

# IN MOTION

Volume 12, Issue 4

June 2020



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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>CDTC's COVID-19 Response</i>	1
<i>Zim Smith Southern Trail Extension Near Completion</i>	2
<i>2020 Technical Assistance Program Project Awards</i>	3
<i>COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation</i>	4
<i>25 Years of CDTC's Linkage Program - Lessons Learned in Community Planning</i>	5
<i>Public Input During COVID-19: City of Albany Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan</i>	6
<i>Additional COVID-19 Resources</i>	7
<i>CDTC Project Solicitation Schedule</i>	7

## Quotable Quote

*"Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out."*

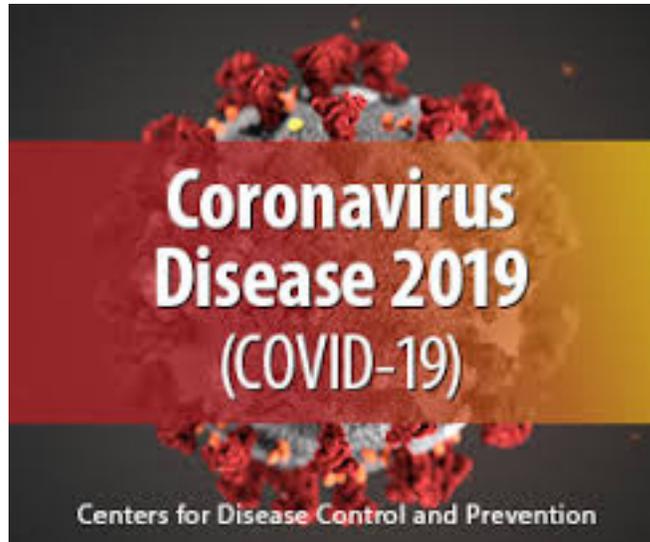
*John Wooden-*

## CDTC's COVID-19 Response

Unprecedented times have led to numerous changes in how CDTC operates and will continue to operate for some time to come. CDTC closed its doors to begin teleworking for the first time in its history on Friday, March 20th. All employees were able to work from home within a week and CDTC began hosting meetings virtually resulting in very few cancellations. As transportation was deemed an essential industry by New York State, capital projects funded through CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) have been moving forward on schedule and TIP amendments have been approved by CDTC's Planning Committee as needed.

Not being in the office has taught CDTC that we can perform much of our business remotely, but that we sometimes miss the personal interaction and input which we receive from our members and our residents. Most transportation planning efforts are moving forward, with a few adjustments.

Announcements for new planning solicitations were held back a few weeks in fairness to all potential sponsors. Most announcements were issued in May with June deadlines.



The deadline for the CDTC/CDRPC Community Planning Technical Assistance Program solicitation, which was issued in February, was extended one month to give applicants more time to apply. A second round of funding is likely to be available in the fall.

A few planning tasks that rely on current traffic data have been delayed and will resume later this year when we think traffic will reach a new normal. Our staff continues to monitor traffic and is beginning to research traffic estimation best

practices for short term planning activities. In-person meetings and in-person public participation opportunities have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## Zim Smith Southern Trail Extension Near Completion

Saratoga County will soon finish construction on an extension of the Zim Smith Trail, from Coons Crossing Road in the Town of Halfmoon to Elizabeth St. Extension in the City of Mechanicville. This segment of the Zim Smith Trail builds upon Saratoga County's ongoing effort to develop an inter-modal transportation system that will help reduce motorized travel and

enhance recreational trail opportunities within the county.

New construction includes approximately 3 miles of paved multi-use trail, two new trail parking areas at Coons Crossing Road, and improvements to the existing trail parking area in Round Lake. The project also includes several new trail amenities at the new Coons Crossing Road East parking area, featuring a two stall public restroom, bike racks, picnic tables, and benches. Once completed, the extended Zim Smith trail will provide a continuous ADA accessible trail system from the Village of Ballston Spa to the City of Mechanicville. Benefits of the trail system include improved bicycle and pedestrian safety, health and quality of life benefits for Saratoga County residents, as well as economic benefits from attracting trail users from outside the region.

