

**NEW VISIONS
FOR
CAPITAL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION**

NEW VISIONS 2035 PLAN UPDATE

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
DRAFT FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW
MAY 2011**

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RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE NEW VISIONS 2035 PLAN UPDATE

RESOLUTION 11 - ____

WHEREAS, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation planning and programming in the metropolitan area of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties, containing the Albany and Saratoga Springs urbanized areas and areas expected to become urbanized over the next twenty years; and

WHEREAS, the CDTC is responsible for developing and adopting a regional transportation plan for the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the CDTC adopted the New Visions 2030 Plan in October 2007; and

WHEREAS, CDTC has continued to implement the plan, refine its content and seek public involvement in assessing long-range regional transportation strategy; and

WHEREAS, CDTC's continued work with CDTA, NYSDOT other members and other partners in the region has reconfirmed the merit of the New Visions principles and policies; and

WHEREAS, CDTC has continually assessed the implementation success, budget needs, resource levels, travel forecasts and community attitudes toward New Visions concepts; and

WHEREAS, this review allows CDTC to reaffirm the vision, goals, objectives, principles, strategies, actions and budget contained in the *New Visions 2030* document through an update extending the plan to 2035; and

WHEREAS, CDTC has completed its air quality conformity assessment for 2035 and has circulated the draft 2035 amendment for public review for over 60 days, and every comment has received a response; and

WHEREAS, the amended New Visions Plan has been determined by the New York Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to satisfy the requirements of the Safe and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); and

WHEREAS, CDTC's Planning Committee, through action at its _____ meeting recommends approval of the *New Visions 2035 Plan Update* as CDTC's regional transportation plan update;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the CDTC approves the *New Visions 2035 Plan Update*, as CDTC's regional transportation plan update.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary is directed to transmit this action to appropriate state and federal agencies and that the staff is directed to publish and disseminate copies of the final report to CDTC participants, appropriate agencies, and other interested parties.

John T. McDonald.
Chairman, Capital District Transportation Committee

Date

OVERVIEW

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the designated “Metropolitan Planning Organization” for a defined metropolitan area that includes the Albany and Saratoga Springs urbanized areas.¹ A key responsibility of every MPO is the maintenance of a long-range regional transportation plan. All federally-funded or federally-approved transportation actions such as highway or transit capital projects must derive from the regional plan.

After four years of extensive outreach and detailed technical analysis, CDTC adopted its landmark *New Visions for a Quality Region (2030)* plan in October 2007. The plan reaffirmed a set of principles to guide transportation planning and investment in the region for coming years. It also articulated a series of short-range and long-range strategies and actions to help achieve broad regional goals, and provided an innovative budget approach to ensure implementation of the plan. The Plan now needs to be updated to a 2035 horizon year.

In developing the 2030 Plan, CDTC was in a good position to begin to explore fundamental questions about the future of the region – its economic prospects, settlement patterns, social equity and sustainability. This exploration required extensive engagement with individuals, groups and affected parties generally outside the routine MPO structure. This effort led to a New Visions 2030 plan that went beyond previous principles, strategies and actions to more fully ensure that the future of the Capital District will be one in which the transportation system appropriately supports and helps foster economic health, environmental stewardship and a high quality of life.

Development of the New Visions 2030 plan was based on extensive engagement with interested parties through CDTC task forces and working groups, and public summits, forums and workshops by other regional groups. This technical and public outreach effort reaffirmed CDTC’s principles, strategies and actions while leading to a broadening of the scope of the plan to include more regional land

use and development issues.

Over the past year, CDTC has assessed the 2030 plan against recent events and current circumstances. The assessment confirms the continuing validity of the plan. CDTC is now formally endorsing the New Visions 2035 Plan Update as a reaffirmation of the 2030 plan without a wholesale re-creation of the plan. Endorsing the update satisfies federal requirements that the plan’s official status remain “fresh” and that the plan’s horizon remain sufficiently long while allowing CDTC to focus its substantive effort on the issues identified in the New Visions 2030 effort.

“New Visions... represents the collective position of the Capital Region and will have important impacts on regional planning and development. It is a framework that describes how to meet the region’s transportation needs in a cost-effective manner while promoting safety, enhancing the environment, building strong communities and improving the overall quality of life.

“The New Visions plan advocates urban investment, concentrated development patterns and smart growth—elements that contribute to economic, educational, social, cultural and recreational opportunities, and that provide safe neighborhood environments and housing choices for all.”

John T. McDonald, III, Mayor, City of Cohoes
Chairman, CDTC

¹ The “metropolitan area boundary” for CDTC’s responsibilities has been defined as the entire four-county Capital District of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties, minus the town of Moreau which is covered by the Adirondack – Glens Falls Transportation Council. The boundary includes all of the existing urbanized area as well as any area expected to become urbanized over the next 20 years. CDTC is responsible for transportation planning and programming throughout the urban and rural portions of the defined area.

CAPITAL DISTRICT CONTEXT

Our region is presented with the opportunity for high quality growth, prosperity with good paying jobs, and economic vitality.

The choice is before us. Do we want to pursue prosperity in a way that allows our children to meet their needs in the future? Are we, as a region, willing to protect our walkable communities and quality spaces while creating new ones? Can we commit to making the *entire* Capital District a vibrant place to live and work for *all* its residents? Is there a commitment to making the kind of transportation investment that has not been seen in over a generation?

