



Capital District Trails Plan Implementation 2020-21

Introduction

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is initiating a program to support a feasibility study(ies) to develop new multi-use trails in the Capital Region. This new program is designed to implement the *Capital District Trails Plan* which was released in 2019. This Plan outlines a vision for developing a 300-mile regional trail network. This network is part of the region’s long range transportation plan, *New Visions 2040*. CDTC has set an ambitious goal of constructing 10 miles of trail per year in order to develop this seamless, connected network by 2040. CDTC will make up to \$75,000 in Federal Planning funds available to eligible project sponsors to conduct a consultant-led feasibility study for constructing a trail(s) connection recommended in the *Capital District Trails Plan*.

*The Capital District Trail System attracts about **1.7 million visits annually**. The implementation of the Trails Plan is projected to attract an **additional 1.1 million visits** and could remove 17,4900 peak-hour vehicle trips. A 300-mile network would have an impact of **\$48.9 million** per year in total economic activity in the region.*

Rate of Multi-Use Trail Construction		
	Current	Target
Miles of trails that need to be constructed annually	7.0	10.0
Number of years to full build out / implementation complete based on miles of trails constructed annually	28.5	20.0

The CDTC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for regional transportation planning in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties with the exception of the Town of Moreau and the Village of South Glens Falls in Saratoga County. CDTC’s adopted long range plan, *New Visions 2040*, and the planning and investment principles within the plan, reflect a strong regional consensus that quality of life, mobility, and economic vitality in the region are linked and dependent on creating a multi-modal transportation system. CDTC has supported many successful trail planning and development efforts throughout the Capital Region.

The anticipated completion of the Empire State Trail at the end of 2020 creates opportunities for developing new trail connections off-road, along roads, and on-road. When completed, the Empire State Trail will be a continuous 750-mile route spanning the state from New York City to Canada and Buffalo to Albany, creating the longest multi-use state trail in the nation. The Capital Region is at the cross-roads of this incredible trail and stands to benefit from new trail-related tourism and economic activity. CDTC’s goal is to leverage the trail in such a way that creates new economic, recreation, and mobility opportunities for all Capital Region communities.

Capital District Trails Plan

The *Capital District Trails Plan* was released in 2019. This Plan was an update to the 2007 *Tech Valley Trails* greenway vision for the Capital Region. It accompanies the *Regional Trail Perspectives* report that



summarizes opinions about trails, who uses trails, and how many people were using trails in 2006 and 2016. All of these documents and reports can be found at www.cdcmpo.org/trails. From the 2016 trail survey initiative, CDTC has comprehensive trail count data for 22 locations on 9 trails, which it has used to develop trail profiles of the region's major multi-use trails.

The 2019 *Capital District Trails Plan* includes 5 components:

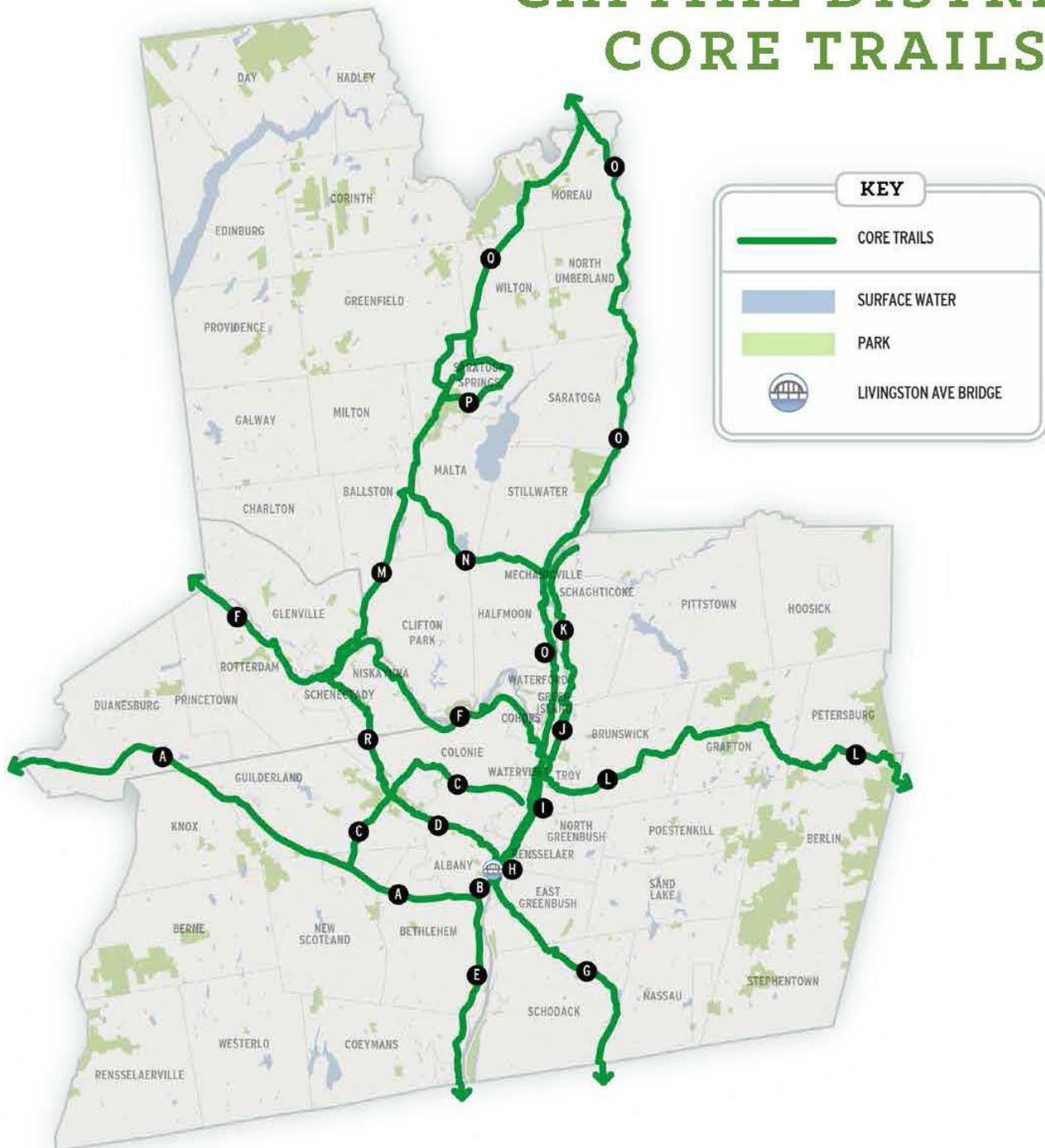
1. Regional greenway & trails visions
 - a. A seamless connected system of 18 core trails and 34 supporting trails
 - b. Each trail is mapped and described in details on pages 27 - 47
2. Regional economic impact analysis of greenways & trails
 - a. Impacts & costs of trail construction & maintenance
 - b. Impact of trails on property values
 - c. Impact of sales of trail-related goods & services
 - d. Spending by trail users
 - e. Tourism & overnight trips related to the trails
 - f. Equity of economic benefits & impacts
3. Best practices for trail management & maintenance
4. A branding & marketing plan for the region's trail system
 - a. Artwork & logo design
 - b. Wayfinding & signage examples
 - c. Marketing strategy
5. Imagery & videos captured by drones

Full implementation of the *Capital District Trails Plan* is projected to cost \$154M. A screening and prioritization matrix has been developed in order to assist decision makers in establishing priority projects. This matrix uses the 4 criteria for projects listed below. However, additional information including local support and advocacy, availability of resources including funding, right-of-way, and coordinating with other programs and related capital improvement projects will be among the factors that will advance a trail project forward toward completion in a timely manner.

1. **Transportation potential:** The Potential Peak PM Traffic Bike Trips per Trail Mile represents the transportation modeling results for the potential use of the proposed trail network. These ratings represent the relative magnitude of potential peak hour commute trips of 10 miles or less that would have access to the proposed trail (note: this does not represent demand).
2. **Population served:** The Population Served per Mile of Trail represents the average population density (by census tract) per linear mile of trail.
3. **Environmental Justice:** The Relative Proximity to Environmental Justice Area represents the relative extent to which the trail runs through an environmental justice area or is connected to an environmental justice area.
4. **Project Readiness:** The Project Readiness for Development represents the overall status of the trail project in terms of planning, design, funding commitment and availability of right-of-way.



