

IN MOTION

Newsletter of the Capital District Transportation Committee

Metropolitan Planning Organization for New York State's Capital Region

Albany, NY

Spring 2008

CDTC Launches Newsletter

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), charged with developing transportation plans and programs for the Capital District Region that includes Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties. CDTC's mission is to proactively shape a comprehensive vision for the region's future growth. To accomplish this, CDTC believes that planning must be done with the public's full involvement, and include the full participation of those whose everyday lives are affected by how they are able to get to work, home, school, stores, and services. The CDTC is committed to meaningful public participation in the regional transportation process. The procedures and tools used by CDTC to disseminate information on the transportation planning process can be found in CDTC's **Public Participation Plan**. In an effort to make the wealth of available information accessible to as many people as possible, CDTC has launched this newsletter, *In Motion*, to provide readers with helpful information on transportation planning, technology, projects, and programs in the Capital District region. This publication is also available on-line at <http://www.cdcmpo.org/newsletter.htm>. *In Motion* will be published four times a year.

About CDTC

A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is, by federal law, designated by the governor of each state for every urban area with at least 50,000 residents. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for both the Albany-Schenectady-Troy and Saratoga Springs urbanized areas. The CDTC is governed by a Policy Board composed of elected and appointed officials from each of the four counties; from each of the eight cities in the region; from the New York State Department of Transportation, the Capital District Transportation Authority, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the New York State Thruway Authority, the Albany Port District Commission, the Albany County Airport Authority, the Town of Colonie and at large members representing the area's towns and villages. Supplementing these voting members are advisory representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The Policy Board is served by a Planning Committee and professional staff of planners, engineers, and research specialists.

Simply stated, CDTC serves as the forum for regional decision-making; builds consensus; plans for roadway and transit improvements; makes strategic plans; obtains and allocates resources; and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region's quality of life. The U.S. Department of Transportation relies on CDTC, and the other twelve MPOs in New York State, to make sure that the transportation projects that use federal funds are the products of a cooperative planning process and meet the priorities of the metropolitan area. The entire community – businesses, government, and citizens – has a voice in the process. Whether the topic is a dangerous intersection or a long-term policy issue, the region's transportation future is shaped by decisions made by CDTC.

Program to Enhance Access to Crash Data

The New York State Department of Transportation is currently developing a new crash data system known as ALIS (Accident Location Information System) which will enable the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to provide GIS-based coding of all crashes in New York State regardless of their location on the street system. The Query, Reporting and Analysis application (QRA) is a web-based application that is part of ALIS. The QRA will allow NYSDOT as well as local governments and MPO's to conduct detailed studies and produce reports identifying high accident locations or unusual concentrations of specific types of crashes. The results from the crash location analysis will influence future capital funding and road improvement projects. For additional information about this program contact Donald Terry at dterry@dot.state.ny.us.

Safe Routes to School Program

CDTC is collaborating with NYSDOT to facilitate and promote the first round of the Safe Routes to School Program. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state and local effort to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school and to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing. Safe Routes to School funds are 100% reimbursable with no local match required. The program is open to all municipalities and school districts in New York State. Applications for the first round of funding have been received and will be reviewed jointly by CDTC and NYSDOT Region One. For more information on the SRTS program, visit NYSDOT's SRTS program webpage <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/srts> or contact Jason Purvis at jpurvis@cdtcmpo.org.

