Capital District
Transportation Committee

April 2007

New Visions 2030
Draft Updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Game Plan and Toolbox
A Product of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force

Background

The Task Force deals with issues ranging from public education to facility planning. The members provide technical guidance on Community and Transportation Linkage Program projects and other bicycle and pedestrian related projects throughout the region. Over the past several years, the Task Force has worked to update the previous toolbox for incorporation into New Visions 2030.

Issues Explored

- **Status--**The status of bicycle and pedestrian activities in the Capital District since original New Visions document was explored and documented.
- **Priority Network**--CDTC's bicycle and pedestrian priority network was updated to include new facilities that are considered to have an importance to bicycling and walking in the Capital District.
- **Task Force Recommendations--The Task Force has several recommendations to implement the goals and objectives developed as part of the updated document (see attached)**

Summary of Findings

- The region is doing well providing pedestrian accommodations to priority network facilities but lacking considerably in bicycle accommodations.
- The Task Force requests additional participation in CDTC's planning process and projects.
- CDTC should continue to provide the regional forum for bicycle and pedestrian discussion.

Performance Measurement (relevance to existing performance measures or proposed new performance measures (if applicable))

- CDTC's access, safety, and air quality core performance measures will be used to determine success of the recommendations.
- The attached Task Force Recommendations will help meet the regional goal of having 350+ center lane miles with bicycle accommodations as stated in CDTC's adopted Supplemental Performance Measures.
- Improvements to the Priority Network will also be used as a performance measure.

Policy/Budget Implications and/or Recommendations

- See attached Goals/Objectives and Task Force Recommendations

- There is a recommendation to gradually increase the level of funding for the Spot Improvement Program from $100,000 per year to $250,000 per year over the next 5 TIP updates. This appears to fit within the New Visions 2030 budget developed by the Finance Task Force.

- There is a recommendation to consider a Second Chance Enhancement Program again, as was successfully conducted in 1999. The program would take place after each new round of the Transportation Enhancement Program. Implications to the budget would have to be explored, but its modest scale would appear to fit within the New Visions 2030 budget developed by the Finance Task Force.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As part of the update, the Task Force decided to revise the goals and objectives set forth in the original document. These short, mid-term, and long-term goals are aggressive, yet realistic, to enhance the bicycle and pedestrian travel environment in the capital region.

Short Term (1-3 years)

- Continue promotion and participation in current plans and programs including, but not limited to, the Spot Improvement Program, incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into the Transportation Enhancement Program, map updates, CDTC's Community and Transportation Linkage Program, and encouraging active regional participation in the monthly meeting of the Task Force.

- Develop more detailed criteria for an enhanced Pedestrian Priority Network. The current Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network weighs heavily on bicycle movements. This should include inter-modal discussions such as bikes on buses and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

  The shared use trail system covers both modes, although pedestrians tend not to travel regionally. What pedestrians really need is a fairly seamless network that ensures the shared-use trail system is inter-linked to local sidewalk networks and any transit system so they can take shorter, more practical trips using the local links or less frequently, longer 'recreational' trips transitioning from local to regional network and back again without having to use a vehicle.

- Provide the means for the Task Force to have an active voice at the CDTC Planning Committee meetings.

- Provide a means for CDTC and Task Force members to have an active role in both the planning and design stages of project development throughout the region.

- Continue with prioritization for improvements along the Priority Network. This should include bike route designations, appropriate signage, more frequent maintenance, increased amenities (crosswalks, bicycle parking facilities) and other improvements that meet the needs of the "average" cyclist/pedestrian.

- Encourage any municipality creating and/or updating any municipal plan to incorporate and adopt a local **and** regional bicycle and pedestrian component. This would require coordination with agencies including the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) and the county planning departments. Most municipal plans have some sort of transportation element that focuses on the local issues. The Task Force suggests that a regional component be included and should expand on the local bicycle and pedestrian needs/issues and identify the

impact and opportunities for creating a well organized and maintained regional bicycle and pedestrian system.(incorporate into funding sources).

