

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Strategic and Logistical Aspects of Implementation

This chapter presents a road map for implementing the 50 specific recommendations presented in the previous five chapters. The aim of this discussion is to establish a plan for pursuing implementation of the complete package as a sustained effort which is both internally logical (that is, actions are sequenced based on not only urgency but *compatibility*) and feasible (with regard to both fiscal resources and competing priorities in McKownville, elsewhere in the Town and elsewhere in the Capital District).

What is presented is a general framework for implementing these recommendations through a combination of exploiting existing or known upcoming opportunities and a number of new efforts to be progressed according to a strategic, long-term plan. This conceptual approach offers a sense of how the logistical, budgetary and political matters inherent in pursuing such an extensive list of actions can be addressed.

The goal in developing an overall approach to implementation is to establish a vision and a set of working relationships very similar to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which metropolitan planning organizations such as CDTC use to guide short- to medium-term capital project implementation and planning work.

Steps to Progressing Actions

The process by which strategies are “bundled” can further goals of logistics, political and public acceptance, administrative efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. Similar benefits can be realized from the establishment of a long-term plan for management and improvement of the local multimodal transportation system. This plan needs to articulate both a fiscally-constrained budget for short, medium and long term projects *and* information on opportunities to progress strategies outside the plan’s set of projects. The process needs to be *strategic* in relating equity, situational urgency, resource availability and other opportunities for implementation to the sequence in which strategies are implemented. This provides a consistent direction for planning and investment decisions.

Some of the keys to this strategic approach are discussed below, both in general senses and as applicable to the *Study’s* strategy set.

Integration into Existing Efforts

Projects

Opportunities may exist in already-planned (and programmed) projects to add in elements which would enhance the bicycle and/or pedestrian travel environments or to better harmonize

transportation activities with the neighborhood. One example referenced earlier was the CDTA Multi-Modal Program project, which will provide the opportunity for implementation of some of the pavement marking and bulbout recommendations discussed in the Pedestrian/Bicycle and Traffic chapters.

As projects involving federal transportation funds in particular are programmed well in advance of implementation, it is vital to initiate these sorts of explorations far in advance of the start of construction.

This principle has applications well beyond the pedestrian and bicycle realm. For example, in laying the groundwork for future ITS deployments, NYSDOT has taken opportunities in the courses of pavement reconstruction projects to include the burying of fiber optic cables so as to ensure the availability of fiber optic lines for future improvements to signal control, communications and traffic monitoring systems.

While the current NYSDOT State Transportation Improvement Program and the Albany County Department of Public Works' capital program do not point to specific projects to be progressed on roads in the Study area, such that recommendations from this Study could be integrated, one project on the draft 2003-2008 TIP – Project A435, “Transit Signal Priority for Washington and Western Avenues,” will if on the final approved TIP stand to implement and in fact go beyond this report's recommendation TRN-4, which simply proposed a *study* of transit priority's potential in the Western Avenue corridor. In addition, and as will be detailed in the “Federal Transportation Funds/Programs” discussion later in this chapter, the Town has a proposal on the draft TIP for a number of improvements recommended under this Study.

Programs

Several prospects exist for taking advantage of ongoing programmatic opportunities to enhance either travel environments or the knowledge bases that are applied to transportation system management. In the former light, opportunities include NYSDOT's annual programs for replacement of pavement markings, traffic count collection and pavement condition inventories and NYSDOT's capabilities to conduct examinations of locations for safety issues, traffic signal retiming needs and condition deficiencies. In the latter light, training opportunities such as workshops and conferences presented by the New York Planning Federation have recently included transportation-related topics such as smart growth planning tools, the relationship between transportation and land use, and access management. In addition, recent workshops presented by the Federal Highway Administration, NYSDOT and other parties have covered topics ranging from pedestrian and bicycle planning to intelligent transportation systems.

Special Opportunities

Periodically, opportunities arise with relatively short notice to participate in either special programs or other efforts which could bring resources to the area. For example, in the course of development of each federal highway reauthorization bill, there is ordinarily a call for potential “earmark” items, usually drawing from a particular funding source (such as ITS or demonstration

project funds). These types of funds could potentially be available for projects in the Study area to enhance traffic control, alternate routing and some of the other incident-related capabilities which provide a secondary benefit to pedestrians, cyclists and transit, as discussed previously. The likely scenario for any pursuit of these funds including the Study area would be for NYSDOT to include this area in either an areawide ITS or traffic signal improvement proposal. In such a case, the primary action needed on the Town's part would be to contact NYSDOT to in essence remind them of their concerns regarding traffic in this area and to express a desire that NYSDOT facilities in the Town be included in any larger area proposals.

