

IN MOTION



Newsletter of the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Metropolitan Planning Organization for New York's Capital Region

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2016 REGIONAL TRAIL PERSPECTIVES

Last summer the Capital District Transportation Committee launched an update to the 2006 *Regional Trail Perspectives*, which itself was a follow-up to the 1997 document *The Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail & Its Impacts on Adjoining Residential Properties*, and the 1998 document *Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail: Analysis of Trail Use, Regional Benefits & Economic Impact*. All of these previous studies can be found on the CDTC website at www.cdcmpo.org/trails. These previous efforts collected data that helped tell a story about Capital Region trail users and the impacts trails had on residents' lives and property. The reports have been used to support the expansion and enhancement of the region's trail network, which has grown significantly over the last decade.

The 2006 *Regional Trail Perspectives* included three major trails – the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, the Zim Smith Trail, and the Uncle Sam Bikeway. At the time, these trails provided a balanced perspective of trail use and opinions in the Capital Region because they reached all four counties and a wide range of communities, from rural to urban. Six

additional trails were added to the dataset in 2016, including the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail-Trail, Albany Shaker Trail, Delaware Avenue (Black Bridge) Trail, Ballston Veterans Trail, Railroad Run, and Spring Run. These trails are all at least 1 mile in length, paved, and provide essential off-road connections or parallel routes where there are barriers to safe walking or biking.

The 2016 *Regional Trail Perspectives* update included surveys and counts. CDTC coordinated volunteers through its Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and regional trail organizations and community groups to conduct trail user surveys along the nine trails. A longer, online survey was also developed and promoted through social media. Volunteers collected 404 in-person trail surveys and an additional 132 online surveys were completed, for a total of 536 surveys. A total of 550 surveys were mailed to owners of residential properties adjacent to one of the nine multi-use trails. 128 surveys were completed and returned, a response rate of 23.3%.

(Continued on page 4)

Quotable Quote

“If you want bike riders to live, build safer streets. If you want bikeshare to die, require helmets.”
– Janette Sadik-Khan,
Former Commissioner,
NYCDOT

Surveys Conducted

Trail	On-Trail	Online*	Resident Mailed	Resident Returned	Resident Return Rate
Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail	135	99	269	56	20.8%
Zim Smith Trail	21	36	36	17	47.2%
Uncle Sam Bikeway	0	18	85	16	18.8%
Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail	173	47	71	20	28.2%
Railroad Run	47	15	27	10	37.0%
Spring Run Trail	0	4	18	6	33.3%
Albany Shaker Trail	6	12	0	0	0
Ballston Veterans Trail	11	8	40	10	25%
Delaware Avenue Trail / Black Bridge	11	14	4	3	75%
	404	132	550	128	23.3%

* surveys tallied for the trail the respondent visited most



LINKAGE CORNER

CDTC's Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (Linkage Program) continues in 2017 as a key task in the 2016-2018 Unified Planning Work Program. The Linkage Program provides integrated land use and transportation planning assistance to implement the adopted policies of CDTC's New Visions 2040 plan. New Visions 2040 is CDTC's federally required long range regional transportation plan that guides transportation planning and capital project funding decisions in the region.

The foundation of the Linkage Program is the recognition that the region's quality of life, mobility and economic vitality are dependent upon improved local land use planning and on better integration of land use and transportation decision making. Linkage Program strategies seek to:

- Support urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial and/or residential areas
- Improve street connectivity and reduce driveway conflicts through access management
- Enhance and develop activity centers and town centers
- Enhance and develop transit corridors and transit supportive built environments
- Encourage a greater mix and intensity of land uses in municipal centers
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian-friendly site design standards
- Create an integrated multi-modal transportation network

Learn more at

www.cdtcmo.org/linkage.htm.

DELAWARE AVENUE COMPLETE STREETS FEASIBILITY

The Town of Bethlehem has partnered with CDTC to undertake a Complete Streets Feasibility Study for Delaware Avenue, one of Bethlehem's primary commercial and mixed use corridors. A "Complete Street" is a roadway planned and designed to consider the safe, convenient access and mobility of all roadway users of all ages and abilities.

The purpose of this \$60,000 Linkage Study is to develop conceptual street alternatives to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motor vehicle drivers. The study limits extend along Delaware Avenue (NY 443) from Elsmere Avenue to the Normanskill Bridge approaching the City of Albany.

