

New Visions 2050 Transit White Paper Summary

To support the development of New Visions 2050, CDTC reestablished a Transit Task Force in May 2019 which was tasked with updating the 2015 Transit White Paper. The update focused on public transit provided by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) as well as other providers of public transportation in the Capital Region. The Task Force met bi-monthly to review the status of transit recommendations in the current regional plan, review what has changed since the current plan was adopted and develop a new set of recommendations to be considered for incorporation into the new plan. Transit data, regional transit system changes, demographic data, development scenarios and federal transit performance measures were all considered. The updated Transit White Paper will support the update of New Visions and the Capital District Transportation Authority's (CDTA) Transit Development Plan.

Transit Planning Principle

The desired land use scenario for transit is one that includes concentrated development patterns. Improving transit service, making transit more accessible and keeping it affordable are all basic principles that the region should adopt as part of New Visions 2050. Therefore, CDTC's Transit Task Force recommends that the transit planning principle be updated as follows:

Innovative and viable transportation services support concentrated development by providing equitable access to reliable and affordable transportation.

The future transit system will:

- *Be an essential element of the region's social, economic, and cultural fabric*
- *Provide high quality fixed route transit in core areas of the region*
- *Reduce congestion, improve air quality, and save energy*
- *Form the backbone for managing travel demand*
- *Provide essential mobility for those who do not operate a private vehicle*

Transit Performance Measures

Federal transportation law requires transit performance measures for Asset Management and Safety. As part of a performance-based approach, CDTC must link its project priorities identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with achievement of its performance targets and to develop a Transit Asset Management plan. CDTC and CDTA must use performance measures to document expectations for future performance. In addition to federal performance measures, CDTC established transit system performance measures for CDTA in New Visions 2040 and monitor transit access, ridership, service quality and cost effectiveness.

CDTA's fixed route transit service has been shown to have a fleet that is beginning to age. In addition, while access to transit increased slightly since 2015 likely due to recent population growth and consolidation of services in areas of concentrated development, ridership, cost effectiveness and service

quality have declined. This indicates that the current fixed route transit system is strained but has yet to see the impact of new services that will be operational in the next three years.

Progress on New Visions 2040 Recommendations

The region made progress on a number of recommendations in the 2015 Transit White Paper that was incorporated into New Visions 2040. Recommendations that were completed or had significant progress included the following:

- The River Corridor (Blue Line) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is in construction and the Washington/Western Avenue Corridor (Purple Line) BRT is in design.
- Articulated buses were reintroduced on BusPlus and trunk routes.
- Commuter coaches are now provided on all express routes.
- CDTA continues to review route performance to allocate resources to keep strong transit routes strong.
- CDTA has expanded its Universal Transit Access Program to three new partners since 2015 and is incorporating bike share into the services offered.

Strategies and Actions

CDTA Initiatives

1. Update and Implement the Transit Development Plan
2. Complete and Upgrade 40 Miles of Bus Rapid Transit
3. Study the Feasibility of Bus Lanes and Future BRT Lines
4. Communicate Land Use Impacts on Transit
5. Support State Worker and Large Employer Transportation Options
6. Develop and Monitor Transit Related Pilot Programs
7. Plan for an Albany Intermodal Center and Additional Transit Centers
8. Invest in a Safe and Sustainable Transit Fleet
9. Plan for Montgomery County Transit Service
10. Explore the Need for a Consolidated CDTA Facility
11. Develop an App for Public Transportation Services
12. Explore Conversion of Enhanced BRT to Light Rail

CDTC Initiatives

1. Adopt Consolidated Performance Measures for Transit
2. Revise Transit Priority Network and Merit Scoring Process
3. Develop a Transit Access Toolkit
4. Develop a Regional Parking Policy Guide
5. Support Replacement of the Livingston Avenue Bridge
6. Support High Speed Rail and Electrification