Add-Ons

Opportunities to capitalize on existing projects through the addition of some relatively modest elements related to this study to other transportation or non-transportation projects should be capitalized upon. For example, a sidewalk improvement could be integrated into a roadway or sewer line reconstruction project, or special pavement markings or signage could be incorporated into NYSDOT's annual pavement markings and signage replacement programs. In certain areas, such as Western Avenue near Fuller Road Alternate, this approach will be critical, as truly "leveling the playing field" likely require a major reallocation of right-of-way to the various modes using this important corridor.

Early Wins

Some of the recommendations presented earlier in this report lend themselves to very short term implementation, particularly those involving crosswalk markings, regulatory actions (e.g., zoning ordinance changes) and improved information dissemination (e.g., the UAlbany-focused promotion of local transit service options). These catalytic steps or *early wins* could take place within six months to one year of acceptance of the final study report, with low-cost construction or other physical improvement actions holding potential for submission as candidates for CDTC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Spot Improvement Program and other such recurring opportunities ideally continuing the momentum established by the early wins.

Free-Standing Projects

From a review of the recommendations set forth in this report, it becomes clear that it will not be possible to achieve everything identified as needed in this Study area either through integration into other efforts or through simple, short term actions. Many of the indicated projects will need to be progressed by the Town, the County or NYSDOT either completely using its own funds or leveraging these funds with funds available from outside sources. Along this line, and as will be discussed in the "Federal Transportation Funds/Programs" discussion later in this chapter, the Town also intends to demonstrate its commitment to the goals of this project through medium-term investments in significant capital projects. The Town intends to take advantage not only of available federal transportation funds but of the synergies between a number of recommended local actions to progress a *bundle* of projects which would have the cumulative effect of yielding meaningful enhancement to the pedestrian travel environment along the Western Avenue corridor between Fuller Road and the City line. It is somewhat unusual to progress a number of

medium-sized projects so quickly following their development; the effect in addition to the obvious benefits of these projects could be to provide further illustration of the value of these types of investments, again in turn sustaining a momentum for improvements to the local pedestrian and bicycle travel environments.

Recommended Sequence for Strategies

One of the challenges in developing a staging plan for the actions recommended in this report was that these actions represent a *subset* of all the desirable actions for the McKownville neighborhood, which is of course only one part of the *Town*. The following plan should thus be considered more as offering a *sequence* of steps to be taken in the McKownville neighborhood in the topical areas covered by this Study rather than suggesting a specific timetable for implementation. That said, notes are offered regarding the timing of pursuit of certain opportunities as appropriate..

Unless a note is made regarding the sequencing of projects in two different topical areas, the listings which follow should only be interpreted to offer possible sequences of actions within each topical area. That is, for example, under the discussion of shorter-term prospects, the Schoolhouse Road area pedestrian crossing improvements are recommended to be of greater priority than the Johnston Road project. It is left to the Town to establish priorities across topical areas, as the study team saw the presentation of recommendations on relative priorities between topics as inappropriate given the context in which these recommendations need to be considered (as noted in the previous paragraph)

Shorter-Term Prospects

The following projects appear to warrant earliest pursuit because of the benefit they would provide, their low cost or ease of implementation, and/or their being necessary prerequisites for other actions. Some of these projects could be initiated by the appropriate jurisdictions within six months to a year; these projects are shown in *italicized boldface*.

<i>SW-15: Zoning Ordinance Provisions to Facilitate Multimodal Travel</i>	<i>Lead: Town</i>
SW-13: Schoolhouse Road Area Pedestrian Crossing Improvements	<i>Lead: Town</i>
SW-1: Johnston Road Sidewalk Improvements	<i>Leads: Town/Albany County</i>
SW-14 Schoolhouse Road Sidewalk Improvements	<i>Lead: Albany County</i>
<i>BK-1: Designation of Town Bike Routes</i>	<i>Lead: Town</i>
<i>BK-3: Bicycle Parking Ordinance</i>	<i>Lead: Town</i>
BK-2: Multi-Stage Bike Route Improvement Program, Stages 1 and 2	<i>Lead: Town</i>
TRL-1: Freedom Quad-Stuyvesant Plaza Trail Development	<i>Lead: Town</i>
TRL-5: Krum Kill West Branch Trail Development	<i>Lead: Town</i>
TRL-6: Norwood Street-UAlbany Trail Development	<i>Lead: Town</i>
<i>NCD-4: Town Streetscape Standards</i>	<i>Lead: Town</i>

