

NEW VISIONS 2030 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Making the vision a reality will require hard work on the part of government and the private sector. Over 100 transportation actions were proposed by the 1995 *New Visions* task forces -- public outreach provided ideas for many more. These actions were grouped into ten broadly supported strategies, combined to reduce redundancy, and refined to reflect scopes appropriate to guide long range planning efforts.

After utilizing the strategies and actions for nearly ten years, the *New Visions 2030* plan development process identified the need for many changes. Since adoption of New Visions in 1997, many actions have been implemented, new SAFETEA-LU requirements and other initiatives have created new actions, and others have been deferred, revised or deleted due to various events. Although most strategies remain unchanged from 1997, three new strategies have been identified for *New Visions 2030*, bringing the total to 13 strategies with 47 associated actions.

A majority of the short-range actions listed in the original New Visions Plan have already been carried out in part or in whole.

The narrative for each strategy describes their expected benefits. Then, recommended actions to implement each strategy are listed. Additional detail regarding the actions can be found in the companion technical reports generated for the development of *New Visions 2030*. The actions, will be used to guide CDTC's Unified Planning Work Program and other planning and programming activities. Financial resources to implement the plan, although constrained, can be budgeted to make significant progress on many of the actions outlined in the near term.

The following describes the 13 *New Visions 2030* strategies and associated actions. Links to additional information regarding each action are provided below.

[1] MAINTAIN GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS

Maintaining the region's roadways, bridges, trails, sidewalks and transit system in a state of good repair is the smart thing to do. Not a lot of new roads are being built; therefore existing facilities must be preserved and enhanced. A performance-based management strategy paints bridges before they corrode, builds long-lasting pavements, and matches design treatment to road function (not necessarily ownership or funding category). This provides baseline support to the regional economy.

There is a continuing need to devote a significant amount of CDTC's TIP resources to infrastructure renewal which has major budgetary consequences. Although the 2030 plan is fiscally balanced over time (based on historic trends), if public funding does not increase over the next 25 years as it has in the past, this could lead to serious, unacceptable declines in physical

and service conditions. Embracing a risk assessment approach to designing infrastructure projects will result in less building of reserve capacity that may or may not be needed in the future. This trade-off frees resources to address *current* needs in other areas.

1) Ensure adequate highway and bridge maintenance efforts.

Highway and bridge maintenance and operations is the single largest commitment of transportation resources in the Capital Region. Essential services, such as snow removal and pothole patching are captured in this category. Significantly, this area is out of the direct purview of CDTC's decision-making. However, successful implementation of *New Visions* will require continued commitment to adequate levels of expenditures for maintenance, as well as increased efficiencies resulting from intergovernmental coordination, consolidation, and joint purchasing. These assumed efficiencies permit improved service over the long run, such as more frequent shoulder sweeping on bike routes.

2) Pursue an effective highway and bridge rehabilitation and reconstruction program.

An effective highway and bridge rehabilitation program is one that is adequately funded and uses life-cycle considerations and system management techniques to prolong good conditions and maximize the return on investment. This action calls for aggressive preventative maintenance efforts coupled with continued resurfacing and reconstruction of state highways at a schedule consistent with the state's Pavement Management System, using the type of repair called for in its and CDTC's pavement models. This action also calls for treatment of higher-volume, higher-function non-state roads with a similar repair and reconstruction approach. Currently, such work on non-state roads is limited. While pavement condition alone can be maintained on these non-state roads using lower scale repair treatments, the importance of these roads warrants more significant work to produce a longer repair life, safer operations, and other benefits. Continuing current local (non-state) repair practice on other local roads appears to meet pavement goals.

It should be noted that resurfacing, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects must consider the community context and local planning objectives regardless of road ownership. For example, if replacing pavement from curb to curb is the goal of the project and there is local planning calling for improved pedestrian facilities on the subject roadway, then the project design process must incorporate such features wherever possible and feasible.

Pavement conditions in the Capital Region can be characterized as follows:

- Interstate system pavement conditions have improved from the conditions of 1994. However, the ages of these highways are now between 30 and 50 years and there have been few full reconstruction projects on these facilities. Without intervention, in another twenty-five years, the majority of expressway sections in the system will be 55 to 75 years of age.
- Non-Interstate arterials and collectors have had their pavement conditions decline from 1994 conditions on both the state and non-state systems. State arterials on the National

Highway System now have conditions more similar to those on locally-owned arterials than to conditions on the Interstate system.

- The intended rate of progress in upgrading important non-state (federal-aid) roads has fallen short of New Visions goals over the past decade.
- Non-federal-aid roads (the lowest-function roads totaling 70% of the total lane miles in the four counties) have also had their pavement conditions decline, with the total percentage rated fair or poor increasing from 31% in 1992 to 50% in 2004.
- Budget requirements for pavement work are substantially higher than current levels of investment – double to triple the current \$55.0 M annual investment level from federal, state and local fund sources. Most of that increase is caused by the age of the Interstate system and the need for reconstruction. Even with the higher funding, not all sections will be reconstructed by 2030.

