

## Community Planner Forum

Virtual Meeting Agenda  
March 17, 2022  
9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



- **Welcome**

This meeting was recorded and posted on [CDTC's YouTube channel](#).

Present: Melissa Cherubino, Town of Glenville; Peter Comenzo, Town of Rotterdam; Al Valachovic, Supervisor of Transportation for Schenectady City School District; Ryan Ripper, Town of Wilton; Al Karam, Shenendehowa Central School District Director of Transportation; Anna Feltham, Town of East Greenbush; Cara Sherman, Town of Malta; Catherine Lawson, UAlbany; Ethan Warren, CDTA; Floria Huizinga, Town of Malta; Mark Surdam, Town of Hoosick; Nicole McGrath FHWA; Tina Carton, City of Saratoga Springs; Susan Barden, Saratoga Springs; Lindsey Buck, Stillwater; Mark Castiglione, CDRPC; Kate Maynard, CDRPC; Sean Maguire, Town of Colonie; Lindsey Buck, Town of Stillwater; Chaim Simon, CDTC; Rima Shamieh, CDTC; Chris Bauer, CDTC; Jen Ceponis, CDTC.

- **Presentation: School Transportation Challenges**

Presenters: Al Valachovic, Schenectady Transportation Supervisor  
Alfred Karam, Shenendehowa Transportation Department

Recently there has been a larger, national trend of challenges with providing bussing for several reasons. We're interested in starting a conversation to exchange information and discuss potential solutions and resources. Today we have two school representatives who have graciously agreed to join us today.

**Al Valachovic at Schenectady City School District:** Schenectady City School District covers 25 square miles. We partner with 7 vendors. Population 9,500 students, serve about ½ of them. 332 routes per day, plus after school programs.

Looking at the business operations, what are the vendor issues? The first ½ of year went smoothly, but then one vendor experienced drivers calling out sick, which had an impact on all bussing. Driver retention is also an issue, which is impact by work culture and pay, just like any other industry.

Other issues play in as well, emergency vehicles, garbage trucks can slow down a route. But those are one-offs. Our focus is on having a good relationship with our vendors. We encourage them to recruit parents as drivers and monitors. We got to retain the drivers that we have, do good job to maintain positive atmosphere. Want to see us grow to add another vendor, so we can expand coverage but we just getting the same vendors bidding on our contracts over and over again. We want new businesses to come in so we can grow and get good coverage.

This year we partnered with CDTA to provide 10 routes they're supporting us with to get our kids to school. We're thinking outside the box. Schenectady has done a good job through COVID.

2 additional pieces that will challenge industry, for everyone:

1. Fuel prices
2. Increase in vehicle pricing. The cost of a personal car is up 20-30%. Bus prices are going up, too.

**Alfred Karam from Shenendehowa Central School District:** Shen is 88 sq mi, 10,200 students. 217 buses. All students are eligible for transportation. 277 employees work for the transportation department. We're a large, suburban district, primarily with campus-based schools, 9 are on-campus, 4 are off campus.

Some challenges from the drivers' perspective: Heavy traffic and inattentive drivers are challenging. Construction, landscape vehicles cause obstructions, creates unsafe conditions for our drivers and students. Untrimmed trees, low branches crack windshields, damage tops of buses, overgrown landscapes that result in less than 500 feet of visibility at an intersection have led to crashes when the bus ends up obstructing traffic trying to get a look the cross the intersection.

For the most part, we don't have sidewalks, so we can't organize walk & roll type events. Those modes happen in very limited situations at Shenendehowa.

We need to good relationship with town highway superintendents – how much of network has been plowed and/or salted? We are dependent on Town Highway Supers on clearing the roads during inclement winter weather.

American School Bus Council has reported that every school bus takes 36 cars off the road. Today's buses are cleaner than older busses, far less emissions.

Luckily we haven't had to cancel routes due to driver shortages We have 187 positions but only have 169 drivers, but we fortunately we haven't had to shut down a school or tell parents that a bus won't be able to run.

