

# IN MOTION

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

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## Quotable Quote

*“Long range planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions.”*

*Peter Drucker-*

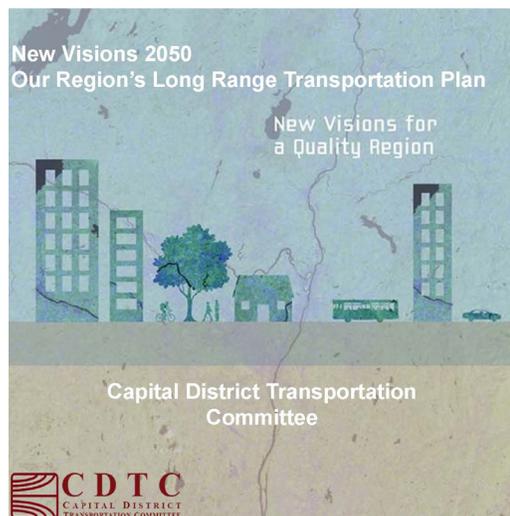
## CDTC New Visions 2050 Update Edition !

How can we make the Capital Region a better place by investing in transportation? CDTC is updating the current regional transportation plan—called “New Visions 2040”. The New Visions Plan supports keeping our highways and bridges in good condition; providing high quality transit service, and building what we call “complete streets” which are streets that are designed for cars, as well as for walking, bicycling, transit, and freight.

The region has many valuable assets: good transportation, strong urban areas, affordable and diverse housing locations, good schools, colleges and universities, ease of mobility, modern air and rail transportation facilities, cultural and recreational opportunities and a clean environment. These are all significant assets and must be supported by an efficient and reliable transportation system. New Visions describes the transportation investment needed for sustainable regional economic growth and prioritizes the maintenance, repair, reconstruction and right-sizing of all existing transportation facilities.

While 2050 may seem like a long time from now, transportation investments must consider future conditions even though forecasts cannot be precise. For example, there is great potential that the majority of cars will be electric or automated vehicles. There may be many other changes in technology and land use that need to be anticipated and considered as much as possible. With good planning, we must ensure that changes in technology are used to protect our regional quality of life and support healthy urban, suburban and rural communities.

New Visions has historically been a composition of CDTC program area White Papers developed by CDTC staff with input from regional experts participating in program specific working groups. New Visions program areas include, Quality Region, Complete Streets, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Mobility Management, Safety and Security, Regional Operations & Travel Reliability, Transit, Environment and Technology, Freight Goods & Movement, and Infrastructure. CDTC will be completing white papers for each planning program area in December 2019. The white papers will include recommendations prepared by CDTC staff and each program working group. This edition of the In Motion Newsletter will provide a brief summary of what to expect from each program area white paper. For more information on the New Visions 2050 update please visit [www.cdtcmpl.org/transportation-plans/nv2050](http://www.cdtcmpl.org/transportation-plans/nv2050).



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# Quality Region

What is a “Quality Region?” To answer that question it would be better to define “Quality of Life”, since a Quality Region is to a region, as a Quality of Life is to an individual.

One definition for quality of life is the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group; in other words, the things that are needed for a good quality of life. Certainly that can be very subjective, but most of us could agree that a good job, a clean environment, good health, good education, a safe and secure environment, and certain freedoms (like freedom of speech) are important features of a good quality of life.

Just as individual quality of life can be subjective, so can the definition of a quality region. New Visions 2050 frames the definition of quality region through the following investment principal:

**Investing in a Quality Region** – *Transportation programming and planning is multi-modal and multi-programmed. Fair and equitable investments in all these modes and programs are needed to make our region a “Quality Region”.*

A Quality Region must be multi-modal and multi-programmed because all our transportation modes and programs are connected and inter-related. You cannot improve one transportation mode or program without improving the other, or in some cases, without harming another.

