



2022-23 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Planning Project Solicitation Guidance

Introduction

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is issuing this call for planning projects to local governments and its member agencies to identify needed transportation planning assistance in CDTC's metropolitan planning area. Projects selected for inclusion in the 2022-23 UPWP must advance the principles and goals of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, [New Visions 2050](#). All approved projects/studies will be funded with federal transportation planning (PL) funds and must meet the eligibility requirements defined by the [FAST Act](#). The 2022-23 UPWP covers the period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

Eligibility

Project proposals for the 2022-23 UPWP must be made by a city, town, village or county in the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga (except the Town of Moreau and the Village of South Glens Falls) and Schenectady. CDTC's member organizations are also eligible to apply. Project partnerships proposed by not-for-profits, neighborhood groups, and other organizations can be considered if the application is sponsored by, submitted by, and involves the participation of a local government with jurisdiction over the project area.

Timeline:

October 12, 2021: Call for projects released

November 19, 2021: Applications due

December 2021: CDTC staff evaluates & prioritizes projects/studies

January 2022: CDTC staff shares list of proposed projects and programs with CDTC's Planning Committee

February 2022: Planning Committee reviews & approves 2022-23 UPWP; 30-day public review begins

March 2022: CDTC Policy Board reviews & adopts 2022-23 UPWP

Eligible Planning Activities

The UPWP funds concept-level planning, feasibility analyses, and technical assistance. Examples of funded projects may be found in CDTC's Status of Planning Activities [INSERT LINK] and in CDTC's [2020-2022 UPWP](#). Project proposals must be consistent with CDTC's *New Visions 2050* metropolitan transportation plan priorities related to:

- Infrastructure
- Regional Operations & Travel Reliability
- Safety
- Transportation System Resiliency/Security
- Complete Streets
- Bicycles and Pedestrians
- Transit and Mobility Options
- Transportation Demand Management
- Freight
- Environmental Stewardship/Alternative Fuels & Electric Vehicle Planning
- Transportation Related Technologies

Prospective applicants are encouraged to generate new ideas, address challenges in a new way, and partner with other municipalities and organizations. A proposal is considered regionally significant if:

- The project and its expected results span two or more municipalities in the region; and/or
- The anticipated results are likely to be readily transferable and highly beneficial to other areas in the region, thereby reducing the need for similar UPWP projects in the future.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that supplement or complement - but not duplicate - previous UPWP-funded activities. Projects may be submitted for one of the four project categories as follows:

- 1) **Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (Linkage Program)** - CDTC continues its commitment to its award winning Linkage Program by increasing the set-aside of available funding for consultant led planning work to \$200,000. Projects will be consistent with CDTC's longstanding Linkage Program strategies, project eligibility and program administration guidelines (see appendix A).
- 2) **Regional Plan Implementation Projects** - Projects that implement a recommendation of CDTC regional plans including the Capital District Trails Plan, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan, Regional Freight Plan, the Local Road Safety Action Plan and other CDTC Planning Documents at <https://www.cdtcmpo.org/transportation-plans/cdtc-planning-documents> . Regional projects related to New Visions 2050 plan priorities are also eligible. As funding allows, only one large scale, consultant led project will be selected per New Visions plan priority listed above.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Transportation-related updates to adopted comprehensive plans
 - Safety plans and programs
 - Inter-municipal bicycle and/or pedestrian plans
 - Planning or feasibility analysis for coordination among human services transportation providers
 - Parking management plans
 - Transportation system management and operations
 - Resiliency plans
 - Freight/goods movement plans
 - Mobility/transportation management plans
 - Transportation education and encouragement programs
 - ADA transition plans for pedestrian infrastructure
- 3) **Community Planning Technical Assistance** - Short term and short duration transportation related community planning technical assistance projects may include comprehensive and/or neighborhood planning, traffic modeling and forecasting, general community planning, zoning and site planning, community design assessment, transportation safety and operations planning, data collection, data analysis and mapping and trail planning. For additional details see Appendix B.