OP-1: Establish 30 MPH Policy Goal for Western Avenue East of Fuller Road **Lead: Town**
OP-3: Adoption of List of Access Management Treatment
Candidates as Reference Set **Lead: Town**

IS-8: Fuller Road/UAlbany South Driveway Intersection Improvements *Lead: Albany County*
 IS-4: Western Avenue/Fuller Road Intersection Improvements –
 All Elements but Negotiated Access and Median Treatments *Leads: CDTA/Town*

TRN-2: Promote Travel Opportunities for UAlbany Students **Lead: CDTA**
 TRN-1: Install Shelters at Western Avenue Bus Stops *Lead: CDTA*
 TRN-3: Enhance Traveler Information *Lead: CDTA*
 TRN-5: Explore Opportunities for Express CDTA Service from McKownville *Lead: CDTA*
 TRL-5: Krum Kill West Branch Trail Development *Lead: Town*
 TRL-7: Recreational Trail System West of Fuller Road *Lead: Town*

OP-6: Elmwood Street Traffic Calming Measures **Lead: Town**
Note: as discussed the in the presentation of this recommendation, efforts to explore the potential for these measures should begin with outreach to Elmwood Street residents in the short term.

It is recommended that pursuit of policy-related actions- SW-15, BK-1, BK-3, NCD-4, OP-1 and OP-3 commence upon final acceptance of this document by the town. As just discussed, OP-6 should also be a short term pursuit.

Medium-Term Prospects

The following projects appear to be of high priority, but are not seen as likely to be pursued in the short term for reasons of resource requirements or other Town and NYSDOT priorities. Barring unanticipated opportunities to advance these projects in the courses of other activities, it would be expected that most of them would not be progressed until at least the year 2009. That said, the earliest projects in each topical purpose should certainly be seen as priorities for earlier implementation if opportunities arise.

SW-2 Western Avenue Eastbound Side Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
 SW-3 Western Avenue Westbound Side Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
 SW-6: Strawberry Lane Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
 SW-7: McKown Road Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
 SW-11: Northeast Quadrant Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
 SW-5: Church Road Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*

IS-1: Western Avenue/UAlbany Intersection Improvements *Lead: CDTA*
Note: This position in the sequencing is predicated on the indicated improvements' not being progressed by CDTA through its Multi- Modal Program project.
 IS-2: Western Avenue/McKown Road/Norwood Street Intersection Improvements *Lead: CDTA*

Note: This position in the sequencing is predicated on the indicated improvements' not being progressed by CDTA through its Multi-Modal Program project.

- IS-4: Western Avenue/Fuller Road Intersection Improvements –
Negotiated Access and Median Treatments *Lead: NYSDOT*
- IS-5: Western Avenue/Schoolhouse Road Intersection Improvements *Lead: NYSDOT*
- IS-6: Western Avenue/Church Road Intersection Improvements *Lead: NYSDOT*

- NCD-2: Median on East Leg of Western Avenue/Fuller Road Intersection *Lead: NYSDOT*
- NCD-3: Trailblazer Signage for Local Recreational Opportunities *Lead: Town*
- NCD-1: Reclamation of Western Avenue Pavement
Between Fuller Road Alternate and Crossgates Mall *Lead: NYSDOT*

- TRN-4: Explore Transit Priority Opportunities for Western Avenue Corridor *Lead: CDTA*
Note: Would be pursued through CDTC 2003-2008 Draft TIP Project A435

- TRL-9: Redevelop McKownville Reservoir as a Recreational Destination *Lead: Town*

- OP-4: Fuller Road Alternate Traffic Calming/Gateway Treatments *Lead: NYSDOT*

Longer-Term Prospects

The following projects appear likely to require deferral to the longer term. Barring unanticipated opportunities to advance them in the courses of other activities, it would be expected that they would not be progressed until at least the year 2015.