For example, if we improve safety (reduce crashes) we improve bike/pedestrian travel and highway operations (traffic congestion). If we improve highway operations, we improve freight and transit. If we improve transit (reduce the number of vehicles), we improve highway operations. If we improve highway and bridge infrastructure, we improve safety. If we improve bike/pedestrian travel, we improve the environment. If we improve human services transportation, we improve safety. And so on and so on... This connectivity and inter-relation can also result in opposing conditions, for example, improving highway and bridge infrastructure can sometimes result in harming the environment if certain precautions are not taken.

The Quality Region white paper takes into consideration the inter-relation of all other CDTC program areas and balances regional priorities, ensuring the goals of one mode or program area are not met by the exclusion of another. The final Quality Region white paper will include recommended transportation planning and programming strategies that will preserve the quality and livability of the Capital District to the horizon of 2050.



## Freight & Goods Movement

The CDTC region occupies a strategic location within the Northeastern United States. The region sits at the nexus of two Interstates (I-87 and I-90), several major highways and rail lines, and has a major international airport. The Hudson River, Mohawk River, and Erie Canal intersect in the CDTC region. This location has made the region a transportation crossroads for many industries, which have produced enormous benefits to the many communities throughout the area. However, this position also brings the region a set of challenges associated with various aspects of freight transportation.

Freight and goods movement in metropolitan regions is complex and does not lend itself to simple fixes. Trucks on area roadways and trains on the region's railroads may pass through the Capital District without stopping, contributing to costs in terms of wear on infrastructure, congestion, emissions, and safety hazards without creating a direct benefit. Other trips that either begin or end at locations in the region provide the goods movement necessary to support local industries that do business beyond CDTC's four counties. These trips include air and maritime cargo. Many truck trips travel entirely within the Capital District, moving goods from distribution centers to retail establishments, healthcare centers, or educational institutions.

In 2016, the CDTC Policy Board adopted the Regional Freight Plan ("Freight Plan") to help guide CDTC and its members to make appropriate investments to support the efficiency and safety of goods movement. The Freight Plan was developed using a significant amount of funding and resources. For the

New Visions 2050 Freight White Paper, the Freight Plan's underlying data and assumptions were considered relevant and mostly accurate. The purpose of this white paper is not to replace the Freight Plan, but rather to review and update the status of key elements of the plan as part of the New Visions 2050 process.

The New Visions 2050 Freight White Paper will include a proposed updated Freight Priority Network and list of potential freight-related projects, programs, policies, and studies. The Freight White Paper also incorporates any new requirements and legislation that have occurred since 2016, including the FAST Act, Performance Measures, and data from the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS).



Source: Albany Port District Commission

## Mobility Management

New Visions 2050 will contain expanded content on Mobility Management, also known as Transportation Demand Management or TDM. The new section will include an overview of the many different programs and services that have been offered since the TDM program was added to CDTC's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in 1997. Retired programs include transit pass subsidies for New York State employees that are members of PEF or CSEA, a NYS DEC Transit Incentive Pilot Program, the Commuter Ca\$h Program in downtown Albany, and an occasional use parking program for Swiper card holders, among others. The new content will also include an evaluation of programs that are currently offered, such as vanpools, the Guaranteed Ride Home Program, CDPHP Cycle! Bikeshare, Capital Carshare, the Bike to Work Day Workplace Challenge and the 511NY Rideshare iPool2 portal that provides carpool matching and other commuter resources to the region.

The Federal Highway Administration document, "Developing a Regional Approach to Transportation Demand Management and Nonmotorized Transportation: Best Practice Case Studies," identifies six factors common to successful regional TDM programs. The six factors are: Identify Champions, Proactive Coordination, Engage Private Sector, Performance Measures, Data Collection, and Integrate Land Use and Nonmotorized Planning. We evaluate our current TDM programming within this framework and identify future priorities to further integrate TDM into regional efforts and capitalize on their successes. Recommendations for future TDM work include supporting private TDM investments through employer and developer engagement and the development of resources such as a commuter benefits toolkit, commuter behavior surveys to better understand commuter preferences, developing performance measures to gauge program successes, and supporting local municipalities as they seek to integrate TDM with land use planning.

