

Capital District Transportation Committee

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New Visions 2030

The Plan for a Quality Region

Summary Document

August 2007

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Dear Capital District Resident,

The Capital District Transportation Committee is pleased to share with you its draft New Visions 2030 Plan through this Summary Document. Through countless contributions from residents, businesses, transportation providers and state and local government representatives, CDTC has shaped a new approach to transportation policy and investment for the coming years.

We believe that the plan described in this report will meet the region's transportation needs in a cost effective manner while also promoting safety, enhancing the environment, building strong communities, and improving the overall quality of life. Through the New Visions effort, CDTC has come to believe more firmly than ever in the Capital Region's assets and in the need to use transportation investments and services to build on current strengths.

The Plan responds to regional voices who have described the desirability of planning for a quality region: a region that develops and sustains healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities that function interdependently and readily adapt to change; a region that creates economic, educational, social, cultural and recreational opportunities and provides safe neighborhood environments and housing choices for all; a region that protects sensitive environmental resources and fosters community identity and "a sense of place" in all parts of the region. The relationship between land use planning and transportation is central to the Plan, which calls for urban investment, concentrated development patterns, and smart economic growth.

The plan calls for preservation of our existing infrastructure along with a steady, even pace of improvements in related areas—highway and bridge conditions and design; pedestrian and bicycle accommodations; arterial management; traffic control and information technology; transit service; intermodal facilities; congestion management; community/transportation compatibility; and economic development. With cooperation, these transportation actions can help the region meet some very lofty goals and move even closer to becoming one of the most livable, economically attractive areas of the nation.

Working together, New Visions 2030 will become a reality.

Sincerely,

Mayor John T. McDonald III

Chairman

What is CDTC?

The [Capital District Transportation Committee \(CDTC\)](#) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan area. Every urbanized area in the United States with a population of over 50,000 must have a designated MPO for transportation in order to qualify for any Federal transportation funding. The simple purpose of each MPO is to provide a forum for State and local officials to discuss transportation issues and reach a consensus on transportation plans and specific programs of transportation projects. CDTC fulfills this purpose for both the Albany and Saratoga Springs urbanized areas and surrounding communities. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) relies on each MPO to make sure that the transportation projects that use Federal funds are the products of a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process and meet the priorities of the metropolitan area. Federal law requires CDTC to maintain an up-to-date Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to guide decisions regarding the over \$100 Million in annual federal highway and transit funds (including match) spent in the Capital District. To put "teeth" into the MPO process, the USDOT will not approve metropolitan transportation projects unless they are on the MPO's program - the budget-constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

CDTC has its origins in the old Capital District Transportation Study (CDTS), set up in 1965 through agreements between New York State and the four Capital District counties (Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady) and the 78 municipalities in those counties. Membership and participation has expanded over the years, and currently the CDTC [Policy Board](#) is composed of elected and appointed officials from

- the four counties;
- eight cities (Albany, Schenectady, Troy, Saratoga Springs, Cohoes, Watervliet, Mechanicville and Rensselaer);
- the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT);
- the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA);
- the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC);
- the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA);

- the Albany Port District Commission*;
- the Albany County Airport Authority; and
- the Town of Colonie; and
- at-large members representing the area's towns and villages.

This membership list is larger and more comprehensive than for most MPOs. Additionally, a technical group (CDTC's [Planning Committee](#)) includes the planning counterparts to the Policy Board officials as well as planners from a number of other towns and villages. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) serve as advisory members at both policy and planning levels.

The CDTC sets its own broad agenda for planning activities. With a small professional staff funded with FHWA, FTA and county funds and the assistance of other member agencies, it investigates issues critical to the future of the Capital District. CDTC's planning approach can be characterized by two words: Stewardship and Vision. Stewardship refers to the responsibility of CDTC (collectively) to care for that which has been entrusted to us. CDTC has responsibility for existing transportation facilities and services, public resources, personal resources that are impacted by transportation decisions (like safety, comfort, and convenience, in addition to dollars and cents), and natural resources. Vision refers to the responsibility of CDTC to look to the long-range future of the area and make sure that the transportation system works then as well as now. The goals of the Capital District's residents, businesses and communities must be incorporated into our plans and programs. An awareness of problems to be averted and the development of innovative ways to achieve the region's goals are important to achieving and maintaining economic health and quality of life here.

CDTC is a recognized national leader in many planning and policy areas: the range of issues addressed through the CDTC forum is unusually broad; the coordination of land use and transportation policy is extensive; and the respect for CDTC as a collaborative decision-making forum is high. CDTC's policies and products represent strong consensus positions of the Capital Region and have very real impacts on real world actions.

CDTC Members

CDTC Policy Board

Chairman

Mayor John T. McDonald III

Staff Director

John P. Poorman

Michael G. Breslin, Albany County
Charles E. Houghtaling, Albany County
Kathleen Jimino, Rensselaer County
Neil J. Kelleher, Rensselaer County
Philip Barrett, Saratoga County
Robert L. Phillips, Saratoga County
Susan E. Savage, Schenectady County

Mayor Gerald D. Jennings, City of Albany
Mayor John T. McDonald III, City of Cohoes
Mayor Anthony J. Sylvester, City of Mechanicville
Mayor Daniel J. Dwyer, City of Rensselaer
Mayor Valerie Keehn, City of Saratoga Springs
Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City of Schenectady
Mayor Harry J. Tutunjian, City of Troy
Mayor Robert D. Carlson, City of Watervliet
Mary Brizzell, Town of Colonie
Mindy Wormuth, Town of Halfmoon
Frank Quinn, Town of Glenville
Ellen McNulty-Ryan, Village of Green Island (Alternate)
Mark Evers, Town of North Greenbush, (Alternate)
John O'Donnell, Albany County Airport Authority
Terrence P. Hurley, Albany Port District Commission
Michael Stammel, Capital District Regional Planning Commission
Raymond J. Melleady, Capital District Transportation Authority
Astrid Glynn, New York State Dept. of Transportation
William D. Rinaldi, New York State Thruway Authority

Non-Voting Members

Richard Frederick, NYSDOT Reg. 1

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, FTA

Robert E. Arnold, FHWA

What is New Visions 2030?

What is a Regional Transportation Plan?

According to federal law, a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP or “plan”) is a comprehensive long-range (20-30 year) plan for the transportation system of a metropolitan area, updated at least every four years by the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The RTP includes goals, objectives and policies. The RTP also recommends specific transportation improvements within a balanced budget.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is the current transportation legislation that authorizes federal highway and transit funds and provides the underlying authority to MPOs such as CDTC. SAFETEA-LU added new responsibilities to CDTC’s list and provided a July 2007 deadline for compliance. With this deadline in mind, the CDTC staff, Planning Committee and Policy Board accelerated work to allow CDTC to adopt a new RTP that complies with all provisions of SAFETEA-LU.

What is New Visions?

CDTC’s plan is called “New Visions”, reflecting the wholesale shift in planning philosophy that led to the first New Visions plan adoption in 1997 after several years of intensive technical work and public dialogue. Twenty-five bold principles gained the status of regional policy at that time and have guided planning and investment ever since.