Total project cost was approximately \$6.4 Million including design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Project funding was shared between Saratoga County, a State Regional Economic Development Council grant, and federal funding. Construction is expected to be completed in summer 2020.



Image: New trail construction east of Coons Crossing Road.  
Source: Saratoga County



Image: Birds eye view of new trail construction through The Fairways of Halfmoon golf course.  
Source: Saratoga County

## CDTC's COVID 19 Response (Cont.)

(Continued from Page 1)

Public participation has proven to be the largest challenge for CDTC. Prior to the shutdown, CDTC used the website, social media, in-person meetings, and online surveys to gather public input. The lack of



in-person meetings has impacted the public participation process for the Draft New Visions 2050 regional transportation plan which was released for public review on March 5th. The public participation plan has since been updated to pivot away from in-person meetings toward online options such as webinars, zoom meetings and YouTube videos. CDTC has also set up a public comment telephone line for those that lack internet access as an alternative to in-person meetings. Members of the public can call in or text comments to [\(518\) 618-2498](tel:5186182498).

CDTC's COVID-19 Resources webpage ([www.cdtcmpo.org/covid19](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/covid19)) provides current information on CDTC's office operations, operational changes to the region's transportation system, local government resources and links to transportation data. When CDTC's office reopens, expect to see an updated visitor policy. Check the calendar of events at [www.cdtcmpo.org/news/calendar-of-events](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/news/calendar-of-events) for information on CDTC meetings and other local events including our tentative reopening date, when available. CDTC staff remains available to you by email and phone should you have any questions or need any assistance during this time. Until we see you again, stay safe and take care of each other.

## 2020 Technical Assistance Program Project Awards

At its May 6, 2020 meeting, CDTC's Planning Committee approved the following four projects for technical assistance through the joint CDTC/CDRPC Community Planning Technical Assistance Program.

### **Town of Clifton Park Western Clifton Park Development & Conservation Trends Analysis (2005-2020)**

This project will support the update of the Town's 2005 Western Clifton Park GEIS & Land Conservation Plan. Work tasks will include data collection, mapping, traffic modeling and the creation of graphic data products to document the existing conditions and changes that occurred since the 2005 plan was adopted. Total project cost is \$18,296 with \$11,896 from CDTC/CDRPC.

### **Town of East Greenbush Gilligan Road Complete Streets Enhancements Feasibility Study Support**



This project will support a feasibility study to be completed by the Town to identify bicycle and pedestrian route options to provide safe, segregated and supportive infrastructure in the Gilligan Road corridor. Work tasks will include an existing conditions assessment, the identification of options for a complete street on Gilligan Road, identification of options for neighborhood level connections and a public engagement process. Total project cost is \$13,989 with \$6,789 from CDTC/CDRPC.

(Continued on Page 6)

# COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation

Vehicle travel in the CDTC region has declined by 75% since the pandemic began, according to data released by StreetLight Data Inc. Streetlight’s VMT Monitor dataset provides daily estimates of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) at the county level across the nation. The four-county CDTC region has seen VMT fall from a baseline of 20 million VMT per day down to just 5 million. Regional travel bottomed out on March 22nd – two days after the NY on PAUSE Executive Order was signed by Governor Cuomo – and remained steady through April. In May, a slow recovery in VMT began, but travel remains at approximately half its historical levels.

The decline in regional VMT offers indication of the extent to which residents are able to remain at home. It also prompts conversations among planners on the loss of transportation revenue from gas tax, tolls, transit fares, and more. For the nation’s MPOs, there is uncertainty as to how federally-mandated performance measures will be impacted by the pandemic.

Freight travel has been impacted to a lesser degree. According to INRIX Inc., freight travel has declined 13% nationwide from its pre-pandemic baseline.