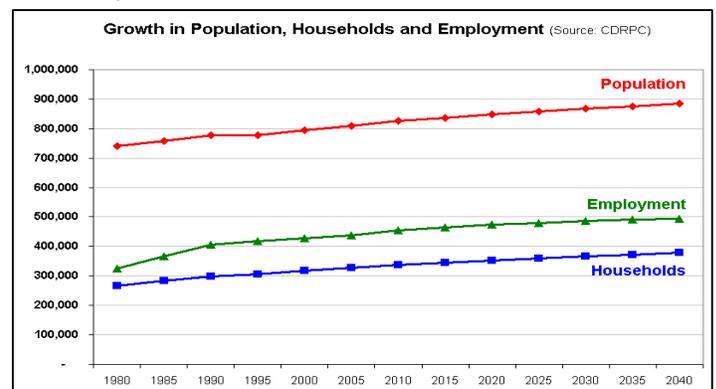
The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) conducted an in depth analysis of the demographic distributions and land use patterns for four scenarios to test the impacts of growth:

- **Status Quo Trend:** CDRPC's baseline forecast (9% growth in population, 15% growth in households by 2030, current development patterns continuing); this is the official Plan forecast;
- **Concentrated Growth:** the baseline growth rate with more concentrated development patterns resulting from urban reinvestment and suburban planning;
- **Trend Hyper-Growth:** hyper-growth (29% population growth and 35% household growth by 2030), with status quo trend patterns of dispersed development;
- **Concentrated Hyper-Growth:** hyper-growth occurring in a concentrated pattern resulting from more urban reinvestment and suburban planning.

Under any growth scenario, it was found that the benefits of concentrated development patterns are significant for the transportation system and for regional quality of life. The New Visions Plan supports and encourages concentrated development in the Capital District. The urgency for coordinated, high quality planning is even greater under a scenario of high growth. This urgency will be necessary because the impacts of a high growth scenario with dispersed development patterns would threaten to make the region's quality of life unsustainable.

Updating the Context through 2035

The Plan needs to be updated to include a new horizon year for future forecasts. CDTC has selected 2035 as the new horizon year. Forecasts of population, households and employment for 2035 were prepared by CDRPC. Adjustments were made at the county level to reflect the new 2010 Census population numbers. CDRPC demographic forecasts through 2035 are shown in Figure below for the Status Quo Trend Scenario. CDTC's STEP Model was used to forecast values for 2035 for the New Visions performance measures.



The basic 2010 Census population values have proved to be remarkably consistent with forecasts prepared by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) and used by CDTC in the 2030 plan.

Population, households, and employment are forecast to grow modestly between 2030 and 2035; population and employment are forecast to grow by 1.0 %, and employment is forecast to grow by 1.6 % over the five year period (see Figures 1 through 4). Because the growth between 2030 and 2035 is modest, the analysis of future alternatives using 2030 forecasts is still valuable, and growth to 2035 does not change any of the future growth scenario conclusions. Therefore, CDTC performance measures were updated to 2035, and qualitative results for the 2030 growth scenarios are also shown. See Appendix C.

In conclusion, updated information reaffirms the validity of CDTC's understanding of the land use, demographic and travel behavioral context that provided the foundation for the New Visions 2030 Plan.

CONTINUING THE COMMITMENT TO A QUALITY REGION

A bold outlook for the Capital Region

New Visions asks everyone to look at the region's transportation planning in a new way— to examine our strengths, evaluate our existing resources and imagine implementing big initiatives. This is not a static plan, but a living document whose regional transportation policy recommendations **will require continued strong public support and visionary leadership in order for the region to benefit.**

Reaching consensus about what we want

New Visions reflects a regional consensus of residents, businesses, state and local government representatives and transportation providers to use transportation and public policy to:

- ✦ Promote sustainable economic growth with good-paying jobs
- ✦ Revitalize urban areas
- ✦ Help build community structure in growing suburbs
- ✦ Preserve open space and agricultural land
- ✦ Make communities more walkable and livable
- ✦ Provide meaningful transit options
- ✦ Connect all residents with job opportunities
- ✦ Manage increasing traffic congestion and maintain reasonable mobility on the highway system
- ✦ Encourage land use and transportation planning

Are we there yet?

The Capital District is a region at a critical crossroads. Decisions about where to locate vital services, such as water, sewer and transportation directly affect regional growth—and future economic vitality. The New Visions 2035 Plan Update continues the commitment to a Quality Region.

What makes a quality region?

A quality region considers health, the economy, and the environment within an overall framework of land use planning and transportation policies. Creating and sustaining a quality region in the Capital District is central to the direction of New Visions toward urban investment, concentrated development patterns, and smart economic growth.

People agree that a quality region:

- ✦ Develops and sustains healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities that function interdependently and readily adapt to change
 - ✦ Creates economic, educational, social, cultural and recreational opportunities
 - ✦ Provides safe neighborhood environments and housing choices for all
 - ✦ Protects sensitive environmental resources
- Fosters community identity and "a sense of place" in all parts of the region

New Visions principles follow four themes:

- ✦ **Preserve and manage** the existing investment in the region's transportation system.
- ✦ **Develop the region's potential** to grow into a uniquely attractive, vibrant, and diverse metropolitan area.
- ✦ **Link transportation and land use** planning to meet the Plan's goals for urban investment, concentrated development patterns, and smart economic growth.
- ✦ **Plan and build for all modes** of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, cars, and trucks.