### **Comments:**

- We talk about safety and vulnerable populations but we don't often talk about school transportation, so it's helpful to think about when we're thinking about design or transportation issues, looking at areas around schools, etc.
- Saratoga Springs has had trouble with an increase in parents dropping students off and having conflicts with walking students because there aren't sidewalks. What guidance is there if you want to extend school zone past where is currently is, to extend a block to make it one-way traffic or not allow traffic during pick up or drop off hours, for example? Are there any requirements for studies or data to determine whether its okay to extend district outside current boundary/ needs to alter street operations (like change 2-way to 1-way), considering these sorts of conflicts?
  - Schenectady: Bus Vendors have asked that we partner with the school principals to manage the drop off/pick up traffic.
  - Shenendehowa: Parent drop offs have tripled. The transportation department worked with campus security, town security, county sheriff's department to manage the traffic because it was backing up in the public roads. Traffic for the north campus was backed up to Route 146.
  - Researching school zones regulations is something CDTC can do and maybe something we can include as we develop the Walk & Roll to School Toolkit.
- Regulatory requirements vary between suburban and urban environments for bussing. CDC can pull together those

- CDTC can help share data and also help make connections between districts and local communities, we can continue to create a forum to engage with each other, share data, share traffic and safety information, we can share data with schools.
- Is there a way to promote the sustainability of bussing instead of driving something to push out to parents?
- In Schenectady, 1 mile bussing qualifies for elementary, 1.5 miles for middle school and high school students. Al would like to see picks ups in certain locations. What are the safety guidelines that would guide the district? How do we provide the transportation safely? Put that in an addendum and detail out how to do it. Put that safety piece in writing as a guideline.
- Did parent drop offs/pick ups increase because of covid? Schenectady hasn't seen a change. Shen said they did see a change. Anecdotal: Saratoga Springs did see an increase last year but this year parents are having their kids use the bus again.

- **2022 Walk & Roll to School Program**

Past Bike to School Challenge is pivoting to become a multi-modal Walk & Roll to School Program, targeting June 1 as the day we're encouraging regional schools to hold their events so they can coincide with this year's Bike to Work Challenge, to be held on June 1

To go along with the new program, we're developing a Walk & Roll to School Toolkit – what organizers will need to create an event, like event notices, timelines, etc.

Also planning to hold an information meeting in late April with past Walk & Roll or Bike to School organizers to speak about their experiences organizing these sorts of events for their schools.

We also have funding this year to hold bike rodeos for school-age kids, to be facilitated by League of American Bicyclist-Certified Instructors.

- **2022 Bike to Work and Ditch the Car Challenges**

This year it will be held on June 1. This year will offer a similar program from past years, with t-shirts and a team structure.

We will hold the second annual Ditch the Car Challenge immediately following the Bike to Work Challenge, beginning on June 4. Like last year, it will be a multi-modal challenge that will focus on non-recreational trips. Designed to push people to think about using modes other than driving alone in their car in order to get to where they need to go.

We're also planning on offering bike safety trainings for adults as well.

- **2022 CDTC/CDRPC Technical Assistance Program**

Mark Castiglione reported that after April 1, CDTC and CDRPC will reopen the Technical Assistance Program for small-scale, local projects that tie back into New Visions 2050. Support is available for things like comprehensive planning, code audits, GIS mapping, trail planning, etc.

- **Future Leaders in Planning ([FLIP](#))**

Kate Maynard reported that the 2019 pilot in partnership with Clean Tech Program, afternoons go to Clean Tech facility in Luther Forest to learn about sustainability. Did in 19 and 21, civic

engagement program for HS students, rising juniors and seniors, expose them early to nat res protection, planning, energy, sustainability. This year, we're looking at UAlbany to hold program., expand from 15 to 30 students and diversify geographically and diversity access to students who are interested. Trying to expand where we can access students. If you're interested, please reach out. How can we get access to students? District-level, BOCES-level, however. If you have ideas, please reach out.

Considering a week in August to hold the 2022 program.

- **Climate Smart Communities Program** (*tent.*)

Mark Castiglione reported that CDRPC was awarded grant to help communities work through the program last year. Contract execution is still pending. Hopefully there will be an update on the program at the next Forum meeting.

- **Census Data Updates**

Mark Castiglione reported that the full census data set has not been released yet but they're making an announcement today. Available data can be accessed on CDRPC website by Census Tract and municipality for decennial data.

