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Quotable Quote

“The reality about transportation is that it’s future-oriented. If we’re planning for what we have, we’re behind the curve”

- Anthony Foxx

Development of the 2019-2024 Transportation Improvement Program for the Capital District is Underway!

One of Capital District Transportation Committee’s (CDTC) most important responsibilities is the development of a multi-modal program of transportation projects that implement recommendations of the planning process, particularly those found in the region’s long-range plan called New Visions 2040. This program of projects is called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Capital District Transportation Committee, as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the four-county Capital District region, prepares and adopts a new TIP typically once every three years. The TIP covers a five-year period and must be financially constrained by year, meaning that the amount of money committed to projects must not exceed the funds estimated to be available to the region. The TIP must include a financial plan that demonstrates that programmed projects can be implemented. CDTC policy also requires an opportunity for public comment prior to the adoption of the TIP.

The image shows a portion of the Helderberg Rail Trail (looking east) and parking lot along Kenwood Avenue in the Town of Bethlehem. The project is being implemented with a combination of federal transportation and Albany County financial support.

Image Source: CDTC
2018 Complete Streets Educational & Technical Assistance Workshop Series

Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) staff, with guidance from CDTC’s Complete Streets Advisory Committee, recently implemented the 2018 Complete Streets Educational & Technical Assistance Workshop Series by completing four local workshops, in the Town of Niskayuna, City of Watervliet, Town of East Greenbush, and Village of Scotia.

The first workshop, held on August 14, was a Complete Streets Implementation workshop in the Town of Niskayuna. Because of their 2016 workshop, Niskayuna formed its first Complete Streets Advisory Committee, and in January 2017, formally adopted a Complete Streets Policy. In this year’s workshop, Niskayuna was looking to build on their success and continue with the momentum they have established. Some of the outcomes from the workshop include developing a vision and bike/pedestrian priority network, and identifying near-term priority low-cost / “low-hanging fruit” implementation ideas.

The second workshop, held on September 7, was a Complete Streets Implementation workshop in the City of Watervliet. Watervliet adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2017 as a result of the Albany County Complete Streets Symposium, in 2016. Like Niskayuna, Watervliet is looking to advance their Complete Streets efforts. The recommended actions identified at the workshop include several relatively small-scale Complete Streets projects that have the potential for a big impact.

The Town of East Greenbush’s Complete Streets Basics workshop was held on September 24. In addition to building a common understanding of Complete Streets benefits, policies, and best practices, participants also learned about how to incorporate Complete Streets into their day-to-day planning activities. The action items from the workshop include developing a Complete Streets Policy and Resolution, identifying improvements that can be made within their existing paving and other Public Works projects, and incorporating Complete Streets into their upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.

The final workshop in the 2018 Workshop Series was a Complete Streets Basics workshop held on October 17, in the Village of Scotia. The Village’s leadership did an excellent job ensuring attendance from key stakeholders, which led to a lively and fruitful discussion. Like others, one of their first steps is to develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy and Resolution. Scotia is also considering forming a Complete Streets Committee. The group developed several other short-term actions to incorporate Complete Streets into the Village’s current plans and processes.

The next round of CDTC’s Complete Streets Educational & Technical Assistance Workshop Series is tentatively scheduled for 2019, pending funding availability. For more information on CDTC’s Complete Streets Workshop Series please visit www.cdtcmpo.org/programs/complete-streets.
New Travel Data Is Available!

Capital District Transportation Committee (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 variety of GPS devices carried by both trucks and cars to record highway speeds. Data is collected under contract with the Federal Highway Administration twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Albany Visualization and Informatics Lab (AVAIL) at the University at Albany, under contract with New York State Department of Transportation, has developed a powerful 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.

One application for this new data set is evaluating the impact of projects. The New York State Department of Transportation completed a project in 2017 which replaced the Rexford Bridge, which carries Balltown Rd. over the Mohawk River. The project replaced a two lane bridge with a four lane bridge. The project included two roundabouts and sidewalks. The following graph (pg.5) shows travel times on Balltown Road northbound from River Road to Aqueduct Road in the PM peak period from February 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. The new bridge was opened at the end of July. Before July 31, travel times are shown in the graph to range between 15 and 22 minutes. After the new bridge was opened, travel times were

Upcoming Hoosick Street Linkage Study

This winter the City of Troy and Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) will be launching a new Linkage Study seeking to increase pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the North Hillside and South Hillside neighborhoods, bisected by Hoosick Street/Route 7. Additionally, the study will look at ways to strengthen connections between the Hillside neighborhoods and downtown, River Street, the new CDTA BRT Riverfront route, and Hoosick Street itself.