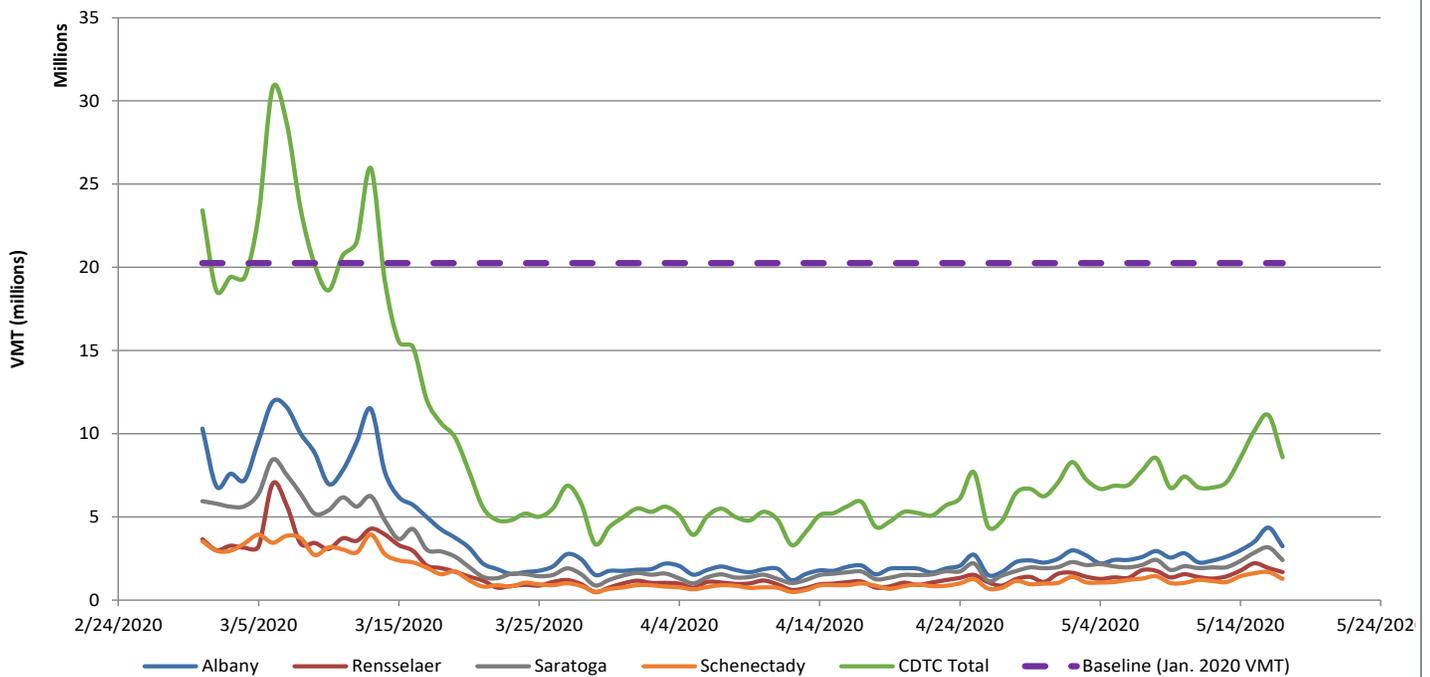
In the Northeast region, freight travel has declined by 9%.

Local transit ridership has also declined, according to CDTA. Fixed-route ridership is down 55-60% from its average annual weekday ridership. CDTA reports that routes serving colleges and universities have seen the sharpest decline, while routes to essential businesses are less affected. CDTA has begun rear-door boarding on its buses and has suspended fare collection. Buses are being disinfected and certain routes have seen an increase in bus frequency to spread passengers out.

Passenger travel at the Albany International Airport initially declined by over 95%, according to the Albany County Airport Authority. The airport, which typically sees between 4,000 to 5,000 passengers depart each day, is now experiencing an increase in demand for flights with enplanements scheduled to reach over 600 per day by May 18.

As the pandemic continues, CDTC will continue to monitor travel data in the region across all travel modes.

## CDTC Planning Area VMT Estimates during COVID-19



Data Source: Streetlight Data Inc.

## 25 Years of CDTC's Linkage Program - Lessons Learned in Community Planning

In the first ten years (federal fiscal years 2000-2010) of CDTC's Linkage Planning Program, CDTC funded 69 projects in 35 communities on topics such as corridor studies, trail feasibility studies, redevelopment initiatives and community wide bicycle master plans. Many lessons were learned which helped shape the Program in the future including the need to be patient and persistent when undertaking community planning.



