis, traffic counts, or analysis of potential operational improvements or ITS improvements. CDTC would also partner with a municipality to hire an engineering consultant to provide safety evaluations for potential problem locations identified in the municipality.
- **Develop a Regional Safety Plan-** Other leading MPOs in the country have instituted Safety Task Forces/Advisory Committees and prepared Regional Safety Reports and Action Plans. This plan would present goals, emphasis areas, statistics, and initiatives, and identify the depth and breadth of safety issues in our area.
- **Increase Security Technical Support and Information Dissemination-** CDTC's regional role and technical strength place it in a unique position to provide technical support to emergency agencies and local communities on transportation system analyses such as vulnerability assessments, evacuation scenario development, data compilation and analyses, and best practices and public information dissemination.

Infrastructure

- **Develop and publish an Infrastructure Report Card for roads, bridges and other assets** – Our citizens, leaders, elected officials, and CDTC members cannot bring about change unless they know change is needed. The report card will provide that knowledge and will highlight individual components of the region's transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, sidewalks, etc.), their physical condition, infrastructure TIP and local projects completed during the previous one or two years, and how well individual goals are being met.
- **Regularly publish transportation summary sheets (bullets)** – Transportation needs advocates and advocates need tools. These transportation summary sheets can be used by our citizens, leaders, elected officials, and CDTC members when they advocate for transportation projects and funding for the various transportation programs described in this document, such as infrastructure, bike/ped, transit, freight, etc.

Freight

- **The Regional Freight & Goods Movement Plan (2016)-** Recommendations break out into two general categories: (1) Projects; and (2) Programs, Policies and Studies. Projects involve construction, reconstruction and/or changes to physical transportation infrastructure. Projects separate into early-action projects and long-range actions. Programs, Policies and Studies are non-capital initiatives that seek to employ regulatory, guidance and/or planning tools to facilitate more cost-effective and efficient use of existing and planned transportation infrastructure. CDTC will work with project sponsors to progress these initiatives.

Capital District Transportation Committee

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