

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES TASK FORCE

RECORD OF MEETING

DATE, TIME, LOCATION: May 26, 1998, 4:00 - 5:40 PM, CDTC offices

PRESENT: Don Odell (Albany County Economic Development, Conservation and Planning), Jeff Olson (NYSDOT Statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Program), Don Robertson (NYSDOT – Region 1), Paul Russell (Town of Colonie Conservation Advisory Council), Michael Urban (NYS Department of Environmental Conservation), Ivan Vamos (NYBC), Steve Allocco (CDTC)

ISSUES: Regional Bike/Hike Map; TEA-21 (new highway/mass transit bill); Advisory Committee goals and functions.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Note: CDTC staff comments or followups to items discussed at the meeting are presented in italics.

Regional Bike/Hike Map

Don Odell, Steve Feeny (Schenectady County Planning) and Steve Allocco have been periodically discussing the idea of producing a "next generation" version of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail map; the map is something of a hot item, with roughly 33000 of the 35000 copies printed in 1993 having been distributed.

There was consensus among those in attendance that any next generation map should shift the focus from the single trail to the Capital District and its various offerings. The quasi-brainstorming exercise in this discussion yielded several ideas for features to include, including the following:

- Beyond Class 1 bike facilities (separate trails), include bike lanes (Class 2 facilities), signed bike routes without any other accommodation (Class 3) and possibly some set of "more bikeable" streets
- Inclusion of parks with bikeable paths or trails and other major bikeable locations, showing them as labeled points rather than linear facilities (e.g., a dot or symbol with the label "XYZ Nature Trail" next to it); the appearances of the locator points could vary based on whether or not the location has bike trails or other bikeable areas, e.g.,
- Inclusion of some historical information about the Capital District

- Dot-, symbol- or flag-based location of bike shops, comfort stations, historic sites, picnic areas, nature sites
- Inclusion of emergency phone numbers
- Possible private sector sponsorship of the map, on either a "related activity" (e.g., bike shops) or a "title sponsor" (e.g., "Freihofer's Run for Women") basis. If the former, could frame map with ads; if the latter, consider using dots/flags to locate all of the sponsor's area locations.

A couple of notes on this approach are in order: if private sponsorship is pursued, the main roles for CDTC staff would likely come in providing a setting for meetings to develop the map and in some technical support, the latter e.g., getting information together to include in the map. Also, it would be easier to include bike shops and other businesses in a sponsored rather than publicly funded map.

- Alternatively, funding development of the map through some state or federal program, with one example noted in the discussion being a Governor's Traffic Safety Committee program (applications for the current round of which are due on July 7) which supports development of safety brochures. It was theorized that inclusion of some safety information (e.g., as one side of the map) could make a map project eligible.

The time frame for the GTSC program is not compatible with current CDTC staff activities, thus CDTC will not be pursuing funding via this route.

Based on CDTC staff discussions, there is a good chance that development of a regional bike/hike map can be progressed in the course of CDTC's bicycle/pedestrian (B/P) planning activities in the current program year. Time (i.e., staff availability) rather than funding is the real issue with regard to CDTC involvement in such an effort; simply put, the more effort required of CDTC to "make the map happen," the longer it will take to develop. The initial expectation is that were this to be pursued as a CDTC effort, CDTC staff would facilitate the map development effort (in the same way it did for the two editions of the Mohawk-Hudson map) and do some of the necessary fieldwork.

The first step in the map development process will be for the Task Force to reach closure on what elements or features the map should include. This done, it will then be possible to structure the effort, particularly with regard to delegation of responsibilities (for data collection) and establishing a timetable for getting the map set to print.

CDTC recently received a copy of the Greater Rochester Area Bike Map, which could serve as a model for the Capital District Bike/Hike Map. The Rochester map starts from a full-size road map of the sort one might buy or get from AAA, with blowups of downtowns and other areas of particular interest, but also features a set of streets color-coded based on "bikeability" (a

function of pavement width, traffic volume, and other factors, validated through field assessments by volunteers). CDTC has been exploring ideas for bikeability index-type representations; the Rochester map gives a sense of how this information could be presented. CDTC will secure a few additional copies of the map for the Task Force to examine at its next meeting.