Capital Region Indicators website was updated to include the 2020 5-year ACS data, which was just released, and now includes dashboards for every school district and zip code in the greater Capital Region.

- **Training/Workshops**

- [Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit](#), April 18-22, Schenectady
- CDRPC's Planning and Zoning Webinar Series May 4 - June 3, every Wednesday 1-2 pm
- [Walk-Bike New York](#) registration is open. May3-4 in Rochester
- [CDTC 2022 New Visions Learning Series](#) – monthly. Expands on themes and strategies in the plan.
  - March 22 at 3:30 pm: Climate Crisis and How to Plan for a Resilient Transportation System
    - *NOTE: This session was cancelled and will be rescheduled.*
  - April 19 at 3:30 pm: What can your regional planning agency do for you?
- CDTC provides New Visions trainings by request
- [Climate Action Council hearings](#) will be held in April and May to take comments on the Draft Scoping Plan to guide the implementation of the state's Climate Act. There will be an in-person hearing in Albany as well at 2 virtual hearings.
- Visit the **News & Events** Pages on both the [CDTC](#) and [CDRPC](#) websites for additional updates on training and workshops.
- Upstate APA Conference is in-person this year, in Buffalo, Oct 12-14, 2022

- **2022-2023 Unified Planning Work Program**

- **CDTC Planning Updates**

- TIP Update Schedule
  - No meeting on March 23
  - CDTC will program the TIP in April
  - Must have adopted TIP by June, so really have to program by April
- UPWP: 22-23 was adopted in March and will be in effect April 1, 2022- March 31, 2023

New key tasks in the new UPWP:

- Town of Hoosick Asset Management Plan – this is a new type of plan that we haven't done before
- Brunswick Hoosick Road Corridor Study (Linkage Program)
- Sand Creek Road Complete Street Feasibility Study (Linkage Program)
- City of Schenectady Albany & Crane Streets Linkage Study (Linkage Program)
- Health Impacts Assessments (work with local health departments and CDRPC). Look at how health is impacted by transportation
- Resiliency and security planning. We will be collecting information about vulnerable infrastructure and preparing to develop regional adaptation plan
- Capital Coexist is evolving – funds set aside for communities to do demonstrations or pilots based on recommendations from past projects. Also earmarked funds to work with local law enforcement and for bike skills training
- Renaming Bike & Ped Planning as Active Transportation Planning to better reflect modes like scooters and electric assist bikes
- Updates on CDTC Initiatives
  - Ballston Spa Ped & Bike Master Plan Linkage project is complete
  - Scotia Downtown Connections Plan public meeting is scheduled for March 23
  - Final meetings for Patroon Creek Greenway study is taking place this week, final plan in next few months. [www.patrooncreakgreenway.com](http://www.patrooncreakgreenway.com)
  - A summary of all the projects is attached to these notes.

- **Other Regional, State and Local Planning Updates**

We will continue to collect information about other community projects going on in the region so we can all be aware of and engage with project of interest.

Mark Castiglione urges everyone to keep an eye on what the Cannabis Control Board is doing in terms of promulgating the regulations.

- **[Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 16, 9:30 am at the FOCUS Lab, 21 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Troy, NY \(no virtual option available\)](#)**
- **Upcoming meetings (start at 9:30am):** September 15, December 15

*NOTE: CDTC has instituted a policy of providing both an in-person and a virtual option for all committee meetings from now on.*