The study will consider ways to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the North and South Hillside Neighborhoods by calming traffic and focusing on streets commonly accessed from Hoosick Street such as 8th, 10th and 15th Streets. Alterations to the Hoosick St. right-of-way will be considered in the context of facilitating safer, more convenient ways for pedestrians and bicyclists to traverse the facility without significantly impacting vehicle traffic.

Hoosick Street is part of the local street network but also serves as a critical regional transportation route that links the capital region to Vermont. As part of the post WWII highway boom, Route 7 was routed over the Hudson River via the Collar City Bridge, depositing a large volume of high-speed traffic onto the historic city street grid, compromising multiple neighborhoods and diminishing safe foot and bike access between neighborhoods.

The study will incorporate at least two public workshops to educate the public about the goals of the study and to gather feedback from area residents, businesses and institutions.
Alternative Fuels 101 & Resiliency Workshop
On October 26th Capital District Clean Communities (CDCC) hosted an Alternative Fuels 101 and Resiliency Workshop for emergency management organizations. The objective of the workshop was to foster discussions on how alternative fuel vehicles can be better incorporated into state and local emergency management efforts. Alternative fuel vehicles include biodiesel, natural gas, propane, electric, ethanol, and hydrogen and offer increased resiliency to vehicle fleets during emergency situations, especially when gasoline and diesel fuel are in short supply. The workshop featured presentations that highlighted the existing alternative fuel landscape in the Capital District, benefits of alternative fuels, case studies on where alternative fuels are already being incorporated into emergency planning efforts, and guidance on incorporating alternative fuel vehicles into a local fleet.

CDCC leveraged a number of resources and online tools developed by the National Association of State Energy Officials’ (NASEO) for their iREV, or Incorporating Alternative Fuel Vehicles into Emergency Planning and Response, initiative. The workshop demonstrated how the iREV tool can be utilized for identifying alternative fuel vehicle fleets and supporting infrastructure that can be vital for emergency response and recovery efforts. Attendees of the workshop included representatives from New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, and local emergency management organizations. For more information on alternative fuels and Emergency Management please contact Jen Ceponis at (518)-458-2161 or jceponis@cdtcmpo.org.

City of Cohoes Ontario Street / Delaware Avenue Intersection Improvements
Construction has been completed on the Ontario Street (Route 470) and Delaware Avenue Intersection in the City of Cohoes. The project included the installation of a new traffic signal to create a four-way stop at the intersection. New pedestrian signals and crosswalks were also added, along with reconstruction of sidewalks and curb ramps for improved pedestrian access and ADA compliance at the intersection.

During the construction of the intersection improvements the City identified the need for storm water and drainage upgrades in the project area. The Construction of these improvements was added to the project and construction is expected to be completed in, or prior to Spring of 2019.

CDTC Equity Task Force Update
Capital District Transportation Committee’s (CDTC) Equity Task Force was formed in 2016 to ensure CDTC’s conformance with Title VI regulations and Environmental Justice. It makes certain that CDTC takes reasonable steps to ensure no person is denied benefits of CDTC’s planning process on the basis of minority and/or low income status, and to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of CDTC’s programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. It accomplishes this in part by promoting collaborative problem solving on issues related to Environmental Justice and Title VI, and providing input on the most effective methods to engage and respond to Environmental Justice and Title VI populations.

To better understand gaps people experience in the Capital Region’s transportation system, CDTC hired Sage Shoppe Inc. to conduct focus groups. The Equity Task Force guided this effort. A summary of the results of the focus groups can be found at www.cdtcmpo.org/committees/other-committees/341-equity-focus-groups. Recurring themes were pedestrian infrastructure and transit infrastructure, including information and technology.

The Equity Task Force is also assisting in the creation of a “Transportation and Poverty” analysis, similar to one created in the Rochester area. This effort will compile data about the demographics and transportation patterns of the area’s residents. It will also consider profiles of residential location and the number of available jobs by travel time by car as well as transit. When complete, this analysis will also be available on CDTC’s website.

The Equity Task Force is seeking new members who are employees, members or active participants of Community Based Organizations that advance Title VI and Environmental Justice issues on behalf of low-income and minority populations, or local elected representatives of districts where a majority of residents are people of color and/or people who have low-income. Interested candidates should submit a resume and a completed Advisory Committee application (available at https://goo.gl/T0pGVM). Priority is given to people of color and low-income candidates. For additional information please contact Carrie Ward at (518) 458-2161 or cward@cdtcmpo.org.
New Travel Data Is Available! (Cont.)

(Continued from Page 3)

reduced to about 3 minutes over the segment.

The graph below shows that not only was travel time much longer before the new bridge was opened, day to day variation in travel time was greater before July 31 as well. After July 31, travel times were consistent day to day. Therefore we can say that travel was less congested and more reliable as a result of the project.