Don Odell's discussion of the Cape Cod map raised another point which the Task Force might do well to bear in mind: while the map he purchased had bike routes shown, not all maps for an area do; if the aim is to promote both cycling/walking and a particular guide like a regional bike map, other maps (e.g., Chamber of Commerce- or Tourism Department-prepared maps) should either include B/P-related information or at least refer to maps such as the conceptual regional B/P map which do contain this information. Without such a relationship, potential bike tourists might be calling a tourism agency which, if it knows nothing about the bike map or area bike routes based on its own information, could fail to provide these people with a reason to come to the area. *This is not a trivial point; Steve Feeney is currently refining a draft report on the Mohawk-Hudson Trail which includes the estimate (based on user counts and surveys) that the Trail sees about 4,600 bicycle tourists per year.*

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The new highway and transit bill, known as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), was signed into law on June 9. (At the time of the Task Force meeting, the bill had been passed by both houses of Congress, and awaited signature.) The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals prepared a summary of the highlights of TEA-21's bicycle and pedestrian-related provisions, which Jeff Olson handed out at the meeting. The highlights included the following:

- Increased funding for the transportation enhancements program. Elements of note in the program include:
 - B/P safety and education projects are now eligible
 - the 20 percent match requirement is now a requirement at the *state* level rather than the *project* level (that is, individual projects may now have local matches of less than 20 percent provided enhancement projects in New York State in total have a total local match of 20 percent or more)
- Pedestrian projects are now explicitly eligible for funding using National Highway System (NHS) funds -- in ISTEA, only bicycle-related projects had this explicit mention
- The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (known as CMAQ) will see a 50 percent increase in funding over 1997 levels (compared to the full range of

transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian projects have relatively few classes of competitors for CMAQ funds)

- Symms Act (National Recreational Trails Act) funds will continue, beginning at \$30 million and increasing to \$50 million over the duration of TEA-21
- Hazard Elimination Program funds may now be used for mitigation of bicycle- and pedestrian-related hazards
- A new transit enhancement program was established, and among the eligible project types are projects which would improve bicycle and pedestrian access to transit. This program requires only a five percent local match.

CDTC has received some early reviews of TEA-21 from USDOT and the national Association of Metropolitan Organizations (AMPO) and via its subscriptions to several transportation-related newsletters and fax services (such as the Washington Letter on Transportation and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign's Mobilizing the Region newsletter). Much additional information is expected to come to CDTC in the near future; staff will pass along to or summarize for the Task Force (and Advisory Committee) such information, as it could serve to "educate" efforts to enhance the bicycle and pedestrian travel environments over the duration of TEA-21.

The group saw TEA-21 as something upon which to capitalize -- a strong argument can be made that its provisions present substantial opportunities to carry out the plans for "leveling the playing field" set forth in the Task Force's report to the New Visions effort and in the New Visions plan itself. *(Bear in mind that the New Visions plan adopted the major elements of the Task Force report by reference, with the intention being to carry out its goals over the next 20 years.)* Ways the group identified for this "capitalizing" included the following:

- Accelerating the pace at which the New Visions goals are pursued

The key issue here will probably be -- as it always is -- getting the "owners of the roads" (i.e., municipalities, NYSDOT, OGS, Thruway Authority) to propose projects furthering the goals of the regional plan which they adopted. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations arguably have a leg up on projects in other areas in this regard, for the old Enhancement Program and the 1997-2002 Transportation Improvement Program update saw very strong responses to funding opportunities -- particularly at the municipal level, there is no shortage of interest in pursuing these types of projects.)

- Somehow getting CDTC to play a greater role in project development, so as to ensure bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly design as a matter of routine

(Here, of course, the issue is how to do this without "burning bridges." CDTC has made some inroads in this area, such that it is now almost routine for CDTC staff to have the

opportunity to provide input to project scoping; the key is to not be heavy-handed (or for any other reason becoming resented by project designers) in getting the message across on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. As it was put in the meeting, the idea is to ensure that "direction from the provider of the funds" is given; what will have to be kept in mind is that the Committees -- Planning and Policy -- are the providers of the funds, while the Central Staff is there to provide support to these Committees (and the municipalities and agencies of the Capital District) rather than to be their "enforcers.")