Delaware Avenue in the study area currently consists of a 4 lane and 5 lane roadway carrying about 18,400 vehicles per day, including CDTA's Bus Route 18. There are sidewalks on the south side and part of the north side. The speed limit is 40 miles per hour. From the outset, one alternative being examined is a "Road Diet".

One of the Federal Highway Administration's Proven Safety Countermeasures, a classic Road Diet typically involves converting an existing four-lane, undivided roadway to a three-lane roadway consisting of two through lanes and a center, two-way left-turn lane with the newly available space repurposed for other uses such as bicycle lanes.

The study will:

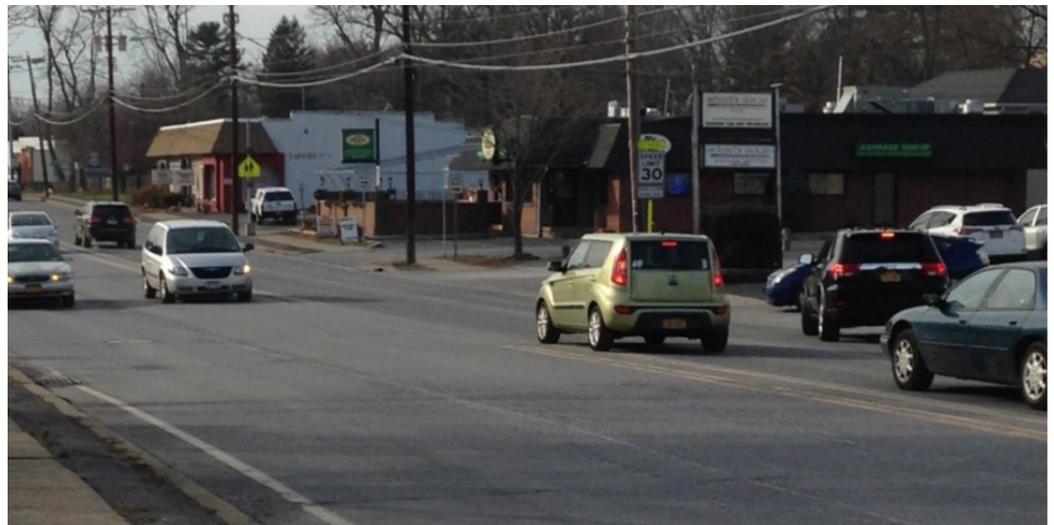
- Create a plan for a more balanced transportation system along Delaware Avenue to
- Enable safe and comfortable ADA compliant access for users of all ages and abilities,
- Include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motor vehicle drivers.
- Ensure an effective public involvement process to engage the community in learning about the benefits and potential tradeoffs of complete streets designs and to gain input on conceptual designs that balance the needs of all roadway users.
- Explore the feasibility of a full range of context-sensitive complete streets elements, including a road diet, to enhance community quality of

life, the local economy, and safety for all users along the corridor and its adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- Continue to implement the Town's goals of fostering a walkable, bikeable and transit friendly community.
- Develop conceptual future roadway designs that are acceptable to the town, its residents and businesses and NYS DOT as the road owner.

Development of study products relies on a technical advisory committee, a study advisory committee, a project website and two major public workshops. Over 110 participants attended the first workshop, held in April at the Bethlehem Town Hall, and provided numerous comments and suggestions for corridor improvements.

The final public workshop will be held this fall to gather input on the draft future roadway alternatives. The consultant for this study is Creighton Manning. The project website is at <https://delawareavecompletestreets.com/>



Typical view of Delaware Avenue near Lincoln Avenue – Photo by CME

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH DATA SET

CDTC has a new data set that shows speeds on Interstate highways and principal arterials. The National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) uses anonymous data from a variety of GPS devices carried by both trucks and cars to record highway speeds. Data is collected under contract with the Federal Highway Administration 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The data will be used to better understand congestion patterns and help manage congestion in CDTC's area.



The CDTC New Visions Plan recognizes that managing traffic flows is critical for the health of the region. There are multiple tools available for managing traffic and the Plan supports a comprehensive approach to traffic management. Some of the major categories of tools include incident management, demand management, intelligent transportation systems (technology), arterial management and land use planning.