**STATUS OF CDTC PLANNING INITIATIVES AS OF MARCH 1, 2022**

NAME AND LOCAL SPONSOR	CONSULTANT OR STAFF, PROJECT COST, CDTC CONTACT	FUNDING APPROVAL DATE	STATUS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	PROJECT WEBSITE LINK
<b>LINKAGE PROGRAM</b>					
1. Ballston Spa Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan Village of Ballston Spa	VHB \$60,000 Jacob Beeman	Policy Board Approved 3/5/20	The Final Plan was presented to the Village Board on 1/10/22 and was adopted by the Village. Consultant is working on providing final printed copies of the plan to CDTC and the Village. Once final materials are provided, this study will be considered complete.	March 2022	<a href="https://projects.vhb.com/ballstonspapbmp/default.htm">https://projects.vhb.com/ballstonspapbmp/default.htm</a>
2. Land Use Regulations Update Village of Menands	The Chazen Companies \$80,000 Rima Shamieh	Policy Board Approved 3/5/20	The draft zoning audit and technical review was released in January, 2022. The consultant team drafting the new zoning code and design guidelines.	April 2022	<a href="https://villageofmenands.com/government/land-use-regulations-zoning-update/">https://villageofmenands.com/government/land-use-regulations-zoning-update/</a>
3. Scotia Downtown Connections Plan Village of Scotia	MJ Engineering and Land Surveying \$60,000 Andrew Tracy	Policy Board Approved 3/5/20	Study Advisory Committee meeting #4 held on January 24; feedback received on Draft Concept Report. Consultant is preparing materials for Public Workshop #2.	April 2022	<a href="https://www.scotiacoconnections.com/">https://www.scotiacoconnections.com/</a>
4. Route 4 Corridor Study: Inter-Municipal Update Town of East Greenbush	TBD \$90,000 Chris Bauer	Policy Board Approved 3/4/21	The consultant selection and contracting process has been completed. The project will be initiated in the coming month. CDTC has begun compiling existing conditions data.	February 2023	TBD
5. Rensselaer Waterfront Connectivity Study City of Rensselaer	MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, PC \$60,000 Andrew Tracy	Policy Board Approved 3/4/21	Consultant and CDTC staff preparing existing conditions memo. SAC membership list prepared by City.	December 2022	TBD
6. Federal Street Corridor Study City of Troy	Creighton Manning Engineering \$50,000 Carrie Ward	Policy Board Approved 3/4/21	The consultants are compiling existing conditions. The first Study Advisory Committee is expected to be held in April.	December 2022	TBD

**COMMUNITY PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

1. Regional Growth and Infrastructure Capacity Analysis City of Troy	CDRPC, CDTC and Town Staff \$16,626 Chris Bauer	Planning Committee Approved 11/4/20	CDTC and CDRPC have completed and distributed final versions of the technical memoranda and deliverables; the project is complete.	March 2022	N/A
2. Development Growth Trends Analysis Town of Guilderland	CDTC, CDRPC and Town Staff \$12,765 Chris Bauer	Planning Committee Approved 6/2/21	CDTC and CDRPC distributed finalized drafts of the Development Growth Trends Analyses in December 2021, which were reviewed by the Town. CDRPC is addressing comments from the Town and edits to the memo will be made as needed. CDTC's portion of the project is substantially complete.	March 2022	N/A
3. Development Growth Trends Analysis Village of Castleton-on-Hudson	CDTC, CDRPC and Village Staff \$12,765 Chris Bauer	Planning Committee Approved 11/3/21	CDTC staff developed a Draft Traffic Growth Trends Analyses, and technical memorandum, which were distributed to the Village for review and comment.	March 2022	N/A

NAME AND LOCAL SPONSOR	CONSULTANT OR STAFF, PROJECT COST, CDTC CONTACT	FUNDING APPROVAL DATE	STATUS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	PROJECT WEBSITE LINK
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**COMMUNITY PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (Continued)**

4. Saratoga Greenbelt – Wilton Connector Trail Project  City of Saratoga Springs/Saratoga County/Town of Wilton	CDTC, CDRPC and Municipal Staff \$14,101  Jen Ceponis	Planning Committee Approved 8/4/21	The final Existing Conditions report was completed. The project team is has evaluated the route alternatives and is preparing the final project deliverables.	March 2022	N/A
5. Glenridge Road Pedestrian Connections  Town of Glenville	CDTC, CDRPC and Town Staff \$7,766  Rima Shamieh	Planning Committee Approved 10/6/21	Site reconnaissance is complete. Data is being compiled and summary of findings is being drafted.	March 2022	N/A