CAPITAL DISTRICT CORE TRAILS





Capital District Core Trails: Prioritization Screening Tool

Map Key	Trail Identification	Primary Type	Miles Open to the Public	Total Miles	Potential Peak PM Traffic Bike Trips Per Trail Mile	Population Served Per Trail Mile	Relative Proximity to Environmental Justice Area	Project Readiness for Development	Initial Priority Level
B	South End Bikeway Connector	On-Road	0	1.5	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	I
I	South Troy Riverfront Bikeway	On-Road	1.1	2.3	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	I
J	Uncle Sam Bike Trail	Off-Road	4.2	4.2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●	I
R	Schenectady Park Connector	On-Road	1.5	7	●●●	●●●	●●●	●	I
D	Patroon Greenway	Off-Road	0	8.8	●●●	●●●	●●	●	II
G	Albany Hudson Electric Trail (AHET)*	Off-Road	0	15.6	●●●	●●	●	●●●	II
H	Rensselaer Riverwalk / RPI Trail	Off-Road	2.3	5.1	●●●	●●	●●	●●	II
C	Albany Loop	On-Road	0	15.2	●●●	●●●	●	●	II
F	Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail*	Off-Road	39.7	41.1	●	●●	●●	●●●	II
P	Saratoga Greenbelt Trail	Off-Road	9.6	17.9	●●	●●	●	●●●	II
A	Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail	Off-Road	8.7	31.1	●	●●	●	●●●	II
N	Zim Smith Trail	Off-Road	8.7	15.7	●	●●	●	●●●	II
M	Ballston Veterans Bike Trail	Off-Road	3.4	12.5	●●	●●	●	●	III
Q	Wilton-Moreau Trail	Off-Road	0	16.1	●●	●●	●	●	III
E	Hudson Northway	On-Road	0	11.7	●	●	●●	●	III
O	Champlain Canal Trail*	Off-Road	11.4	44.5	●	●	●	●●	III
K	River Road	On-Road	0	10	●	●	●	●	III
L	River to Ridge Path	On-Road	0	28.6	●	●	●	●	III

* Part of Empire State Trail



Eligibility

To be eligible for this program, proposed projects must be directly related to the implementation of the *Capital District Trails Plan*. The purpose of the program is to provide critical support to local governments to develop plans and studies that are needed between the concept plan and detailed engineering steps of a trail construction project. Any proposal must focus on the feasibility of constructing one of the 18 core trails identified in the Capital District Trails Plan and produce evidence that the trail is a viable project. For the purposes of this program, CDTC refers to a paved path or form of infrastructure that supports multiple transportation opportunities, such as walking, bicycling, inline skating, and people with mobility assistance devices. Eligible proposals can include:

- Framework for development of a trail, including a physical plan and recommendations for designing and implementing a trail and its associated facilities
- Official mapping – identifying trail alignments
- Evaluation of alternative route scenarios for a trail
- Assess potential routes for critical barriers and opportunities for constructing a trail
- Identifying connections between existing core trails and new supporting trails and/or activity centers (i.e. employment, entertainment, recreation)
- Concept plan illustrating the trail location and all associated design features (i.e. parking trailheads, landscaping, bike racks)
- Cost estimate for trail construction

Eligible projects must also demonstrate the capacity to implement the project, such as support from the public and/or elected officials, inter-municipal cooperation, and experience planning and constructing multi-use trails. If you have questions about the eligibility of a potential project, please contact Jen Ceponis of the CDTC staff via email at jceponis@cdtcmpo.org or at (518)458-2161.

Ineligible Projects

This program is for trail planning initiatives. The objective is to provide support to local governments to develop the necessary documents and materials between the concept and detailed engineering steps of a trail project. The following are not eligible for funding assistance:

- Right-of-way acquisition
- Detailed engineering
- Surveying
- Complementary infrastructure design (ex. bridge, culvert, and other stormwater maintenance)
- Construction of a trail facility (ex. trailhead or paved path)
- Any capital project
- Wayfinding plans
- Active Transportation (bicycle and/or pedestrian) plans or studies for a town/city/village
- Evaluation or planning for hiking or recreation trails
- NEPA, SEQR, or other environmental review or regulatory processes



Eligible Project Sponsors

Eligible sponsors must be public entities within CDTC's planning area. The following are eligible to apply for funding:

- Preferred sponsors are towns, cities, villages, and counties
- Other sponsors may include State agencies or non-government entities such as non-profits and public authorities (with a letter of support from the municipality or municipalities in which the study is located)
- Inter-municipal initiatives are encouraged

Planning Assistance

Planning assistance will be provided through a consultant under contract to CDTC. The consultant will be solicited for by CDTC on behalf of the project sponsor following joint development of a detailed scope of work. CDTC staff assistance will be provided to administer the consultant contract and to support the planning process. All funding sources must be identified in the application.