Ineligible Activities

- Right-of-way acquisition
- Site preparation
- Detailed engineering
- Surveying
- Storm water/sewer system design
- Construction projects
- Transportation operations

Project Budgets and Local Match

The UPWP is funded with federal transportation planning funds from the Federal Highway Administration and from the Federal Transit Administration. These funds are allocated to CDTC by New York State and come with requirements at both the federal and state levels. If funding is awarded, in addition to the requirements outlined below, additional project administration guidance will be provided to project sponsors. Note that federal fund awards are capped and failure to meet CDTC's requirements may result in funding being revoked.

The maximum request for federal funding and required local match by project type is as follows:

- Linkage Program - \$100,000 maximum total project cost with 10% local cash match (i.e. \$90,000 federal + \$10,000 local cash = \$100,000 total project cost) or 10% in-kind services match. Cash match is preferred.
- Regional Plan Implementation - \$150,000 maximum total project cost with 10% minimum in-kind services or cash match (i.e. \$135,000 federal + \$15,000 cash)
- Community Planning Technical Assistance – \$30,000 maximum total project cost with 10% in-kind services match (i.e. \$30,000 federal + \$3,000 local in-kind services)

Additional in-kind services match or cash matches above the minimum are encouraged. Federal funds are not eligible for a cash match. State, county, and local funds may be used, as well as funds from private and not-for-profit groups with a direct connection or interest in the project. Sponsors should ensure the agreed to local cash match is in their 2022 budgets as the local share will be invoiced by CDTC and due no later than December 1, 2022. Any local in-kind support for the study including meeting coordination, the public participation process, document review, etc. must be documented and provided to CDTC including the number of hours and hourly rates per person.

CDTC will administer consultant contracts on behalf of the project sponsors. Planning projects undertaken by CDTC's staff, activities not led by consultants, must be completed within one year of the start date of the 2022-23 UPWP on April 1, 2022. Project sponsors are expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding prior to project initiation. The MOU will outline the roles and responsibilities of CDTC and the project sponsor.

CDTC may recapture funds if satisfactory progress is not being made according to the scope of work. Applicants should not submit applications if they do not expect to initiate the project within a reasonable time.

Public Participation

All UPWP-funded planning projects which are expected to result in recommendations or actions with direct or indirect impact on the public must provide for public input and participation. The magnitude of a project determines the extent of the public input component. All consultant led activities will utilize CDTC's Public Participation Plan as a guide for public involvement. Projects that are of a technical nature and/or focus on data collection efforts (such as pavement condition monitoring) do not require public input.

Title VI and Nondiscrimination

CDTC's Nondiscrimination Program consists of separate Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) components. CDTC is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its metropolitan transportation planning process on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or economic status, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations.

Successful applicants for UPWP funds are expected to make concerted efforts to have broad and meaningful public participation from all affected parties in their planning processes, and to demonstrate that the project doesn't have discriminatory impacts.

Selection Process & Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be screened to ensure they are complete and meet all program requirements. A review of the local match requirement will be undertaken and confirmed with the sponsor(s). Incomplete submissions and those that do not meet the program requirements will not be considered for funding. Project sponsors must submit a good-faith project budget which will be checked for appropriateness by CDTC staff. Proposals that best meet the evaluation criteria will be considered first for funding.

Qualitative Review: Evaluation matrix

Project Information	
Project Type	
Location	
Is this an inter-municipal or regional effort?	Y / N
Project Cost Range (select from the following)	
Under \$25,000	
\$25,001– 60,000	
\$60,001 – 100,000	
Over \$100,000	
Primary Criteria	
Does the Study Area include an EJ community identified by CDTC? See https://www.cdtcmpo.org/images/how_nondiscrim/envijustice/EJTitleVI2020.pdf	Y / N
If yes, does the applicant describe how they intend to involve all affected parties in the planning process?	Y / N
Demonstrated need for the project.	Y / N
Project considers communities of concern prior to and during a project's development.	Y / N
Advances 1 or more planning & investment principle(s): 1. Invest in a Quality Region 2. Support economic development	Y / N

