

Igniting a Regional Dialogue for Smart Growth Options

Summary of Estimating the Fiscal Impact of Alternative Futures for the Capital Region



FALL 2007

Knowing Our Options

Planning for the future is much easier with reliable information and clear options. Planning for a community's future requires courage and consensus. Today, the Capital Region faces four future growth scenarios with very different impacts detailed in the compilation study titled, "Estimating the Fiscal Impact of Alternative Futures for the Capital Region." This brochure highlights empirical findings based on various population patterns, pictured below, and related policy options.

The \$1 Billion Question

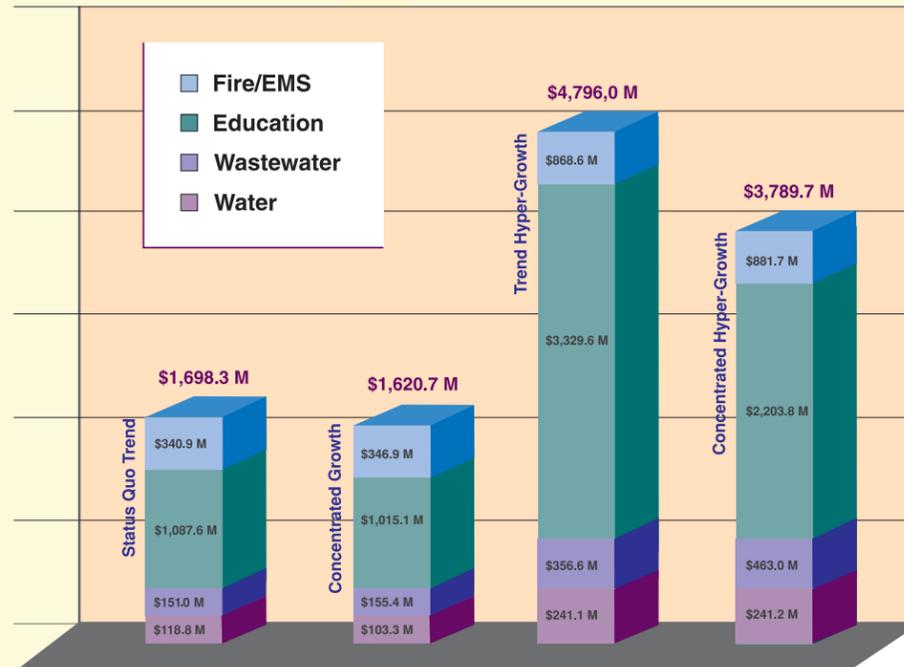
Choices will be made, intentionally or by default, regarding variations of dense or dispersed growth. With concentrated growth there is the opportunity to save \$1 billion in infrastructure costs, not including transportation, while enjoying a cleaner environment and enhanced quality of life. Yet with dispersed population patterns there is the threat of skyrocketing infrastructure costs due to excess investment and long-term maintenance, increased congestion and adverse environmental impacts. By engaging in an informed dialogue about planning and policy options, especially on the local level, we can guide growth and shape our future in the Capital Region.

Growth Rate Realities

The faster the region grows, the more critical it is that we manage growth and avoid escalating infrastructure costs. If not, these costs will result in higher taxes and the erosion of our economic competitiveness. Alternatively, limited or no growth will undermine our ability to maintain and replace existing infrastructure, which will become the responsibility of smaller and less wealthy populations. It is important to note that recent projects, such as the Luther Forest Technology Campus and International SEMATECH's initiative at the University at Albany, suggest more rapid growth. Regardless of future growth rates, local planning efforts that encourage more concentrated population patterns provide significant advantages to unchecked sprawl in the Capital Region.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF GROWTH

The chart below identifies the basic infrastructure costs of water, wastewater, education and Fire/EMS and how these costs will vary based on each of the four growth scenarios.



CDTC BIG TICKET INITIATIVES

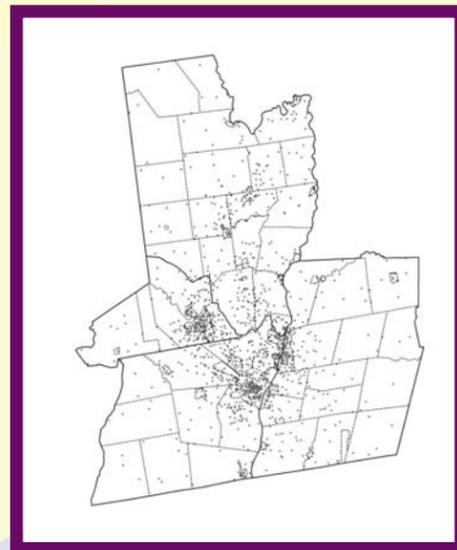
Encouraging concentrated growth is a long-term process that demands bold leadership and regional cooperation. The chart below outlines hypothetical "Big Ticket Initiatives" that are proven methods for guiding growth and creating a more connected region.