- Mid-Term (3-7 years)

- Support and promote projects and activities that increase the number of Capital District children who walk to school and increase awareness of the benefits walking has on the environment, health issues, and quality of life.

- Increase coordination among other state, regional and local agencies and inter-agency support. This will help reduce duplicative efforts. Focus should be on the Priority Network as a performance measure for this goal.

- Build more financial incentives for multi-jurisdictional projects into the funding programs.

- Comprehensive view of bicycle and pedestrian trips regardless of trip purpose, including leisure time physical activity.

Long-term (more than 7 years)

- Double bicycle and pedestrian trips (priority on commuting trips) in the Capital District and at the same time reduce the bicycle/pedestrian regional crash rate by 10%. This is consistent with the 1995 document's suggestion to apply the Federal Highway Administration's national goal set forth in their *National Bicycling and Walking Study* (1994) to the Capital District. The FHWA's goal is for the changes to occur by 2010. It does not appear that the Capital District will meet this goal by 2010 but is still considered useful as it gives the message that steps need to be taken to increase the safety of both the bicycle and pedestrian travel environments.

- The creation of a well organized and maintained regional bicycle and pedestrian system. This would have both operational and physical components. Specific standards should be developed for greater consistency and the creation of a seamless user experience.

  Physical Components:

  The physical components would most likely include a regional shared-use trail system and a regional bike route system. Both of these should make direct logical inter-connections with each other and with major population/employment centers, schools, recreation areas and other 'key' destinations.
  Other essential physical elements of this system are dense population and business and/or retail centers well served by sidewalks for trips between important trip destinations as well as a bus system that is entirely outfitted with bike racks.

Operational Components:

The operational components would be related to increased coordination and formalized agreements between municipal entities relating to a regional bicycle and pedestrian system. These agreements would lead to the establishment of a single coordinating body for the management and maintenance of the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail as a single entity. Encouraging coordination relating to development and joint maintenance (signs, sweeping, etc.) of regional bike routes or facilities should be a priority. All coordination should be focused on sharing resources where possible, preventing duplication of effort and expense, creating a seamless / safe / inviting experience for users, and ensuring the kind of multi-jurisdictional communication that prevents local bike routes from meeting at a municipal border or a sidewalk dead-ending short of a logical destination.

- Have a minimum of 25% of all projects with a majority of project funds being used for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations funded by CDTC be multi-jurisdictional, meaning a lead sponsor and at least one co-sponsor from a different municipality and/or agency that will be impacted by the project. *It is understood that some of the projects funded through the Spot Improvement Program, by definition, may be too small to include more than one jurisdiction or have multiple sponsors.*

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Trail Survey

The Task Force commends Schenectady County for its work on their report. The new report including analysis, will be available in the Spring of 2007. The report will be distributed to each municipality within the CDTC planning area and be posted on CDTC's website. This will serve as a great reference for municipalities at all stages of trail development.

Regional Greenway Concept

CDTC will continue exploring options and provide a forum for discussion on the concept, together with other "Big Ticket Initiatives" explored as part of Working Group C. The concept will continue to be presented whenever possible to inform elected officials and advocates of the concept's regional benefits. It should be noted that the Task Force is very enthusiastic about finding ways to implement the concept while understanding that a regional champion has not been identified and resources are limited.

Bicycle Signage Guidelines

Continue referencing and distribution of the signage guidelines to establish consistency along the trail system. Projects that are not consistent with the signage guidelines should not receive priority for funding even if the signage is a small component of a larger scope of work (widening, resurfacing, or reconstruction). There should be increased awareness of the guidelines to the region as a whole. The complete signage guidelines are included in Appendix A.

Bike Maps

The maps are an important resource to the cycling and walking community. In order to remain effective, the maps will be updated every two to four years, as CDTC staff time and funding allows, using the newest technology available. If needed, partnerships will be created to help reduce printing costs.