The impact of the New Visions plan – and the integration of environmental, fiscal, land use and community issues into transportation decisions that is at the heart of the New Visions principles – has been substantial over the past decade. New Visions has spurred 54 “Community and Transportation Linkage” joint planning studies in 30 municipalities with over \$3,000,000 in funding. It has provided priority for a NY 5 “Bus Rapid Transit” and land use plan across five municipalities. It has “leveled the playing field” to allow local governments to compete fairly with the state for highway repair and upgrade funds. It has ensured that steady progress will be accomplished in all areas, even during times of financial shortfalls. It has funded dozens of “spot” bike and pedestrian accommodations, sidewalks and trails. It has put a priority on operating the

system, leading to the first advanced regional transportation management center, road patrols and transit – highway information connections. And it has reconciled highway planning to be more realistic and better balanced with community character.

One need only look at downtown Schenectady (with an economic renaissance supported in part by the major State Street Streetscape project enabled by New Visions), the Rensselaer Rail Station (funded in part by federal highway funds “flexed” by CDTC), rehab of I-87 and I-90 and other major roads, CDTA’s new hybrid-electric bus fleet or similar projects to see the importance of New Visions. New Visions is a living plan that has a direct impact on planning philosophy and public investment. It is not a “shelf plan” in any respect, but has had great staying power – all 25 of the adopted principles were re-adopted in 2001, again in 2004 and are still valid today.

What is New Visions 2030?

The effort to go beyond the existing plan and create a “New Visions 2030” plan has been underway for a number of years, with continuous refinement and expansion of subject matter from that in previous plans. Public involvement has ranged from engagement in the dozens of “Linkage” studies at the local level to a recent Center for Economic Growth / SUNYA / CDTC / CDRPC (Capital District Regional Planning Commission) work documenting the fiscal impact on the region of several alternative growth scenarios for the next 30+ years. *Will this region be stagnant, or grow by a quarter-million people or more? Does it matter if the cities survive? Can we make a difference through intelligent local planning? How vulnerable will the region be if there is an energy crisis?*

A long list of new areas for exploration for 2030 called for new technical work and new opportunities for public reaction. Over the past several years, five working groups examined issues ranging from local governmental practices to the “big ticket” question, from “larger than regional policy questions” to the high cost of reconstructing an aging expressway system. The working groups posed new policy questions with which the region must grapple.

Why is the new plan important?

In the past several months, the policy and fiscal aspects of the multitude of these New Visions activities have been reviewed and highlighted. One by one, CDTC's Planning Committee and subsequently the Policy Board have examined each of over a dozen draft New Visions 2030 elements that represent new draft regional policy on issues ranging from human service transportation coordination to "big ticket" initiatives.

The CDTC Policy Board has now released these [draft materials](#) for public review. These new policy commitments include a handful of new planning and investment principles and a new financial plan, among other items, and will be additionally circulated for public comment between now and October 2007. Over the summer, CDTC staff will work with a "Quality Region Task Force" (which has been in place since the 2030 work started) to look for gaps in this new material and to help develop more polished summary materials for even wider public distribution. At its October Policy Board meeting, CDTC would then be asked to either adopt New Visions 2030, extend the public comment period, or both. The type of action would be dictated both by public comment received and by the work carried out with the Quality Region Task Force over the summer. The new plan will fully reflect the new planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU and ensure CDTC's full compliance with federal law.

The content of the new plan is important. CDTC's track record for a decade is to abide by its policies and the draft set of expanded principles frames the way this region will look at such items as transit service, urban reinvestment, roundabouts, the scope of projects, treatment of Northway and other expressway congestion and highway widening issues in general. Public buy-in to the refined New Vision approach is critical.

New Visions 2030 adoption also reflects a significant milestone along a long path. As noted, the bulk of the underlying philosophy was first fully articulated in the original New Visions plan in 1997. Since that time, CDTC and its members have been seriously engaged in implementing and refining the plan. In contrast to many other metro areas, the Capital District's physical landscape increasingly reflects the regional planning philosophy. CDTC's TIP ([Transportation Improvement Program](#)) reflects the plan and joint land use – transportation plans that have been developed in nearly 30

municipalities since the original New Visions adoption.

The new plan broadens the scope and deepens the treatment of many issues. The incorporation of alternative growth and development scenarios into the plan has few parallels in the nation. The consideration of potential "big ticket" initiatives that would call for transportation investment of billions of dollars carefully frames a simultaneously cautious and creative policy framework. Cautious, because the plan does not commit to major system redesign or dramatic new services without the funds to support them. Creative, because 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.

New official principles for the region are articulated for critical issues of safety, security and community context; consideration of roundabouts; tradeoffs between capacity and other project considerations; and a commitment to "managing" any new capacity considered on the expressway system. These, like the existing planning and investment principles, will not only keep transportation decisions in the Capital District focused on collective goals but will also serve as model statements for consideration elsewhere.

Adoption of the plan – after further public review – will officially end one chapter and initiate a new one in the New Visions saga. New work is called for in the plan. Not the least of the next steps is joint effort at all levels of government to ensure that the modest, steady growth in real resources required by the plan is a reality.

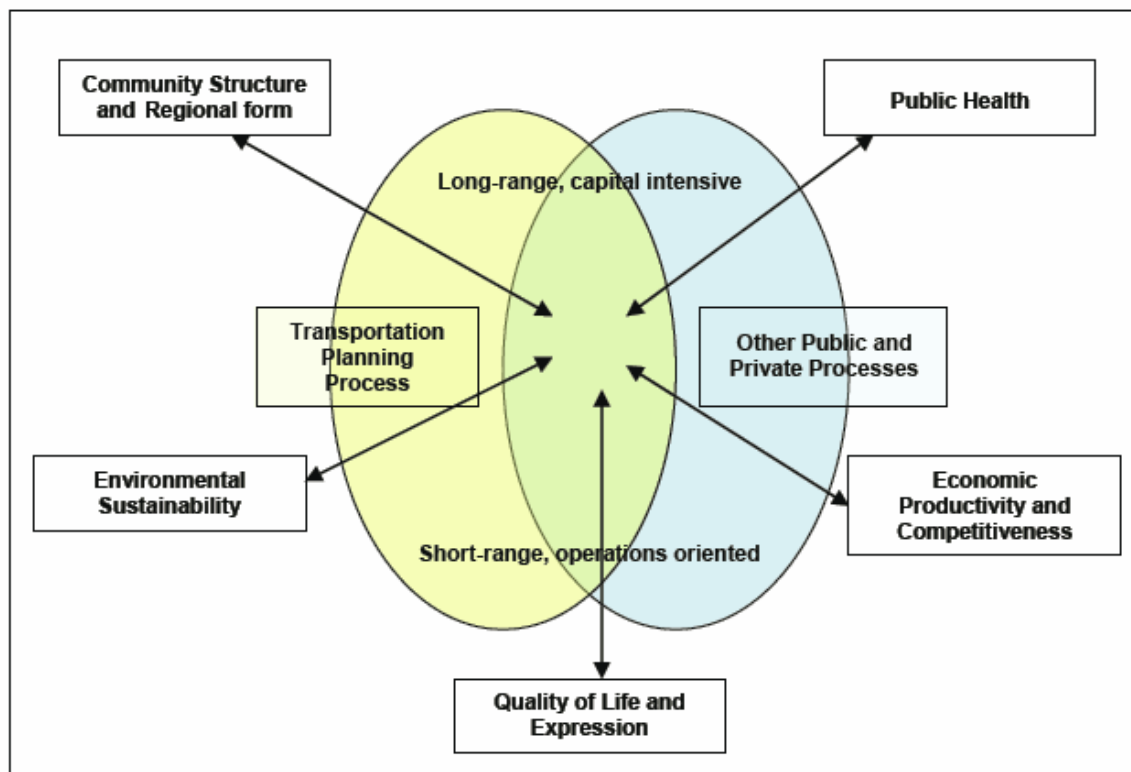
The New Visions Plan is a holistic plan that will maintain the Capital District as a quality region...