Bridge conditions in the Capital Region can be characterized as follows:

- Interstate system bridge needs are substantial. Overall, they are estimated to require about one-half of the total bridge budget over the next 25 years. Included in this set of needs is reconstruction or replacement of the I-90 Patroon Island Bridge, I-787 viaduct structures, the I-87 Mohawk River crossing and others. NYSDOT Region 1 estimates a need of over \$500 M for Interstate work in the coming 12 years alone.
- While non-Interstate bridge conditions are improved over those from a decade ago, current funding is short by about one-half of the amount needed to achieve the modest bridge condition goals of having no more than 20% of all bridges in the deficient category. At current funding, the number of bridges rated deficient by 2018 alone will range from 24% (Thruway) to over 50% (NYSDOT owned Interstate bridges). 2030 conditions at current funding would be unacceptable. Funding sufficient to achieve the modest 20% goal is incorporated into the basic financial plan for New Visions 2030.
- The total budget requirements for bridge rehab and replacement are substantial, totaling nearly \$35 M annually above current investment levels of \$55.1 M.

3) Continue to maintain transit equipment and facilities in a state of good repair.

Clean, reliable, up-to-date vehicles are required for transit to provide dependable service, keep operating costs under control and offer an attractive product in the competitive market place. The transportation system is not served well by equipment that suffers from deferred maintenance and lack of capital investment. Customers react to the condition of the vehicles they travel on and to their perceived cleanliness, both with regard to the physical cleanliness and with regard to emissions.

CDTA has developed a strategic fleet replacement plan using long-term procurement contracts with recurrent (annual) replacement of bus and paratransit fleets. CDTA has entered into a

multi-year vehicle procurement contract with a single manufacturer to increase fleet consistency. To achieve a balanced approach to fleet replacement, normal replacement will be combined with early replacement and life extension through rehabilitation to develop an “approximately balanced fleet”. Given a 12-year life, a perfectly balanced fleet would maintain an average age of 6 years (in a perfectly balanced fleet of 200 buses, approximately 17 buses are purchased each year; half the fleet is older than 6 and half is younger). CDTA ordered its first hybrid-electric bus in 2006; and plans to continue to replace a portion of the fleet with this technology, even though the incremental cost of this technology over straight diesel is significant. Customers have weighed in that they like the look and “green feel” of these vehicles. The replacement strategy using hybrid-electric technology also fits well with the goals of the local Clean Communities coalition, which is organized using CDTC staff. It is anticipated that CDTA’s fleet replacement strategy will cost about \$10-12 M per year.

In 2005, CDTA performed a comprehensive study of its operating facilities, including three bus garages/depots, two rail stations, park and ride lots, and stops and shelters. This resulted in a preventive maintenance plan for the overall facilities, and identified an ongoing need for replacement and maintenance to a state of good repair at between \$1 and \$1.5 million per year.

About 25 commuter coaches are used by other transit operators in the region for commuter services. These vehicles also require replacement on a regular basis, and with SAFETEA-LU are subject to accessibility requirements. CDTA operates the NX service (Northway Express Commuter Runs from Saratoga County to Downtown Albany); these buses are branded with CDTA’s new bus design. The cost to keep these vehicles in a state of good repair is about \$0.5-1.0 M per year.

4) Embrace a "risk assessment" approach for capacity considerations in infrastructure project design.

Rather than routinely designing bridge structures and roads to meet traffic projections of 25 or 35 years in the future, a risk assessment approach examines the costs and benefits of alternative designs and makes capacity treatment an explicit choice. A risk assessment approach to bridge reconstruction asks questions like:

- Do 20-year traffic projections justify widening the bridge now?
- Do 30 or 40-year projections?
- What is the projected congestion risk of replacement in-kind?
- How much does it cost to widen it now?
- How much more will it cost to widen the bridge at different points in the future?
- Are the future capacity constraints on this bridge of a higher priority than addressing existing current congestion elsewhere in the region?
- Can the future capacity concerns be directly linked with private developments, so private sector funding, through mitigation programs, are the more appropriate fund source?

While the concept of such analysis is slowly taking hold within the project development arena, the Travel Task Force has identified the need for further work on procedures to implement this action as a high priority for CDTC in the 2030 plan.

5) Maintain, update, and enhance priority treatment networks for transportation investments.

