



CDTC New Visions

Executive Summary

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Capital District Transportation Committee
One Park Place
Albany NY 12205
518-458-2161
www.cdtcmpo.org

What is CDTC?

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. The CDTC consists of elected and appointed officials and their representatives from:

- Each of the four counties
- Each of the eight cities in the four counties (Albany, Cohoes, Mechanicville, Rensselaer, Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, Troy, and Watervliet)
- Albany International Airport
- Albany Port District Commission
- Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC)
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Town of Colonie
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA)
- At-large members representing the area's towns and villages

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) serve as advisory members.

Under federal law, CDTC is the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making, dealing with a wide range of highway, transit, and multi-modal concerns and their influence on regional economic vitality, environmental health, and quality of life. CDTC is responsible, together with NYSDOT and the CDTA, for maintaining a long-range regional transportation plan meeting social, environmental, economic, and travel needs of the area. It is also responsible for developing and maintaining a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which programs federal transportation funds for specific projects. The federal government will not entertain projects in the Capital District unless they are consistent with the plan and have been programmed funds through CDTC.

What is New Visions?

New Visions refers to CDTC's official long-range regional transportation plan for Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. Under federal law, CDTC must maintain at least a 20-year policy vision for the transportation system that reflects the needs of the area. CDTC's New Visions plan was first adopted in March 1997 and included numerous public policies, principles, actions and a transportation budget for the 25-year planning period. It also established a regional technology (ITS) plan; a regional bike system plan; a regional transit plan; and other significant elements.

Like MPOs nationwide, CDTC regularly updates our region's long-range transportation plan. Our current plan is called *New Visions 2035*, and our new, updated plan will be called *New Visions 2040*.

CDTC assigned the tasks of updating our New Visions Plan to the following 5 permanently-established Advisory Committees and 4 temporarily-established Task Forces:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Complete Streets Advisory Committee
- Environment and Technology Task Force
- Freight Advisory Committee
- Infrastructure Task Force
- Quality Region Task Force
- Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee

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- Regional Transportation Coordination Committee
- Transit Task Force

Committee and Task Force members were selected from throughout the CDTC region, and consisted of representatives from both public and private sectors, CDTC members, and CDTC staff. CDTC staff provided the Committee and Task Force members with the relevant principles from the newly-revised 12 New Visions Planning and Investment Principles, the relevant sections from New Visions 2035 and staff summaries, a list of recommended tasks, and additional guidelines.

The Committee and Task Force members were then asked to review the existing New Visions 2035 Plan and staff summaries, and to develop strategies and recommendations for our 2040 Plan. Each Committee and Task Force established their own meeting schedules and agendas. Over the last 8-month period, some Committees and Task Forces met monthly, while others met bi-monthly. Each Committee and Task Force was tasked with producing a draft “white paper” summarizing its findings.

Below are the relevant New Visions Planning and Investment Principles for each Committee and Task Force, the recommended tasks, and some of the important issues facing each Committee and Task Force (in that order).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation – Bicycle and pedestrian travel is vital to the region’s public health, transportation, and the economy.

Encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel is a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible and healthy approach to improving the performance of our transportation system. Possible bicycle/pedestrian related improvements will be considered from the perspective of developing a system – not just based on whether a particular facility is currently used. That system of sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails will encourage safe bicycle and pedestrian use and will increase accessibility.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- On-going mission of the Advisory Committee
- Bike/Ped Priority Network Update
- Input into the New Visions Plan regarding Bike/Ped issues
- TIP project candidate review
- Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Performance measures

Important Issues included:

- For TIP project evaluation update, quantifying all the benefits (health, business, etc.)
- Developing new strategies to improve planning and infrastructure

Complete Streets Advisory Committee

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

Complete Streets – Street design will serve all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, freight, and drivers.

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Transportation investments are made based on a complete streets framework which supports the convenient and safe travel of all people — of all ages and abilities as appropriate to a facility's community context. Utilizing a complete streets framework ensures that transportation investments are consistently planned, programmed, designed, operated and maintained with all users in mind – including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and local delivery needs.

Successful implementation of a complete streets framework will be achieved through improvements to communication and coordination, training and education, and design standards and other resources.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- On-going mission of the Advisory Committee
- Input into the New Visions Plan regarding complete streets
- Complete Streets design standards and process.
- Green infrastructure
- TIP project candidate review

Important Issues included:

- Identify best practices for Complete Streets (CS) implementation
- Develop Draft CS Design Guidelines
- Develop training and education materials

Environment and Technology Task Force

New Visions Planning and Investment Principles:

Environment – Transportation choices should improve our environment, not harm it.