- NYSDOT is considering the idea of holding a series of three "what TEA-21 means for bicycle and pedestrian transportation" meetings around the state, with one possible location being the SUNY/Albany campus. It was asked whether CDTC would consider co-sponsoring such a local presentation. *Internal staff discussions reached the determination that this is something CDTC can do.*

Advisory Committee Goals/Functions/Makeup

As noted in the previous section, TEA-21 presents the opportunity to continue the progress made in recent years via ISTEA and the New Visions effort. The upcoming transition of the Task Force to Advisory Committee (AC) status (which will be specified in the next CDTC Prospectus -- the "operating manual" for the MPO -- expected to be ready by December) will introduce a mechanism in the CDTC process for providing input specific to bicycle and pedestrian matters. (Bicycle and Pedestrian is one of two Task Forces which will be transitioned to AC status, Goods Movement being the other.)

The group was asked for its ideas on how the AC could have an appropriate impact in the CDTC process, recognizing that the group will indeed be *advisory*, and thus a source of guidance and insight rather than of direction and decisions. A few ideas were raised, including the following:

- It was suggested that within a certain period of time after its establishment (say, one year), the AC should make a short presentation or speech to the CDTC Policy Committee, with the general aim being to remind the Committee of the new law, regional B/P priorities, and the connections between the two. The intention would be to get commitments from those around the Policy Committee table to bicycle and pedestrian travel, in the hope that these commitments would ensure project implementors' proper inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in projects.

In CDTC's structure, the AC will be advisory to the Planning Committee. Policy Committee meetings include time allotments for public comment (as do Planning Committee meetings); members of the AC would certainly be welcome to make statements to the Policy Committee during these opportunities. But the primary influence of the AC would come in providing a level of detail on B/P issues for Planning Committee use that the Planning Committee cannot generate by itself.

- Somehow, it would be desirable for the AC to be a source of citizen review or input on individual projects. This could be either through the CDTC staff B/P liaison providing material to the AC and distilling responses to a short "sense of the Committee" writeup, or via the creation of a set of subcommittees (having one for each county was one suggested approach) to conduct these reviews for projects within their areas.

CDTC staff discussions of the subcommittee idea raised the notes that it could raise such issues as stratification (e.g., "within a county, do we need urban/suburban/rural reps?"), coverage (e.g., "each city/larger town/village...") and "creation of a bureaucracy." It was also noted that periodically, circumstances will trigger the emergence of ad-hoc issue-specific subcommittees. The Task Force will need to further discuss the issue of structure (note the discussion of AC makeup on the next page).

- *CDTC staff have also pulled together some ideas for Advisory Committee functions/duties, including the following:*

➤ *Possible Committee Functions:*

- ❖ *provide concise reports to the Planning Committee on problems in the bicycle/pedestrian travel environments*
- ❖ *draft B/P planning products for Planning Committee review/approval*
- ❖ *provide feedback on project proposals for Enhancement Program, Spot Improvement Program*
- ❖ *carry out special projects (studies, public meetings) or prepare discussions of specific topics as requested by Planning Committee*

➤ *Possible Meeting Goals:*

❖ *Routine Meetings:*

- ◆ *prepare status reports on bicycle and pedestrian travel environments*
- ◆ *identify opportunities for improvement*
- ◆ *prepare reports on conferences, success stories elsewhere for Planning Committee information*

❖ *"Special Topic" Meetings:*

- ◆ *develop specific deliverables (e.g., regional bike/ped plan, bike/ped travel studies) for Planning Committee review*

➤ *Meeting Products:*

- ❖ *Routine products would include memos to the Planning Committee, with these memos including discussions of problems noted, opportunities for B/P accommodation and any recommendations.*
- ❖ *Special products would be draft plans, maps or reports.*
- The issue of Advisory Committee makeup was also discussed. While the basic intent is for the Task Force to evolve into the AC, from among the 30 people on the Task Force mailing list there are only a small number of "regulars" (~6) at the Task Force meetings. While few people get involved with efforts such as working groups because they like spending time in meetings -- their hopes are to actually get something to happen out in the field -- membership on an AC would arguably carry with it some greater level of responsibility to participate rather than simply to be on the mailing list. This factor should be considered by Task Force members (1)deciding whether to ask that they be included on the AC roster and/or (2)considering recommendation of other stakeholder groups for inclusion.