- SW-4: Crossgates Mall Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Private*
- SW-8: Williams Court Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
- SW-9: Westlyn Court Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
- SW-10: Brookwood Avenue Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*
- SW-12: Mercer Street Sidewalk Improvements *Lead: Town*

- BK-2: Multi-Stage Bike Route Improvement Program, Stage 3 *Lead: Town*

- TRL-2: Western Avenue-Schoolhouse Road Trail Development *Lead: Town*
- TRL-3: Patricia Lane-Westmere Elementary School Trail Development *Lead: Town*
- TRL-4: McKown Road-Abele Park Trail Development *Lead: Town*
- TRL-8: Town Trails Map Development *Lead: Town*

- IS-3: Western Avenue/Parkwood Street/1450 Western Intersection Improvements *Lead: CDTA*
Note: This position in the sequencing is predicated on the indicated improvements' not being progressed by CDTA through its Multi-Modal Program project.
- IS-7: Western Avenue/Crossgates Mall Intersection Improvements *Lead: NYSDOT*

- OP-2: Strategic Midblock Bulbouts on Western Avenue and Fuller Road *Leads: NYSDOT,
Albany County*

Funding Opportunities

Local Resources

Use of local funds has the advantage of generally being the fastest way to progress projects. At the same time, this requires the local implementer to fund projects entirely with its own resources. This may not be a desirable approach for larger-scale projects.

Typically, highway, public works or parks department budgets are used to support transportation projects such as pavement repairs or reconstruction, sidewalk construction and trail or bike path development. Human service agency funds may be used to secure transportation service for agency program clients. Under more aggressive arrangements around the State, highway funds have been used to support transit service, with the logic being that the investment in transit service in essence benefits the highway system by relieving some of the burden on the road system.

From the set of strategies developed in this *Study*, among the primary candidates for pursuit solely with local funding are some of the shorter-length sidewalk replacement or construction projects, signage improvements, and support of specialized transit services (e.g., dial-a-ride services for seniors). In addition, a number of the ordinance-related strategies set forth in this report would likely be progressed through local resources as the necessary development work would be undertaken by Town staff in the courses of their normal duties.

In light of the point raised in the Executive Summary regarding the way in which improvements such as sidewalk construction can yield benefits to both quality of life and economic development, they can be seen as investments in the future of the community which benefit both residents and business owners. As such, one concept raised by the Steering Committee in its discussions was the establishment of a Town fund for sidewalk development accumulated from modest taxes and fees imposed on new developments. Recognizing the Town's past history with impact fees, it is noted that the key to making such a fee basis work would be to establish a clear connection between the fee levies and the in-the-field improvement projects funded through these fees. As it may be difficult for a developer to (for example) reconcile a levy on a development in Fort Hunter with a sidewalk project in McKownville, it may be most appropriate to structure the fund groups such that funds are collected and used within the same neighborhood, based on the Town's most common neighborhood definitions.

Another dimension to the discussion of local resources concerns taxpayer-financed improvements through *special assessment districts*, such as a sidewalk district. While the establishment of such districts could partially defray the Town's expenses related to the replacement or new construction of sidewalks, there are a number of political and policy-related issues which would need to be considered should the establishment of a special assessment district be considered by the Town. Some of the main such issues include the need to identify a

logic for prioritizing these improvements and the time frame to achieve benefit (if improvements in the district are funded solely by the assessments).

Note on Local Resources and Maintenance

It should be recognized that a number of the improvements recommended in this report will introduce new responsibilities for maintenance of public spaces and facilities. As the Town considers whether and when to pursue those improvements falling within its areas of responsibility, potential maintenance-related demands need to be understood, and a commitment to performing this maintenance needs to be made. Failure to do so will lessen both the magnitude of and the length of time during which these benefits will realized.

State Resources

State support for transportation investments comes in four main forms: direct State pursuit of these investments, State assistance to local governments in covering their shares of the costs of transportation-related investments, State non-NYSDOT grant programs in other areas which can provide communities with support for their efforts, and legislative “member items.”

In regard to *direct state pursuit* of transportation projects, it is frequently the case that many or most of the most critical road-based transportation linkages in a community (in McKownville’s, case, including Western Avenue and Fuller Road Alternate) are on State routes. As such, NYSDOT would ordinarily be financially responsible for improvements to these facilities, save for some cases in which the host community looked to do something (such as streetscaping) which was neither within the scope of an existing NYSDOT project nor within the NYSDOT right-of-way for the road in question. That said, the general comment is that opportunities may lie in existing NYSDOT projects and plans to achieve community transportation objectives.

On the matter of *State assistance to local governments*, the two main programs serving this purpose in the transportation arena are the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program System (CHIPS), which provides support for capital improvements to road and bridges with expected life spans of seven to ten years or more, and Marchiselli funding, which covers 75 percent of the local share on federally-funded projects (that is, 75 percent of the required 20 percent local share, meaning that the locality ultimately needs to cover only five (5) percent of the cost of such shared-fund projects). CHIPS tends to be used to support improvements such as pavement rehabilitations (“repaving”) and bridge repairs, while Marchiselli funding tends to be applied to larger pavement and bridge reconstruction projects (that is, projects that are large enough to be federally funded and for which this type of support would be beneficial).