"Encouraging concentrated growth is a long-term process that demands bold leadership and regional cooperation. The Big Ticket Initiatives are proven methods for guiding growth and creating a more connected region."

--Center for Economic Growth report on Alternative Futures for the Capital Region

New Visions Addresses Issues That Affect Everyone

Transportation Safety

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

Transit Service

New Visions incorporates CDTA's Transit Development Plan, which will improve and grow a variety of transit services for the Capital District, increasing mobility and supporting economic development and smart regional growth. One example is CDTC's investment in the BusPlus system on the Route 5 corridor.

Highways and Bridges

New Visions makes a strong commitment to keeping the region's highway and bridge system in good condition, providing \$3.4 billion for highway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and design and \$1.8 billion in bridge maintenance, repair, and replacement by 2030.

Traffic Congestion

New Visions explores ways to manage congestion, by using incident and traffic information technology to ease daily commutes. The Plan also encourages support for more transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel, which reduces vehicle traffic.

Arterial Management

New Visions endorses corridor transportation plans that call for a well-designed network of connected streets featuring pedestrian and bicycle treatments and transit access.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

New Visions encourages development that incorporates bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into highway construction as well as city, village, and town plans and provides for recreational opportunities through creation of bike/hike trails.

Environmental Quality

New Visions supports energy conservation and air quality in the region by advocating sustainable development patterns and site design, ur-

ban reinvestment, and community-based land use planning, along with transit, bicycle, and pedestrian investments and strong participation in the Clean Cities program.

Local Communities

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

Economic Development

New Visions articulates regional economic development needs and the transportation investment needed to support sustainable regional economic growth.

Freight Movement

New Visions advocates congestion management and infrastructure investments that will support the movement of goods throughout the Capital District.

Public Participation

New Visions seeks public participation in the planning process. Collaborating in the development of the 2030 Plan were the Quality Region Task Force, five working groups, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, the Goods Movement Task Force, and the Finance Task Force as well as public involvement in over 70 Linkage Studies at the local level. CDTC continues to reach out for public involvement at the community and regional levels.

Security

New Visions follows the lead of NYSDOT and CDTA with security-related issues in transportation planning. CDTC provides a forum for operational discussions related to the safety and security of the Capital District transportation system.

Big Ticket Initiatives

The New Visions 2035 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.

The big ticket initiatives represent an investment tool that will help manage growth in a way that will sustain the Capital District as a quality region. Investments in the big ticket initiatives can catalyze a more concentrated development pattern under any growth scenario. The caveat is that the big ticket initiatives are currently unfunded, and by themselves will not induce high growth.

The Big Ticket Initiatives include:

- Regional Greenway Program
- Riverfront Access and Urban Development Program
- Street Reconstruction and Reconfiguration
- Roadway Widening and Connections Program
- Suburban Town Center Development
- Bus Service Expansion, BRT Program with Transit Oriented Development
- Guideway Transit System with Transit-Oriented Development
- Managed Lane Program
- Highway Noise Program
- Demand Management Program
- Clean, Efficient Vehicle Program Intelligent Traffic Management Program
- Video Surveillance and Enforcement Program
- Comprehensive Traffic Safety program

WHAT HAS OCCURRED SINCE ADOPTION OF THE 2030 PLAN?

Since the adoption of the New Visions 2030 Plan in October 2007, there have been a number of significant accomplishments. These accomplishments are described in detail in Appendix C, along with changing circumstances that need to be reviewed in updating the Plan. Included in this section is a brief review of accomplishments as well as changing circumstances.

Financial Plan

Financial circumstances and future prospects have experienced significant – and mixed – changes over the past three years

Negative Factors:

- ⇒ State funding declining- the majority of dedicated state funding goes to debt service
- ⇒ Federal funding legislation surviving on short term extensions
- ⇒ Operating funds for CDTA have been reduced in the past two years for the first time in memory
- ⇒ Pavement and bridge conditions have not kept pace

Positive Factors:

- ⇒ Construction cost inflation is slowing
- ⇒ The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided an unanticipated “shot in the arm” to transportation capital finances, pumping approximately \$80 M of federal funding into CDTC highway, transit and rail projects above and beyond anticipated TIP funding.
- ⇒ NYSDOT plans to rehab the Patroon Island Bridge (I-90 over the Hudson)-What could have been a \$300 M project was reduced to a \$100 M rehab with a 30+year life due to innovative design driven by budget considerations
- ⇒ Budget concerns have not led to the abandonment of multi-modalism in the Capital District. CDTA rolled out its NY 5 BRT service in April 2011 and remains committed to implementation of the full set of BRT elements; high speed rail initiatives progress;

and NYSDOT and other implementers continue to expand the pedestrian network, build roundabouts for safety and air quality benefits; and communities continue to refine integrated local plans and ordinances.