Innovative Program Integrates Land Use and Transportation

CDTC's Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (the Linkage Program) provides consultant or CDTC staff technical assistance for joint regional-local planning initiatives that link transportation and land use. It is a key implementation activity of New Visions 2030, the regional long range transportation plan, which is predicated on reducing the growth of vehicular travel in the Capital Region. The Linkage Program is also the cornerstone of CDTC's local planning assistance and public outreach efforts. CDTC's transportation and land use policy is that good site and community design are essential to achieving regional transportation system goals. The Linkage Program is one of the most significant cooperative regional efforts in the nation to reflect, in practice, what representatives of the region's counties, cities, towns and villages as well as state and local transportation providers have adopted as policy. CDTC has funded a total of 59 collaborative, jointly-funded studies over the past eight years. Study sponsors have included 34 separate urban, suburban and rural municipalities and counties as well as not-for-profits and other public entities. Roughly \$4.0 million in federal, state and local funds have been committed to the Linkage Program since its inception in 2000. The next Linkage Program solicitation is expected to occur in September 2008. For more information, please visit CDTC's website at <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/linkage.htm> or contact Sandy Misiewicz at smisiewicz@cdtcmpo.org. Look for the "Linkage Corner" in future issues of "In Motion" to read about the details of one of many active Linkage Studies!

CDTC Adopts New Visions 2030 Plan

Where will growth occur in the Capital District for the next 30 years? How will transportation meet the needs of the future? How can we protect our walkable communities and quality places? How can we guarantee that the Capital District will remain a vibrant place to live and work? These questions are addressed in the New Visions 2030 Plan. The Plan calls for urban investment, smart economic growth, and high quality transportation service.

Approved by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Plan takes a bold look at the way development takes place in our region, and recommends concentrated growth patterns that will support our cities, provide opportunities for high quality transit and reduce congestion and driving costs.

(See New Visions 2030 on Page 5)

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) coming soon to the Route 5 Corridor

Implementation of the region’s first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the Route 5 corridor linking the cities of Albany and Schenectady is well underway.

CDTA, CDTC, NYSDOT and the five municipalities along the corridor have been working in partnership for over a decade on NY5, beginning with the *Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Concepts Study*, adopted in 2001, which initially identified BRT as the high end transit solution for this heavily traveled corridor. The follow up *Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Design Study* was completed in 2005 leading to current efforts spearheaded by CDTA resulting in implementation of the first phase of NY5 BRT over the next year.

Bus Rapid Transit is a **high-performance transit service** that acts more like light rail than like a local bus with the goal of providing a **more convenient, reliable, and comfortable ride**. After all phases of the project are in place, the key features of NY 5 BRT will include:

- Limited-stop service with no more than 20 stations
- Substantial passenger facilities and amenities at stations
- Real-time information on bus arrivals at stations
- Improved pedestrian environment around stations
- Park-and-ride opportunities at selected stations
- New environmentally-friendly hybrid electric vehicles
- Priority treatment at traffic signals
- Special bus lanes to bypass traffic congestion at two key points (Wolf Rd/NY 5 and New Karner Rd/NY 5)
- Off-vehicle fare collection
- A specific brand image to distinguish BRT from other bus services, common to the BRT vehicles, station signs, and promotional materials



Example of Electronic Bus Arrival Time



New CDTA Hybrid Bus- BRT Buses will have their own unique paint scheme

The design and amenities to be found at each of the BRT stations, once completed, are a critical element of the BRT service which is focused on customer convenience, comfort and reliability. Notably, a “centerpiece” station at Colonie Center is being planned with an indoor waiting area, restrooms and concession space. Part of the attraction of BRT systems around the world is the use of advanced vehicle technology. New hybrid electric, specifically branded buses will be part of the NY 5 BRT system. In addition to the use of alternative fuels, these new buses will sport low floors, automated announcement systems, and other amenities to increase passenger comfort.

Other key pieces of the NY 5 BRT system include priority treatment at traffic signals and special “queue jump” lanes.



Example of a right-lane queue jumper in Troy

(See BRT on Page 4)

BRT

(Continued from page 3)

This will help ensure reliability of BRT service and reduce travel time: it is estimated that **BRT vehicles will be able to travel the corridor about 25% faster** than current local buses, potentially saving up to 17 minutes end to end.

NY 5 BRT will be put into service incrementally over the coming years with the first phase to be completed in 2008 focusing on the stations, new vehicles and limited stop service. Implementation of planned traffic signal priority (TSP) in the corridor and two queue jumpers (one at Wolf Road and the second at New Karner Road) along with ticket vending machines and other station security and amenity features will be implemented in later phases.