Most of the congestion in the Capital District is caused by "non-recurring delay" such as

delay caused by a vehicle crash, a snowstorm or major weather event, or construction. Incident Management is the planned, coordinated process of detecting and removing incidents to restore normal traffic operations as quickly as possible. With a majority of all expressway system delay caused by incidents -- ranging from vehicles with flat tires on shoulders to major crashes -- quick detection and removal are critical to maintaining traffic flows, particularly during peak travel periods.

An important measure of traffic flow is reliability, or consistency of travel time. Non-recurring

delay is unexpected and disrupts plans, while predictable, recurring delay can be more tolerable. The NPMRDS data will be used to measure the reliability of traffic flows on different highways throughout the Capital District.

The Capital Region Transportation Management Center (TMC) is a traffic monitoring and response center operated by the New York State Department of Transportation in partnership with the New York State Police. The TMC, pictured above, is an essential tool for providing incident management services. Reliable and predictable travel are important goals supported by the

TMC. Quick clearance of incidents, management of traffic during construction, and coordination between NYSDOT and emergency service providers are critical to minimizing delays. CDTC strongly supports the TMC.

The Albany Visualization and Informatics Lab (AVAIL) at the University at Albany, under contract with New York State Department of Transportation, is developing a tool to summarize and analyze the NPMRDS data. This tool will be used by CDTC to better understand congestion and to support congestion management in our region.

BIKE TO WORK (AND SCHOOL) RESULTS 2017

CDTC sponsored competitions for Bike to Work Day, May 19th, and Bike to School Day, May 10th. This year, 515 people on 64 teams registered for the challenge, amounting to about 5,500 bicycle miles, replacing about 223 gallons of fuel, 4,400 lbs of CO₂, and together burning about 240,000 calories.

The Winners Are:
In Albany County, the trophy for the most riders goes to the Albany Public Library. BERP had the highest percent participation

(large employer). The highest percent participation (small employer) goes to Parks and Trails New York. BERP's Mike Soucie rode the longest commute. Hamagrael Elementary won the school trophy.

In Rensselaer County, RPI had the most participants and Capital Roots had the highest percent participation (large employer). Matt Brady at RPI won the trophy for the longest commute.

In Saratoga County, the Saratoga

Springs Public Library (two members pictured in optional CDTC-provided T-shirts) had the most riders and the highest percent participation (large employer), and Ken Williams at the Waterford-Halfmoon Central School District wins the trophy for the longest commute. The highest percent participation for a small employer goes to Elan Planning and Design. Lake Avenue Elementary continues to hold onto the school trophy.

Schenectady County's Union College had the most riders. The

large employer with the highest participation is NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The small employer with the highest participation is Land Art Studio NY. Dana Rackliffe of the Von Rollers rode the longest commute.

The City of Cohoes wins the municipal challenge for the highest participation including the mayor or supervisor.



I-787 STUDY UPDATE

Through the winter, the I-787/Hudson River Corridor Study project team further assessed potential short and long term strategies for the study area which begins at I-787 Exit 2 near the Port of Albany and ends at I-787 Exit 9 near Route 7.

The assessment used CDTC's Regional Travel Demand Model to look at the traffic impacts of one long term strategy. It also reviewed transportation facility design guidance for Interstates, arterial roadways and freight rail lines and it documented the potential impacts of sea level rise on various strategies.