3. Make investments regionally equitable 4. Preserve & manage the transportation system 5. Maintain travel reliability 6. Invest in safety 7. Invest in security 8. Invest in complete streets 9. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel 10. Move freight efficiently 11. Invest in transit 12. Provide essential mobility for all 13. Prioritize affordable & convenient travel options 14. Preserve the environment 15. Leverage technology	
Addresses 1 or more Emerging Issues & Opportunities: 1. Increased remote work & telework options 2. Economic recovery and potential stimulus programs related to pandemic recovery 3. Labor shortage 4. Growing income inequality 5. Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act 6. EV Mandate 7. Connected & Automated Vehicles 8. Transportation system's role in public health 9. Shifting demographics (ex. aging population, more diverse) 10. Curb management and electrification 11. Safe Systems / Vision Zero	Y / N
Addresses 1 or more FHWA Emphasis Area(s): 1. Resiliency / Climate Change 2. Equity / Diversity/ Inclusion 3. Complete Streets 4. Bicycle & Pedestrian 5. Planning & Environmental Linkages 6. Regionally Significant Project	Y / N
Advances and/or Implements a New Visions Big Ticket Initiative 1. Regional Greenway Program 2. Riverfront Access & Urban Development Program 3. Street Reconstruction & Reconfiguration 4. Suburban Town Center Development 5. Enhanced BRT with TOD 6. Demand Management Program 7. VMT, Carbon Tax, or Carbon cap, Reduce, & Invest 8. Integrated Corridor Management Program 9. Ridesharing System for All Users 10. Regional EV Charging System	Y / N
Secondary Criteria	
Proposed project supports New Visions 2050 land use goals of urban investment, concentrated development patterns, and smart economic growth	Y / N

Proposed project is recommended in a completed Linkage Study	Y / N
Proposed project is recommended in a Comprehensive Plan or other locally adopted planning study	Y / N
Project sponsor demonstrates a strong commitment to adopting the resulting plan/product and incorporating recommendations into local policies such as zoning, capital improvement programs, and local laws	Y / N
Project sponsor demonstrates ability to support the project (in-kind services)	Y / N
Proposal exceeds match requirement (with non-local funds or in-kind services)	Y / N
Innovative or new approach (used less than twice or never used successfully within that county)	Y / N
Project has substantial community support	Y / N
Overall quality of application & supporting materials	✓ / -
Programming Filters (internal to CDTC)	
Geographic balance & equity - balance among counties, urban/rural, municipal type, & project cost range	
Number of CDTC planning projects awarded to sponsor by CDTC in last 5 years	
Planning funds requested per capita of project area	

Application Requirements

Project sponsors must complete an application form for each proposed project, submitted via JotForm [INSERT LINK]. Within the electronic application, upload the following:

1. A brief, signed cover letter that includes a commitment to the local match requirement signed by the lead elected official or chief executive (.pdf format).
2. A project location map, if applicable (.pdf format).
3. Letters indicating commitment of project partners (optional). Do not include general letters of endorsement.

To assist you in the preparation and appropriateness of projects, a virtual meeting is scheduled for [Date and time TBD]. **Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for new project proposals.** You may register for the virtual meeting at [INSERT REGISTRATION LINK]. Contact CDTC if you are unable to attend the virtual meeting and intend to submit a proposal. Proposals submitted from sponsors that fail to attend the meeting or discuss their proposal with CDTC's staff will be rejected. CDTC staff will work with you to determine whether the initiative will require consultant assistance (generally, requests for services over \$50,000 will likely require a consultant).

All proposed projects must have a municipal sponsor. UPWP planning project proposals must be submitted electronically via JotForm at [INSERT JOTFORM LINK]. The form link is also available on CDTC's website at <https://www.cdtcmpo.org/upwp>. All proposals must be received by **November 19, 2021 at 5 p.m.** Applications received via mail or fax will not be accepted unless pre-approved by CDTC's Executive Director. Applications that do not adhere to the above requirements will not be accepted. For application questions, please contact CDTC at 518-458-2161 or cdtc@cdtcmpo.org.

Notification of Award

Following approval by CDTC's Planning Committee in February 2022, all project sponsors will be notified in writing as to the status of their submissions by March 1, 2022. In March 2022, following Policy Board approval, sponsors awarded funding will receive project administration guidance and will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU must be signed before the project can begin and after April 1, 2022.

The MOU is between CDTC and the study sponsor(s) and articulates the roles and responsibilities of all parties throughout the study process. The MOU will be tied to the chosen method of assistance. Please note that the ability of these studies to move forward after April 1, 2022 will be dependent on the progress of the Linkage Program efforts funded in previous years and the availability of CDTC staff.