A QUALITY REGION develops and sustains healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities that function interdependently and readily adapt to change. A quality region creates economic, educational, social, cultural and recreational opportunities and provides safe neighborhood environments and housing choices for all; protects sensitive environmental resources and fosters community identity and "a sense of place" in all parts of the region.

Components of New Visions 2030

- Principles
- Strategies and actions
- Comprehensive budget
 - 17 categories from bridge maintenance to land use planning
 - Covers all funding sources at all levels
 - Steady progress policy
- Alternative Growth Futures
- Big Ticket Initiatives

A Holistic View of Transportation Planning



Comprehensive Budget

New Visions establishes funding for the following budget categories:

- Intermodal facilities
- Transit capital
- Transit operations
- Priority highway rehab
- Other highway rehab
- Bridge rehab
- Highway and bridge operations
- ITS/ traffic infrastructure
- ITS operations
- CMS Strategic projects
- Community / Economic projects
- Supplemental bike/pedestrian
- Supplemental goods movement
- Supplemental arterial management
- Supplemental safety actions
- Demand management
- Integrated planning & outreach

Reasonably Anticipated Revenues

CDTC's regional plan is fiscally constrained. That is, CDTC may not identify actions or projects as "committed" if it is not reasonable to anticipate that revenues will be available to advance the actions or projects at the intended time.

The New Visions financial plan is fiscally constrained on the same basis as have been previous New Visions plans. In the New Visions 2030 plan, CDTC and its members commit to the necessary rehabilitation of the entire transportation system, along with modest upgrades and improvements. Recent increases in the cost of materials coupled with the need to rebuild a nearly 50-year-old Interstate system have pushed the cost of the plan up 40% in the past six years – more than eating up funding increases provided in that period.

Even with these cost increases, the 2030 plan is fiscally balanced over time – *but only if public funding increases regularly over the next 25 years as it has in the past*. An essentially "flat" level of revenues would lead to serious, unacceptable declines in physical and service conditions and make even the most modest improvements difficult to accomplish.

While it is reasonable to anticipate that funding will be available over coming decades to carry out all elements of the New Visions plan, **it is imperative that CDTC and its members work with all interested parties at the federal, state and local level to explore prudent and timely actions to secure these funds**. Discussion of "big ticket initiatives" must occur simultaneously with discussion of budget gaps for the basics. It may be necessary to link the "urgent" with the "desired" to elicit sufficient public support for legislative action to provide the necessary resources.

The budget commitments in the New Visions 2030 plan are modest and conservative. In accord with adopted principles, emphasis is placed on system management and operations, coordinated land use and transportation planning, system preservation and re-investment and safety and air quality initiatives. Discretionary system expansion budgets are modest, but necessary.

The budget maintains CDTC's "steady progress" principle. That is, until funding levels match in real dollars the New Visions budget levels, funding commitments can be made to individual projects across all project types but at a slower pace of implementation than in the financial plan. CDTC will continue to seek bike and pedestrian accommodations, intermodal improvements, transit service improvements, new system operations initiatives and the like along with system preservation projects even while working with its partners to secure the necessary funding for full implementation. It will not be possible to achieve long-term system objectives across all subject areas without making steady progress (at a pace affordable by current funding) in all subject areas over the next 30 years.

New Visions 2030 Finance Plan Regional Transportation Plan Budget by Element

			previous	new
		Current Invest-ment Levels	New Visions 2025 Full Implemen-tation	New Visions 2030 Full Implemen-tation
REGIONAL PROGRAMS¹				
1	Intermodal Facilities	31.900	41.095	41.600
2	Transit Infrastructure	12.000	11.491	16.807
3	Transit Service	60.000	41.860	63.000
4	ITS (Technology) and Traffic Infrastructure	6.300	12.790	15.250
5	ITS (Technology) and Traffic Operations			
6	Highway Rehab, Reconstruction and Redesign -- Priority Network	55.000	87.805	148.500
7	Highway Rehabilitation & Reconstruction – Other	12.500	15.250	20.730
8	Bridge Rehab & Reconstruction	55.100	82.100	89.100
9	Highway and Bridge Maintenance	191.000	174.300	217.875
10	Strategic Highway and Bridge Actions -- CMS-based (capacity)	17.400	10.277	8.939
11	Strategic Highway and Bridge Actions – Economic Development /Community Compatibility	9.500	8.712	12.286
12	Supplemental Goods Movement Accommodations	14.800	3.665	5.130
13	Supplemental Bike & Pedestrian Accommodations		2.618	3.670
14	Supplemental Access Management Actions		0.500	0.700
15	Supplemental Safety Actions		3.800	5.300
16	Demand Management	0.500	1.600	2.000
17	Integrated Planning & Outreach	2.600	3.610	4.500
	SUBTOTAL	468.600	501.473	655.387

¹ All values are in millions of 2007\$, annually over 25 years, 2006-2030.

New Visions Addresses Issues Important to the Capital District

Transportation Safety- The New Visions 2030 plan lays out a clear strategy to meet a long-standing goal of improving the safety of the transportation system for all of its users both in response to new federal requirements and recent developments in the state of the practice. The plan relies on an integrated approach for safety planning activities which not only supports the continued use of traditional safety countermeasures on high speed facilities (clear zones, rumble strips, etc.), where appropriate, but also encourages use of the “Complete Streets” concept (where arterials, collectors and local roads are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users) and innovative design techniques. These include use of roundabouts, “visual friction” (the visual cues drivers get from the road environment to slow down), and access management techniques (to reduce conflict points between users of a roadway). This integrated approach also recognizes that education and enforcement efforts by local safety professionals also has a real impact on driver behavior and that designing improvement projects in sync with surrounding community context can help encourage responsible driving behavior. Taken together this approach will help reduce the level of risk for the region’s most vulnerable users of the transportation system, namely bicyclists, pedestrians, children and the elderly.

Transit Service- Transit provides travel options, increases mobility and can support economic development. The New Visions Plan incorporates CDTA’s Transit Development Plan which will improve and grow a variety of transit services for the Capital District. CDTC is investing in Bus Rapid Transit or BRT in the Route 5 corridor. “Big ticket” initiatives outline a vision of potential further investment in BRT and fixed guideway transit systems as a means of supporting regional growth.