## Complete Streets

New Visions includes both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. CDTC's principle on Complete Streets says that streets are appropriate to the community context, and designed and operated to enable safe, convenient access for all users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, and the movement of goods. They serve all users equitably, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, freight, and personal vehicle drivers and riders.

It is critical to recognize the connection between land use and transportation. Complete Streets must be designed to serve the current and future land use, and land use policies and zoning ordinances must support the type of street the community desires. Land use that fully supports Complete Streets is dense, mixed-use, and transit-oriented with homes, jobs, schools, transit, and recreation in close proximity depending on the context. Other topics to be explored include process and communication, road diets, green infrastructure, repaving programs, traffic signals, level of service methodologies, and the impact of new technologies.

Since New Visions 2040, CDTC developed a Complete Streets

Educational and Technical Workshop series to help transportation planning practitioners and decision makers identify and overcome Complete Streets policy and implementation barriers. These free workshops are highly interactive in nature, with the goal of building local capacity to implement Complete Streets approaches, and strengthen relationships between transportation practitioners, other departments, and the community. CDTC held a round of workshops in 2016 and in 2018. In addition, CDTC staff is in the process of drafting Complete Streets design guidelines applicable throughout the Capital Region. Since 2018, staff has conducted field visits to document completed TIP projects with photos or videos.



Source: CDTC  
Project: Delaware Avenue, Bethlehem

## Operations & Reliability and Congestion Management

The New Visions Plan addresses operations, congestion management, and travel reliability in a number of important ways and provides a framework for improving regional environmental quality. CDTC has studied traffic congestion and traffic operations in the Capital District. The New Visions Plan recognizes that managing traffic flows is critical for the health of the region. The New Visions Plan also recognizes that because it is not possible to eliminate all congestion, reliability of traffic flow is emphasized.

It is important that any congestion management actions must recognize the importance of pedestrian, bicycle and transit objectives described in the New Visions Plan. Trade-offs are often necessary in project design and when necessary some congestion is acceptable to maintain high quality access for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. Reduction in single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel through the use of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies shall be prioritized over the expansion of existing facilities. Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies shall also be incorpo-

rated into the congestion management process.

The focus of the CDTC Congestion Management Process is on reliability. Reliable traffic flow is more important than reducing congestion. While it is not possible to eliminate all congestion, focusing on reliability can significantly improve traffic flow. The New Visions 2050 Plan Update will explore regional data on congestion and reliability and make recommendations for improving traffic reliability.



Source: CDTC

## Bicycle & Pedestrian

New Visions 2040 laid out an ambitious agenda for CDTC's bicycle and pedestrian planning program. It set goals of reducing crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists, increasing bicycle and pedestrian trips and continuing to demonstrate regional support of walking and bicycling through increased investment of federal transportation funds. In general, trends in walking and bicycling are headed in the right direction but there is still much to be done in terms of improving safety and developing a seamless network of walking and bicycling infrastructure.

As more communities in the region adopt Complete Street ordinances or policies, equally considering the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, transit users, freight and drivers, the bicycle and pedestrian network has expanded to over 1,000 miles which consists of sidewalks, paved trails, and designated bike lanes. Expansion, as well as preservation, of the network is a CDTC priority and a strategy for increasing access to safe infrastructure, reducing greenhouse gas emission from transportation, and improving economic conditions in neighborhoods that have suffered from a legacy of discrimination and disinvestment. Emerging technology like automation and the electrification of transportation, as well as new shared mobility services present opportunities for reshaping streets and communities to be more walk- and bike-friendly. The Action Plan provides a framework for how Capital District communi-

ties can leverage new technology and adapt to changing travel behavior and choices.

New Visions 2050 builds upon the success of the bicycle and pedestrian planning program, like the development of the Capital District Trails Plan and the Capital Coexist Traffic Safety Ambassador. It proposes CDTC creates an ongoing bicycle and pedestrian count program, compile average facility construction and maintenance costs, and develop educational materials and resources to assist municipalities in their local planning efforts. A focus on equity, maintenance and accessibility, and safety are woven throughout the program's goals and performance measures.