**ADDITIONAL CDTC PLANNING INITIATIVES**

1. New Visions 2050  CDTC - Regional	CDTC Staff \$100,000  Jen Ceponis	Included in the 2020-2022 UPWP	CDTC continues to offer the Virtual Learning Series and Virtual Local Government Training. View the schedule and sign up for training at <a href="http://www.cdtcmpo.org/nv2050">www.cdtcmpo.org/nv2050</a> . CDTC is also monitoring mobility trends and will update and amend the plan accordingly. Webinars have been scheduled through April 2022 - 3/22: The Climate Crisis & How to Plan for a Resilient Transportation System; 4/19: What Can Your Regional Planning Agency do for You? More info at: <a href="https://www.cdtcmpo.org/news/nv-webinars">https://www.cdtcmpo.org/news/nv-webinars</a> .	Adopted September 3, 2020	<a href="https://www.cdtcmpo.org/nv2050">https://www.cdtcmpo.org/nv2050</a>
2. ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for Pedestrian Infrastructure	City of Saratoga Springs Program capacity: \$75,000  Carrie Ward	Included in the 2020-2022 UPWP	The advisory committee met mid-February and provided feedback on the data that was collected.	Spring 2022	N/A
3. Patroon Creek Greenway  CDTC and City of Albany	Bergmann Associates \$100,000  Jen Ceponis	Policy Board Approved December 2020	An alignment analysis has been shared with both the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Project Advisory Committee (PAC) which have met to discuss each proposed trail alignment. The consultant team also met with NYSDOT, FHWA, administration at Arbor Hill Elementary School, and other stakeholders, individually, to discuss the proposed alignments and refine route options. The community liaisons will plan and coordinate outreach events for February as it works to finalize the draft report. A survey is currently open to collect public opinions about the trail route alternatives.	March 2022	TBD
4. Bus Lane Feasibility Study  CDTA/CDTC - Regional	Foursquare ITP \$200,000  Sandy Misiewicz	Included in the 2020-2022 UPWP	The third Study Advisory Committee meeting will be held on February 3rd to discuss the Baseline Corridor Assessment and Prioritization, the final draft Phase 1 Public Participation summary and the next Leadership Committee meeting to be scheduled in April. Next steps include finalizing the screening and further developing bus lane concepts.	July 2022	<a href="https://www.buslane study.com/">https://www.buslane study.com/</a>
5. NY 378 Bridge Transportation Scoping/PEL Study  NYSDOT	WSP \$400,000  Susan Olsen, NYSDOT Andrew Tracy	TIP Project A605/R344: NY 378 Troy Menands Bridge Study	The NYSDOT Regional Design Services was used to select the consultant for this effort. Kickoff held Sept 2. Call held on December 16th to discuss Scope of Services.	TBD	TBD
6. Albany County Loop Trail Feasibility Study	CDTC Staff \$30,000  Jen Ceponis	Albany County support contract 12/8/20	CDTC staff met with Albany County staff to discuss next steps to move forward to develop a trail concept plan.	February 2023	N/A
7. Regional Truck Parking Study	CDTC Staff \$137,750  Chris Bauer	Planning Committee Approved 4/7/21	The project team has established regular status update meetings. CDTC staff has begun collecting existing conditions data. The first Study Advisory Committee meeting is expected in March 2022.	February 2023	TBD

NAME AND LOCAL SPONSOR	CONSULTANT OR STAFF, PROJECT COST, CDTC CONTACT	FUNDING APPROVAL DATE	STATUS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	PROJECT WEBSITE LINK
8. Smart Communities Guidebook	WSP \$100,000  Jen Ceponis	Planning Committee Approved 4/7/21	The consultant team completed consultant interviews and which will be used to develop final Toolbox materials.	May 2022	<a href="https://www.cdtcsmartmobility.com/">https://www.cdtcsmartmobility.com/</a>
9. ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for Pedestrian Infrastructure	City of Albany Program capacity: \$75,000  Carrie Ward	Included in the 2020-2022 UPWP	Project partners agreed to redirect data collection efforts toward the consultant team, which is currently interviewing new interns.	Summer 2022	TBD
10. Data Collection Services	Quality Counts, LLC \$40,000  Andrew Tracy	Included in the 2020-2022 UPWP	Quality Counts LLC collected horizontal curve safety data, provided to CDTC. Four traffic count sites were collected in early December to support ongoing planning studies. Remaining sites planned to be collected March 2022.	Spring 2022	N/A