Highways and Bridges- The cost to maintain the highway and bridge infrastructure in the Capital District over the next 20 years is staggering. The plan provides for \$3.4 billion worth of investment in highway rehabilitation, reconstruction and redesign and \$1.8 billion in bridge maintenance, repair and replacement by 2030. The New Visions Plan makes a strong commitment to keeping the region’s highway and bridge system in good condition.

Travel Demand Management- The New Visions Plan continues to call for a variety of programs and initiatives aimed at managing travel demand. Park and ride lots, encouraging car pooling, telecommuting, employer based programs, guaranteed ride home, and support of use of non-auto modes such as transit, bicycle and pedestrian investments are strongly supported by CDTC.

Traffic Congestion- The Plan incorporates the CDTC “Congestion Management Process” (CMP). The CMP recognizes that congestion is worst in the AM and PM peaks; and that the most unbearable congestion is related to incidents, especially on

the expressway system. An accident during rush hour on the Northway can back up traffic for hours. The CMP calls for an emphasis on managing congestion—rapid clearing of incidents, information for travelers to avoid incidents, and taking advantage of technology (Intelligent Transportation Systems) including signal timing and coordination. The CMP also relies on travel demand management and encourages transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel. The Plan identifies the future option of managed lanes on the expressway system. An example of a managed lane could be a “HOT” lane on the Northway—a premium service lane that allows carpoolers for free, other drivers for a toll, and allows transit service to bypass congestion. A HOT lane is identified as one of the unfunded “big ticket initiatives” in the Plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation- CDTC has made a strong commitment to improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This means incorporating sidewalks and pedestrian crossings and bicycle lanes in highway construction projects; encouraging site design by developers that provides high quality pedestrian access; developing bike/hike trails; encouraging the incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into city, village and town plans. One of the currently unfunded “big ticket initiatives” described in the Plan presents a vision for a regional greenways program that would result in 280 miles of bike-hike trails linking parks, natural areas, cultural features, historic sites, neighborhoods and retail areas.

Environmental Quality- The New Visions Plan charts a course for environmental quality in the Capital District. The plan fosters protection of open space and environmentally sensitive areas, moderation of growth of vehicle miles traveled (or VMT) to support energy conservation and air quality, and identification of opportunities for larger- than-project specific mitigation of transportation impacts. By encouraging sustainable development patterns and site design, urban reinvestment and community-based land use planning, along with transit, bicycle and pedestrian investments and strong participation in the Clean Cities program, the Plan seeks to create a sustainable transportation system over the long run in the Capital District.

The Importance of Local Communities- The New Visions Plan recognizes the critical importance of land use and development. CDTC has sponsored the Linkage Planning 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. A comprehensive arterial management program that promotes properly located and spaced driveways and signalized intersections, use of raised medians, and emphasizes connected streets, sidewalks, and transit access, in the end, will provide a safe and efficient arterial street system and quality communities. At the regional level, CDTC has evaluated regional growth patterns and concluded that development which is transit-oriented and concentrated around centers holds the best hope for regional quality of life and a sustainable transportation system.

Economic Development- CDTC has worked with the Center for Economic Growth, ARISE (A Regional Initiative Supporting Empowerment), the Business / Higher Education Roundtable and members of the Quality Region Task Force to articulate regional economic development needs and the transportation investment needed to support regional economic growth. CDTC worked with CEG, CDRPC, and UAlbany to assess the fiscal impacts of regional growth scenarios. There is strong support from the business community for urban reinvestment and concentrated growth patterns and a strong transportation system that will support sustainable economic growth for the region.

Freight movement- The New Visions Plan recognizes the importance of planning and developing appropriate programs to meet the increasing demands freight movements put on the transportation system. New Visions recognizes the importance of freight to the regional economy and to private sector businesses. Congestion management and infrastructure investments will support goods movement in the capital district.

Public Participation- The New Visions 2030 development has included Quality Region Task Force, five working groups, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, the Goods Movement Task force, and the Finance Task Force; and public involvement in the dozens of Linkage studies at the local level. The CDTC Policy Board has now released the **draft Plan materials** for public review. Over the summer, CDTC staff will work with a “Quality Region Task Force” (which has been in place since the 2030 work started) to look for gaps in this new material and to help develop more polished summary materials for even wider public distribution. At its October 4, 2007 Policy Board meeting, CDTC will then be asked to either adopt New Visions 2030, extend the public comment period, or both. The type of action would be dictated both by public comment received and by the work carried out with the Quality Region Task Force over the summer. The new plan will fully reflect the new planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU and ensure CDTC’s full compliance with federal law.

Security- Security has become an important factor in transportation planning. CDTC will continue to follow the lead of NYSDOT and CDTA with security related issues and continue to provide a forum for operational discussion related the transportation system in the Capital District. If needed, CDTC will assist a security coordinating agency to the extent possible.

Alternative Development Scenarios

The Capital District is a region at a critical crossroads. With the prospect of increased development pressure and growth potential, the region is being challenged to assess its ability to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner. During the development of the New Visions 2030 Plan, CDTC received strong support from regional partners for developing a plan that sustains the Capital District as a quality region.

The future is uncertain, and CDTC decided to analyze different scenarios of growth.

Four different future development scenarios were considered. These scenarios were developed to test the impacts of growth. CDRPC conducted an in depth analysis of the demographic distributions and land use patterns for four scenarios:

1. **Status Quo Trend**- This is CDRPC's baseline forecast (9% growth in population, 15% growth in households by 2030, current development patterns continuing); this is the official Plan forecast, and can be considered the most likely based on past trends;
2. **Concentrated Growth**- This scenario assumes the baseline growth rate, but with more concentrated development patterns resulting from urban reinvestment and suburban planning;
3. **Trend Hyper-Growth**- This scenario assumes "hyper-growth" (29% population growth and 35% household growth by 2030), with trend patterns of dispersed development; the rate of growth mirrors the national average of one percent per year;
4. **Concentrated Hyper-Growth**- This scenario assumes hyper-growth occurring in a concentrated pattern resulting from more urban reinvestment and suburban planning.

The four growth scenarios were represented and modeled in detail at the zonal level, and are illustrated in the maps on page 16.