One of those lessons was that the Program needed a streamlined consultant selection process. Significant time was being spent by consultants putting together proposals for numerous planning projects with low budgets, decreasing responses to Requests for Proposals. CDTC began to use a Request for Expressions of Interest (REI) which contains the project scope of work written by CDTC staff and the sponsor. The consultant only submits a letter of interest with supporting qualifications, a management plan and a price proposal, saving time and money in preparing the response. CDTC also discouraged consultant interviews for projects less than \$50,000 to further save time and money when possible.

CDTC staff also learned that it had to be patient with sponsors that in some cases had volunteers or part time staff representing the community on the project team, sometimes resulting in CDTC taking on a larger role in project management. CDTC also had to be persistent with sponsors and consultants to ensure the scope of work was being completed and pro-

gram requirements were being met. To address these issues, a Linkage Program Administration Procedures document was created. The document provides guidance on many topics including the development of the REI, the consultant selection process, the membership of advisory committees and the local match requirements. The roles and responsibilities of all parties are confirmed through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Sponsors learned early on that patience and persistence are critical to the successful implementation of the plans. Patience is needed to ensure a fair and equitable planning process that builds trust with community members so that the resulting product has long term support. The City of Cohoes Route 470 Corridor Study serves as an example. Completed in 2002 after a one year long community planning process, the Study planted the seeds for several initiatives including downtown redevelopment, trail and residential development on Van Schaick Island, Remsen Street reconstruction and it even provided an early vision for a reconfigured NY 787 corridor. Many initiatives have taken 10 years if not almost 20 years to implement with more planned in the future.

The Study provided the City a foundational document to use when pursuing grant opportunities, more detailed planning work such as that undertaken in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan update in 2017 and numerous others. Persistence on the part of the City has led to a continued refresh of that early vision with community buy in, resulting in Study still being relevant nearly 20 years later.



NY 470 (Ontario Street at Remsen Street, City of Cohoes, May 2020  
Source: CDTC

(Continued on Page 7)

## Technical Assistance

(Cont.)

(Continued from Page 3)

### Town of Glenville Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code Analysis

Focused on the Route 50 corridor between the Target Plaza Entrance and Thomas Corners intersections, this project will assist the town with implementing the recently completed Comprehensive plan. Work tasks will include a zoning code audit for transportation system and community design best practices. A review of recent development as it relates to the new comprehensive plan concepts and the provision of crash and traffic count data. Total project cost is \$12,021 with \$9,617 from CDTC/CDRPC.

### Town of Westerlo Comprehensive Plan Committee Support

The Town initiated a Comprehensive Plan Update and is requesting assistance with documenting existing conditions, providing mapping, data analysis and providing guidance on public outreach. Work tasks will include a demographic analysis, mapping of features including wetlands, flood plains, transportation corridors, hamlets and other topics and the development of a community survey and a presentation on survey results. Total project cost is \$10,816 with \$8,360 from CDTC/CDRPC.

A second round of funding is likely going to be made available this fall. For more information visit [www.cdtcmpo.org/techassist](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/techassist).

## Public Input During COVID-19: City of Albany Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

CDTC is working with the City of Albany to create a new Pedestrian Master Plan and to update the existing Bicycle Master Plan using an innovative and representative public input process. The intended outcome is to give clear direction on priority locations and desired design treatments for inclusion in street repaving or reconstruction projects. One of the primary considerations of the plan is transportation-related needs of people who traditionally experience transportation disadvantages. The project includes both a technical advisory committee with staff from partner agencies, as well as a community advisory committee.



Image: Example of a temporary demonstration project, held on Washington Avenue in Schenectady

Source: CDTC

The project's pedestrian component will identify existing pedestrian infrastructure and recommend policies and/or Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant infrastructure for comfortable and safe pedestrian travel. The bicycle component will review and confirm or update the existing Bicycle Master Plan as necessary, and recommend treatments by bikeway segment.