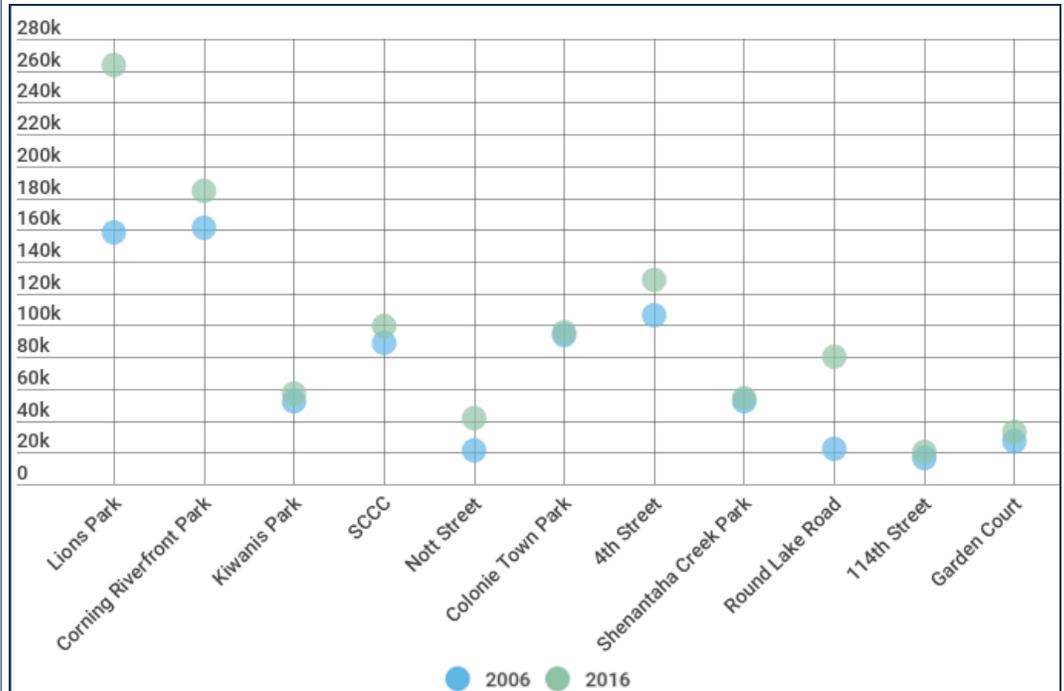
A draft report was developed in May 2017 and is currently in internal review. CDTC, NYSDOT and the City of Albany intend to work with the consultant team and the study advisory committee over the next month to revise the draft report and are tentatively planning on making it available to the public in late June or July 2017.

Once the public meeting date has been set, it will be posted along with the draft report on CDTC's website www.cdtcmpo.org and the project website at <http://787waterfrontstudy.blogspot.com/>.

The project is approaching the finish line and we look forward to your feedback. Questions regarding the project should be directed to Sandy Misiewicz, AICP at 787waterfrontstudy@cdtcmpo.org or call 518-458-2161.

2016 REGIONAL TRAIL PERSPECTIVES (CONT.)

2006 and 2016 Annual Trail Use Estimates



(Continued from page 1)

CDTC contracted with Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) to conduct automated trail counts at 22 locations on the nine multi-use trails throughout the month of September 2016. This was the first time CDTC employed automatic counting technologies to collect bicycle and pedestrian data. PTNY installed Eco Counter PYRO Boxes along the trails for a week at a time.

Additionally, PTNY conducted manual counts in approximately the same locations to observe mode and gender split of trail users and to verify the accuracy

of the technology. PTNY used the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project methodology for the observational counts.

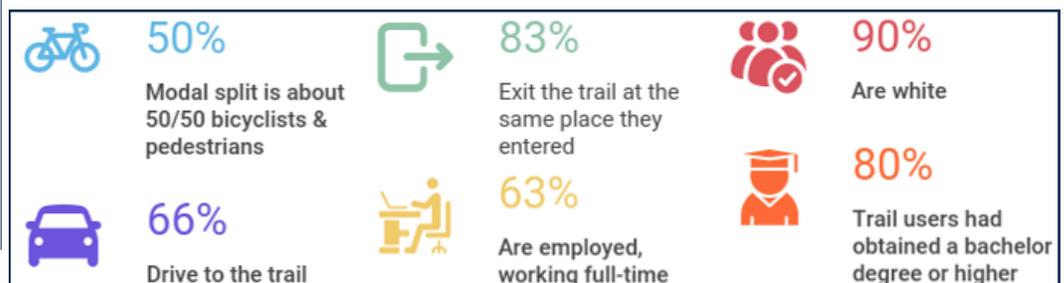
The top five trailheads with the highest usage were:

- Lions Park on the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail (MHBHT) in Niskayuna,
- Barge Restaurant on the MHBHT in Albany,
- Boat Launch on the MHBHT in Albany,
- Hudson Avenue on the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail-Trail in Delmar, and

- Shaker Ridge Country Club on the Albany Shaker Trail in Latham.