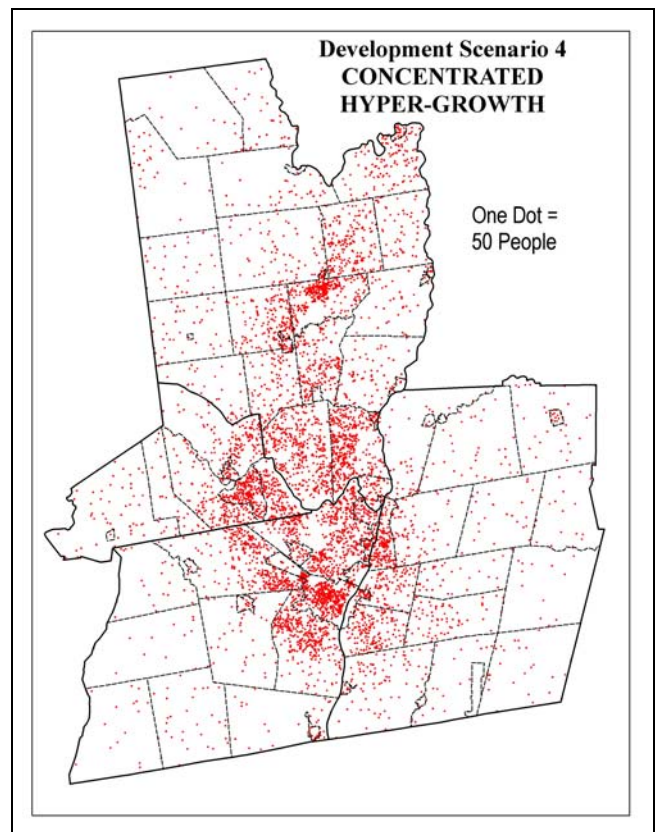
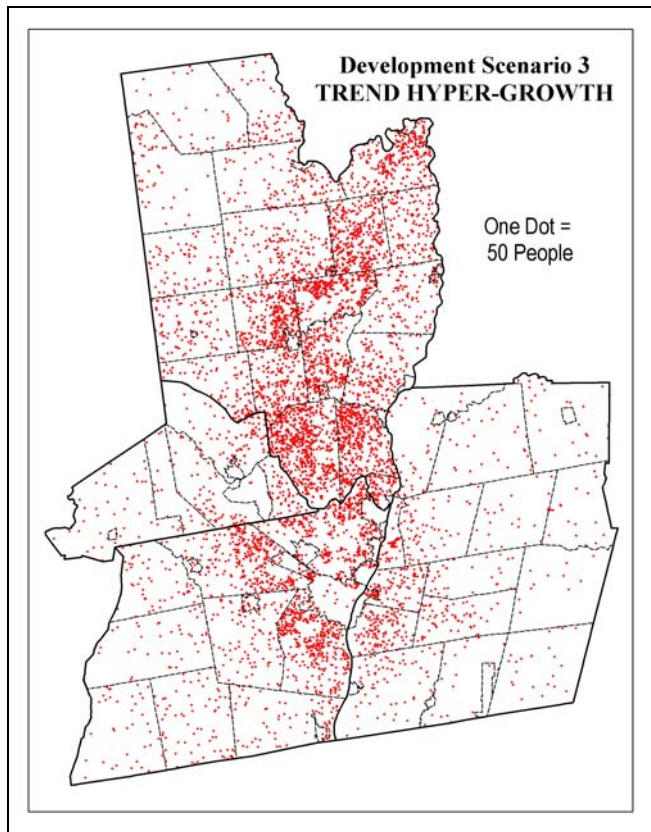
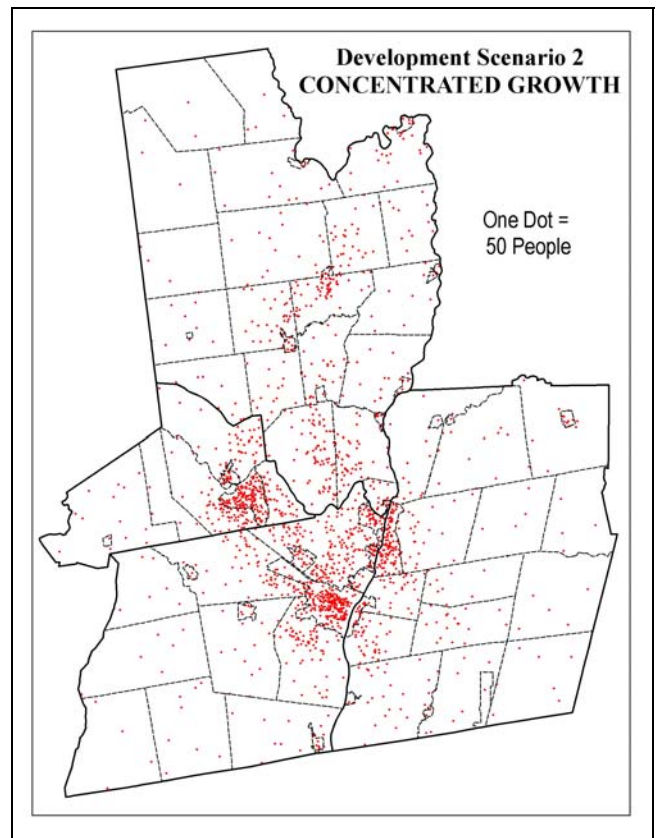
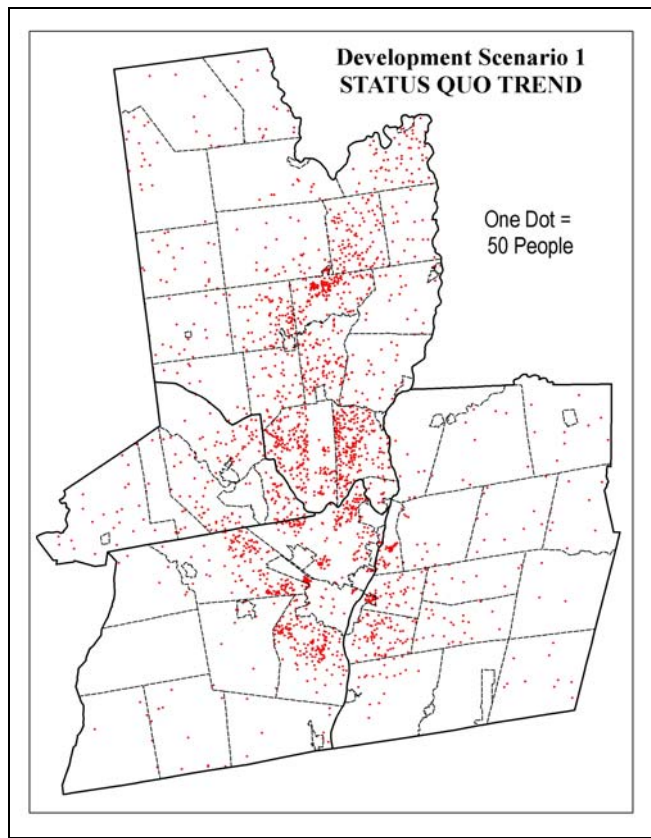
Under any growth scenario, it was found that the positive benefits of concentrated development patterns are significant for the transportation system and for regional quality of life. The New Visions Plan supports and encourages concentrated development in the Capital District. The urgency for coordinated, high quality planning is even greater under a scenario of high growth. This urgency will be necessary because the impacts of a high growth scenario with dispersed development patterns would threaten to make the region's quality of life unsustainable.

CDTC worked with CEG, CDRPC, and UAlbany to assess the fiscal impacts of regional growth scenarios. There is strong support from the business community for urban reinvestment and concentrated growth patterns and a strong transportation system that will support sustainable economic growth for the region.