As was the intent of inviting whom we did to participate in the New Visions task forces, we want to make a diligent effort to ensure that appropriate stakeholder groups are represented on the AC. The aim will be to have good stakeholder "coverage" but with an AC size still allowing for effective meetings -- say, no more than 12-15 people.

Mechanically, the approach to developing the AC roster will probably be to have current TF members self-nominate if they would like to serve, suggest other people to include and "pass the word" to possibly interested parties. CDTC can take care of any formal invitations to possible "new players." If any decisions need to be made on exclusions, CDTC staff will advise the Task Force of such conditions and solicit their feedback. This topic will be discussed further at future Task Force meetings.

Other Stray Notes

Routine Incorporation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements in Projects

Partially as an outgrowth of the TEA-21 and Advisory Committee discussions and partially because of "current events" discussions of upcoming projects, the group spent some time on what still seems to be a problem of "corporate culture" when it comes to addressing bicycle and pedestrian needs via elements of non-B/P specific projects (e.g., road reconstructions). A couple of specific examples were cited.

- Wolf Road: Scoping for this rehabilitation project is to begin shortly. The project will include sidewalks, as it was decided in the CDTC process to include this element after the Town of Colonie proposed and got the sidewalk project onto the Transportation

Improvement Program (TIP). As for bicycles, concerns have been raised with regard to "whether and how" to accommodate cyclists. The fact of the matter is that there are people who ride along Wolf Road now, and thus there is arguably the obligation to properly accommodate them; a counterargument is that it might not however be desirable to encourage others to ride along this road (the example raised at the meeting being "the eight year-old who lives nearby"). In addition, it was suggested that some bypass or other alternate route (e.g., along a "Maxwell Road Extension" or through rear lots of Wolf Road businesses and offices) could provide a safer alternative; however, such options must be considered against the backdrop of a project budgeted as a rehabilitation, not a full-scale corridor redevelopment. These considerations illustrate why input to the scoping process and other public and professional comment will be needed to ensure that the outcome of this project with regard to bicycle accommodation does not end up like it was for another project: the Route 7 project in Colonie and Niskayuna.

- Route 7: This road gets a considerable number of bicycle commuters, but the widening project of a few years back did not provide it with a pavement allocation including bike lanes. At the time, there was some "back and forth" on the subject of a two-foot wide "offset" (basically, a stripe two feet from the curb) versus a 14'-wide curb lane, with the wide curb lane eventually winning out. One of the issues at the time was the distinction between observed demand (people actually out there cycling on the road) and latent demand (those who would with some greater accommodation in place -- recall Don Odell's "cyclists are not stupid -- if there is not a safe place for them to ride, they won't do so" remark). Latent demand was apparently not a consideration when this project was in design; there is some evidence to suggest that it is at least something of a consideration now.

New York Bicycling Coalition (NYBC) "Good Design" Award Program

Ivan Vamos reported that throughout the year, NYBC will be making "local achievement awards" to municipalities and transit providers for exemplary projects which enhance bicycle-friendliness. The NYBC newsletter asks that people wishing to make nominations send to NYBC (43 Fuller Road, Albany 12205) letters including project descriptions, the name(s) of the responsible agency(ies), and any supporting letters.

Colonie B/P Planning

Paul Russell reported that one of the issues which the Colonie Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) is working on is that of how to promote alternative modes of transportation, i.e., cycling and walking. Steve Allocco met with the CAC to discuss some of what can be done in this area, with the possibilities including presentation of the USDOT Pedestrian Safety Road Show as a way of helping the Town develop an action plan for enhancing the walking environment. Also on the subject of promoting cycling and walking but in another sense, on June 20 the Town planned to have tables with informational material on cycling and walking at its stop along the

"New York State Canals Cruise and Trail Trek," which was to be on its final leg (Schenectady to Waterford) on that day.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Steve Allocco checking around on matters of B/P advisory committee content/missions and bike/hike map contents.
2. Don Odell contacting Jimapco and the private firm which prepared Cape Cod map featuring bike routes to investigate the prospects of working with these firms to develop the map.
3. Mailing list members to consider whether they wish to serve on the Advisory Committee and whom else they think should be on it.
4. Mailing list members to also get ideas together on what they see as desirable features for a "next generation" bike/hike map, this one having a regional rather than single facility orientation.
5. An announcement of a next meeting will come out in the next few weeks. It will likely be on a Friday afternoon at the CDTC offices (see cover memo).