The project began in early 2020, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. The initial plan was to hold a number of in-person input sessions across the city, as well as at least two demonstration projects. Unfortunately, in-person engagement is no longer possible for the first part of the project. To maintain momentum, and in recognition of uncertainty about reopening and future outbreaks, the in-person input sessions will be held online.

The project team currently seeks community groups that would like to discuss their experience walking and/or bicycling in the City and provide suggestions for infrastructure and program improvements. In addition, the consultants were able to create an 8-minute video to help introduce the project virtually. The video is available on the project website, <https://vizcomm.wixsite.com/albany-bikepedplan>, which also includes a link to a "wiki-map" where community members can draw suggested improvements and problem locations. The participatory mapping component of the project was included in the initial project scope.

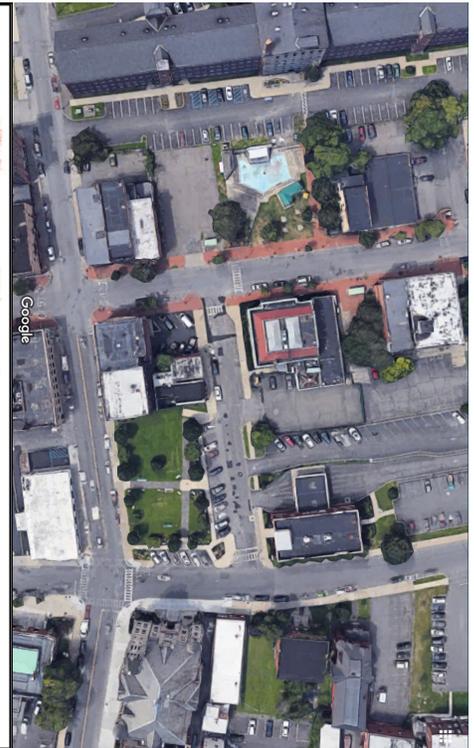
At this time, project partners continue to plan to implement the temporary demonstration projects. These will be used primarily as educational tools to garner input and will be in place for less than a week each. Temporary demonstration projects are helpful to see how different street elements operate. Suggestions for demonstration project locations will be sought from the online input sessions and members of the community may also contact the project team at [dpd@albanyny.gov](mailto:dpd@albanyny.gov) or [518-465-6066](tel:518-465-6066).

## 25 Years of CDTC's Linkage Program (Cont.)

(Continued from Page 5)

The report is available on the City's website at: [www.ci.cohoes.ny.us/213/Plans-Studies](http://www.ci.cohoes.ny.us/213/Plans-Studies). Good community plans are dynamic, flexible and implementable. The Cohoes Route 470 Corridor Study is just one of many CDTC Linkage Program plans that represent good community planning. To learn more about the Linkage Program visit [www.cdtcmpo.org/what-we-do/linkage](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/what-we-do/linkage).

Next time, we will look at how suburban and rural communities have developed community visions and strengthened local planning through the Linkage Program!



Left Image: 2002 Concept Plan for Downtown in Cohoes Route 470 Corridor Study  
Source: CDTC

Right Image: 2020 Google Map 3D view of same area in downtown today.  
Source: Google Map

### Additional COVID-19 Resources

Over the past few months, CDTC staff has used many resources to stay informed on the potential social, economic and transportation impacts that the COVID-19 virus may have throughout the United States and specifically, the Capital Region. Listed below are a few of these resources that we have found most interesting and helpful to our work.

#### Transportation Economics and Planning for a Post Pandemic Era

Transportation Economics and Planning for a Post Pandemic Era is an article published by EBPUS, a company based out of Boston that provides economic analysis and research that supports planning and policy in the transportation sector. The article highlights some of the present and approaching challenges that may result from the COVID-19 pandemic. The article can be found on the EBPUS website at <https://www.ebp-us.com/en/insights/transportation-economics-and-planning-post-pandemic-era>.

#### National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) - COVID-19: Transportation Response Center

NACTO has developed a COVID-19 Transportation Response Center to help support Cities and transit agencies throughout this pandemic. The response center includes toolboxes with guidance on how to continue to operate essential services and examples of best practices from around the world. The response center also has information on available federal funding opportunities for coronavirus relief. Please visit the NACTO COVID-19: Transportation Response Center on the NACTO website at <https://nacto.org/program/covid19/#federal>.