Achieving the benefits of the concentrated development scenarios will require continued strong public support and much concerted regional and community leadership. New Visions 2030 calls for transportation investments that support urban reinvestment and high quality suburban planning. The New Visions for a Quality Region process has confirmed a consensus that seeks to use transportation policy (and other public policy) in the region to:

- 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 meaningful transit options;
- Connect all residents with job opportunities;
- Mitigate growing congestion and maintain reasonable mobility on the highway system; and,
- Encourage land use and transportation planning.

Population Growth from 2000 to 2030 Under Four Alternative Development Scenarios



Big Ticket Initiatives

The Plan calls for consideration of potential “big ticket” initiatives. These initiatives would be supported by higher growth scenarios, yet they could be pursued with trend growth as well. Funding is not identified, yet the plan puts forward the vision of bold investments that could be feasible if the public supports the vision and funding can be found.

The Plan is cautious, because it does not commit to major system redesign or dramatic new services without the funds to support them.

The “big ticket” initiatives also represent a creative approach, because 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 are listed on pages 20 to 21, along with descriptions and cost estimates.

During the development of the New Visions 2030 Plan, six conditions were identified that have allowed such initiatives to occur in other regions and that could make the big ticket initiatives feasible in the Capital District. Some of these conditions may already be present for some initiatives. All of these are conditions that the Capital District may grow into.

1. A sense of urgency is typically present. This sense of urgency may be related to long-standing issues of great magnitude (such as the congestion present in London prior to areawide pricing) or to an experience and atmosphere of rapid growth. *This sense of urgency may not be present in the Capital District for many of the initiatives under current growth trends, but it could emerge strongly under higher growth scenarios.*

2. A champion is typically a critical element as catalyst and sustainer of the initiative. Elected officials or, occasionally, planning professionals are often directly associated with marshalling the support and forging the necessary partnerships to make an initiative a reality. The champion is often essential to shepherding the initiative through difficult implementation phases of environmental analysis, NIMBY opposition and cost increases. Without a visible champion, an initiative could die easily in the face of such obstacles. *The big initiatives for the Capital District will require champions.*

3. The initiative reflects the sensibilities and community values of the region, producing a strong community consensus. For example, Portland’s and

Minneapolis' initiatives in the areas of growth management, environmental stewardship and livability both draw from and reflect the personal priorities of the local residents and business leaders. Big initiatives today are not likely to succeed simply because they fall within the purview of a powerful government agency; they require broad public support. *The feasible big initiatives presented in this paper have been selected because they are consistent with New Visions planning principles, which have enjoyed strong and growing support among Capital District communities.*

4. Commitment to a major initiative is as much related to a subjective rationale as to objective analysis. This does not mean that a decision to reconstruct the Central Artery in Boston or a regional rail system in Raleigh-Durham is unfounded. Rather, it means that regions pursue major initiatives as much because they want to as because they believe the initiative is economically efficient in achieving results. The “look and feel” of the completed project; the desire to make a *public* statement of the region's priorities; the hope of lasting positive benefits are at least equal to calculations of user savings, transit ridership, emissions reductions or cost effectiveness in the decision process. *The subjective rationale for the big ticket items in the Capital District is compelling.*

5. Funding is achieved through a combination of local sources and state or federal funds – reflecting a willingness to pay. The funding paradox (“We can't plan something big because we don't have money and we can't get money because we haven't planned anything big”) is resolved in successful initiatives by (1) securing local financial support for a popular initiative with public support by promising external funds to vastly subsidize the local cost; and (2) leveraging the local enthusiasm and local funding commitment to obtain external (state or federal) funds from discretionary pots.

The question of the willingness to pay for big ticket items has an uncertain answer in the Capital District under existing conditions. Growth pressures brought about by the high growth scenarios may influence the public on this, especially if investments are viewed as tools to manage the growth and protect and enhance community quality. Further, higher growth scenarios may lead to increases in regional transportation revenues, for example, an increase in mortgages related to higher population growth will create more revenue for funding public transit; and higher population growth will result in increasing shares of federal funds. This type of funding increase would present opportunities that would influence the public's thinking. More concentrated development patterns with urban reinvestment would support premium transit service and reduce costs per vehicle mile traveled, creating opportunities for public support of increasing revenue.









Finally, forecasts of future levels of State and federal funding are uncertain; but if those funding levels were to increase, the region would be well positioned to take advantage of those funds if a consensus has been developed about the types of big initiatives that should be pursued. The recent state investments and incentives for

Nanotech and chip fab industries in the Upstate communities raises the possibility that the external funding needed to help support big transportation initiatives in the Capital District may be from the state budget as much or more than from the federal budget.









6. In the absence of the conditions to support big initiatives, it is difficult to attain comparable impact through incremental changes. Incremental actions, such as those contained in CDTC's existing New Visions plan and funded in the Transportation Improvement Program, are different in kind as well as in scale from big initiatives that derive from a sense of urgency. For example, in the absence of expectations of rapid growth in the region, in 2000 CDTC chose a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) option for the NY 5 corridor and full implementation will not be completed until 2015. Over that same timeframe, other metropolitan areas will have built substantial regional rail systems, undertaking the difficult and expensive actions because of urgency caused by growth. The substantial commitment to rail transit in those metropolitan areas will produce a land use impact (with development more oriented to station locations) that the slow rollout of BRT in the Capital District cannot. *Forty years from now Capital District residents may wonder why their region lacks the transportation infrastructure evident in other areas and conclude that planners and elected officials at the beginning of the 21st century lacked foresight. For that reason, it is important to at least consider big initiatives for the Capital District.*

The big ticket initiatives represent an investment tool that will help manage growth in a way that will sustain the Capital District as a quality region. Investments in the big ticket initiatives can catalyze a more concentrated development pattern under any growth scenario. The caveat is that the big ticket initiatives are currently unfunded, and by themselves will not induce high growth.

Maximum Twenty-Year Scale of Hypothetical “Big Initiatives” In the Capital District (Implementation between 2010 and 2030)

	Hypothetical “Big Initiative”	Approximate Maximum Twenty-year scale in the Capital District	Twenty-year cost estimate	Comments
	Regional greenway program	10 miles per year; 280 total including existing	\$150 M	Scale reference is Seattle’s plan for 800 miles of paths. Cost at approximately \$500 K/mile based on local experience.
	Riverfront access and urban development program	Implementation of a majority of existing plans	\$1,000 M	Could draw from multiple fund sources, not just transportation. If significant Interstate redesign is included, could approach \$3 B - \$4 B based on Boston’s Central Artery precedent.
	Street Reconstruction and Reconfiguration	40 lane miles per year; 800 total	\$2,400 M	New Visions intended to address 25 lane miles per year; this is 50% more aggressive. Cost at approximately \$3 M per lane mile.
	Roadway widening and connections program	10-15 lane miles per year; 200 total	\$1,000 M	Scale comparable to double the intended ten-year implementation in New Visions 2021 plan. Mix of modest (\$2.5 M per lane mile) and costly (\$7 M per lane mile) projects.
	Suburban town center development	5-10 lane miles per year; 150 total	\$175 M	Cost at approx. \$1 M+ per lane mile as mix of access and collector roads. Developer-built or financed connections not included in the total.
	Bus service expansion, BRT program with transit oriented development	100 route miles total including NY 5	\$200 M capital \$400 M add'l oper.	Scale and cost estimated at 5-10 times that for NY 5 BRT.
	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.	Scale comparable to planned expansion in Portland over 20 years; capital cost of \$40 M/mile derived from Portland, Phoenix, and Columbus plans. Operating cost estimated at \$1.25 M/year per linear mile. Includes ½ of BRT non-guideway plan also.
	Managed lane program	50 route miles total with approx. 75 lane miles	\$750 M \$10 M operating	Scale at one or two lanes per center-line mile where physically feasible in Interstate system in Albany County, extensions north, east, west. Cost at \$10 M per lane mile.