Appendix A

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program for 2022-23

Introduction

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (Linkage Program) was initiated in the year 2000 by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga (except the Town of Moreau and Village of South Glens Falls) and Schenectady Counties. CDTC plans for the regional transportation system and created the Linkage Program to implement the adopted metropolitan transportation plan, *New Visions 2050*, by providing integrated land use and transportation planning assistance to local communities. *New Visions 2050* reaffirms longstanding thinking that the region's quality of life, mobility and economic vitality are dependent upon improved local land use planning and on better integration of land development and the transportation system.

Since the Linkage Program was initiated, CDTC has funded 95 planning studies in 42 communities including all eight cities, large and small towns and villages. Although there are many successes regarding the implementation of these studies, there is still more work to be done. Visit the Linkage Program webpage at <https://www.cdtcmpo.org/programs/linkage> for more information on completed Linkage Program plans, the status of current initiatives and additional planning resources.

Linkage Program Strategies

The Linkage Program emphasizes seven broad planning strategies that are consistent with the [*New Visions 2050*](#) planning and investment principles. Submissions will be screened as part of the evaluation process for consistency with the Linkage Program strategies.

The seven strategies are to:

- Create a connected and integrated multi-modal transportation network.
- Support urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial/residential areas.
- Enhance and develop activity centers and town centers.
- Enhance and develop transit corridors and transit supportive built environments.
- Encourage a greater mix and intensity of land uses in municipal centers.
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian-friendly community and site design standards.
- Reduce driveway conflicts through access management.

Eligible Initiatives for 2022-2023

To be eligible for this program, the proposed initiative must:

- Be directly related to a recommendation of a completed Linkage study or other adopted local plan and/or an adopted local policy (i.e. complete streets resolution).
- Have a clear and direct connection to transportation issues.
- Be consistent with the Linkage Program strategies and the *New Visions 2050* principles.

Inter-municipal initiatives are highly encouraged, especially for implementation initiatives or follow up planning work dependent on inter-municipal cooperation to be effective. Tactical urbanism or

demonstration projects to test a road configuration are eligible as long as the installation is in place for less than one month. Longer term installations (those intended to be in place for more than a month) are considered capital projects and will not be eligible. Engineering related work is not eligible and municipal wide initiatives are limited. Municipal wide updates of zoning codes or site design standards are not eligible unless local sponsors pool financial or other resources to undertake larger initiatives. Federal funds for Linkage Program implementation activities will be capped.

Eligible projects must also fit into one of the following categories:

1) Implementation activities related to completed Linkage Program plans or other completed local planning work (i.e. Comprehensive Plans, Waterfront Revitalization Plans, etc.)

Implementation activities may include the exploration of the feasibility of a transportation concept (i.e. road diets (travel lane reductions), complete streets (streets designed and operated for all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, transit users, freight deliveries, the disabled, seniors, children, etc.), on street bicycle infrastructure, etc.), development or refinement of a portion of a local zoning code (i.e. overlay or innovative zoning in a subarea of a community), development or refinement of community site design guidelines, or other related initiatives. Transportation concept studies in corridors with a funding commitment to a federal, state or local pavement project or other multi-modal transportation project in the next three years will receive additional priority.

The funding commitment to a pavement or other capital project type must be demonstrated through the provision of State Transportation Improvement Program listings, resolutions, project award letters, local bonds, links to local websites with approved capital program project lists, etc. Evaluating the feasibility of a transportation concept identified in a Linkage study or other adopted local plan or adopted local policy at the time a facility is entering the design process, even for a simple repaving project, can lead to better coordination between the facility owner and the community. This coordination will likely result in project designs that better fit the context of the community. Given the emphasis on pavement preservation projects statewide, implementation actions may be as low cost as restriping a facility to create a more multi-modal corridor.

NYS DOT will do its best to share its state funded paving program with CDTC and project sponsors at the time of Linkage project programming. However, the state paving program changes quickly and a comprehensive schedule of paving projects in the next two to three years may not be available.

2) Updates of Linkage Program plans completed before 2012.

Best practice comprehensive planning has shown that once a plan reaches ten years of age, an update should be considered. CDTC and our community partners have completed over 60 Linkage Program plans between 2000 and 2012. As local conditions have changed, strategic updates of Linkage Program plans to bring in current thinking on transportation and land use planning issues will be eligible.

