

Development of the 2012-14 Unified Planning Work Program

The Capital District Transportation Planning Committee (CDTC) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation planning purposes. The CDTC has conducted regional transportation planning for the Capital District Region for nearly 40 years. CDTC has always affirmed the need to conduct transportation planning in a cooperative and intergovernmental, as well as a sound technical manner. All planning has been conducted on an integrated multi-modal basis, with highway, transit, and transportation system management measures all given consideration. Planning has been conducted on a comprehensive basis with consideration given to the wide range of impacts of transportation, and the need to coordinate transportation planning with land use planning. CDTC has emphasized the maintenance of a sound planning data base, since, without an intimate understanding of the current transportation system and of those factors that determine the need for transportation facilities and services of various kinds, sound transportation planning cannot be conducted. These and other principles that form the foundation of CDTC's planning program are described in detail in CDTC's *Continuing Operations Plan 2010*.

One of CDTC's responsibilities is to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as a basis and condition for all FHWA and FTA funding assistance for transportation planning within the four county Capital District region. CDTC has embraced the two-year UPWP concept, moving from an annual to biennial development in 2006.

Development of the 2012-14 UPWP began with a discussion with and solicitation of ideas from CDTC's Planning Committee as its November 2, 2011 meeting. The solicitation for the 2012 Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program will provide several additional tasks for next year's planning program. Specific studies will be chosen by the Planning Committee at its February meeting.

An outline of the 2012-14 UPWP will be presented to the Planning Committee on January 4, 2012 for review. The Planning Committee will be asked to approve the draft program at its February meeting. Policy Board action is scheduled for March 1, 2012.

Key Accomplishments of CDTC's 2010-12 UPWP

- The *New Visions 2035 Plan* was completed and adopted by the Policy Board. The *New Visions 2035 Plan* reaffirms the vision, goals, principles, strategies, actions, and budget contained in the 2030 document through an update extending the Plan to 2035.
- Continued work with CDTA, NYSDOT, and other members and partners in the Region to implement New Visions.
- CDTC staff was heavily involved in the Governor's Capital Region Economic Development Council, attending meetings and workshops and preparing data for the council's work.
- The Capital District remains an ozone non-attainment area. An air quality conformity analysis was prepared for the New Visions Plan maintenance update, extending the analysis horizon to 2035. Approval by the Federal agencies was received in December.

- CDTC's Linkage Program continues to be a national model for land use and transportation planning. New Visions and the Linkage Program were featured as a case study in the FHWA/FTA Livability in Transportation Guidebook. The Planning Committee approved the funding of five new studies for 2011-12 and began contract on five new studies for the 2010-11 program.
- In addition to the Linkage Program, CDTC is working with NYSDOT and others on several other land use and transportation studies including the *I-87/US 9 Integrated Corridor Study*, *I-787 Integrated Corridor Study*, the *Albany Transit Oriented Development Study*, CDTA's *Park and Ride Lot Study*, *TCI / NYSERDA Northeast Regional Electric Vehicle Network Planning Project*, and the impending *Capital Regional Car Share Operations Plan Study*.
- A noteworthy achievement of CDTC's TDM programs is the eighteen vanpools that have been formed to date, eliminating over 1,000,000 vehicles miles traveled in the Capital Region annually.
- The role of CDTC in security planning took on significance in light of the severe impacts of flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene. Both the Planning Committee and Policy Board discussed ways in which CDTC could be a resource for planning for emergencies. This will remain an important task for the next UPWP.
- CDTC has converted the TIP mapping from static maps to interactive, mapping using a user-friendly Google interface.
- CDTC invested a significant effort on the 2010 Census, delineating TAZs in 2011, and will continue to be involved in the sharing of information related to the 2010 Census Urban Area Boundary update. CDRPC provided Census data extraction and analysis services to CDTC.
- CDTC continues to be intensely involved in not only regional safety planning but statewide safety planning issues through their roles in the NYS MPO Highway Safety Working Group.
- Public outreach efforts continue to be a priority at CDTC. The Bicycle Safety Campaign, Capital Coexist has explored new and innovative ways to reach the public (i.e. Radio Disney, Tri-City Valley Cats, Times Union, etc.).
- CDTC is in its ninth year leading Capital District Clean Communities coalition. A formal re-designation process is scheduled for December 15, 2011.
- The biennial survey of non-state federal-aid roads and Albany County-owned roads was completed
- Approved a resolution adopting the findings of CDTA's Washington/Western Bus Rapid Transit Concept Design Study as a refinement to the New Visions Plan. This will allow CDTA to initiate FTA's required Alternatives Analysis process.
- Preparation, presentation, and adoption of the 2011 Coordinated Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. The updated plan specifically addresses outreach to Veterans, consistent with the Veterans Transportation Community Living Initiative.
- Completion of New Visions Guidebook
- Involvement with CDTA on BRT implementation of BusPlus in the Route 5 corridor
- Successful integration or arterial management principles into linkage studies
- Participated in design committees for the Exit 3/4 and Balltown Road TIP projects
- Participation in NYSDOT's Capital Plan process through the New York State MPO Association
- Successful Clean Communities re-designation