Maximum Twenty-Year Scale of Hypothetical “Big Initiatives” In the Capital District (Implementation between 2010 and 2030)

	Hypothetical “Big Initiative”	Approximate Maximum Twenty-year scale in the Capital District	Twenty-year cost estimate	Comments
	Highway noise program	40 locations on expressway system	\$40 M	Scale addresses all existing warrants; noise mitigation costs for widenings are included in guideway and managed lane budgets above.
	Demand management program	40,000 participants	\$50 M (public)	Scale at 10% of regional workforce; Cost estimated at \$20/month for ¼ of participants, self-financed by employers for remaining participants. \$20/month is derived from CDTC experience.
	Clean, efficient vehicle program	public transit fleets, private vehicle incentive to double hybrid sales (2010), declining incentive to 2030	\$550 M	Scale at 30% purchase price incentive in 2010 to double hybrid sales to 2,800; incentive declines as hybrid market expands. Estimated \$100,000 price increase for 300 transit vehicles of varied sizes.
	Intelligent traffic management program	Full ITS deployment on priority network; including real-time traffic info on entire system	\$135 M	Working Group B estimates as continuation of current \$6.7 M/yr; purchases more as costs decrease. Cost does not include rapidly-expanding private investment (vehicles, services)
	Video surveillance and enforcement program	Full deployment on priority ITS network	Supported by fines	Red light running cameras and possibly, speed enforcement cameras
	Comprehensive Traffic Safety program	Capital investment at several times the set aside in SAFETEA-LU, plus other features	\$200 M	Capital improvements, driver education, traffic enforcement, improved community and site design.
	Major highway system construction	Approx. 20-25 arterial and 5-10 lane miles of expressway annual	\$3,000 M to \$5,000 M	Not included in the Plan --Not consistent with community values or public policy (such as the State Energy Plan, State Transportation Plan and the New Visions Plan).
	Take-a-lane program	No feasible implementation for contra-flow lanes. Tolling existing toll-free facilities in theory could reach 100 route miles	more than supported with toll revenue-	Not included in the Plan --Not supported by traffic dynamics; no excess capacity in off-peak to yield a lane. Tolling existing toll-free facilities not yet politically plausible.

New Visions Principles

Planning and investment principles guide decision-making at CDTC. As statements of principle, they provide a framework for funding decisions, project selection criteria, and corridor-level planning. The original New Visions plan in 1997 led to the articulation of 25 principles which have been reaffirmed in subsequent updates of the plan. After more than ten years of public vetting, they have had significant impacts on how transportation planning is approached and where public transportation investments are made in the region. These 25 principles are carried forward into New Visions 2030. These principles have described CDTC's commitment to:

The New Visions planning and investment principles have significantly impacted transportation in the region since 1997.

- **system preservation first**
- **technology, operations and demand management**
- **jurisdiction blind investments**
- **plan and build for all modes**
- **transportation *and* land use**
- **fiscal realism**
- **steady progress with balanced implementation**

New Visions 2030 articulates six new principles which address the following issues:

- **safety**
- **security**
- **consideration of roundabouts**
- **tradeoffs between capacity and other project considerations including community context**
- **a commitment to “managing” any new capacity considered on the expressway system**
- **environmental stewardship**

CDTC'S 31 ADOPTED PLANNING & INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

The following is a list of the principles adopted in CDTC's New Visions 2030 Regional Transportation Plan. CDTC attempts to respect these principles in all its actions.

PRESERVE AND MANAGE

Improve System Performance

- 1) CDTC is committed to the maintenance, repair and renewal of the existing highway and bridge system in a cost-effective manner that protects and enhances rideability, public safety and accessibility.
- 2) Funding for appropriate repair and renewal will be based on the function and condition of the facility -- not ownership.
- 3) Encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel is a socially, economically and environmentally responsible approach to improving the performance of our transportation system.
- 4) In addition to supporting desired land settlement patterns, transit service helps meet multiple regional objectives in the Capital Region.
 - Transit contributes to congestion management, air quality and energy savings;
 - Transit offers an alternative travel mode, reducing auto dependence; and
 - Transit provides essential mobility for those who do not operate a private vehicle.
- 5) Improve the safety of the regional transportation system by creating a traveling environment that is consistent with the community context and provides a reasonable range of risk for all users of the system.
- 6) Transportation planning and implementation in the Capital Region includes examination of security issues and incorporation of security actions that: protect lives and coordinate the use of resources and manpower through established plans and protocols; provide services during and after disaster emergencies to aid citizens and reduce human suffering resulting from a disaster; and provide for recovery and redevelopment after disaster emergencies.
- 7) The needs of the older driver will be considered as transportation facilities are maintained and rehabilitated.

- 8) Increased efficiency in current vehicles/programs is preferable to fleet expansion to provide for special transportation needs.

Manage Congestion

- 9) Management of demand is preferable to accommodation of single-occupant vehicle demand growth.
- 10) Cost-effective operational actions are preferable to physical highway capacity expansion.
- 11) Capital projects designed to provide significant physical highway capacity expansion are appropriate congestion management actions only under certain conditions.
- 12) Significant physical highway capacity additions carried out in the context of major infrastructure renewal are appropriate only under certain conditions.
- 13) Incident management is essential to effective congestion management.
- 14) Any major highway expansion considered by CDTC will include a management approach.
- 15) In project development and design, other performance measures, such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit access, community quality of life, and safety will be considered along with congestion measures.
- 16) The New York State Department of Transportation guidelines for roundabouts will be used for all CDTC federal aid projects that involve intersection improvements.

Protect Our Investment

- 17) Managing traffic flows on the Capital Region expressway and arterial system is critical for both economic and social reasons.
- 18) Major capital projects must have a plan for operating budgets for the life of the project.
- 19) Maintaining the health and improving the efficiency of the existing freight facilities in the region through public/private partnerships is a high priority.

CDTC'S 31 ADOPTED PLANNING & INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

DEVELOP THE REGION'S POTENTIAL

Build Upon our Strengths

- 20) The transportation system of the Capital Region is an important part of the region's attractiveness.
- 21) Transportation investments will help preserve and enhance the Capital Region's existing urban form, infrastructure, and quality of place.