- ⇒ Big ticket initiatives are still supported
- ⇒ Federal and state discussions of funding needs continue

Conclusions

Events since adoption of the New Visions 2030 plan are consistent with the range of funding scenarios anticipated for the 2005-2030 period. Nothing that has occurred is sufficient cause for abandoning the reasonable, modest, balanced New Vision plan or the assumption that – through peaks and valleys, fits and starts – federal, state and local legislation will help meet the financial requirements of the plan. State funding is tight; stimulus funding was a windfall. Legislation has not been passed, but the desire to find adequate funding is real. This story is consistent with the budget assumptions of the New Visions 2030 plan. *The New Visions 2035 plan thus does not require a revision to the long-term budget plan, nor an adjustment to estimates of budget requirements for each project category.*

Quality Region/Land Use/Integrated Design

Six complete street projects and 14 roundabout projects have been completed or are underway (see Appendix C)

The CDTC Linkage Planning Program has been used to complete a significant number of land use/transportation community planning studies since the New Visions 2030 Plan was approved. These studies represent partnerships with local communities to implement the New Visions Plan. Linkage studies completed or underway since 2007 include the following:

- ⇒ Albany (City) Bicycle Master Plan
- ⇒ Altamont Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan
- ⇒ Bethlehem Delaware Avenue Hamlet Enhancement Study
- ⇒ Bethlehem Route 9W corridor Study
- ⇒ Broadway (Village of Menands) Transportation, Access and Land Use Study
- ⇒ Clifton Park Town Center Plan
- ⇒ Clifton Park/Halfmoon Exit 9 Land Use and Transportation Plan
- ⇒ Cohoes Van Schaick Island Transportation and Revitalization Plan
- ⇒ Guilderland Westmere Corridor Study
- ⇒ Guilderland/Princetown Land Use and Transportation Study
- ⇒ Mechanicville Central Corridors Linkage Study
- ⇒ Neighborhood Master Plan for the Hamlet of Guilderland Center (Town of Guilderland)
- ⇒ New Scotland Hamlet Area Master Plan (Town of New Scotland)
- ⇒ North Swan Street Multimodal Accessibility Study (City of Albany)
- ⇒ Railroad Avenue Corridor Study (Albany County/Towns of Colonie and Guilderland)
- ⇒ Rotterdam Five Corners Land Use and Transportation Study

- ⇒ Rotterdam NY 7 & NY 146 Land Use and Transportation Study
- ⇒ Rotterdam NYS Thruway Exit 26 & I-890 Land Use and Transportation Study
- ⇒ Route 32 Redevelopment Plan (City of Watervliet/Town of Colonie/ Village of Menands)
- ⇒ Sand Lake Hamlet Linkage Study
- ⇒ Schaghticoke Route 40 Corridor Study
- ⇒ Schenectady (City) Route 5 Transit Gateway Study
- ⇒ Schenectady (City) Route 5 Transit Oriented, Mixed Use Catalyst Project Study
- ⇒ Scotia Waterfront Concept Study
- ⇒ Wilton Exit 16 Linkage Study

The New Visions Plan was reaffirmed by the US-DOT livability agenda

CDTC has been recognized in four national case studies on incorporating livability into transportation planning and was awarded the 2010 Transportation Planning Excellence Award (TEPA) by FTA/FHWA/APA for the Linkage Program.

The NYS Smart Growth and Public Infrastructure Priority Act of 2010 is consistent with the New Visions Plan emphasis on smart growth.

Infrastructure

Funding: The majority of federal funding in the Capital District is spent on the preservation of roads and bridges. Over the last five years, more than \$446 million (federal, state, and local) has been invested in the region's (federal-aid eligible) roads and bridges, including resurfacing, rehabilitation or reconstruction of about 300 lane-miles of pavement and repair or reconstruction of 47 bridges. Notable bridge projects include \$58M for the Batchellerville Bridge in Saratoga County and over \$40M for the Exit 6 Bridge over I-87 in Albany County. However, significant growth in funding levels in real terms has not occurred.

Maintenance Strategies: Given the atmosphere of a shortage of funding, the strategy to perform the lesser expensive and short lasting repairs continues to be in effect for most roads and bridges. This maximizes the pavement condition benefit of funds at least in the short term.

Road & Highway Condition: As shown in Appendix C, federal-aid roads held their own between 2005 and 2009; at the risk of overstating subtle trends, the data indicate that slight declines in locally-owned federal-aid pavement conditions are more than balanced by modest improvement in overall state pavement conditions. While funding constraints have not caused noticeable decline in pavement conditions, little progress has been made toward the New Visions 2030 goal of significant reconstruction of the major highway system – including an expressway system that will range from 50 to 85 years of age by 2035. Additionally, financial “triage” has prevented the state and others from programming even necessary work on a number of roads in poor or low-fair condition; as a result, pavement conditions on state-owned arterials on the NHS system appear to be more similar to those on locally-owned arterials than to conditions on the Interstate system.

Bridge Condition: CDTC staff reviewed bridge condition by ownership and compared current known conditions to the conditions at the time of the New Visions 2030 update and the goals of the 2030 plan. Overall, conditions worsened somewhat, consistent with forecasts developed in the 2030 plan update, giving back some of the gains achieved in prior years towards the long-term bridge condition goals of the plan. Since 2006, the number of deficient bridges increased from 30 percent to 34 percent of all bridges. (See Appendix C).