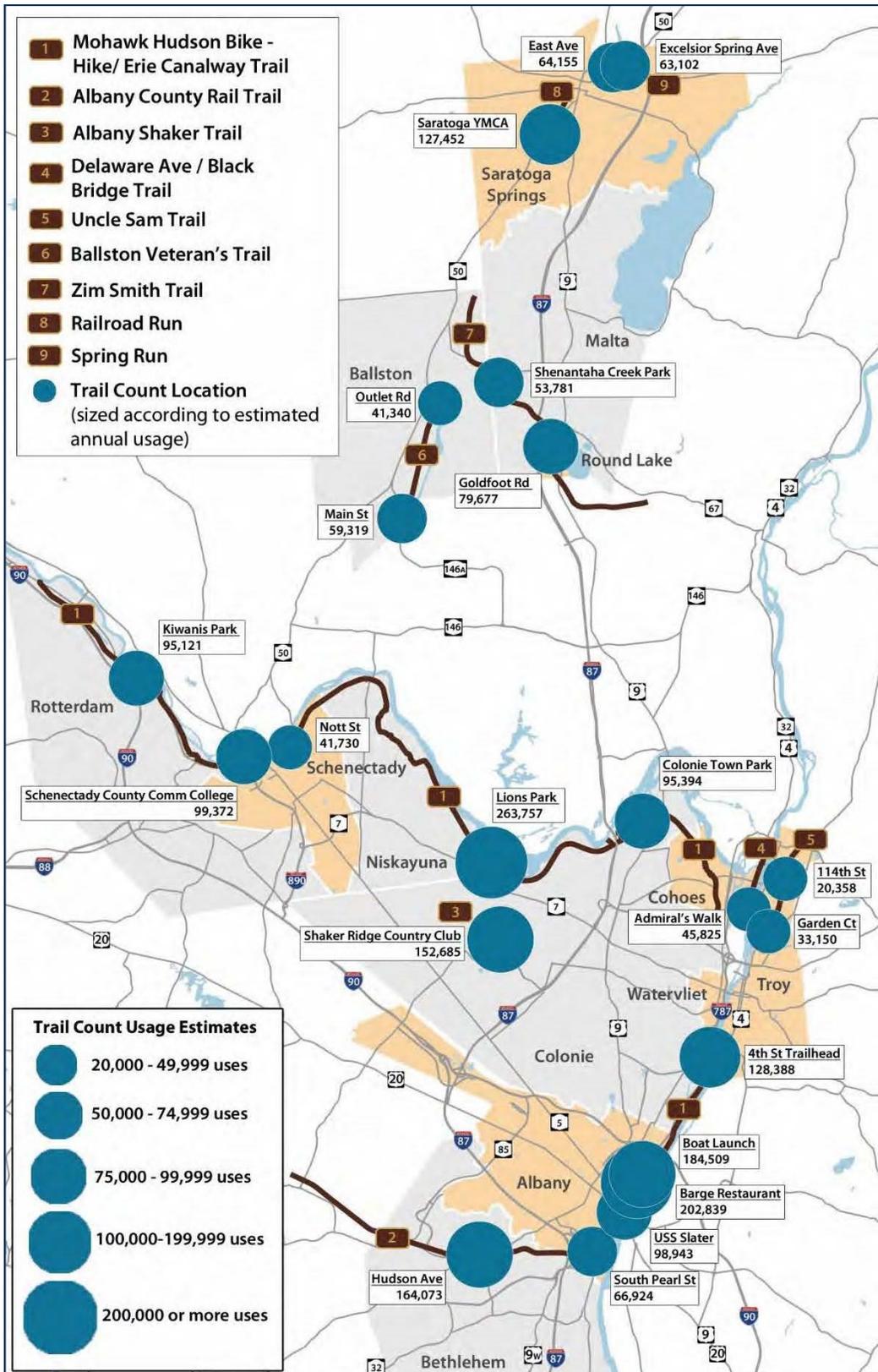
The largest usage increases since 2006 were Lions Park on the MHBHT (40%) and Goldfoot Road in Round Lake (72%). The graph compares the annual number of trail users in 2006 and 2016. There were no decreases in use at any location.