3) New plans, particularly in communities that have not participated in the Linkage Program before. Priority will be given to the following:

- Complete streets guidelines or complete streets feasibility studies – more detailed exploration of complete streets design treatments in communities with adopted complete streets policies and/or looking to implement a complete streets concept in a specific transportation corridor.

- Strategic zoning code changes/overlays and/or site design guidelines – zoning and/or site design guidelines that aid in the implementation of regulatory changes in how land is developed in a community, consistent with the vision set forth in a Linkage Study or other adopted local plan.
- Official mapping – identifying or codifying new local streets to aid in the implementation of town centers, the creation of new connected street networks and access management.
- Bicycle/pedestrian planning – examples include trail feasibility studies, pedestrian safety initiatives, on road bike plans, etc.
- Traditional transportation planning activities – quantitative assessment of specific transportation planning issues including operational studies, cumulative transportation impacts of land development, safety studies, etc.

Examples of Previously Funded Linkage Program Planning Work:

- **City of Albany Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (\$90,000 consultant effort):** The City of Albany is updating its Bicycle Master Plan from 2009 and expanding its scope to include master planning for pedestrians. The project included two demonstration projects. Learn more at: <https://vizcomm.wixsite.com/albanybikepedplan>.
- **Town of Schodack Town Center Form Based Zoning (\$45,000 consultant effort):** To support the implementation of the 2014 Town Center Plan, the Town of Schodack developed a form-based zoning code to allow and encourage redevelopment consistent with the “town center” vision. The draft code language is available at: https://www.cdtcmpo.org/images/linkage_program/RenCoFinal/Schodack_FBC_FinalCombined_Cvr_Rpt_Apendsmall.pdf.
- **Town of Malta Route 9 Feasibility Study (\$40,000 consultant effort):** The feasibility of redesigning Route 9 from its current highway style configuration to a complete street in the Town Center was evaluated. The study focused on the section from Cramer Road to Knabner Road and was a follow up activity to the Town’s 2013 Downtown Master Plan. Review the study at: https://www.cdtcmpo.org/images/linkage_program/SarCoFinal/Malta9CSStudyweb.pdf
- **Town of Glenville Freemans Bridge Road Complete Streets Concept Plan (\$50,000 consultant effort):** A detailed framework and a set of transportation and land use recommendations for implementing Complete Streets within the Freemans Bridge Road (NY Route 911F) corridor were developed to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel options for all users of Freemans Bridge Road.

For an interactive map and to review the final reports from completed Linkage Program initiatives, visit <https://www.cdtcmpo.org/transportation-plans/completed-linkage-program-plans>.

Planning Assistance

Planning assistance will be provided through a consultant under contract to CDTC. The consultant will be solicited by CDTC on behalf of the project sponsor following joint development of a detailed scope of work. CDTC staff will administer the consultant contract and will provide technical support throughout the planning process. Municipality or other unit of government administration of a consultant will only

be considered for large scale studies with total study costs exceeding \$100,000, achieved by combining funds from other sources. All funding sources must be identified in the application.

Additional CDTC staff technical assistance (limited to no more than \$10,000) may be requested in the application for small scale planning tasks such as existing conditions data collection and analysis, existing conditions documentation, public involvement, highway capacity analysis, modeling, etc.

Project sponsors must document in-kind staff services on tasks including meeting coordination, the public involvement process, document review, etc. including the number of hours and hourly rates.

Funding Availability and Timing

CDTC has reserved up to \$100,000 in staff time and up to \$200,000 in consultant budget authority from federal planning funds to support the Linkage Program in CDTC's 2022-23 UPWP. Funds awarded for 2022-23 Linkage Program projects will not be available for use until after April 1, 2022. **If the project sponsor does not execute the Memorandum of Understanding with CDTC by March 31, 2023, Linkage funds will be forfeited.**

Linkage planning studies must be completed within 20 months beginning April 1, 2022. Should the project be delayed, the following milestones will apply:

1. Within 1 year – hire a study consultant and have a kick-off meeting.
2. Within 2 years – 50% of the study scope of work completed by the consultant.
3. Within 3 years – 100% of the study scope of work completed by the consultant. This does not include legislative adoption of the study findings.

