

Introduction

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (referred to as the Linkage Program) is designed to fulfill adopted principles and strategies in the Capital District Transportation Committee's official regional transportation plan, "New Visions." Since its first solicitation for candidates in 2000, CDTC has funded 34 planning studies in 21 municipalities, totaling over one million dollars in federal funding along with nearly \$400,000 in local funding support. The Linkage Program is one of the most significant cooperative regional efforts in the nation to reflect, in practice, what representatives of the region's counties, cities, towns and villages and state and local transportation providers have adopted as policy.

Capital District Policy on Transportation and Land Use Development

A strong regional consensus emerged in the mid-1990's that the region's quality of life, mobility and economic vitality is dependent upon improved local land use planning and on better integration of land use development and the transportation system. This regional consensus is reflected in policy first adopted in 1997 and re-affirmed in 2000 and most recently in August 2004.



A majority of CDTC's adopted planning and investment principles – which CDTC members attempt to respect in all of CDTC's actions – reflect the critical nature of efforts to achieve intelligent site and community design integrated with sensitive transportation system design. The core of the Capital District's regional transportation – land use policy is reflected in eleven adopted principles (from CDTC's full set of 25 adopted principles). The policy thrust is that good site and community design *can* help realize the region's potential and that transportation actions *will* play a role. The Linkage Program is intended to convert the promise of sound land use planning into reality. The relevant policy principles behind the program are listed below:

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: DEVELOP THE REGION'S POTENTIAL

Build Upon Our Strengths

- ▶ The transportation system of the Capital District is an important part of the region's attractiveness.
- ▶ Transportation investments will help preserve and enhance the Capital District's existing urban form, infrastructure, and quality of place. The Capital District already has many unique attributes that other regions strive for:
 - ☑ The region is a collection of communities that work together and that possess a livable, community scale.
 - ☑ The region is multi-centered with the most intensive suburban development in the center of the region rather than at the fringe. Suburban and urban areas depend on each other for jobs, housing, and cultural activities.
 - ☑ Traditional transit corridors link urban centers.
 - ☑ The region's modest growth rate is a strength because it affords the time and the opportunity to put in place plans and policies that encourage growth in harmony with the region's objectives.
 - ☑ The region is endowed with a diversity of parks, a relative abundance of open space and a wealth of recreation and tourism attractions.

Use Transportation Investment as a Tool

- ▶ Transit facilities and services can be an essential element of the social, economic and cultural fabric of a metropolitan region if supportive policies and investments are in place.
- ▶ Neighborhood-based local planning efforts are important to the success of an overall regional plan that emphasizes livable communities.

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: LINK TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

Encourage Local Land Use Management

- ▶ Land use planning and management is critical to the protection of transportation system investment.
- ▶ Design of street layout and location of complementary uses can create a pedestrian scale and provide increased accessibility without compromising the attractiveness of development.

Link Transportation Investments to Land Use Planning

- ▶ Transportation investments will encourage residential and commercial development to locate within an Urban Service Area defined for the Capital District.
- ▶ Transportation investments will not encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and will help to preserve rural character.
- ▶ Arterial management guidelines will be flexible enough to deal with the Capital District's various roadway types and the specific land use patterns surrounding them.

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: PLAN AND BUILD FOR ALL MODES

- ▶ CDTC's planning efforts will be comprehensive enough to encompass all modes, including air, water, freight, intercity and local transit, pedestrian and bicycle.
- ▶ 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.

The need for an enhanced local planning program is reflected as a budget element in CDTC's New Visions plan. High quality local planning leading to revitalization of older urban areas, improved streets systems and community structure in suburban areas, and reduced development pressures in outlying areas is one of the critical action items necessary to achieve long-range regional transportation system goals. This has underscored CDTC's commitment to continuing funding support for and further developing the effectiveness of the Linkage Program.

Linkage Program Overview

The primary objectives of the Linkage Program are to:

- Assist local initiatives that integrate land use and transportation decisions through staff or consultant support;
- Ensure local initiatives are compatible with the *New Visions* regional transportation plan principles; and to
- Be responsive to local needs through direct solicitation of candidate activities.

The Linkage Program is for planning assistance only. Capital projects, preliminary engineering or other design work are not eligible activities.

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

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| • Corridor Land Use / Transportation Visioning or Concept Studies | • Transportation Component of a Comprehensive Plan |
| • Access Management Plans | • Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility or System Plans |
| • Site or Building Design Standards | • Cumulative Development Assessments |
| • Market Studies (particularly for urban revitalization) | • Local Highway Safety Plan |
| • Traffic Management/Mitigation and Public-Private Financing Plans | • Truck Access Plan |
| | • Multiple Jurisdiction Plans |
| | • Parking Studies |

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