Use Transportation Investment as a Tool

- 22) Transit facilities and services can be an essential element of the social, economic and cultural fabric if supportive policies and investments are in place.
- 23) Neighborhood-based local planning efforts are important to the success of an overall regional plan that emphasizes livable communities.

LINK TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

- 24) Land use management is critical to the protection of transportation system investment.
- 25) Design of street layout and location of complementary uses creates a pedestrian scale and provides increased accessibility without compromising the attractiveness of development.

Link Transportation Investments to Land Use Planning

- 26) Transportation investments will encourage residential and commercial development to locate within an Urban Service Area defined for the Capital Region.
- 27) Environmental stewardship is one of CDTC's emerging roles and is crucial to the success of and quality of life in this region. Transportation investments must improve or preserve the region's cultural and natural environment.
- 28) Transportation investments will not encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and will help to preserve rural character.
- 29) Arterial management guidelines will be flexible enough to deal with the Capital Region's various roadway types and the specific land use patterns surrounding them

PLAN AND BUILD FOR ALL MODES

- 30) CDTC's planning efforts will be comprehensive enough to encompass all modes, including air, water, freight, intercity and local transit, pedestrian and bicycle.
- 31) Possible bicycle/pedestrian-related improvements will be considered from the perspective of developing a system -- not just based on whether a particular facility is currently used.

CDTC'S DRAFT 13 STRATEGIES & 47 ACTIONS

The following is a list of the draft strategies and actions for CDTC's *New Visions 2030* Regional Transportation Plan. They represent CDTC's intended implementation program.

MAINTAIN GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS

- 1) Ensure adequate highway and bridge maintenance efforts.
- 2) Pursue an effective highway and bridge rehabilitation and reconstruction program.
- 3) Continue to maintain transit equipment and facilities in a state of good repair.
- 4) Embrace a "risk assessment" approach for capacity considerations in infrastructure project design.
- 5) Maintain, update, and enhance priority treatment networks for transportation investments.
- 6) Explore changes in road ownership or state funding opportunities as ways to level the playing field between various roadway owners.

PRO-ACTIVELY PLAN VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- 7) Prepare and maintain Regional Development Strategies.
- 8) Develop a New Visions Planning Guidebook.**
- 9) Continue to provide funding for and staff participation in community based planning through the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program.
- 10) Develop a New Visions Training Program that specifically targets local planning board members and other local decision makers.**
- 11) Engage county planning and encourage intermunicipal planning and information sharing.**
- 12) Continue to undertake access management plans for priority network arterials as opportunities arise.
- 13) Maintain a program for transportation projects directed explicitly at community enhancement or regional economic development.

PLAN FOR A SAFER AND MORE SECURE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- 14) Establish a Safety Working Group to coordinate CDTC's safety planning activities with regional safety partners.**
- 15) Develop a formal safety management system for the Capital Region that goes beyond traditional approaches.**
- 16) Facilitate interagency cooperation and coordination of security planning activities.**

REACH OUT FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

- 17) Emphasize public participation in transportation planning, programming and implementation.

DESIGN EFFECTIVE FACILITIES

- 18) Improve continuity between the planning, programming and design of transportation projects, regardless of fund source and road ownership.
- 19) Routinely make road projects bicycle, pedestrian and transit friendly.

ENHANCE THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- 20) Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) on the priority network.
- 21) Continue to support the Transportation Management Center and incident management activities.
- 22) Continue to promote sound arterial management planning and design practice as one tool to improve transportation system performance on all Capital Region arterial streets.
- 23) Facilitate the collection of transportation data to foster regional transportation planning and analysis.**

SUPPORT INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

- 24) Improve intermodal passenger connections throughout the region.
- 25) Continue to support and facilitate goods movement planning and intermodal activities.
- 26) Improve surface access to the Port of Albany.
- 27) Continue to support improved surface access to the Albany International Airport.
- 28) Eliminate at-grade railroad crossings where feasible and improve at-grade railroad crossing safety.

PROVIDE RELIABLE, EFFICIENT AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICE

- 29) Continue to restructure and enhance transit service to meet 21st century needs.
- 30) Support transit through design of the built environment and use of technology.
- 31) **Maintain the Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee to serve as the forum for coordinating the transportation activities of human service agencies and local transit services, such as CDTA.**

TREAT ALL MODES FAIRLY IN THE CAPITAL PROGRAM

- 32) Direct transportation funding to support ***New Visions 2030*** concepts.
- 33) Continue to provide funding for implementation of small, cost-effective improvements.

ENHANCE DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- 34) Continue and expand demand management initiatives using the best available technologies.
- 35) Engage New York State as a full partner in parking management and transit promotion.
- 36) Consider highway pricing (particularly congestion pricing) and broad parking policies (including cashing out).

ENSURE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS ARE CONSIDERED WHILE CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- 37) **Support the deployment and use of Clean Fuels and Clean Fuel Technology in the Capital Region.**
- 38) **Continue to update CDTC's Title VI/Environmental Justice (EJ) document and consider the impacts of planning, project programming and project design on CDTC's Title VI/EJ populations.**
- 39) **Specifically consider environmental and cultural resource impacts of transportation planning, project programming and design.**
- 40) **Explore Green Corridors and opportunities to reinforce open space protection efforts in the Capital Region.**

EXPLORE BIG TICKET/BIG IDEA INITIATIVES

- 41) **Refine and further articulate the Big Ticket/Big Idea Initiatives for the Capital Region.**
- 42) **Continue to explore options for the Regional Greenway Concept.**

SECURE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

- 43) Build a coalition to lobby for regional transportation projects.
- 44) Explore local funding mechanisms for implementation of the plan.
- 45) Increase the use of mitigation costs and public/private partnerships to finance transportation improvements.
- 46) Include demand management and transit support in developer-financed traffic mitigation programs.
- 47) Explore changes in funding rules to better align funding with function.

The Full New Visions 2030 Plan is documented in the reports listed below. They are available on CDTC’s website: www.cdtcmpo.org.

Effects of Alternative Development Scenarios in the Capital District

(Working Group A: [Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Expressway System Options

(Working Group B: [Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

“Big Idea” Transportation Initiatives For The Capital Region

(Working Group C: [Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Larger than Regional Policy Concepts

(Working Group D: [Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Concepts for Assisting Local Decision Making in a Regional Context

(Working Group E: [Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Bicycle and Pedestrian Game Plan and Toolbox

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

The Metropolitan Congestion Management Process

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Environmental Justice Analysis

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Meeting the Environmental Mitigation and Consultation Requirements of SAFETEA-LU: An Opportunity to Continue Moving Toward a Sustainable Regional Transportation System

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

New Vision 2030 Finance Plan

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Goods Movement Plan

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Safety Planning in the Capital District

([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

Security ([Draft Summary](#) | [Draft Final Document](#))

CDTC’s 31 Adopted [Planning & Investment Principles](#)

CDTC’s [Strategies and Actions](#)

While not directly a part of New Visions 2030, the following two documents were recently approved and are incorporated into CDTC’s planning efforts to ensure SAFETEA-LU compliance.

- **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan:** [Executive Summary](#) | [Final Document](#) | [New Visions Summary](#)
- **Public Participation:** [Final Document](#)