

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program for 2005-06

Program Summary

In the mid-1990's, a strong regional consensus emerged which indicated that the Capital District's quality of life, mobility and economic vitality are dependent upon improved local land use planning and on better integration of land use development and the transportation system. This regional consensus is reflected as policy in the Capital District Transportation Committee's official regional transportation plan *New Visions*. The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (referred to as the Linkage Program) is designed to fulfill the adopted principles and strategies in *New Visions* by providing assistance to communities undertaking local planning initiatives that integrate land use and transportation.

The core of the Capital District's regional transportation – land use policy is reflected in eleven adopted principles (from CDTC's full set of 25 adopted principles). The policy thrust is that good site and community design *can* help realize the region's potential and that transportation actions *will* play a role. The Linkage Program is intended to convert the promise of sound land use planning into reality. The relevant policy principles behind the program are listed below:

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: DEVELOP THE REGION'S POTENTIAL

Build Upon Our Strengths

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

Use Transportation Investment as a Tool

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

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: LINK TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

Encourage Local Land Use Management

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

Link Transportation Investments to Land Use Planning

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

ADOPTED PRINCIPLES: PLAN AND BUILD FOR ALL MODES

- ▶ CDTC's planning efforts will be comprehensive enough to encompass all modes, including air, water, freight, intercity and local transit, pedestrian and bicycle.
- ▶ Possible bicycle/pedestrian-related improvements will be considered from the perspective of **developing a system** -- not just based on whether a particular facility is currently used.

Program Strategies

The Linkage Program offers an opportunity for communities to undertake high quality local planning that will not only benefit the local community but will also benefit the region as a whole. The Linkage Program is consistent with statewide and national initiatives such as New York State Quality Communities and Smart Growth. Some of the broad strategies to be considered in Linkage Program studies that are consistent with the adopted *New Visions* principles are:

- Urban revitalization;
- Improving street connectivity;
- Enhancing and developing activity centers, town centers and transit corridors;
- Encouraging a greater mix and intensity of land uses;
- Pedestrian-friendly development standards; and
- Creating an integrated multi-modal transportation network.

Other considerations may include enhancing bicycle, transit and goods movement modes of transportation, improving the safety of the traveling public, supporting the economic vitality of Capital District communities, providing access to jobs, protecting open space and better managing congestion.

Submission Information

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be entities within CDTC's planning area of Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Saratoga County (with the exception of the town of Moreau). Preferred eligible applicants

are units of local government (town, city, village) and counties. Non-governmental agencies as well as public entities are also eligible if the application includes a letter of support from the municipality or municipalities in which the study is focused. Joint applications by multiple jurisdictions or multiple parties are strongly encouraged.

Eligible Initiatives

Eligible initiatives include those that meet the principles and strategies described in the program summary. **Priority will be given to submissions that utilize innovative strategies supportive of the *New Visions* principles to integrate land use planning with transportation.** Linkage Program planning initiatives are conceptual in nature. Examples of eligible initiatives include:

- Development of access management, driveway consolidation and service road plans along an important corridor that relate to existing or proposed development.
- Development of architectural and site design standards for community cohesiveness.
- Development of a land use or strategic plan for a redeveloping area or for new forms of development such as town centers or transit oriented development.
- Examination of long-range transportation system options for use in preserving rights-of-way such as official street mapping as part of a comprehensive planning process.
- Exploration of joint transportation plan or cumulative development assessment among adjacent communities.
- Development of a local bike system, sidewalk or pedestrian facilities plan that emphasizes neighborhood, school or activity center connections.
- Development of a traffic management and mitigation plan and/or a public-private financing plan for developing areas, perhaps as part of an overall Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS) for the area.
- Development of a community highway safety plan.

Ineligible Initiatives

Municipal wide comprehensive planning efforts are not eligible for funding. However, Linkage funds can be used to complete the transportation component of a comprehensive plan.

Other ineligible activities include right-of-way acquisition, detailed engineering, surveying, storm water/sewer system design and construction of facilities.

Maximum Award

There is no set minimum size for requests. The maximum size for requests is \$50,000 (federal). Pooling of Linkage funds with funds from other grants is permitted to allow for greater impact through a larger, integrated study. The Linkage Program application process is competitive.

Linkage Program funds are for planning assistance only. They are not available for capital improvements.

Linkage Program funds are not available to cover the cost of municipal employees.

Project awards will be made as part of the approval of CDTC's 2005-06 Unified Planning Work Program, tentatively scheduled for February 2005.

Match Requirement

Funding for consultant support is available on a reimbursement basis with a minimum 25% local cash match. In evaluating the merit of competing proposals, CDTC will give consideration for additional local commitment represented by in-kind staff services. However, in-kind service cannot be used to meet the minimum 25% cash match requirement. For example, if a \$60,000 consultant project is intended, the applicant must be prepared to provide \$15,000 in cash to match \$45,000 in federal funds. *CDTC may waive the local match requirement for small-scale CDTC staff (not consultant) assistance or in special circumstances.*

Requested Assistance

Assistance can be provided in one of three ways:

- Through CDTC staff technical assistance.
- Through consultant work done under contract to CDTC.
- Through consultant work done under contract to a municipality or other unit of government.