If a sponsor fails to meet the project milestones, an explanation for the delay and a request for an extension must be provided to CDTC's Planning Committee. If a sponsor fails to make this request, Linkage funds will be forfeited. In addition, the study sponsor will not be allowed to submit for a new Linkage Program study while the delayed study is incomplete.

Due to uncertainty regarding the availability of federal planning funds in 2022, CDTC reserves the right to cancel Linkage Program projects funded through this solicitation at any time prior to contracting with a consultant. Should CDTC cancel a funded project, that project will be given the first opportunity to compete for funds in the next funding year.

Cost Estimates and Match Requirement

Sponsors must provide a cost estimate for the planning activity in their submissions. The maximum total study cost for consultant efforts is \$100,000 including a minimum 10% local match. Local cash is preferred to achieve the 10% local match requirement. Local in-kind services up to 10% of the project value will be considered on a case by case basis. If additional CDTC staff assistance is requested along with the consultant effort, the estimated dollar value and the type of requested assistance should be documented in the submission and is capped at \$10,000. Total consultant study costs may exceed \$100,000 if the sponsor pools Linkage funds with funds from other grant sources. Such grant sources should be identified in the study submission. Larger consultant efforts exceeding \$100,000 may require the municipality to select the consultant and administer the contract directly. CDTC reserves the right to confirm or modify all cost estimates based on past experience with Linkage Program studies.

Local Action on Study Findings

A formal resolution from the legislative body adopting the study findings is preferred by CDTC. Such action indicates the sponsors' willingness to continue to work through important planning processes, such as zoning code updates, to implement the findings of the plan (processes which are likely subject to New York State Environmental Quality Review ([SEQR](#)) regulations). Sponsors may also consider formally endorsing or accepting the findings of the planning effort. Endorsing or accepting the findings of a plan does not carry the same weight with operational entities such as the New York State Department of Transportation as adoption does for project implementation.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)

Meeting SEQR regulations is the responsibility of the local municipality. If formal action is desired or required under SEQR for the initiative, all documentation, public hearings and other SEQR related materials are outside the budget of Linkage Program planning efforts. Changes in land use such as changes to a zoning code must consider SEQR requirements. Although Linkage Program studies are not municipal wide comprehensive plans, they are considered comprehensive in nature and are subject to SEQR if the municipality is considering formal action. Methods of formal action include a resolution, adoption of the study as a strategic plan, as an amendment to a municipal comprehensive plan and through other means as appropriate.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

Linking Planning with NEPA: Linkage Program study sponsors often advance transportation projects that were recommended through the Linkage Program planning process. Sponsors should be aware that projects proposed as a result of Linkage study concepts will be subject to NEPA if the project will be utilizing federal transportation funds for its design and construction. For Linkage Program planning efforts, consideration should be given to following Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance on linking the transportation planning process (Linkage Program plans) with NEPA. For details on the program visit www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/pel.aspx and for the NEPA/planning linkages checklist visit www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/pel/pel_quest.aspx

FHWA guidance encourages the planning process to inform the purpose and need statement, scoping and alternatives identification, evaluation and/or elimination of alternatives, and indirect and cumulative impacts assessment of a transportation project. Engaging specific stakeholders (i.e. Federal, Tribal, State, and local environmental, regulatory, resource agencies and the public) and documenting planning decisions in a format that can easily be appended to the NEPA document or incorporated by reference are essential for linking planning with NEPA. To have standing in the NEPA process and its additional analyses, transportation planning information, analyses, documents, and decisions must be well documented and provided for examination during project scoping.

NEPA Categorical Exclusions: According to NYSDOT's Environmental Procedures Manual, certain types of federal aid projects are considered categorical exclusions under NEPA (visit the NYSDOT website at www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/environmental-analysis/manuals-and-guidance/epm/chapter-2 and the federal code www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div8&node=23:1.0.1.8.43.0.1.9 for more information). Automatic categorical exclusions include planning and technical studies which do not involve or lead directly to the construction of a project. CDTC's Linkage Program studies generally fall into this category. However it is important for Linkage studies to adequately screen the study area and

document potential environmental issues per CDTC's environmental mitigation procedures, document the assumptions and data inputs used, document any technical analysis performed (including methodology and results) and document the public outreach process as potential projects investigated as part of a Linkage study may be subject to NEPA.