Environmental stewardship is crucial to the success of and quality of life in this region. Transportation investments must improve or preserve the region's cultural and natural environment. Transportation investments will not encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and will help to preserve rural character. Transportation investments will support alternative fuel vehicles and greenhouse gas reduction. Environmental best practices will be incorporated into all projects.

Technology – We must plan for new, smarter, better, and rapidly-changing transportation technology.

Advancements in technology, such as self-driving cars, self-adjusting traffic signals, smart phone apps, ridesharing, carsharing, and bikesharing will have tremendous and wide-reaching impacts on future transportation. These impacts include, but are not limited to, decreasing congestion, providing transportation to more seniors and people with disabilities, reducing traffic accidents, and more.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- Alternative fuels, electric vehicles, fuel economy
- Greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation
- Climate adaptation/mitigation planning
- Explore the impact of emerging technologies (e.g. self-organizing traffic signals, automated vehicles, solar roads, smart streetlights, self-healing road pavements, advanced composite bridge materials, etc.) on transportation in the Capital District.
- How should the New Visions Plan anticipate these impacts.

Important Issues included:

- Expanding the New Visions Plan commitment to greenhouse gas reduction
- For TIP project evaluation update, increasing consideration of environmental impacts

Freight Advisory Committee

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

Freight – Our freight system is crucial to the economy; it will be efficient and automated, and will minimize its impact to communities.

CDTC's freight planning efforts will be comprehensive enough to encompass all modes, including air, water, rail, and highway. Maintaining the health and improving the efficiency of freight facilities in the region through public/private partnerships is a high priority. CDTC's planning efforts will embrace freight's key contributions to regional prosperity, while also trying to mitigate the negative impacts of all modes of freight movement on local communities.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- On-going mission of the Advisory Committee
- Freight Priority Network
- Input to incorporation of freight needs to New Visions Plan
- TIP project candidate review
- New Regional Freight Plan
- Performance measures

Important Issues included:

- Forecasted growth of freight (all modes)
- MAP-21 and successor's impact on freight planning and funding

Infrastructure Task Force

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

Infrastructure – Transportation funding must be sufficient to both repair and sometimes replace our highway, bridge, and transit infrastructure.

New Visions has made a strong commitment to keeping the region's transportation system functioning and in good condition. CDTC remains committed to the maintenance, repair, and renewal of the existing passenger and freight transportation facilities in a cost-effective manner that protects and enhances rideability, public safety, accessibility, and serviceability.

Currently the needs for repairing/reconstructing bridges and pavement, and investing in transit and port facilities outweigh available resources. Renewing existing infrastructure in our communities is fiscally responsible and consistent with New York's Smart Growth policy.

CDTC needs to ensure that system preservation and system renewal are balanced, and that roads and bridges in our cities and rural communities are equitably considered. Continued capital investment in the region's transit system, port, and airport – and their connections to other surface transport – will remain a priority.

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The Committee reviewed and updated:

- Pavement and Bridge Conditions
- Bridge funding needs
- Pavement funding needs
- Equity for non-State owned roads
- Highway and Bridges Condition Inventories and Asset Management
- Other infrastructure needs such as sidewalk, transit, port, and airport.
- Performance measures

Important Issues included:

- Dealing with scarce funding and equitable funding, especially for roads and bridges in the rural areas of the Region.
- Preservation vs. System Reconstruction vs. System Improvements
- Financing and managing infrastructure through mileage-based user fees, technological innovation, and shared services / functional consolidation
- Investment and education in ADA compliance

Quality Region Task Force

New Visions Planning and Investment Principles:

Investing in a Quality Region – A great transportation system with great choices will help make our region a Quality Region.

Transportation investments will help preserve and enhance the Capital Region's existing urban form, infrastructure, and quality of place. Neighborhood-based local planning efforts are important to the success of an overall regional plan that emphasizes livable communities and smart growth.

Transportation investments will:

- Plan and build for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, cars, trucks, marine, aviation, and rail;
- Support healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities;
- Encourage concentrated development patterns and smart economic growth;
- Link transportation planning and land use planning in order to reduce conflicts and improve both;
- Protect sensitive environmental resources.

Economic Development – Transportation is critical to our region's economy.

New Visions articulates the transportation investment needed for sustainable regional economic growth. All indications are that the region's quality assets are becoming apparent to decision makers outside the region. Transportation choices, strong urban areas, affordable and diverse housing locations, good schools, colleges and universities, ease of mobility, modern air and rail transportation facilities, cultural and recreational opportunities and a clean environment are significant criteria in location decisions of advanced technology firms. These factors support Tech Valley and the region's economic development and business climate. CDTC will partner with New York State to encourage regional efforts to build a strong, sustainable economy.

Regional Equity – Transportation investments will address all needs fairly and equally.