Source: CDTC  
Project: Rensselaer Riverfront Trail Concept, City of Rensselaer

## Environment & Technology

In New Visions 2040, the Environment & Technology White Paper, anticipates electric vehicles and automation are two major technological changes that could impact the operations and safety of the transportation system. In this long range plan update, the paper builds upon the assumptions that have been made about these transportation revolutions, and proposes strategies for the Capital District to leverage their benefits while mitigating potential harms to persons and infrastructure conditions. A review of progress in reducing greenhouse gases and other harmful transportation emissions shows that the growth of vehicle technologies like electric vehicles are contributing to positive trends, but are vulnerable to impacts of other emerging technologies like ride hailing and the growth of e-commerce.

Programs like Capital District Clean Communities, the Smart Communities Task Force, regional Travel Demand Management efforts and the Community and Transportation Linkage Program have all worked to advance new environmentally friendly technologies and principals in the Capital District.

Specifically, these programs have aided in Smart Growth and transit oriented development principles in land use planning, expansion of the electric vehicle charging network, launching of shared mobility systems like CDPHP Cycle!, and assisting municipalities as they navigate new, energy saving technologies like LED Streetlights with integrated "smart" technologies that can communicate with traffic lights, complement a smart parking system, and collect invaluable data.

Moving into New Visions 2050, CDTC's priorities include becoming a more resilient region in the face of the climate crisis, facilitating "readiness" for connected and autonomous vehicles, and guiding smart land use planning, data use, and technology adoption. There is an unprecedented amount of uncertainty about the future of transportation due to the rapid changes in technology and how it has influenced travel behaviors. As the MPO, CDTC is in a unique role of being able to assist municipalities as they adapt and respond to these changes.

## Safety & Security

The safety of the regional transportation system is one of CDTC's top priorities and is considered in everything we do from planning to capital project development. In 2019, a Local Road Safety Action Plan was completed within which crash data on non-state owned roadways was evaluated to identify common crash characteristics. That evaluation led to the identification of six crash emphasis areas: intersections, lane departures, vulnerable users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, etc.), age related (older and younger drivers), road user behavior (distracted, impaired and aggressive driving)



Source: Lori Van Buren / Times Union

and speed. Within these emphasis areas, a number of engineering, education and enforcement related strategies and actions were identified that aim to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.

The findings of the Local Road Safety Action Plan, along with the New York State Strategic Highway Safety Plan, will serve as foundational documents for the update of the Safety & Security White Paper. The White Paper will go further to integrate both state and local road crash data analysis, review safety trends and consider the impact of vehicle technology in the near and more distant future. CDTC's safety planning principle will also be updated to emphasize a "move to zero" fatal and serious injury crashes by 2050.

The security of the transportation is an emerging topic that is often considered with the context of safety but focuses on issues beyond crashes. CDTC is reviewing its role in security planning and has worked with County emergency management offices to provide regional travel model data as well as analysis to support situational planning. Consideration is being given to supporting regional planning for vulnerability assessments of flooding, acts of terrorism and cyber security.

## Transit

CDTC reestablished a Transit Task Force in May 2019 to support the update of the New Visions Transit White Paper. The White Paper will catalog regional progress since 2015 to create a stronger transit system. Highlights include the design and initial construction of CDTA's River Corridor and Washington/Western Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Systems, the implementation of the Navigator fare media system, expansion of the Universal Access Program, the reintroduction of articulated buses into the CDTA fleet, a new CDTA station at Crossgates Mall and a reconstructed Amtrak rail station in Schenectady. Despite these successes, regional transit has encountered several disruptive forces such as ridesharing, lower gas prices and poor winter weather, resulting in declining ridership in recent years.