Some Considerations in the Development of the 2012-14 UPWP

There are a number of issues that need to play out as a new UPWP is developed: (1) CDTC has agreed to participate in the Cleaner, Greener Communities Program, should the City of Albany's application for this program on behalf of the eight counties in the Capital Region Economic Development Council area be approved; (2) work on the development of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan will need to be incorporated into the new UPWP, although CDTC has roughly three years to complete the plan; (3) the next UPWP should include a significant effort on safety data analysis and planning (the need for consultant services has been identified); (4) allocate CDTC staff time to help CDRPC in the Climate Smart Communities Initiative; and (5) recognize that MPO funding levels and planning emphasis areas are uncertain pending the development of new federal legislation.

For the coming two-year period under CDTC's 2012-14 UPWP

- Initiating and completing a new regional transportation plan, New Visions 2040 Plan
- Development and adoption of a new 2013-18 Transportation Improvement Program
- Implementing new Federal transportation legislation
- Continued effort to integrate safety conscious planning into the regional process
- Revive CDTC's Regional Operations Committee
- Discuss ways in which CDTC could be a resource for planning for emergencies
- Renewed emphasis on environmental justice, ADA compliance, and freight planning
- STEP model refinement that includes development of a mode-choice model that would assist CDTA in BRT planning for the Western/Washington Alternatives Analysis
- Continued involvement in public transportation planning, including support of CDTA's update of their Transit Development Plan
- Advance, expand, and provide continued support for CDTC's Capital Coexist bicycle education campaign
- Continued discussion with NYSDOT on implementing FHWA's Every Day Counts Initiative, especially with linking NEPA with the planning process
- Participate in FHWA-sponsored training to increase understanding of freight issues
- Additional data collection efforts to help support performance measure development
- Enhance CDTC's Environmental planning capacity
- Continue the lead in NYSAMPO working groups
- Continue to provide leadership in USDOE Clean Communities Program
- Continue to collect and evaluate highway condition data

Detailed Descriptions of Major UPWP Tasks

New Visions 2040 Plan

Fifteen years ago, CDTC issued its first New Visions Plan and presented a regional consensus about the future of the Capital District. The New Visions 2035 Plan, the latest update adopted in September 2011, is called New Visions for a Quality Region. The 2035 Plan reaffirms the CDTC's principles, strategies and actions while broadening the scope of the original plan to include more regional land use and development issues.

As we approach 2015, the horizon year for the original plan, we have an opportunity to pursue another comprehensive update of the plan, with a new horizon year of 2040. Some of the topics suggested for consideration in New Visions 2040 include:

- **Financial Plan:** As CDTC pursues the New Visions 2040 plan, it will be appropriate to fully revisit its financial plan. In addition to confirming or adjusting the basic structure of the financial plan and CDTC's adopted finance-related principles, estimates for the annual average financial budget and anticipated resources will require new values.
- **Incorporating Complete Streets Treatments into Projects:** Working with NYSDOT partners and other project implementers specific policies, strategies and actions needed to improve and implement the integrated design process will be pursued.
- **Sustainable Communities:** In 2011, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission submitted a grant application to the US Housing and Urban Development agency or HUD for development of a Capital District Sustainable Communities Plan to build off the policies of the existing New Visions Transportation Plan, particularly related to its land use/smart growth strategies, and also including a broader set and deeper treatment of additional issue areas such as affordable housing, workforce development, homelessness and the local food supply. While the grant was not awarded in this recent round of funding, there are aspects of the proposal that can be explored further and potentially incorporated into New Visions 2040 plan development.
- **Highway and Bridges Condition Inventories and Asset Management:** Consideration should also be given to developing a comprehensive asset management plan that includes pavement, bridge, culvert, guiderail, traffic signal, transit and “green” assets. A comprehensive asset management plan would be particularly valuable in refining the financial plan for preservation of the whole system.
- **Transit Funding:** In recent years, budget constraints have slowed implementation of service improvements and threaten the long term sustainability of operations for improved service, even in the fact of increasing ridership. If resources remain significantly restrained for transit, especially for operations, the 2040 Plan update will need to consider implications for long term transit system goals. Potential actions to address funding shortfalls should be considered. Additional revenue sources may need to be explored, including local revenues such as a sales tax increase.
- **Congestion Management:** The 2040 Plan update will include a reassessment of major projects, congestion management capacity projects, and economic development/community compatibility capacity projects for status and priority.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding:** The Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force has indicated the desire to increase the New Visions Plan funding commitment for bicycle/pedestrian improvement projects. This issue can be further explored in the 2040 Plan update process.
- **Safety Initiatives:** CDTC will also continue to make progress on its safety initiatives, further integrating safety into the planning process and will continue to work with NYSDOT on identifying safety projects for the use of Highway Safety Improvement Program funds on important local system locations/programs.