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES TASK FORCE

RECORD OF MEETING

DATE, TIME, LOCATION: November 30, 1998, 3:15 - 5:20 PM, CDTC offices

PRESENT: Kevin McLaughlin (New York Parks and Conservation Association), Don Odell (Albany County Economic Development, Conservation and Planning), Don Robertson (NYSDOT – Region 1), Bert Schou (CDTA), Steve Allocco (CDTC)

ISSUES: Regional Bike/Hike Map; Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail maintenance; improving access to Hudson segment of Mohawk-Hudson Trail, Spot Improvement Program candidate review procedure; Transportation Enhancements Program candidate review procedure; comparison of regional bike/ped plan (Task Force's November 1995 report) against Transportation Improvement Program to identify possible project elements/future free-standing projects; future of Task Force.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Regional Bike/Hike Map

Content and Format: Discussion of these aspects of the map continued from the May meeting. With regard to content, the current "wish list" for data to include in the regional map includes the following:

- Class 1 bike facilities (separate trails)
- Bike lanes (Class 2 facilities)
- Signed bike routes without any other accommodation (Class 3)
- some set of "more bikeable" streets (e.g., those carrying lower amounts of motor vehicle traffic and/or motor vehicles at lower speeds), if not the representation of some sort of technical analysis of "level of service" as discussed above
- parks with bikeable paths or trails and other major bikeable locations (shown as labeled points rather than linear facilities, e.g., a dot or symbol with the label "XYZ Nature Trail" next to it. The appearance of the locator points could vary based on whether or not the location has bike trails or other bikeable areas, e.g., □)
- Historical information about the Capital District

- Bike shops, comfort stations, historic sites, picnic areas, nature sites (dot/symbol/flag indications)
- Emergency phone numbers
- A series of phone numbers for county tourism offices and agencies with information on recreational offerings in the area (e.g., the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation or the Canal Corporation)
- A "for more information" number which people could call for trail information across the region

As for format, the group liked the general approach of the Genesee Transportation Council (Rochester area equivalent to CDTC)'s regional bike map (this map was prepared by Map Works, a Rochester company). This map includes a complete street network, major recreational and cultural facilities, and a series of streets which are color-coded to reflect "bikeability" as assessed by GTC and the Rochester Bicycling Club. While CDTC has been exploring ways of objectively assessing bikeability and walkability (quantitative methods of calculating "level of service" for bicyclists and pedestrians have been developed in recent years), it would be difficult if not impossible to present indications for both groups on one map. In addition, it would take several months to collect the data for such assessments. Still, there could be the opportunity to identify a limited number of streets which by some measure were particularly conducive to cycling and walking, so there would be more to show on the map than simply the limited number of Class 1 trails (separate facilities, e.g., the Mohawk-Hudson Trail) and on-street bike lanes.

From CDTC conversations with one map company, indications are that there would probably be about a two-month turnaround time from when CDTC provided final marked-up copies of mylars with information to show on the map as well as any text copy (e.g., "rules of the road," Capital District history) until the maps were ready. That said, it should be noted that the group was concerned that it would take a considerable amount of time to compile the information needed to "flesh out" a regional bike/hike map, even if street-by-street bike- or ped-friendliness assessments were not done.

Don Odell suggested that when the time comes to scan the field for possible map producers, the group should be sure to check with JIMAPCO regarding the next generation Capital District map that firm is reportedly developing.

Next Steps: The group saw the next step for map development being a "call for data" in addition to some fieldwork. With regard to the call for data, Bert suggested reaching out to the Mohawk-Hudson Cycling Club for its input. Don Odell suggested that this could be done in the course of a broader effort to canvass interested parties for their input, perhaps with CDTC preparing a one-page writeup on the bike/hike map update effort, describing the various goals of the map (e.g., promoting tourism, raising local awareness of recreational opportunities, promoting safe cycling)

and listing the types of information expected to be included in the map. This sheet could be sent to advocacy groups, "outdoor-oriented" organizations, bike clubs and the like, in addition to the Task Force mailing list. Don and Steve Allocco will work on putting together such a "pitch" sheet; Steve will draft some sort of outreach mechanism (a letter or an activity writeup) to send to potential "new players" in the Task Force's work.