Transit Conditions: CDTA's capital investment, on the whole, has kept pace with that of the New Visions 2030 plan. While capital budget gaps continue (projects on the TIP that seek or require additional capital funds), CDTA has succeeded with its transition to a program of routine fleet replacements and has made inroads with both vehicles and station improvements for BRT. Constraints and reductions in operating resources continue to be an issue constraining service improvements.

Major capital investment at the Rensselaer rail station, Saratoga Springs rail station and the Albany International Airport were complete prior to adoption of the New Visions 2030 plan. Investment in these facilities, particularly the airport, has continued.

Plans for rehabilitation or reconstruction of the Schenectady rail station are in place with partial funding in hand, and double-tracking and Livingston Avenue bridge rehabilitation has secured ARRA funding.

The Port of Albany's wharf improvements are well underway, in part due to CDTC's support for the use of ARRA highway funding there – the only MPO in the state to offer such support for port projects.

Transit

Bus Rapid Transit (BusPlus) on Route 5 opened in April 2011. This represents a significant accomplishment of the New Visions Plan.

Ridership on CDTA routes rose 22% as people faced \$4.00 per gallon fuel prices in 2008. There were 250,000 more boardings in April 2008 than in April 2007. Most new riders had cars but couldn't afford the gas prices.

Despite this trend in ridership, CDTA was forced to increase fares from \$1.00 to \$1.50 in April 2009. In 2008, the Capital District North/South Corridors Key Travel Market Assessment Study was commissioned by the High Speed Rail Task Force and CDTA. This study, completed in early 2009, looked at existing and potential future transit travel markets along the north/south corridors throughout

Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties.

Route restructuring has been taking place county by county, with revisions to the Saratoga Springs routes occurring first. Ridership nearly quadrupled since that route restructuring took place. More recently, refinement of the Transit Development Plan for Schenectady was completed, and an effort to refine the TDP for Albany was initiated. Ridership has increased on Schenectady routes since restructuring. The Albany restructuring should be complete by the end of 2011.

The City of Albany is working with CDTA on a Transit Oriented Development Overlay/Zoning Ordinance Amendment & Guidebook.

Congestion Management

The Hudson River Crossing Study was completed in 2008. The study evaluated traffic demand and operations for river crossings and made recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle facilities across the Hudson River. The study recommended that capacity should not be increased on the Patroon Island Bridge, which supported the NYSDOT decision to rehabilitate the bridge rather than replace the bridge.

The Route 5 Arterial Management Study was completed. A key set of products resulting from this study were designed to provide easy to understand, transferable tools for local development review boards in requiring access management at the site plan and broader corridor level.

The Northway Integrated Management (ICM) Study was initiated.

Exit 6 of the Northway was reconstructed as a single point urban interchange (SPUI), resulting in a significant improvement in traffic operations at the interchange. Pedestrian and bicycle access was significantly improved.

The CDTC Regional Operations Committee developed a proposal for a regional operations initiative which would provide technical traffic engineering and corridor planning services for municipalities supportive of maintaining traffic signal systems and other operations. This regional initiative has not yet been funded by CDTC due to limited resources.

The City of Albany in partnership with NYSDOT has requested CDTC to conduct a planning study for the I-787 Corridor.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Capital Coexist: In April 2010, CDTC launched a localized bicycle education campaign, *Capital Coexist* (<http://www.capitalcoexist.org>).

Regional Bike Rack Program: CDTC staff worked closely with CDTA to develop the first regional Bike Rack Program. The 2010 program was a success with more than 300 new bike racks being distributed. The 2011 program is underway using \$50,000 in TDM funds.

NYS Pedestrian Action Plan/Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee: CDTC staff has played a major role in representing the NYSMPO Association on a committee looking to develop a statewide Pedestrian Action Plan. This Plan has been funded through the Governors' Traffic Safety Committee and includes a wide array of stakeholders. Staff has also represented the MPO Association on the NYSDOT Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Linkage Planning Studies: The overwhelming majority of Linkage Program planning projects undertaken by CDTC with regional and community partners completed since 2007 consider bicycle and pedestrian issues, needs and potential improvements in development of their conceptual improvement plans. Some notable projects have included: the *Altamont Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* and the *City of Albany Bicycle Master Plan*.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force: The Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force continued to meet on a monthly basis, providing technical and policy suggestions to the Planning Committee and Policy Board.

Since New Visions 2030 was adopted, the Capital Region received funding for four Transportation En-

hancement projects (2008).

CDTC continued its support of the Spot Improvement Program by increasing funding availability during the 2010-2015 TIP update to \$250,000 per year. The Spot Improvement Program funded a large variety of small-scale bicycle and pedestrian projects. In 2008, six projects were funded with continued emphasis on 'filling gaps' while maintaining geographic balance.

The Safe Routes to School Program provided an excellent opportunity for municipal/school district partnerships to be created to improve the bicycle and pedestrian travel environment. In the first round, six projects were awarded funding in NYS-DOT Region 1.

CDTC is collaborating with several stakeholders to ensure that any rehabilitation of the Livingston Avenue Bridge include accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians.

Some progress has been made in implementing components of the Greenway Concept Plan for the Capital Region. See the *Big Ticket Initiatives* section for progress details.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA): NYSDOT recently completed a draft-for-public-review ADA Transition Plan which includes information on ADA compliance status of NYSDOT facilities, including the state-owned pedestrian network.