There are also *non-NYSDOT programs* which support transportation improvements or related activities. For example, in the area of safety education, the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) and the New York State Department of Health’s Bureau of Injury Prevention both operate funding programs supporting safety education. Several communities in Albany County have taken advantage of past GTSC programmatic opportunities. These agencies are also sources of accident data for planning and project development efforts. (GTSC: 518-474-3135;

Bureau of Injury Prevention: 518-474-8985) In addition, the New York State Environmental Protection Act, administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), covers projects for such facilities as walking and bicycling trails.

Recognizing the significance of stormwater management issues in the neighborhood, it is worth noting that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Emergency Management Office and other related agencies may be sources of information regarding state (and federal) funding opportunities for stormwater management enhancements which may be able to include pursuit of some of the trail concepts presented in this report.

Finally *legislative member items* can be secured through the area's State Senate or Assembly representatives. The pursuit of member items has positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, they can be secured for relatively short term project implementation (i.e., within the next State Fiscal Year), tend not to require the sorts of detailed applications or project justifications that are typical of transportation funding processes (particularly competitive program opportunities), tend not to require local matches, and can be "pitched" through very localized efforts such as meetings or field visits with a Senator's or Assemblyperson's district office staff. On the negative side, the competition for this sort of support can be quite fierce, the dollar amounts that can be provided tend to be toward the low end of the range for transportation improvements (perhaps \$10,000 or less), the degree to which the opportunity really exists is a function of the political process (e.g., the area representative's majority/minority status in his/her legislative body), and the availability of funds is ultimately a function of the passage of the State budget.

Federal Transportation Funds and Programs

Several transportation funding programs operate under the provisions of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21. TEA-21 is the Federal transportation law which authorizes Federal highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs. These programs cover general transportation, transit, pedestrian and bicycle transportation, pavement and bridges. TEA-21 took effect in October of 1997, and will be in force through September 30, 2003, by which time a new highway law will need to have been passed.

Through the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Town can submit projects for consideration for federal transportation funding under CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP process is both quite competitive from the perspective of quality of project proposals and constrained by available funds and the need to first complete existing projects before funding new ones.

For the 2003-2008 TIP update, the Town submitted a proposal to CDTC for a package of projects developed under this study. At the time of this writing, the proposal was on the draft TIP out for comment (to be voted on by the CDTC Policy Committee in May), with construction projected for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The package consisted of the following projects.

- SW-2: Western Avenue Eastbound Side Sidewalk Improvements (segments between UAlbany and Fuller Road only)
- SW-3: Western Avenue Westbound Side Sidewalk Improvements (segments between UAlbany and Fuller Road only)
- IS-1: Western Avenue/UAlbany Intersection Improvements
- IS-2: Western Avenue/McKown Road/Norwood Street Intersection Improvements
- IS-4: Western Avenue/Fuller Road Intersection Improvements
- NCD-2: Median on East Leg of Western Avenue/Fuller Road Intersection

Other Federal Funds and Programs

Other Federal agencies administer programs with potential application to study area projects, particularly in the area of trail development. As examples, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds and the National Trails Act are managed by OPRHP and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) staff, while stormwater, wastewater and floodplain management efforts supported through the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service may include trail and walkway development. The NYSDEC Region 4 offices in Rotterdam would be the first point of contact for information on these opportunities.

Private Support

Private support for transportation-related improvements tends to be limited to trail, open space or tourism-oriented opportunities. In many cases, this support takes the form of in-kind or permissive support, such as the way in which a number of utility companies around the State have allowed trail development along their rights of way; however, with policy changes implemented by many utilities in the wake of the World Trade Center attack, there may not be the degrees of access to these rights of way in the future.

Another form of private support is financial support for trail development or land acquisition. Charitable foundations such as the J. M. Kaplan Fund (www.jmkfund.org) have provided grants to efforts of these sorts in past years, although the recipients of these grants have tended to be private organizations rather than governments, and the Kaplan Fund has particularly (although not exclusively) targeted more rural areas. That said, a number of the trail development concepts discussed earlier could conceivably be pursued by the Guilderland Pathways Committee (if its official or legal status qualifies it to do so) with foundation funding support.

For both private and public grant support, it would be prudent to periodically contact the New York State Library, as the State Library is a clearinghouse for those libraries in each county which serve as *designated repositories for foundation grant information*, and maintains updated listings of grant opportunities.