In light of the aforementioned concerns regarding the length of time it could take to compile all the data desired for the regional map, it was suggested that it may be necessary to commission another reprint of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail map, such that agencies will be prepared for the wave of requests for maps they typically get starting in early Spring. Steve will look into the reprint logistics with Argus Press, which printed both runs of the map to date.

Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail Maintenance

The Albany County Hudson River Waterfront Strategy study effort raised the concern that the condition of the Trail is not consistent from one community to the next, and suggested that there might be the need for a mechanism such as a "trail maintenance organization" established for the purpose of managing the Trail. The Task Force has discussed the topic of Trail maintenance in the past; in addition, it has noted the need for consistency of signage, distance markings and other informational treatments from community to community.

General Sense: The group considered the question of whether it should take the opportunity to provide input to the Waterfront Strategy effort on this subject. There was interest in investigating current maintenance practices and perhaps putting together a resource paper framing some of the group's key concerns regarding trail management.

Discussion Snippets:

- the City of Albany and the Towns of Colonie and Niskayuna seem to be the leaders of the group with regard to Trail maintenance
- in addition to routine maintenance needs, high water levels in the spring leave mud and silt deposits on the Trail; timely springtime plowing and sweeping would be desirable
- while raising a concern regarding creating a new bureaucracy, the trail maintenance organization idea does have its merits, for "the present system is not working"
- the group's present understanding of responsibilities for maintenance of each section of the Trail is as follows:
 - City of Albany section maintained by the City

- Albany County is responsible for the sections of the Trail not in Albany or the Town of Colonie (that is, the Menands, Watervliet, Green Island and Cohoes sections)
- Colonie maintains the sections within its borders
- Niskayuna and Rotterdam maintain the sections within their borders
- Schenectady County is responsible for the non-Niskayuna, non-Rotterdam sections within the County
- it would be interesting to find out what each community with Trail maintenance responsibilities does along these lines
- with Trail pavement condition generally good (even the unpaved section in Cohoes is fairly comfortable), signage could be the biggest issue in enhancing the Trail experience. As noted in the past, types of signage which might be desirable include navigational signage both along the Trail ("Niskayuna 5 Miles") and on nearby streets ("Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail →") and destination-oriented informational signage ("Lions Park," "Entering City of Albany").
- there is also a "coordination" concern for the Trail, as in addition to being "its own entity" the Mohawk-Hudson Trail is part of the Canal System, is adjacent to a number of municipal parks or other recreational areas, and can be used to access various natural or cultural features (e.g., Cohoes Falls, Saratoga County Heritage Trail System, RiverSpark Cohoes Visitors' Center)

Improving Access to Hudson Segment of Mohawk-Hudson Trail

The Albany County Hudson River Waterfront Strategy study effort also raised the concern that local access to the Trail is hindered by obstacles such as I-787 and the Port of Albany.

General Sense: The Task Force considered this issue and was of the mind that while Menands and Watervliet in particular are indeed largely separated from the Trail by I-787, it is difficult to argue that this is preventing people in these communities from using the Trail. Furthermore, it was noted that while there are some locations along the Trail where people may travel for a significant distance before reaching another access point (e.g., roughly 3 1/3 miles between the Colonie Street (Albany) parking lot and the Broadway access at 4th Street in Watervliet), it is difficult to argue that this necessitates somehow providing intermediate access points by use of new bridges, tunnels or such other means.

Alternative Issue: The group did however note that there is a related issue of access worth taking on, centered on the question of how to make optimal use of existing access points. For example,

signage or pavement markings clarifying where the Trail accesses are, such that people would find it easier to get from Broadway in downtown Albany to the Trail, would be desirable. Also, navigating the on-street portions of the Trail system (in Cohoes or Schenectady, as examples) could be easier with better trailblazer signage or route maps. This seemed to be the extent of the group's potential interest in getting involved with the larger discussion of promoting Trail access under the Waterfront Strategy effort.