The NPMRDS will allow transportation planners to develop a more in depth understanding of travel patterns at the project level, the corridor level, and the regional level.

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.

Weekday Travel Times, PM Peak Period
Balltown Road northbound from River Road to Aqueduct Road
February 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017

CDTC Transportation Guidebooks

CDTC has recently undertaken the revision of two of its most popular guides – the Bicycling Guide and the Pedestrian Guide – and has begun creating a third guide: The Capital District Complete Streets Design Guide. The Bicycling and Pedestrian Guides are intended for the public to use throughout the Capital Region, with various tips and tricks to help make walking and bicycling easier and safer. The guides will feature updated information on best practices for crossing streets safely and proper helmet attire, as well as new information on topics like green bike lanes and evolving technology.

The new Capital District Complete Streets Design Guide is intended for municipalities, community leaders, and interested individuals who wish to explore Complete Streets, beginning with definitions, and working through policies and design guidance.  (Continued on Page 7)
2019-2020 CDTC Linkage Program Solicitation

Capital District Transportation Committee’s (CDTC) Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (Linkage Program) is entering its 19th year of providing integrated land use and transportation planning assistance to communities within CDTC’s planning area. The Linkage Program implements the planning principles of CDTC’s New Visions 2040 regional transportation plan and emphasizes seven broad planning strategies:

• Urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial/residential areas;
• Street connectivity and access management;
• Activity center and town center enhancement and development;
• Enhancement and development of transit corridors and transit supportive built environments;
• Encouragement of mixed uses and greater intensity of land uses in municipal centers;
• Development of bicycle and pedestrian-friendly site design standards;
• Creation of an integrated multi-modal transportation network.

CDTC is currently soliciting for projects and has reserved up to $150,000 in federal planning funds for no more than three consultant led efforts. Additional funds have been reserved for CDTC staff technical assistance. Eligible initiatives must be directly related to transportation, be directly related to an existing local plan and be related to one of the following:

• Implementation activities related to completed Linkage Program plans or other completed local planning work (i.e. Comprehensive Plans, Waterfront Revitalization Plans, etc.)
• Updates of Linkage Program plans completed before 2010
• New plans, particularly in communities that have not participated in the Linkage Program before. Priority will be given to:
  ○ complete streets guidelines/feasibility studies
  ○ strategic zoning code changes and/or site design guidelines
  ○ official mapping
  ○ bicycle/pedestrian planning
  ○ transportation planning activities (i.e. operational and safety studies)

The submission deadline is December 14, 2018. Visit www.cdtcmpo.org/linkage for additional information.
Capital District Smart Communities Task Force Update

Earlier this year the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) launched a Smart Communities Task Force. The objective of the Task Force is to develop an action plan for creating an autonomous vehicle (AV) – ready, connected, and efficient transportation system consistent with New Visions 2040 principles of equity, sustainability, safety, livability, and reliability. CDTC defines “Smart Cities” as an integrated, smart transportation system that uses data applications and technology to help people and goods move more quickly, cheaply, safely, and efficiently. The Task Force has met regularly since April and released a solicitation for planning projects in late summer.

CDTC received three project proposals and has chosen to fund one – the Saratoga Springs Municipal Smart City Street Light Conversion and Evolving Technology Guidebook. In New York State, through the Governor’s Smart Street Lighting NY Program initiative, municipalities can now purchase utility owner conventional street lights and convert them to energy efficient light emitting diode, or LED. LED street lights can reduce energy use by as much as 65%, which can reduce emissions and generate savings to taxpayers. New “smart” street lights include technological features that can collect data through embedded sensors, connect digital networks, provide wireless internet signals, and more. Smart street lights can detect and adapt to movement by pedestrians, cyclists, and cars, or even include electric vehicle charging ports.

The goal of the Guidebook will be to identify the types of LED lighting and technologies available, their benefits, and what type of roadway or district they work best in so the City can choose the appropriate product that fits their needs. As more communities work towards converting their street lights to LEDs, the guidebook will prove to be a valuable tool for the Capital District and beyond. For more information on the Smart Communities Task Force please visit www.cdtcmpo.org/programs/smart-communities.

Transportation Guidebooks (Cont.)

The guide will address how communities can develop their own Complete Streets policies and work toward implementation. Much of the guide will be dedicated to a comprehensive selection of pedestrian, bicycle, road, transit, and intersection design options that can be easily applied to street typologies applicable across the Capital Region, along with options for green infrastructure. The intent of the guide is to create an exciting, memorable, and accessible tool that communities can work with as they pursue street redesign and reconstruction projects on their own or with partners.
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Comments and requests to be added or deleted from the mailing list or to receive the newsletter electronically are welcome and should be sent to: newsletter@cdtcmpo.org