The first year of the New Vision 2040 Plan development will focus on:

- Refine demographic forecasts based on the 2010 Census
- Review and refine performance measures, including potential performance measures for livability, housing-transportation affordability and safety.

- Assess implementation and creative completion of major projects such as Exit 3/4, Balltown Road, and others
- Examine further CDTC options for climate change planning
- Update the priority networks for transit, bicycle and pedestrian, goods movement, arterial access management, and ITS, including data refinement and updates.
- Update the CDTC STEP Model especially for transit and related performance measures
- Consider updating the alternative growth forecasts completed in 2007.
- Explore and pursue opportunities to collaborate with the business community for implementation of the New Visions Plan and the Capital Region Economic Development Council Strategic Plan.

After the first year, CDTC will be in a position to assess the direction of the expected federal transportation reauthorization act. Based on federal and State policy guidance and the results of the above work efforts, CDTC will engage the public and stakeholders in a broad and comprehensive dialogue about the options for developing a New Visions 2040 Plan that will build on the progress already made and pursue further opportunities.

Safety Analysis and Planning

CDTC will work collaboratively with NYSDOT and other state, regional and local safety partners on implementing the NYS Strategic Highway Safety Plan as well as CDTC's integrated approach to safety planning which blends community design with engineering. Education and enforcement efforts will also be a part of CDTC's planning and public outreach efforts. Safe accommodation of all modes of travel on all public roads is central to CDTC's safety planning work.

For 2012-14, CDTC will create a static regional GIS crash database to be used in the initial identification of high crash locations off the state highway system and to identify system level safety issues, if any, that either compliment or may be different than current statewide priorities (pedestrian and lane departure crashes). CDRPC staff will assist CDTC in the analysis of crash data on a regional scale and will develop appropriate mapping of key regional safety issues. The NYSAMPO Safety Assessment process will be used to identify potential low cost improvements to address high crash locations off the state highway system.

Further coordination with NYSDOT on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) will be undertaken including the development of a documentation process for projects off the state highway system. HSIP guidelines and the availability of more detailed crash data may require an update of CDTC's safety benefit calculation procedures for proposed TIP projects as well as TIP programming policies.

CDTC will establish a Safety Working Group to coordinate CDTC's safety planning activities with regional safety partners. The group will serve as a regional forum on transportation safety issues and will include representatives from state and local governments as well as enforcement, education and emergency service stakeholders.

CDTC will also continue its involvement in the statewide NYSAMPO Safety Working Group. Staff time will be devoted to building the safety planning capacity of the NYSMPO's, working with NYSDOT and a wide variety of state safety partners on improving crash data systems in NYS, and participating in the update of the NYS HSIP Manual, Strategic Highway Safety Plan and Traffic Records Strategic Plan.

Public Transit Planning

CDTC staff has actively supported CDTA in exploring alternative and innovative ways of implementing New Visions transit-related recommendations. Over the past two years, CDTC has worked with the Authority and its consultants on several TIP-related projects including NY 5 BRT implementation, Washington/Western BRT Implementation, and the Schenectady AMTRAK Station Redevelopment. In addition, CDTC has worked with CDTA and NYSDOT to produce an assessment of the current status, future demand, and policy recommendations for park-and-ride facility development in the region. CDTC also participated in CDTA's route restructuring effort.

For the coming year, CDTA will be updating its Transit Development Program, and is looking for CDTC technical and financial support for this significant effort. The effort will include an update to the transit propensity index. CDTC will also work with the Authority on developing an approach to the traffic/mode choice modeling required for the Alternatives Analysis for the Washington/Western BRT (likely to require consultant assistance).