The objective of the trail user surveys was to paint a picture of the typical trail user in the Capital Region. Most trail users were from the CDTC area. However, compared to American Commu-



Trail Users

2016 REGIONAL TRAIL PERSPECTIVES (CONT.)



nity Survey data for the region, trail users were more male, more white, and older than the typical Capital Region resident. Trail users also had a higher median household income and were more educated. While trail surveys showed a 50/50 mode split of bicyclists and pedestrians, trail count data showed slightly more bicyclists.

Bicyclists preferred to ride road or hybrid bicycles on the trail. The typical trail visit begins by driving to a trail trailhead, is between 1-2 hours in length, and is mainly for health and exercise. Trips that began with walking or bicycling to the trail were more likely to be for non-recreational trips like commuting and running errands. Trail users generally visited with one or more other people and fewer than 20% of users visited with a child. The number of times a trail user visited the trail per year greatly varied, with only 15% reporting they use the trail more than 100 days per year.

Displayed on the next page, survey respondents ranked what was most important to them in regards to trails. The highest priorities of trail users were being physically active, access to recreation, living or working near a trail, and parking at trailheads. All survey respondents agreed that trail building and maintenance is a good use of public funds and 99% of respondents said they believe multi-use trails have a positive impact on quality of life. The most persistent problems on the trails were the lack of services (i.e. bathrooms), trail surface conditions, off-leash pets and their waste, and dangerous road intersections.

Surveys also asked trail users if and where they spent money during their trail visits. Overnight trail visitors spent about \$200 per day, not including any bicycle

(Continued on page 6)

2016 REGIONAL TRAIL PERSPECTIVES (CONT.)

(Continued from page 5)

purchases during their visit, and largely on lodging, restaurants, and other takeout food. Local trail users also reported trail-related spending, including annual bicycle maintenance costs. For trail users, the largest spending category was restaurants and bars.

CDTC mailed over 500 surveys to property owners of residences

adjacent to a trail and 128 were returned. The information collected by the surveys help measure the impact of having a trail as your neighbor. Almost all survey respondents claimed the property to be their primary residence. In almost all cases the trail ran along the edge or near their property, with more than half over 100 feet from the trail's edge. Most respondents described their property as suburban in nature and over half lived on more than a half acre. Over 60% reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the trail as a neighbor, higher than was reported in the 2006 Regional Trail Perspectives. Only 14% reported that living near the trail is worse than they expected.

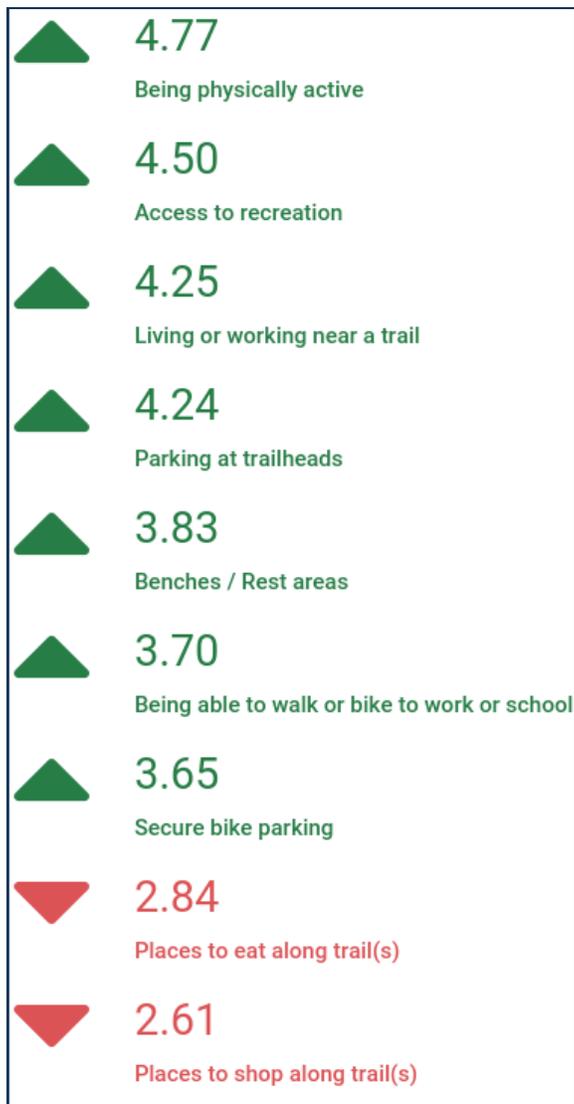
Most property owners supported using public funds for trail development and management and more than half reported using the trail frequently or daily. Being adjacent to the trail improved activity levels of property owners based on survey responses. The trail is not perceived as a risk to 72% of property owners and their families. More property owners believed the trail had no effect (37.6%), or increased (22.6%) their property's value than lowered (7.5%) it and most believed the trail either made their property easier to sell or had no impact at all.