Linkage planning studies may not be categorically exempted when there are "unusual circumstances" as defined by law (23 CFR 771.117(b)). Such unusual circumstances include significant environmental impacts; substantial controversy on environmental grounds; significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act (23 CFR 771.135) or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State or local law, requirement or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action.

There are instances when a project sponsor may desire to generate a project directly from a Linkage Study. Therefore, sponsors should be aware that capital projects proposed to implement a Linkage study concept will be subject to NEPA if the project will be utilizing federal transportation funds for its design and construction. NYSDOT's Federal Environmental Approvals Worksheet Engineering Bulletin explains the procedure for processing Categorical Exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for projects that are funded or permitted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Follow the link below for more information. The contents of this Engineering Bulletin are to be incorporated in the next update of the NYSDOT Environmental Manual Chapter 4, the Project Development Manual Chapter 4 and the Procedures for Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects Manual Chapter 7. www.dot.ny.gov/portal/pls/portal/mexis_app.pa_ei_eb_admin_app.show_pdf?id=12041

Notification of Award

Following approval by CDTC's Planning Committee in February 2022, all project sponsors will be notified in writing as to the status of their submissions by March 1, 2022. In March 2022, following Policy Board approval, sponsors awarded funding will receive CDTC's *Linkage Study Administration Procedures* and will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU must be signed before Linkage funds may be accessed. Linkage funds become available for use after April 1, 2022.

The MOU is between CDTC and the study sponsor(s) and articulates the roles and responsibilities of all parties throughout the study process. The MOU will be tied to the chosen method of assistance. **If the project sponsor does not execute the MOU with CDTC by March 31, 2023, Linkage funds will be forfeited.** Please note that the ability of these studies to move forward after April 1, 2022 (when the federal funds become available) will be dependent on the progress of the Linkage Program efforts funded in previous years and the availability of CDTC staff.

Consultant Activity Guidelines

To satisfy federal and state requirements, use of an appropriate means of consultant solicitation and selection will be required prior to designation of a consultant. CDTC uses an abbreviated approach to consultant selection. Sponsors should be aware that if consultant assistance is used in the preparation of a Linkage Program submission or in the development of the scope of work for the study, that consultant will not be eligible for the contract. In addition, a consultant on retainer to a municipality is not guaranteed a Linkage study contract. The consultant selection process is required to be competitive.

CDTC will administer consultant studies with total study costs of \$100,000 or less to minimize the administrative burden on the municipality. However, if a large consultant effort is intended (over \$100,000 using CDTC and other fund sources), the municipality may be required to select the consultant and administer the contract directly. In this case, the municipality will be required to execute necessary agreements with the New York State Department of Transportation in order to be reimbursed for the study costs.

CDTC reserves the right to modify the program without prior notice.

Appendix B

Community Planning Assistance Eligibility

Projects eligible for Community Planning Assistance must be related to a transportation planning issue including but not limited to:

- Walkable Communities and Complete Streets:
 - Evaluate a subsection of a community to consider active living, transportation choices, social equity, and environmental health.
 - Guidance on the planning and management of shared use, non-motorized trails.
 - Walkability audits
 - Demonstration projects
 - Complete Streets training
- Transportation Safety and Operations Planning:
 - Crash data analysis
 - Road safety assessments
 - Traffic signal operational analysis
 - Intersection analysis
 - Before and after studies of capital projects
 - Recommendation and scoping of ITS strategies
- Data Collection, Analysis and Mapping:
 - Identify issues and/or opportunities for collecting data
 - Traffic modeling and forecasting
 - Analyze demographic, transportation facility, and other community development trends
 - Data research and visualization
 - Data collection
 - GIS mapping and analysis
- Zoning and Site Planning:
 - Guidance on best practices towards the implementation of planning policies and goals
 - Zoning ordinance audits
 - Site plan review assistance
 - Planning for development of regional impact
- General Community Planning:
 - Guidance in goal setting, plan development and procedural requirements
 - Identification of innovative solutions to local planning challenges
 - Public input and community visioning
 - Research into a planning issue
 - Surveys and communications activities
 - Training
 - Professional advisement