Spot Improvement Program Candidate Solicitation/Review (new issue not in mailout)

The group was asked for its thoughts on two issues regarding the Spot Improvement Program:

- what if any guidance should be set forth in the call for proposals with regard to eligible project types, maximum project costs and other such parameters
- how the Task Force might provide some form of review or comment on proposals to guide CDTC staff evaluations and prioritizations of proposals

General Sense: With regard to project eligibility, the group felt it more important to see to it that the call letter express the intent of the Program clearly than that it explicitly identifies eligible and ineligible activities. (The proposals would still be subject to any eligibility guidelines applying to federal aid funding.) This would allow the maximum degree of creativity in proposal development, by not foreclosing (by exclusion from an "eligible activities" listing) any innovative approaches to enhancing the bicycle and/or pedestrian travel environments.

As for the question of whether to establish a "maximum project cost" value, the group felt this was not advisable. Especially in light of the fact that the first solicitation of proposals will be for use of about \$125,000 in funds, specifying a project cost cap could unduly "bracket" the possibilities, such that very few submissions could come in. (Proposers would under such circumstances be considering not only a maximum cost but some minimum cost to make pursuit of a funding application worthwhile; if this range is too narrow, it could be difficult to come up with attractive project candidates.)

With regard to proposal review, the group concurred with the suggestion that proposal review was essentially a staff task; if time permits, Task Force review and comment could be included in the process.

Note on Technical Basis of Proposal Review: CDTC staff reviews could include compilation of data which provide context to proposals, possibly including traffic volumes, accident histories, letters of support, contributions to regional goals and so on. In addition, CDTC staff could conduct some objective technical analysis of the proposals, should the Task Force wish to see such evaluations. The methodology used for evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian-oriented candidates for the 1997-2002 TIP (which calculated values for potential [1]"market" for bike/ped travel, [2]cost effectiveness, [3]safety benefit and [4]emissions reductions) could arguably be

applied, but there is a staff concern that depending on what the proposed projects are, it might be difficult to capture the benefits of a "spot" project with a regional evaluation tool.

Transportation Enhancements Program Candidate Review Procedure (new issue)

The group was also asked for its thoughts on the evaluation basis for the upcoming first round of the Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) to proceed under TEA-21. One element of this TEP which differs from the way it operated under ISTEA lies in metropolitan planning organizations' (MPOs) having the responsibility to prioritize TEP proposals within their areas. The MPOs will then submit their prioritized lists to NYSDOT, and the statewide Transportation Enhancements Advisory Committee (TEAC) will select a slate of high-priority projects to recommend to the Commissioner of Transportation for funding.

With this new approach to the TEP, there is a need to identify a basis for precisely prioritizing proposals. ("Precisely" as opposed to the approach applied to the TEP during the ISTEA era, in which an MPO "recommendation" was all that was required, with the strength of this recommendation established in the CDTC process based on the number of affirmative answers to an eight-question review of each proposal.) This prioritization is complicated by the fact that the TEAC will be receiving project prioritization lists from the NYSDOT regional offices, and there is a question as to whether such regional offices as Region 1, which serves as the MPO for two counties in addition to encompassing an area including both the Adirondack-Glens Falls Transportation Council (AGFTC) and CDTC areas, will submit single lists for their entire areas.

General Sense: If it is ultimately the way evaluation will work, the group was comfortable with the idea of pursuing a process similar to that used in evaluating bicycle and pedestrian-related candidates as described in the "*Note on Technical Basis of Proposal Review*" section of the Spot Improvement Program review discussion above. Beyond this, the Task Force seems willing to defer to CDTC staff judgement on what methodology would be appropriate. Regardless of the evaluation approach ultimately applied, the group concurred with the suggestion that a dynamic similar to that suggested for the Spot Improvement Program proposal review above was appropriate: review would be a staff task, with Task Force review and comment if time permits.

Note on Status: Subsequent to the meeting, CDTC and NYSDOT Region 1 staff have had some early discussions of prioritization concepts. The key concern articulated by CDTC staff to date has been that if there is only to be one combined list submitted for the full set of proposals received by all three reviewing agencies within Region 1, this prioritization needs to be as objective as possible, with little or no room for flexibility in the "scoring" which would be applied. (The TEP Guidebook appears to indicate that multiple lists are permitted in such cases.) The TEP Guidebook (available from NYSDOT's Web site: www.dot.state.ny.us) sets forth a conceptual approach for local review based on the procedure which the TEAC will apply; the problem with this approach as presented is that it does not include comprehensive, objective "point systems" for scoring (although it does suggest for some categories that either "yes/no" or "sliding scale" point assignment bases could be used), nor does it indicate how to relatively

prioritize the different attributes factored into that review (e.g., the weight of "benefit to region and environment" versus that for "relationship to other plans and projects").