Safety

NYSMPO Safety Working Group– Since its inception in 2005, CDTC staff has been heavily involved with safety planning issue through the New York State MPO Association on safety issues through the Safety Working Group (SWG) and has chaired the group since 2008. This high level of involvement is necessary to help build the capacity of not only CDTC staff but of all of New York’s MPOs to integrate safety into the planning process.

NYS Traffic Safety Information Systems Strategic Plan- New York State, through the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) and the Institute for Transportation Safety Management and Research (ITSMR), implemented a multi-year strategic plan to improve the state’s traffic records systems. An extensive update will be completed by June 2011.

Accident Location Information System (ALIS): ALIS is a web-based crash data application introduced in 2009 by NYSDOT that utilizes Geographic Information System technology to locate crashes on both the state and non-state roadway systems. ALIS also allows for a direct download of crash data into other software for additional analysis. CDTC has used the ALIS application :

⇒ to continue its work on the safety pilot project in Rensselaer County intended to provide a model for the region in the development of a formal safety management system for CDTC.

⇒ in the Transportation Improvement Program project evaluation process to calculate safety benefits.

⇒ to identify existing safety issues in study areas of Linkage Program planning initiatives.

⇒ in the evaluation process for two safety related regional set-aside projects ultimately programmed in the 2007-2012 TIP.

Over the past three years much has also been achieved on bicycle and pedestrian safety and education. The details are described in the summary on bicycle and pedestrian issues but a few highlights include the launch of a localized bicycle safety education campaign, *Capital Coexist* (<http://www.capitalcoexist.org>) in April 2010 and CDTC’s direct involvement in the Safe Routes to School.

ITS was identified in the New Visions 2030 Safety plan as important to improving safety in the Capital District. Much has also been achieved on operations and ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) since 2007. The details are described in the summary on Congestion, Arterial Management and Expressways.

Travel Demand Management

Transit Pass Subsidies: One of the earliest efforts to promote transit with subsidies was a program targeted to New York State employees through which CDTA provided transit pass subsidies for members of the Professional Employees Federation (PEF) and the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA). CDTA continued the deep discount, until inception of the NYS-Ride program, which is a pre-tax commuter transit pass program for New York State employees.

Carpool/Ride Matching: In 2008, TDM monies programmed in the TIP were used to upgrade the Commuter Register on-line carpool information website to a GIS based platform, powered by GreenRide. The upgraded site, re-branded as “iPool2” complemented CDTA’s iRide campaign and has resulted in creation of over 1,000 iPool2 accounts with the estimated number of carpools formed eliminating over a million miles of VMT and reducing about 400 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Prior to the iPool2 platform, the Commuter Register averaged about 40 carpool ads per year.

Van Pools: In the spring of 2009, CDTC, CDTA, and the Albany Downtown BID, in partnership with VPSI, a national vanpool firm, were granted funds from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to start a vanpool pilot project in the Capital Region. To date, ten vanpools have been formed, with each vanpool driving an average of 62 miles per day, with the longest commute of 95 miles and the shortest commute of 28 miles, resulting in the elimination of nearly 655,000 miles of vehicle travel (VMT).

The Occasional Use Parking program is a partnership of CDTA, CDTC and the Albany Parking Authority which:

- ⇒ allows Swiper transit pass holders to park up to 5 times per month in pocket lots along Central Avenue, at the WAMC public lot at Central and Quail, and at the Quackenbush parking lot.
- ⇒ using “Smart Meters” to track use and prevent fraud, allows CDTA customers the flexibility to drive to work on occasion, increasing the attractiveness of becoming a regular transit rider.

LINK: A long standing program, the LINK, provides free transfers to the CDTA system with a “LINK” Ticket to commuters arriving in the Region from a long-distance bus. LINK increases CDTA ridership and the viability of the long-distance carriers, resulting in a monthly average of 4,200 rides in 2010.

TMA: With the aid of a consultant, CDTA and CDTC staffs investigated the feasibility of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in the Harri-man Campus area, resulting in a recommendation for a private sector Transportation Coordinator Network as an informal TMA program.

Additional CDTA Transit Pass Subsidies- Three programs provide free unlimited access 31-day rolling passes for CDTA fixed route services; participants are required to complete entrance and exit surveys to track each program’s effect on travel behavior:

- ⇒ Homeowners’ Incentive Program
- ⇒ Transit for Refugees and Immigrants Program
- ⇒ Sustainable Housing Partnership

Regional Park and Ride- In early 2009, CDTA commissioned a consultant study of the existing park and ride lot infrastructure to include an inventory of existing lots and their usage, determination of potential express transit service markets, and identification of potential sites for the development of additional park and ride facilities for transit, carpooling, and vanpooling.

Price Chopper AdvantEdge for Transit- In March 2010, an innovative pilot partnership with Price Chopper created a bus pass version of Price Chopper’s very popular Fuel AdvantEdge Program. CDTA sells passes and tickets to Price Chopper at the 10% corporate discount and riders redeem Fuel AdvantEdge Points for discounts on bus passes, a \$2 discount is “equivalent” to each 10¢ fuel discount earned.

TDM Website- In November 2010 CDTA and CDTC, received a NYSERDA grant to develop a TDM website to increase awareness of various transportation modes and illustrate impacts of single-occupancy vehicle use on the transportation system and environment.