Project sponsors must document in-kind staff services on tasks including meeting coordination, the public involvement process, document review, etc. including the number of hours and hourly rates.

Funding Availability and Schedule

CDTC is making up to \$75,000 available in consultant budget from federal planning funds to support the implementation of the Capital District Trails Plan. This program is identified as Task 4.68 Capital District Trails Plan Implementation in the CDTC 2020-21 Unified Planning Work Program. These funds became available on April 1, 2020. **If the project sponsor does not execute the Memorandum of Understanding with CDTC by March 31, 2021, awarded funds will be forfeited.**

Trail feasibility studies must be completed within 20 months of April 1, 2020. Should the project be delayed, the following milestones will apply:

- Within 1 year – hire a study consultant and have a kick-off meeting.
- Within 2 years – 50% of the study scope of work completed by the consultant.
- Within 3 years – 100% of the study scope of work completed by the consultant. This does not include legislative adoption of the study findings.

If a sponsor fails to meet the project milestones, an explanation for the delay and a request for an extension must be provided to CDTC's Planning Committee. If a sponsor fails to make a request, awarded funds will be forfeited.

Due to the uncertainty regarding the availability of federal planning funds in 2021, CDTC reserve the right to cancel Task 4.68 projects funded through this solicitation at any time prior to contracting with a consultant. Should CDTC cancel a funded project, that project will be given the first opportunity to compete for funds when the next funding becomes available.



Cost Estimates and Match Requirements

Sponsors must provide a cost estimate for the feasibility study in their submissions. The maximum total study cost for consultant efforts is \$100,000 including a minimum 25% local cash match (\$75,000 in federal funds matched with \$25,000, in local cash match). In-kind service cannot be used to meet the minimum 25% local cash match requirement. **However, any local in-kind services (including meeting coordination, the public involvement process, document review, etc.) must be documented and provided to CDTC including the number of hours and hourly rates.** There is no minimum total study cost and federal funds are capped. Note:

- The availability of the local cash match must be documented in the letter of intent to be included with the submission (see page 8). Sponsors should ensure the agreed to local cash match is in their 2020 or 2021 budgets as the local share will be invoiced by CDTC.
- Overmatches may be provided in the form of additional local cash or in-kind services. Additional credit will be given to projects with overmatches in the project selection process.
- Total consultant study costs may exceed \$100,000 IF the sponsor pools Task 4.68 funds with funds from other grant sources. Such grant sources should be identified in the study submission.

CDTC reserves the right to confirm or modify all cost estimates based on past experience with administering planning studies. For 2020-21, this action will be undertaken as step two of the evaluation process (see the project selection section on page 9 for details).

Local Action on Feasibility Study

The objective of this program is to implement the *Capital District Trails Plan*. This plan is part of CDTC's adopted long range transportation plan, *New Visions 2040*. CDTC has set an ambitious goal of constructing 10 miles of trail per year in order to realize the vision of a regional trail network. Sponsors must take action to indicate their willingness to continue to work through important processes, like regulatory processes, design and engineering, to implement the trail and recommendations of the feasibility study. Study sponsors should be prepared to formally endorse or accept the findings of the study through a resolution from the legislative body adopting the study.



Submission Instructions

The submission (excluding what is required below), should be as brief and concise as possible. **Deadline for receipt of completed submissions is the close of business (5:00 PM EST), Friday, August 7, 2020. An electronic copy should be submitted via email to iceponis@cdtcmpo.org.** Incomplete submissions will not be considered for funding.

The following must be included in all submissions:

1. A letter of intent which commits the community/sponsor(s) to the 25% local cash match, local in-kind services, and to the project, signed by the lead elected official. For proposals from non-governmental entities, a letter of support from the municipality in which the study is focused is required.
2. Letters of support from key stakeholders, such as owners of right-of-way and other organizations contributing to the study.
3. Project Name.
4. Primary contact person information including name, title, street address, email address and phone number.
5. A detailed project description including:
 - a. The Core Trail from the *Capital District Trails Plan* that is subject to the proposed study
 - b. Identify a missing gap in the regional network that the proposed project would complete and how this would enhance regional mobility and connectivity
 - c. An outline of the scope of work including a task list, desired deliverables, and a discussion as to how the sponsor will implement the proposed project
 - d. Maps
6. Disadvantaged populations (i.e. minority, people with low incomes, people who have disabilities, etc.) must be engaged in the planning process. Describe how this will be accomplished.
7. If the proposal has been identified in completed plans or studies, other than the *Capital District Trails Plan*, provide the name of the plan and a description of the specific recommendation(s) to be further explored.
8. Provide documentation to demonstrate a funding commitment for a related trail construction project, if applicable
9. Provide the estimated cost of the study using the guidelines on page ten (10). All sources of funding for items in 2 and 4 should be identified.
10. Include in an appendix of supporting materials (evidence of related past planning efforts related to the proposed trail) to help CDTC understand the status of, context of and local commitment to the proposed project.



Sample Proposed Project Budget:

1. Consultant Budget Requested from CDTC	
Federal planning funds requested (75%)	\$75,000
Local cash match (25% required)	\$25,000
Section 1 Total	\$100,000
2. Add-On (if applicable)	
Additional cash match	\$10,000
Source: City Budget	
Additional grant funds to be pooled for a larger effort	\$0
Source:	
Section 2 Total	\$10,000
Total Consultant Budget (sum of Sections 1 and 2)	\$110,000
4. Local in-kind staff contributions:*	\$10,000

*Does not count toward the local cash match

Project Selection

This program is competitive and will involve a three step project selection process:

- Step 1: Submissions will be screened to ensure they are complete and meet all program requirements as described in this solicitation. Incomplete submissions and those that do not meet the program requirements will not be considered for funding.

- Step 2: CDTC staff will review the project description proposed for each project and the estimated budget. If the budget is not adequate for the desired scope of work, CDTC staff will develop an appropriate budget for the project and will reach out to the study sponsor with two choices: 1) increase the local match in proportion to the revised study cost to complete the desired scope of work or 2) reduce the desired scope of work to fit the study budget originally proposed. Project budgets will be confirmed based on CDTC’s extensive experience with consultant work. Once study budgets and scopes have been confirmed for all projects, the submissions will be forwarded on to a review committee for full evaluation.

- Step 3: CDTC, a member of the CDTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), NYS Canal Corporation, and Empire State Trail staff will then evaluate the submissions. CDTC’s Planning Committee will review the evaluation results and funding options. Once approved by the Planning Committee, CDTC’s Policy Board will take action on the recommended study(ies) for incorporation into the 2020-22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The likelihood of study receiving funds will not be known until submissions have been received and evaluated. The evaluation criteria presented below are not presented in order of



importance, however an indication of their relative importance is noted for each criterion.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Is the initiative eligible and consistent with Capital District Trails Plan and the prioritization matrix (see page 2)? What is the need for the project? Is there a sense of urgency? (mandatory and improves priority)
2. Is the proposed scope of work reasonable for the proposed budget (mandatory)?
3. What is the sponsor's plan for implementation? Is the intent to construct the trail? Does the proposal indicate a path for success? (mandatory)
4. Is funding available for a capital project to construct the trail? Is there local commitment to constructing the trail related to the proposed effort? (improves priority)
5. Is the submission supported locally through complementary activities (i.e. active transportation planning and creating non-motorized connections) and/or funding commitments beyond the minimum match requirements? (improves priority)

All proposed projects are required to meet the first three criteria. Addressing the remaining criteria will improve the priority of the submission. The submission(s) that best meets all five evaluation criteria will be considered first for funding.

Notification of Award

Following approval by CDTC's Policy Board, all project sponsors will be notified in writing as to the status of their submissions by August 7, 2020. The sponsor(s) awarded funding will receive and be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU must be signed before CDTC solicits for consultant assistance. The MOU is between CDTC and the study sponsor(s) and articulates the roles and responsibilities of all parties throughout the study process. If the project sponsor does not execute the MOU with CDTC by March 31, 2021, funds will be forfeited.

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 uses an abbreviated approach to consultant selection. Sponsors should be aware that if consultant assistance is used in the preparation of a project proposal or in the development of the scope of work for the study, that consultant will not be eligible for the contract. In addition, a consultant on retainer to a municipality is not guaranteed a study

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contract. The consultant selection process is required to be competitive. CDTC will administer consultant studies to minimize the administrative burden on the municipality.

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

For questions regarding this program, contact Jen Ceponis of the CDTC staff by email at jceponis@cdtcmpo.org.