Proposals may specify which method appears most appropriate to the applicant or request that CDTC suggest the most appropriate method. If the proposal is favorably evaluated by CDTC, the determination of the most appropriate method will be made cooperatively between CDTC and the applicant.

Consultant Activity Guidelines

To satisfy federal and state requirements, use of an appropriate means of consultant solicitation and selection will be required prior to designation of a consultant. CDTC has developed an abbreviated approach to consultant selection for the 2005-06 Linkage Program.

CDTC may be able to administer small-scale consultant studies to minimize the administrative burden on the municipality. However, if a large consultant project is intended (\$100,000 or above using CDTC and other fund sources), the municipality will be required to select the consultant and administer the contract directly. In this case, the municipality will be required to execute necessary agreements with the New York State Department of Transportation in order to be reimbursed for the project costs.

SEQR

Study sponsors should be aware that SEQR applies to local actions that involve a change in land use, such as a zoning change. Although Linkage Program studies are not municipal wide comprehensive plans, they may be considered comprehensive in nature and therefore may be

subject to SEQR. SEQR procedures are the responsibility of the study sponsors if formal action on the study, perhaps in the form of adoption, is undertaken by the municipality.

Application Instructions

The formal application should be approximately two pages in length and can be provided in the form of a letter. The applicant is encouraged to include supporting material (excerpts from comprehensive plans, etc.) as an appendix to the application to help CDTC understand the status of, context of and local commitment to the proposed planning study.

The following items must be included in all applications. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. **Deadline for receipt of completed applications is the close of business, Friday, December 17, 2004.**

1. Name and address of applicant along with the name, title, address (if different than the applicant) and phone number of the contact person for the study.
2. Title and description of the proposed study including the current need for the study.
3. Submissions must clearly describe the relationship of the proposed study to CDTC's *New Visions* planning principles and program strategies as described in the program summary. The discussion should provide an indication as to how the project would advance local community planning goals and initiatives as well as being supportive of regional principles and policies.
4. Estimated cost of the proposed study, including any documentation of the basis of the cost estimate. Sponsors must clearly indicate the amount of federal funding requested for the study up to \$50,000 (excluding the local match).
5. The sponsor's current judgment on the method of assistance that appears most appropriate and desirable: CDTC staff assistance; CDTC administration of a consultant; or sponsor administration of a consultant.
6. Provide evidence as to the availability of the local cash match during federal fiscal year 2005-06.
7. For proposals from non-governmental entities, a letter of support from the municipality or municipalities in which the study is focused.
8. Estimated schedule for the study and indication that it will be completed in a timely manner.

Selection of Projects

CDTC has reserved up to \$100,000 in staff time and up to \$200,000 in consultant budget authority to support the Linkage Program for 2005-06. Selection of projects to be funded for 2005-06 will be made by CDTC's Planning Committee in February for approval by CDTC's Policy Board prior to April 1, 2005. The likelihood of a study receiving funds will not be known until applications have been received. This will be affected by their number, size and quality.

CDTC staff will evaluate submissions and provide CDTC's Planning Committee with a recommended package for funding. **Priority will be given to submissions that utilize innovative strategies supportive of the *New Visions* principles to integrate land use planning with transportation.** The evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Is the submission an eligible activity?
- Is the submission complete and does it meet all program requirements?
- Is there a demonstrated need for the study?
- Does the submission clearly contribute to the implementation of *New Visions* concepts?
- Does it satisfy at least one of the program strategies outlined in the program summary?
- Is the submission supported locally through complementary activities and/or funding commitments?
- Is the submission regional in nature, demonstrate a regional benefit or represent the efforts of multiple jurisdictions?
- Has the sponsor received Linkage funding in the past and was their performance as a sponsor adequate and appropriate?

Submissions that best meet the evaluation criteria will receive funding. If there are more submissions that adequately meet the above criteria than funding available, geographic balance will be considered in the recommended package of studies.

Notification of Award

Following approval by CDTC's Policy Board prior to April 1, 2005, all project sponsors will be notified in writing as to the status of their submissions. Those awarded funding will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before Linkage funds are released for use in the study. The MOU is between CDTC and the study sponsor and will articulate their roles and responsibilities throughout the study process as they relate to the chosen method of assistance. Key to this MOU will be the understanding of the study sponsor that they will uphold the Linkage Program principles and strategies throughout the course of the study.

CDTC reserves the right to modify the program without prior notice.

For questions regarding the Linkage Program, contact Sandra Misiewicz of the CDTC staff at (518) 458-2161 or email smisiewicz@cdtcmpo.org.