Elderly and the Disabled

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (RTCC) and JARC- With the direction of the Coordinated Plan and newly formed Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (RTCC), great strides have been made in the coordination arena since New Visions 2030 was adopted. As a result of two JARC solicitations funding was continued for CDTA's trip planner positions, the safety net brokerage and a mobility manager, all very successful aspects of the JARC program which are recommended to continue in the Coordinated Plan.

New Freedom Program (NFP)- SAFETEA-LU established the New Freedom Program (NFP) as a formula program based upon the number of persons with disabilities residing in the metropolitan area for the purpose of providing new public services and alternatives *beyond* the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to assist individuals with disabilities. Four very innovative projects were approved as a result of this process:

- ⇒ Project 1: Trip Scheduling and Dispatch Software
- ⇒ Project 2: Schenectady County Weekend Service for Mobility Disabled Persons
- ⇒ Project 3: Fixed Route Feeder Service in the City of Watervliet and Green Island
- ⇒ Project 4: CDTA Accessible Taxi Program

Section 5310- Section 5310 funds can only be used to purchase vehicles in NYS, at an 80/20 federal to local match ratio. SAFETEA-LU required MPO's to confirm that proposed service to be provided by the requested vehicles be consistent with the coordinated plan and would not duplicate effort. The result is increased dialogue between human service agencies and additional members to the RTCC.

CDTA's STAR Service, Special Fare Policies and 100% Accessible Transit Buses- CDTA's special transit service (STAR), initiated in 1982, is designed for any Capital District resident unable to utilize CDTA's fixed route bus service due to disability. The STAR fleet consists of 34 vehicles and provided 220,521 elderly and/or handicapped people specialized trips during fiscal year 09/10 and 217,474 in FY 08/09. For FY 10/11 there has been a 7% increase in ridership and growing demand is expected to continue. The financial impact of the substantial subsidies required to provide this service is a major operating and fiscal issue facing CDTA.

Environmental Impacts/Sustainability

Alternative Fuel Projects: Since 2007, a range of alternative fuel related projects have been facilitated by the Capital District Clean Communities Coalition (CDCC) or funded through federal transportation or NYSERDA funds. Projects include:

- ⇒ establishment of twelve public E-85 fueling stations
- ⇒ purchase of propane school buses for three area school districts, with several of these districts now intending to eventually power their full fleets by propane
- ⇒ installation of a public CNG fueling station
- ⇒ purchase of alternative fuel vehicles by UAlbany, Coca Cola, Verizon and National Grid for their Capital Region fleets using ARRA funds.

Development of a NYS Climate Action Plan: In 2009, CDTC staff became a member of the Climate Action Council's Transportation and Land Use Technical Work Group, charged with defining actions the state could implement to help achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The results, along with those from the other Technical Work Groups, were incorporated into the full final draft NYS Climate Action Plan submitted to the Governor in 2010. Recommendations from the Transportation and Land Use Technical Work Group are all consistent with CDTC's 2030 New Visions Plan and focus on many of the successful activities CDTC and CDTA have been involved in—land use planning, transit oriented development, smart growth, alternative fuels, TDM, and pedestrian and bicycle amenity programs.

Natural and Cultural Resources Mapping: During the 2010 – 2015 TIP Update proposed projects having potential for significant environmental impacts were mapped against natural and cultural resource locations to identify possible overlaps and generalized environmental impacts.

FHWA's Everyday Counts Initiative: FHWA's *Every Day Counts* initiative sets up a framework for considering and incorporating documents and decisions from the earliest stages of project planning into the environmental review process through to project design. Use of FHWA's *Every Day Counts* initiative can lead to more seamless decision-making that minimizes duplication of effort, promotes environmental stewardship, and reduces delays in project development.

FHWA's Planning and Environmental Linkages or PEL initiative strives to bring transportation planning and implementation agencies together with natural and cultural resource agencies to facilitate earlier, enhanced coordination and communication. CDTC has been participating in events, and is continually tracking available tools, related to this initiative.

Smart Growth: CDTC staff participates in the Capital District Smart Growth Forum facilitated by Empire State Future which meets quarterly to discuss smart growth and sustainability efforts by various public agencies and non-profits focused on affordable housing, historic preservation, regional planning, open space preservation, and the environment.

Public Participation

Websites- The iPool2 commuter information and Capital Coexist bicycle awareness websites were launched, which are described above.

CDTC's main website, www.cdtcmpo.org continues to provide a valuable tool to share information, post announcements and provide a central location for all CDTC products to be easily viewed. To the greatest extent possible, CDTC's website is organized and formatted to accommodate persons with visual disabilities. Work has begun on a website translator for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and interactive TIP mapping..

Social Media- CDTC has initiated use of social media and recently adopted a social media policy to address both the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way many people now communicate and obtain information. The policy states: CDTC may use social media tools to reach a broader audience; CDTC encourages social media use to further its goals and mission(s); use of social media by CDTC is to provide relevant, timely, and useful information to the public.

Newsletter- The new CDTC newsletter *In Motion* has been published regularly since Spring 2008 to help carry out a commitment to meaningful public participation in the regional transportation planning process which requires a concerted effort to make information widely accessible.

Linkage Program- CDTC's Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program continues as the primary community level public participation tool designed to fulfill the adopted principles and strategies in New Visions 2030 by providing assistance to communities undertaking local planning initiatives to integrate land use and transportation. Since its inception, CDTC has funded 71 planning studies in 40 Capital Region communities ranging from the largest city to small towns and villages.