	Hypothetical "Big Initiative"	Approximate Maximum Twenty-Year Scale in the Capital Region	Twenty-Year Cost Estimate Comments
	Regional Greenway Program	10 miles per year; 280 miles total (including existing)	\$150 M
	Riverfront Access and Urban Development Program	Implementation of the majority of existing plans	\$1,000 M
	Street Reconstruction and Reconfiguration	40 lane miles/year; 800 lane miles total	\$2,400 M
	Roadway Widening and Connections Program	10-15 lane miles/year; 200 lane miles total	\$1,000 M
	Managed Lane Program	50 route miles total with approx. 75 lane miles	\$750 M \$10 M operating (\$10 M/lane mile)
	Suburban Town Center Development	5-10 lane miles/year; 150 lane miles total	\$175 M
	Bus Service Expansion, BRT Program with Transit-Oriented Development	100 route miles total including NY Rte. 5	\$200 M capital \$400 M add'l oper.
	Guideway Transit System with Transit-Oriented Development	50 route miles guideway with 50 route miles of non-guideway BRT	\$2,100 M capital \$1,450 M add'l oper.



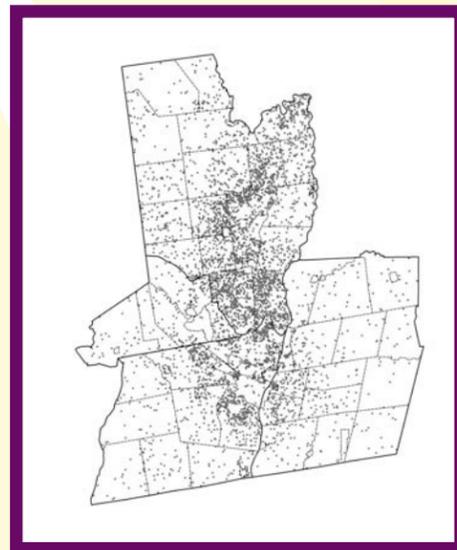
2000-2030
STATUS QUO TREND

Unguided growth at current growth rate, sprawl development



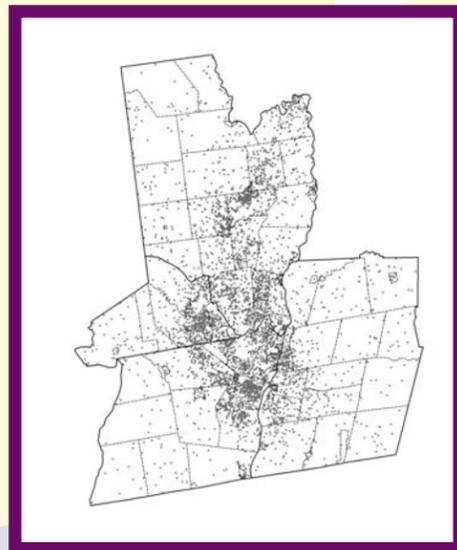
2000-2030
CONCENTRATED GROWTH

Guided growth at current growth rate, dense development



2000-2030
TREND HYPER-GROWTH

Unguided growth at average U.S. growth rate, vast sprawl development



2000-2030
CONCENTRATED HYPER-GROWTH

Guided growth at average U.S. growth rate, robust dense development

Questions that Encourage a Community Dialogue for Smart Growth

- Is the local planning board considering the regional impact of local development decisions?
- Is there a comprehensive plan that deals with growth and its impacts?
- Has the community identified prospective areas to target for future growth?
- Do existing land use regulations accommodate compact, connected, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented design?
- Is the community participating in the Capital District Transportation Committee's Linkage Program or other financial incentive programs available from public and foundation sources?
- Are infrastructure providers meeting with planning entities to more effectively link density requirements with system expansion?
- Is there coordinated capital planning for wastewater treatment and potable water expansion?
- Does the community purchase land or work with property owners of select parcels, with the intent to solicit design competitions for their development?
- Is the School Board or administration engaged in development and growth conversations with other civic leaders?
- Are DEC Brownfields Opportunity Area grants being utilized?

Please visit www.ceg.org or www.cdrpc.org to find the full text version of *Estimating the Fiscal Impact of Alternative Futures for the Capital Region*.

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