To further assess the performance of CDTA's transit system, data was reviewed related to transit system ridership, service quality, access, cost effectiveness and fleet condition. The results of that assessment have been mixed, with the system improving or meeting expected targets in some measures while declining in others. CDTA's transit propensity index, which measures the viability of transit based on demograph-

ic, employment and large shopping center data, has also been updated to reflect changes in the region since 2015.

There is no doubt that transit services and facilities are essential to the region's social, economic, and cultural fabric. Trends in regional growth as well as regional development scenarios continue to point to the need for concentrated development patterns to maintain a viable transit system. CDTC expects to maintain transit supportive policies and programs to ensure transit remains viable.



Source: CDTA

## Transportation Infrastructure

One critical piece of the Capital District transportation system is the physical infrastructure that makes up the network of roads, bridges, sidewalks, trails, ports, airports, and rail. The Region’s transportation system includes over 14,000 lane-miles of roadway, over 1,000 bridges, and over 1,200 miles of sidewalk collectively owned by the State, counties, cities, towns, and villages. This infrastructure provides a critical role in the regional economy and maintaining it in a condition of good repair is essential for New York State and the Capital District to remain economically competitive in the future.



Source: CDTC

As part of the New Visions 2050 update process CDTC staff has collected and evaluated numerous state and local data sets and documented changes in bridge and pavement infrastructure condition over time. This data is being used as inputs into the Highway Condition Projection Model (HCPM), a tool that analyzes different scenarios of funding and asset conditions, in order to project future needs to the 2050 time horizon and better understand how to put limited financial resources to the highest and best use.

An infrastructure working group, made up of local and regional infrastructure experts, was developed to assist in the plan update by identifying highway, bridge, transit and other infrastructure needs throughout the region and provide valuable input throughout the update process. The efforts of the New Visions 2050 update will result in an infrastructure investment principal, strategies and future actions that will inform the planning and programming process at CDTC and ultimately guide how investment decisions are made. The table to the left highlights the size and scope of the transportation system in the Capital District.

Capital District Infrastructure - By the numbers	
Total Regional Lane Miles	14,000 +
Federal Aid Eligible Lane Miles	4,500 +
Regional Sidewalk Mileage	1,200 +
Regional Off Road Multi-Use Trail Mileage	130 +
Regional Bridges	1,000 +

throughout the update process. The efforts of the New Visions 2050 update will result in an infrastructure investment principal, strategies and future actions that will inform the planning and programming process at CDTC and ultimately guide how investment decisions are made. The table to the left highlights the size and scope of the transportation system in the Capital District.

New Visions 2050 Plan Schedule	
December 2019	Draft White Papers on each major program area completed for CDTC Planning Committee review.
February 2020	CDTC Planning Committee approval of Draft New Visions 2050 Plan
March 2020	CDTC Policy Board approval to release Draft New Visions 2050 Plan to public and begin public outreach.
March - May 2020	Conduct 60 day Public Outreach on Draft New Visions 2050 Plan
May 2020	CDTC Planning Committee Approval of Final Draft New Visions 2050 Plan
June 2020	CDTC Policy Board approval to release Final Draft New Visions 2050 Plan to Public and begin 2nd round of public outreach
June - August 2020	Conduct 60 day Public Outreach on Final Draft New Visions 2050 Plan
August 2020	CDTC Planning Committee Approval of Final New Visions 2050 Plan
September 2020	CDTC Policy Board Approval of Final New Visions 2050 Plan



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#### ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## CALENDER

Please call CDTC to confirm.

12/5/19 CDTC Policy Board Meeting @3:00 PM, CDTC Office

12/10/19 CDTC Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee @9:00 AM, CDTC Office

12/12/19 CDTC Community Planners Forum @9:30 AM, CDTC Office

1/8/20 CDTC Planning Committee Meeting @9:30 AM, CDTC Office

1/22/20 CDTC Planning Committee Meeting @9:30 AM, CDTC Office

2/6/20 CDTC Planning Committee Meeting @9:30 AM, CDTC Office

2/19/20 CDTC Freight Advisory Committee Meeting @9:00 AM, CDTC Office

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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:

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