### CDTC Project Solicitation Schedule

CDTC Program	Solicitation Deadline	CDTC Staff Contact
Complete Streets Workshop Series	June 19, 2020	Chris Bauer - <a href="mailto:cbauer@cdtcmpo.org">cbauer@cdtcmpo.org</a>
ADA Transition Plans	June 15, 2020	Carrie Ward - <a href="mailto:cward@cdtcmpo.org">cward@cdtcmpo.org</a>
Capital District Trails Feasibility Study	August 7, 2020	Jen Ceponis - <a href="mailto:jceponis@cdtcmpo.org">jceponis@cdtcmpo.org</a>



### Capital District Transportation Committee

One Park Place, Main Floor  
Albany, NY 12205-2628  
Phone: 518-458-2161  
Fax: 518-729-5764  
Email: [cdtc@cdtcmpo.org](mailto:cdtc@cdtcmpo.org)  
[www.cdtcmpo.org](http://www.cdtcmpo.org)

#### Chair

Mayor Kathy M. Sheehan

#### Executive Director

Michael V. Franchini

#### Albany County

Daniel P. McCoy

Andrew Joyce

#### Rensselaer County

Steven F. McLaughlin

Michael E. Stammel

#### Saratoga County

Preston Allen

Michael Valentine

#### Schenectady County

Anthony W. Jasenski, Sr.

Joe Landry

#### City of Albany

Mayor Kathy M. Sheehan

#### City of Cohoes

Mayor William T. Keeler

#### City of Mechanicville

Mayor Dennis M. Baker

#### City of Rensselaer

Mayor Michael E. Stammel

#### City of Saratoga Springs

Mayor Meg Kelly

#### City of Schenectady

Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

#### City of Troy

Mayor Patrick Madden

#### City of Watervliet

Mayor Charles V. Patricelli

#### Town of Colonie

Paula A. Mahan

#### Towns and Villages

Nancy Perry, Sand Lake

Mayor Megan Grenier, Menands

#### Alternates

Philip Barrett, Clifton Park

Mayor Thomas Gifford, Scotia

#### Albany County Airport Authority

Philip F. Calderone, Esq.

#### Albany Port District Commission

Richard J. Hendrick

#### Capital District Regional Planning Commission

Craig M. Warner

#### Capital District Transportation Authority

Carm Basile

#### New York State Dept. of Transportation, Region 1

Patrick Barnes

#### New York State Thruway Authority

Joseph Stahl

#### Non-Voting Members

Marie Therese Dominguez, NYSOT

Stephen Goodman, FTA

Richard J. Marquis, FHWA

### Capital District Transportation Committee

One Park Place, Main Floor  
Albany, NY 12205-2628

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## CALENDAR

For the most up to date meeting information and CDTC virtual meeting log-in information, please contact [cdtc@cdtcmpo.org](mailto:cdtc@cdtcmpo.org).

6/4/20 CDTC Policy Board Meeting @3:00 PM, Zoom Virtual Meeting

6/9/20 CDTC Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee @9:00 AM, Zoom Virtual Meeting

6/18/20 CDTC Community Planners Forum @9:30 AM, Zoom Virtual Meeting

7/1/20 CDTC Planning Committee Meeting @9:30 AM, Location TBD

7/14/20 CDTC Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee @9:00 AM, Location TBD

8/5/20 CDTC Planning Committee Meeting @9:30 AM, Location TBD

8/19/20 CDTC Freight Advisory Committee Meeting @9:00 AM, Location TBD

IN MOTION is published by the Capital District Transportation Committee as an aspect of its public outreach program. Funding for the newsletter is provided by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration as part of CDTC's Unified Planning Work Program. The contents of the articles are the responsibility of the CDTC staff and do not necessarily reflect the policies of FHWA, FTA, NYSOT, or other agencies or governments.

Editing and Layout: Jacob Beeman

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](mailto:newsletter@cdtcmpo.org)