Continued CDRPC Support

CDTC has provided pass-through funds to CDRPC to help in certain data extraction and analysis work, which remains a critical element in CDTC's planning work program. CDRPC has been actively involved with Linkage studies since 2005. For 2012-14, the Commission will provide continuing technical support and input for the program, including serving on advisory committees and the Linkage Submission Review Committee. CDRPC staff has been a strong voice in promoting the smart growth and sustainability elements of CDTC's quality region initiative, which address the land use elements of the New Visions 2035 Plan.

CDRPC will continue to be the primary source for Census data extraction and analysis. The Commission staff will prepare customized data sets, including population, employment, and household projections by minor civil division and traffic analysis zone.

CDRPC will continue to process, manipulate, and map information specific to CDTC needs. The Commission will continue to work with others to coordinate data sharing and to prepare customized mapping to meet the needs of CDTC planning efforts. GIS mapping tasks will also include looking at regional growth trends, assisting CDTC in addressing environmental justice requirements, mapping and analyzing crash data, and additional mapping services as needed. In addition, CDRPC will work with CDTA and CDTC to update the transit propensity index as part of the CDTA Transit Development Program update.

CDRPC will continue to make presentations on regional growth issues and to assist communities in understanding, planning, and implementing sustainable development elements of New Visions.

Data Collection and Development

Data collection to keep CDTC's data systems current remains a critical element of CDTC's work program. This continuing project collects and processes travel data for federal-aid street and highway system. Data collected provides input to VMT forecasting, the maintenance of the

Congestion Management Process, the STEP model calibration and validation, individual project level analysis; and is vital to project development work that addresses highway deficiencies and proposed mitigation actions.

CDTC has made a renewed commitment through New Visions 2035 to facilitate data collection. Data collection over the last two years has been extensive. With the help of Graduate Student interns, the staff has compiled 70 traffic and pedestrian counts at 60 intersections; completed 20 trip generation studies; conducted five speed/delay studies; documented traffic observations at twelve locations; and completed land use inventories in several linkage corridors. Staff also continued to collect information on pedestrian and bicycle features and usage on the region's bike/ped priority network. The use of graduate students has proven to be a very cost-effective way of collecting data and will continue for the foreseeable future. All of the data that CDTC collects is organized and maintained for access by municipalities, public and non-profit agencies and groups, consultants, and other interested parties.

CDTC, together with the other 12 New York MPOs, is participating in a Data Collaboration Scan sponsored by NYSDOT. The purpose of the scan is to determine how New York's MPOs and NYSDOT (1) can share data already collected, and (2) use data collection resources more efficiently to avoid duplication.

CDTC expects data needs to remain extensive with the passage of new transportation legislation. It is expected that the new bill will require an outcome-driven planning approach that tracks transportation system performance. Performance-based planning may require CDTC to accelerate data collection efforts. CDTC will explore the use of consultants to supplement the intern-based program.

Building Freight Planning Capacity

The region's economic health depends on a transportation system that provides for reliable and timely goods movement. Freight movement is an important planning factor in the region. Evidence of the importance attached to freight can be found in New Visions 2035, CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program, and many other aspects of CDTC's work (freight access issues do occasionally arise in linkage studies). When active, CDTC's Goods Movement Task Force sustained meaningful outreach to the local freight community, building awareness and expertise among planners and the general public. Freight shipments are growing steadily in the region, especially in the Quebec/New York corridor, at the Albany International Airport, and at the Port of Albany.

There is every indication that the new transportation bill will place an emphasis on freight movement. It seems appropriate, therefore, to take freight planning to the next level. Working with CDRPC, NYSDOT, and other stakeholders, CDTC will take the first steps toward developing a goods movement strategy that would help identify needed improvements in the Capital District. In order to build CDTC's freight planning capacity, staff will avail itself of training opportunities as they are made available.

Budget

The full UPWP agenda continues to be ambitious and demanding. CDTC's ability to pursue the proposed agenda is a result of the Administrative & Finance Standing Subcommittee's confidence

in the staffs management and technical abilities, their stewardship of CDTC's financial resources and contractual commitments, and the A&F's commitment to a stable staffing structure. The budget for the 2012-14 UPWP will grow slightly to reflect the increased challenges that the staff is being asked to meet. The budget will reflect a commitment of resources for data collection and other specialized activity that is expected under the new Federal transportation legislation. In the absence of a new federal bill, FHWA PL and FTA MPP funds for next year have been estimated by NYSDOT. Those estimates suggest a slight increase in planning funds for 2012-13.

A proposed budget, together with expanded task descriptions, will be provided in a draft of the full 2012-14 UPWP for Planning Committee review in February and Policy Board action in March.