The full Regional Trail Perspectives report will be available at www.cdtempo.org/trails. It includes a snapshot of each of the nine trails surveyed. Data by trail or count location are available by request. The full report also includes results of a Trail Maintenance Survey that was distributed to trail owners and maintainers. This data was collected to gauge trail maintenance costs, existing ownership models, and common maintenance obstacles.

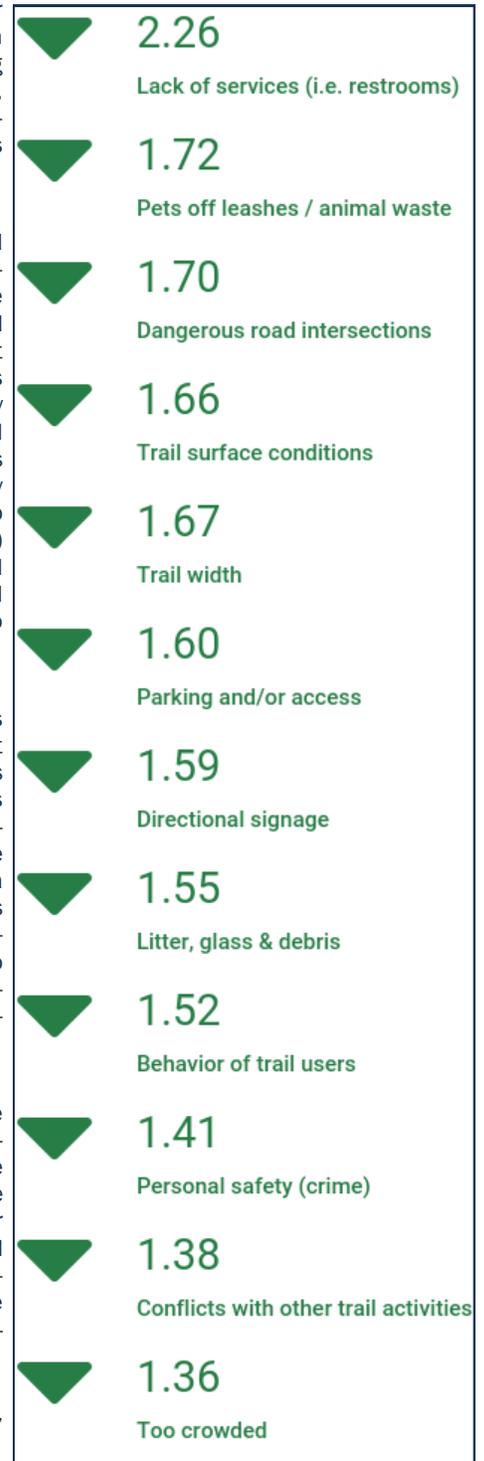
The Regional Trails Perspective provides a solid case for trail enhancement and expansion in the Capital Region. It is clear multi-use trails provide off-road facilities for non-motorized transportation and access to recreation. They contribute to a community's sense of place and are supported by both trail users and neighbors.

For next steps, see "Greenway Plan" on the next page.

Average Trail User Importance on a scale of 1-5



Average Trail User Extent of Problem on a scale of 1-5



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS

To ensure compliance with Environmental Justice regulations and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, CDTC analyzes its programs and policies. CDTC last completed this analysis in 2014. The Policy Board approved the 2017 Environmental Justice/Title VI Analysis for public review at its June 1st meeting. New to the 2017 analysis is an indication of the minority and low income members of CDTC's two boards.

Category	Regional Rate
Minority	19.3%
Low Income	11.4%
Under 18	20.8%
Over 65	14.6%
Limited English	3.1%
Disability	11.8%

In developing a methodology for analysis, Capital District Regional Planning Commission staff created demographic parameters using data from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS). Threshold values were defined at the census tract level to identify geographic areas with populations of minority or low-income persons greater than the regional rate. The regional rates of multiple demographic categories are shown in the table.