Ongoing CDTC Task Forces- Task forces are working groups assigned a specific task or subject area and are responsible to the Planning Committee for recommendations regarding their subject matter. Currently the most active Task Forces are the Bike/Pedestrian Task Force and the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee, others include a Goods Movement Task Force and a Regional Operations Committee.

IDEAS/AREAS OF EXPLORATION FOR THE 2040 PLAN

The development of the New Visions 2040 Plan will begin in the fall of 2011 and will be a multi year effort that will give CDTC the opportunity to engage the public and stake holders in a broad and comprehensive dialogue about the Plan. The timing of the 2040 plan update will allow for more comprehensive analysis and more extensive discussions with regional stakeholders, and will also afford us the opportunity to make the plan consistent with a new federal transportation reauthorization act, which is not expected until after the 2035 Plan Update is approved. Many ideas for the 2040 update are included in Appendix C. A number of highlights are listed below.

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. By the time of the 2040 update, CDTC will have had over fifteen years' experience with its unique approach to defining system preservation and prioritizing (a steady progress of) system improvements. National and state-level climate action plans will also help shape CDTC's fundamental review of budget requirements.

Incorporating Complete Streets Treatments into Projects: This already occurs, and is supported by NYSDOT policy, but is constrained in scope and extent because of rules laid out in NYSDOT's Design Manual and Project Development Manual (formerly the Environmental Action Plan). 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 2010, 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. First and foremost among these is the development of a Pattern Book for the purposes of providing our region's communities with a visual and graphic toolkit illustrating ways to implement New Visions principles related to integration of land use and transportation, walkable communities at the neighborhood, street and parcel level. Other components which could be considered include the Sustainable Housing Plan and the Sustainable Economy Plan; a Smart Growth Model Land Use Code; a Green Infrastructure Plan; a Sustainable Region Housing Plan; and a Community Food Assessment.

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 the implementation of BusPlus and

other service improvements. If resources remain significantly restrained for transit, 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.

Travel Demand Management- CDTC will continue to build TDM programs and will continue to market them to area employers. The NYSERDA grant for the vanpool pilot is expiring, so a heavy emphasis on marketing the vanpool program, with the help of NYSERDA's consultant, Action Research, will use results from an employer survey to identify employers that would be willing to entertain promoting vanpooling and carpooling to their employees. The Regional Park and Ride lot consultant study will provide recommendations for additional lots, additional express transit services, and transit priority on highways. These recommendations will be incorporated into the 2040 New Visions Plan.

BUDGET

CDTC's New Visions plan is unique among metropolitan plans in comprehensively assessing annual funding requirement for seventeen capital, operating, maintenance and planning budget categories. Additionally, the plan's strength draws from CDTC's commitment to achieve "steady progress" across all categories even if funding levels fall short of those needed for *full* implementation of all New Visions recommendations.

The New Visions plan must be fiscally constrained. That is, CDTC may not identify actions or projects as "committed" if it is not reasonable to anticipate that revenues will be available to advance the actions or projects at the intended time.

CDTC asserted that the 2030 plan was fiscally balanced over time – *but only if public funding increases regularly over the following decades as it has in the past*. An essentially "flat" level of revenues would lead to serious, unacceptable declines in physical and service conditions and make even the most modest improvements difficult to accomplish. Financial circumstances and future prospects have experienced significant – and mixed – changes over the past three years, and are discussed in more detail in Appendix C.

Events since adoption of the New Visions 2030 plan are consistent with the range of funding scenarios anticipated for the 2005-2030 period. Nothing that has occurred is sufficient cause for abandoning the reasonable, modest, balanced New Vision plan or the assumption that – through peaks and valleys, fits and starts – federal, state and local legislation will help meet the financial requirements of the plan. State funding is tight; stimulus funding was a windfall. Legislation has not been passed, but the desire to find adequate funding is real. This story is consistent with the budget assumptions of the New Visions 2030 plan. The New Visions 2035 plan thus does not require a revision to the long-term budget plan, nor an adjustment to estimates of budget requirements for each project category.

The current situation, however, does call for two clear areas of thought and activity for CDTC and its members over the coming year or two:

Reaffirming the steady progress precept. Discussions may need to portray current fiscal challenges as a call for a diet, rather than a call for a retreat. A diet brings to mind a healthy concern for balance, smaller portions and the elimination of excess. This image is helpful in preserving the steady progress approach and achieving necessary cost savings. In contrast, retreat brings to mind abandonment of goals and cutting of losses. In large institutions, retreat is more easily embraced than a diet. It may be a role for the CDTC forum in the near future to champion the diet image to decision-makers.

Providing information in response to funding initiatives. The New Visions 2030 plan states, "*While it is reasonable to anticipate that funding will be available over coming decades to carry out all elements of the New Visions plan, **it is imperative that CDTC and its members work with all interested parties at the federal, state and local level to explore prudent and timely actions to secure these funds.** Discussion of "big ticket initiatives" must occur simultaneously with discussion of budget gaps for the basics. It may be necessary to link the "urgent" with the "desired" to elicit sufficient public support for legislative action to provide the necessary resources.*" This critical effort remains unfinished and more urgent than when first stated.