CDTC staff will continue to explore issues of review and prioritization with NYSDOT Region 1 and AGFTC.

Comparison of Regional Bike/Ped Plan with TIP to Identify Project Elements/Free-Standing Projects

The Task Force's 1995 "Making the Capital District More Bicycle- and Pedestrian-Friendly: A Toolbox and Game Plan" report included an appendix presenting an examination of those projects on the 1994-99 TIP which were to go into the design stage between the 1995-96 and 1997-98 program years and which had some potential for bicycle and/or pedestrian components. The examination offered some indications of what might be done within the scopes of the subject projects to more fully incorporate bicycle and pedestrian travel into the region's transportation system.

The question was put to the group as to whether such an effort should be pursued once again, as a way of continuing to help agencies holding jurisdiction over our roadways envision how to bicycle and pedestrian travel might be integrated into their projects. As conceived, this time around the effort would have a broader approach, with the aim being to consider TIP projects both against the Priority Bicycle/Pedestrian Network (to see how development of this network could be "helped along") and against the Task Force report's more general discussions (dealing with matters such as destination treatments, improving known "problem locations" and so on). In addition, the goal would be not only to identify possible TIP project elements, but also to identify possible free-standing projects for future Enhancement Program, Spot Improvement Program and flexible funding candidates.

General Sense: The group saw this task as desirable, but noted that it would be very important to have the local advocacy community (bicycle and pedestrian, environmental/open space, et cetera) involved in the effort. (This point segues well with the subject of the next section, that of the future of the Task Force.) Toward this end, aggressive outreach efforts should take place, utilizing both the CDTC process and those of other organizations such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Future of the Task Force (new item raised by Don Odell during the meeting)

In the latter part of the New Visions effort and again as the Task Force has resumed its periodic meetings, those in attendance have primarily been people who were there "on the clock;" that is, planners and other professionals who could charge time to participating in the meetings. Holding meetings after hours at locations on the bus lines did not enhance citizen participation. Considering this reality in light of all that the Task Force has to do, Don Odell raised the point that having advocates and other citizen members regularly participating in the group's work will

be critical to its credibility. He noted that if the meetings regularly consisted of the same few professionals (usually Don Robertson, Bert Schou and himself) and Ivan Vamos (a professional, but participating primarily while "wearing his bicycle advocate's hat"), the Task Force's recommendations would not be likely to carry much weight around the CDTC table, for they would not reflect true citizen participation. Some thought will need to be given to how to "re-energize" citizen participation in the Task Force's work; early ideas on how this could take might include requiring a reaffirmation of desire to participate (i.e., "clearing out" the Task Force rolls and sending out letters asking people to once again join the group) and instituting a meeting attendance requirement (e.g., "miss two consecutive meetings and you will be removed from the Task Force list"). Recognizing that public participation is an important part of the CDTC process, and that varying situations may make it difficult to establish absolute requirements for participation, mailing list members are asked to give some thought to the question of how to draw the advocacy community in particular into the process.

It should be noted that while the "reapplication" and "attendance requirement" suggestions set forth above are more administrative in nature than anything else, suggestions on Task Force activities which would draw people into the process (that is, tasks which would trigger "now that seems like something worth working on" reactions) are also desired.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Don Odell and Steve Allocco to work on one-page writeup on bike/hike map update effort.
2. Steve to work on outreach mechanism (letter or activity writeup) to be sent to potential "new players" in Task Force work (e.g., advocacy community, outdoor groups).
3. Steve to contact Argus Press regarding the possibility of doing another small run of Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail maps to cover 1999 needs.
4. Steve to contact the principals of the Waterfront Study regarding the Task Force's discussions of issues raised by the Study (and regarding the Task Force's willingness to provide input to the ongoing Waterfront effort).
5. Steve to draft letter to municipalities with responsibility for Mohawk-Hudson Trail maintenance regarding their Trail maintenance activities/budgets (the latter if any).
6. Mailing list members are asked to consider the question of how to revitalize the Task Force.
7. Next Meeting: **Tuesday, February 2, 1999, 4:00 to 6:00 PM**, CDTC offices, 5 Computer Drive West, Colonie.