Funding for appropriate repair, replacement and reconstruction will be based on the function and condition of the facility -- not ownership. Investments should meet the needs of all users of the transportation system, in a

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manner that increases access to transportation or does not disproportionately impact people with disabilities, and minority and low-income populations.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- Big Idea/Big Ticket Initiatives
- Financial Plan
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Community Quality of Life- Factors that reflect community quality of life in the central cities, inner suburbs, outer suburbs, small cities and villages, and rural areas.
- Overview of other Committees and Task Forces

Important Issues included:

- Forecasting regional growth and transportation needs
- Fostering Community Quality of Life
- Focusing and reducing New Visions 31 guiding principles
- Financial Plan and MAP-21 Reauthorization

Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee

New Visions Planning and Investment Principles:

Travel Reliability – Reliable traffic flow is more important than reducing congestion – traffic congestion is often a sign of an area's economic vitality.

Managing traffic flows on the Capital Region expressway and arterial system is critical for both economic and social reasons.

- Congestion Management is much more cost effective than highway capacity increases or new lanes. Congestion alone does not justify increasing highway capacity or adding new lanes.
- Congestion management actions will include traffic management center improvements, incident management, managed lanes, managed tolls, traffic information technology, traffic signal coordination, parking management, and travel demand management strategies such as supporting more transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel, carpooling, vanpooling, carsharing, bikesharing, and flexible work hours.
- Some congestion is acceptable when the community deems it acceptable, or when it results from balancing the needs of other transportation modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.

Safety and Security – We can significantly save lives and reduce injuries when we decrease traffic accidents and better respond to traffic emergencies.

CDTC and its members need to improve the safety of the regional transportation system by creating a travel environment that is consistent with the community context. Safety considerations will be integrated into all investment decisions.

Roundabouts and road diets will be considered in proposed highway and intersection projects to address safety concerns.

Examination of security issues and incorporation of security actions using computer modeling and scenario planning will be considered in transportation planning and investment decisions.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- On-going mission of the Advisory Committee
- Congestion Management Plan update
- Travel/delay data
- ITS Priority Network
- Safety needs inventory & projects
- TIP project candidate review
- Security Planning
- Safety Plan
- Performance measures: critical congestion, reliability, safety

Important Issues included:

- Managing congestion with incident management, signal coordination, travel demand strategies, etc. and without new capacity.
- Coordination between the state and local highway system.
- Obtaining crash data for the local system and developing effective mitigation measures to improve safety
- Using CDTC regional computer model to assist Local Emergency Planning Committees developing detour and evacuation plans

Regional Transportation Coordination Committee

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

The overall purpose of a Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan is to improve services for transportation disadvantaged populations by identifying gaps and overlaps in service and providing prioritized recommendations for service improvements.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- On-going mission of the Advisory Committee
- Input to New Visions Plan
- Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan
- TIP project candidate review

Important Issues included:

- New coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- Improving coordination between the many existing public and private transporters

Transit Task Force

New Visions Planning and Investment Principle:

Transit – Our transit services will provide modern, innovative, and viable travel options.

Because transit facilities and services are an essential element of the social, economic, and cultural fabric, sufficient operating and capital funding and supportive policies must be in place. Innovative services and transit supportive investment are critical to developing a high quality transit system. The future transit system will:

- Promote transit supportive land use patterns and infrastructure;
- Contribute to congestion management, air quality, and energy savings;

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- Form the backbone for managing travel demand;
- Provide essential mobility for those who do not operate a private vehicle;
- Capitalize on market trends and attract choice riders.

The Committee reviewed and updated:

- TDP-Transit Priority Network
- Transit funding needs
- New revenue sources
- Parking requirements
- Site plan review guidelines
- Transit provision thresholds
- 40 miles BRT short term and 100 miles BRT Big Ticket
- Public input to transit policy ideas
- Fixed guideway
- Travel Demand Management
- Alternative transit services
- Partnerships (i.e. transit access agreements)
- Performance measures: percentage of residents with transit access and annual ridership

Important Issues included:

- Bus Rapid Transit Development, dedicated transit lanes, and potential for evolution to a fixed guideway system (trolley, light rail, etc.)
- Transit funding (capital & operations)
- Transit centers, bikeshare, and carshare

Additional Information

For additional information concerning any of these Committees, Task Forces, or topics, please see one or all of the following “White Papers.”

Next Steps

The above Committees and Task Forces, and CDTC staff have been working on this New Visions update for the last 12 months. The schedule for the remaining update tasks (next 11 – 12 months) follows:

February 2015	Draft Plan completed for public review. Draft Plan introduced at public meetings.
May 2015	Final Draft Plan completed; 3 month public review begins. Final Draft Plan reviewed at public meetings.
September 2015	Final Plan approval by CDTC Policy Committee. Public outreach to publicize plan begins.

Please remember we need and want your input!