For more information on NY 5 BRT please visit the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) website at <http://www.cdta.org> In addition find NY 5 BRT Conceptual Design Study products through CDTC's website at <http://www.cdtcmpo.org> and click on Route 5 BRT or contact Anne Benware at abenware@cdtcmpo.org.

New Matching Software for CDTC's Commuter Register

The **Commuter Register** is a Commuter Information System that allows people to advertise for free for a carpool. The *Commuter Register* also provides information on park and ride locations, bus schedules and fares, and other commuter related programs. The *Commuter Register* primarily serves people who live **or** work in the Capital District (Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties).

Under the current setup an individual who is interested in forming a carpool must do the work to find appropriate matches within the *Commuter Register* website. The potential carpooler must mentally note his/her path to work to identify potential matches along the route to work. CDTC staff manually uploads the new carpool ads to the *Commuter Register* website.

CDTC staff recognizes that the current format of the carpool matching component of the *Commuter Register* has likely impacted the attraction and usage of the free site. Consequently, CDTC has made the decision to convert the matching component of the *Commuter Register* into a user-driven web and map-based ridesharing system. CDTC, with the aid of CDTA, has circulated an RFP to vendors that are capable of transitioning the *Commuter Register* to a GIS based system.

GreenRide (www.greenride.com) has been awarded the contract and will begin work on redesigning the *Commuter Register*. The newly designed site should be fully operational by the end of April. Once the site is operational, carpool matches will be displayed in a map format, and enroute matching will be accommodated. Transit options will also be displayed. In addition, for marketing purposes, the *Commuter Register* will be re-branded to fit with CDTA's "iride" campaign. The former *Commuter Register* will be branded "ipool". Users will be able to go to www.ipool.com to access what is currently the *Commuter Register*. A marketing campaign will likely follow once the site is fully operational and tested. For more information on the *Commuter Register* please contact Deborah Stacey at dstacey@cdtcmpo.org.

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New Visions 2030

(Continued from page 2)

The New Visions Plan will:

- Encourage sustainable economic growth with good-paying jobs
- Revitalize urban areas
- Help build community structure in growing suburbs
- Preserve open space and agricultural land
- Make communities more walkable and livable
- Provide high quality transit options
- Connect all residents with job opportunities
- Mitigate growing congestion and maintain reasonable mobility on the highway system
- Encourage land use and transportation planning

Encouraging strong community planning with public involvement is critical to achieving these goals. CDTC will continue its Linkage program, which provides funding for cities, towns and villages to prepare community-based transportation and land use plans consistent with New Visions principles. Where and how the region's communities plan and design the places we work, live, and shop can have a real and direct impact on the region's arterial and collector street system, whether people can walk, bike or take transit to reach their destinations and other aspects of regional quality of life.

The plan provides for \$3.4 billion worth of investment in highway rehabilitation, reconstruction and redesign by 2030, and \$1.8 billion in bridge maintenance, repair and replacement by 2030.

In addition, the Plan calls for pursuit of **"Big Ticket" Initiatives**. These are currently unfunded, but represent a vision that the region can strive for; the plan empowers CDTC members and others to continually explore big ideas. This innovative approach ensures that the Capital District maintains vision during periods of financial constraint. The Big Ticket Initiatives include:

- Regional Greenway Program
- Riverfront Access and Urban Development Program
- Street Reconstruction and Reconfiguration
- Roadway Widening and Connections Program
- Suburban Town Center Development
- Bus Service Expansion, BRT Program with Transit Oriented Development
- Guideway Transit System with Transit-Oriented Development
- Managed Lane Program
- Highway Noise Program
- Demand Management Program
- Clean, Efficient Vehicle Program
- Intelligent Traffic Management Program
- Video Surveillance and Enforcement Program
- Comprehensive Traffic Safety program



To obtain additional information on the New Visions 2030 plan visit <http://www.cdtcmpto.org/rtp2030/2030.htm> or contact Christopher O'Neill at co'neill@cdtcmpto.org.



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