Intelligent Traffic Management Program

A traffic management program would include widespread use of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to provide electronic traffic monitoring, traveler information and traffic control systems. ITS technology can monitor traffic flows on major freeways, inform motorists of problem areas, improve response time to incidents and alter traffic signal timing on arterials to improve traffic flow in emergencies. Providing drivers with reliable, up to the minute information on existing traffic conditions would greatly enhance the traveling experience and may reduce incident related congestion. Some ITS technologies can be coordinated at a central location, often at a traffic management center, to allow for regional monitoring of the transportation system. ITS applications include:

- Integrated traffic control and transportation management systems
- Coordinated traffic signals
- Highway advisory radio systems
- Variable message signs
- In-pavement vehicle detectors
- Closed-circuit television
- Global Positioning Systems and route guidance (currently used in some trucks, buses, and rental cars)
- Electronic toll systems

A “big initiative” of this type in the Capital District could be pictured as one that extends signal technology and coordinated operations to the entire CDTC-designated ITS priority network, coupling that with a quantum jump in the quantity and quality of real-time travel information made available through public and fee-based or subscription-based private sources. The cost estimate for this initiative is approximately $7 M per year.

Rationale: The region is already a leader in its financial commitment to traffic and transit technology. A bold initiative to take the ITS program in the Capital District to the next level would reflect the region’s recognition that providing travel information, reliability and predictability is a higher objective and more achievable goal than eliminating delay.