Spot Improvement Program

The Task Force feels very strongly that this program continue as it provides a means for small scale bicycle and pedestrian improvements to be made. Funding will, at a minimum, remain at $100,000 per year. During the next five TIP updates, the opportunity for the set aside to be increased on a gradual basis to $250,000 per year will be explored. A streamlined process will be developed by CDTC and NYSDOT to assist the municipalities with the administrative responsibilities associated with projects that are funded with federal monies.

Walkable Communities Workshops (Pedestrian Safety Roadshows)

The public forum provided by the format of the Road Show is most useful to local communities wishing to improve their walkability, safety, and pedestrian environments. Quality of life issues are becoming more prominent in public discourse. Walkable Communities have many of the qualities which local residents desire. The Task Force recommends that collaborating agencies work with local governments to provide more of these forums in the coming years. Training of local experts in presentation of this format will facilitate in increasing the number of communities wishing to make improvements that will result in more people walking and biking, enhancing safety and health benefits and, at the same time, generate a reduction in crash rates.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Index

CDTC staff will continue their efforts that focus on pedestrian safety and accessibility. Expanding the inventory to include each signalized intersection in the Capital District will be explored. The data collected on the intersection forms and the “grades” they receive will be formally incorporated into the project evaluation process for funding opportunities. The intersections will be revisited on a regular basis as conditions often change, possibly altering the original score of the intersection.

Pedestrian Specific Improvements

The Task Force encourages that both bicycle and pedestrian improvements continue to be included in projects throughout the region. An attempt to track the costs of the bike/ped components of larger projects (reconstruction or resurfacing) will be made.

Wolf Road Pedestrian Survey

This survey was an excellent tool to get a sense of pedestrians' thoughts on count down signals. The number of pedestrians crossing Wolf Road has probably increased when 50 Wolf Road returned to full capacity. Monitoring the vehicular turning movements in and out of Colonie Center will be revisited. A leading pedestrian phase was included as part of the Wolf Road reconstruction.

Transportation Enhancement Program

During future rounds of the Transportation Enhancement Program, The Task Force would like CDTC to continue to be responsible for submitting a prioritized list of projects to NYSDOT for statewide review. Members of the Task Force will continue to be included as part of the review committee provided they do not have a vested interest in any of the submitted projects. Bicycle and Pedestrian safety and mobility will continue to receive prioritization during the evaluation process.

Major TEP Projects

The Task Force encourages Saratoga County to continue with their efforts to complete the Zim Smith Trail. Exploring options for connecting to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail should be a priority for the region. If the Capital District ever has a champion and the resources to create a true regional bike/hike system, the Zim Smith Trail would be a major component.

The Task Force believes the improvements will greatly enhance the walking/biking travel environment. To help ensure consistency and provide a seamless user experience, future trail improvement projects will be encouraged to be multi-jurisdictional.

"Second Chance" Enhancement Program

The Task Force commends CDTC on their commitment to bicycle and pedestrian projects. The Second Chance Enhancement Program will be on the Planning Committee agenda as a discussion item for possible funding each time there is new round of the Transportation Enhancement Program.

Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program

The Task Force finds tremendous value in this program. The Program will continue, providing planning and technical assistance to local municipalities. While moving

towards a regional bicycle and pedestrian system, increasing the capacity for cyclists and pedestrians at the limited number of river crossings should be a priority. When a Linkage, or similar type project, has a river crossing in the study area, a task should be dedicated to accommodating non-motorized travel on the bridges. Bicycle and pedestrian issues are a large part of many of the Linkage projects. If a project has a large bicycle/pedestrian component, a single task force member may be invited to participate on the study advisory committee. The invitation would be on a project by project basis. This person would be responsible for representing the views of the Task Force and this document as well as reporting on the project status at the regularly scheduled Task Force meetings.

Priority Network

The Priority Network will be updated on a regular basis to include other facilities that meet the criteria. Improvements to the Priority Network will be used as the primary performance measure for defining the region's success in accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians.

Other Programs, Projects or Initiatives

Explore the possibilities of including data on leisure time walking, bicycling, and running into regional transportation planning models and decision making. The proper mechanism would have to be created to accurately capture this data. Also, the Task Force supports the continuing efforts of the iHi Program.