Then, based off of residents' commutes to work, CDTC staff analyzed transportation patterns by race/ethnicity, income, age, English ability, disability status, and gender in CDTC's planning area. The greatest difference between the defined minority and non-minority population is in the Drive Alone and Transit categories. Similarly, people experiencing low-income are 20% less likely to drive alone, 11% more likely to commute via transit, and more likely to walk. Other categories did not show as great of a difference over multiple commute methods.

Using this information on the region's residents, we are able to analyze our programs and projects for equitable effects for the region's minority and low-income residents. Maps show locations of Transportation Improvement Program projects funding improvements to roads and bridges, as well as planning tasks. Tables show funding amounts by project type and by project location in areas with higher than the regional rate of minority and/or low-income residents. This allows us to compare both the benefits and potential negative effects for minority and low-income residents and for the entire population.

The 2017 Environmental Justice/Title VI Analysis is now available online for public review at www.cdtcmo.org/news/latest-news. Comments for the 2017 Analysis will be accepted through June.

GREENWAY PLAN

Tech Valley Trails: A Greenway Concept for the Capital Region was developed in 2007 after the 2006 Regional Trail perspectives. CDTC will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services to develop an updated greenway plan for the region. Using the extensive data collected for the Regional Trail Perspectives, the greenway plan will evaluate existing trails and identify opportunities to fill in gaps and connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The ultimate goal is to create a continuous, connected, off-road path for non-motorized users. A regional greenway is a New Visions "big ticket" initiative. Having an updated plan will make the region more competitive as it pursues funding for trail enhancement and expansion projects and hopefully attract private investment where appropriate. Visit the CDTC website for updates on the release of the RFP.

WATERFORD – COHOES BRIDGE

NYSDOT is reconstructing this bridge carrying Route 32 (Saratoga Street/ Saratoga Ave) over the Mohawk River. After NYSDOT held public meetings in Waterford and in Cohoes in August 2013 to discuss two construction options, NYSDOT determined to construct a new bridge next to the existing bridge.

The new bridge will cost \$20.3 million and will be an 850-foot long multiple-span structure located approximately 80 feet east of and parallel to the existing bridge.

It will have a sidewalk on both sides, 14-foot wide travel lanes in each direction, and an 11-foot wide center lane for left turns. The existing three-lane bridge, which first opened to traffic in 1932, will remain open during construction.

Alternating one-way traffic will be required for some construction operations. These will be short term and will occur during off-peak times of day. Two-way traffic is being maintained during all non-working hours and during times of high traffic. The new bridge could be open as soon as this July!

RENSSELAER EAST STREET

The City of Rensselaer is now designing a project on East Street between Partition Street and Third Avenue. This \$2.25M project will repave East Street between Adams Street and Herrick Street and between Willow and Partition Streets, and will reconstruct East Street between Herrick Street and the AMTRAK parking lot entrance.

The City will evaluate on-street bike lanes and will standardize 5' sidewalks and a 4' buffer between the street and the sidewalk. The project will also provide storm water drainage, separating it from sewage lines, and will replace water and gas lines. The City expects to begin

construction in 2018.





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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CALENDAR

Please call CDTC to confirm.

- 06/07/17 CDTC Linkage Forum @ 9:30 AM, CDTC Office
- 06/13/17 CDTC Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee @ 9:00 AM, CDTC Office
- 06/16/17 Albany Shaker Road Public Meeting @ 6:00 PM, Shaker Rd Loudonville Fire Department
- 06/20/17-06/21/17 NYS Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Conference, Syracuse
- 06/28/17 CDTC Planning Committee @ 9:30 AM, CDTC Office
- 07/11/17 CDTC Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee @ 9:00 AM, CDTC Office
- 08/02/17 CDTC Planning Committee @ 9:30 AM, CDTC Office
- 08/08/17 CDTC Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee @ 9:00 AM, CDTC Office
- 08/16/17 CDTC Freight Advisory Committee @ 9:00 AM, CDTC Office
- 09/07/17 CDTC Policy Board @3:00 PM, CDTC Office
- 09/12/17 CDTC Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee @ 9:00 AM, CDTC Office
- 09/21/17 CDTC Linkage Forum @ 9:30 AM, CDTC Office

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