CDTC has been utilizing priority networks in planning and project programming since they were originally developed by New Visions task forces for the 1997 plan. Priority networks exist for

Priority networks reflect facility function and importance.

bicyclists and pedestrians, goods movement, intelligent transportation systems, arterial management and transit. These networks receive special treatment in planning and project programming and improvements to them are made as part of necessary renewal work. Since 1997, the priority networks have

been refined and mapped and it is expected that they will continue to be maintained, updated and enhanced as needed.

Having priority networks does not imply that improvements off the defined networks are not warranted or desirable. For example, bicycle or pedestrian accommodation in a given corridor can often be provided more safely and/or cost-effectively on parallel facilities, rather than on the shoulder of a busy state highway. Flexibility is required in interpretation, so long as the basic message -- **these are important facilities** -- is not lost.

The following summarizes the current priority networks as defined for *New Visions 2030*. Further refinement of these networks is expected, as necessary.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network

A bicycle and pedestrian priority treatment network provides a "backbone" for a region-wide bicycle and pedestrian travel system. The ±465 mile network contains those facilities which have high existing or potential bicycle and pedestrian travel but also present many barriers, including high traffic volumes/speeds, limited pavement space and busy or confusing traffic patterns. These facilities connect major activity centers, are accessible to residential areas via local roads, and have few practical alternatives nearby. In addition to on-road facilities, all off road trails (i.e. Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and Zim Smith Trail) are considered part of the network.

It should be noted that priority network segments that have received improvements since 1997 when the network was first established are still included as more can always be done to improve the cycling/walking environment. A map of the priority network facilities is included in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Game Plan and Toolbox* technical report. The bicycle and pedestrian Priority Network will be updated on a regular basis to include other facilities that meet criteria established by CDTC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force. Improvements to the Priority Network will be used as the primary performance measure for defining the region's success in accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians.

Arterial Management Priority Network

CDTC's adopted arterial management strategy uses a performance measure, called Level-of-Compatibility to help evaluate traffic/land use conflict in the Capital Region. Analogous to traffic level-of-service ratings, level-of-compatibility ranges from "A" the most desirable, to "F" the least acceptable. Measures for both residential and commercial corridors covering nearly 850 miles of Capital Region roadways were developed. Using these level-of-compatibility measures, the arterial management priority network is defined as:

- Those road segments that show a high degree of conflict between commercial or residential land use and traffic, resulting in "poor" compatibility (Level of Compatibility D, E or F); and
- Additional road segments where either the potential for commercial development or intrusion of vehicle traffic through residential corridors is high, or significant deterioration in arterial corridor function is forecast to occur by 2015.

This priority network includes about 220 miles of roadway. The network is predominantly composed of state highways in suburban towns. The level of compatibility ratings and the arterial management priority network will be updated following adoption of the *New Visions 2030* plan.

Goods Movement Priority Network

The priority road network for goods movement in the Capital Region includes:

- The National Highway System, including intermodal connectors (approximately 826 lane-miles); and
- State Highways that currently carry more than 10% trucks in the traffic flow (approximately 150 centerline miles).

The cycle of infrastructure repair on these routes will systematically remove barriers to goods movement. This should be done regardless of any changes in jurisdiction or other policy choices made in the context of overall infrastructure renewal. The priority truck network should be built to AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standards (14.5 foot minimum clearance, 16.5 feet is desirable) regardless of ownership. Resource requirements are the baseline assumptions for infrastructure repair. If this baseline were reduced, the priority truck network would require special attention.

Transit Priority Network

The transit priority network has previously focused on traditionally-strong transit corridors such as NY 5, NY 32, US 20, US 4, and downtowns and potentially-strong corridors such as NY 7, US 9, NY 155 and Wolf Road. Transit amenities include bus stops, pull outs, and park and ride facilities. However, the single most important action to improve transit accessibility is a

significant increase in sidewalk and crosswalk provision and maintenance throughout the region. Currently, the transit priority network considers all roadways served by fixed route transit as part of the network. As the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) continues its work on revamping transit routes in the Capital Region through the transit development plan, a revision to the transit priority network is expected.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Network

The ITS Priority Network primarily developed around the expressway system. However, the role of ITS on the arterial system can not be ignored. Some ITS improvements to arterials which parallel the expressways will have direct benefits to expressway travel, especially by providing alternate routes during expressway incidents. Arterial management and physical improvements will be required for this to be effective. Nonetheless, ITS benefits from signal coordination, transit signal priority, or other improvements will also provide significant benefits to normal daily arterial function. Successful implementation of signal coordination along the Route 5 corridor in Albany, Colonie, Village of Colonie, Niskayuna and Schenectady has demonstrated the value of ITS for arterial performance. For routes that parallel expressways, ITS holds the promise of allowing the signal coordination and timing plan to be changed by the Transportation Management Center (TMC) to facilitate diverted traffic during an incident.

The regional ITS priority network contains:

- priority expressways;
- arterials representing their immediate alternatives (ordinarily either parallel to or connecting the expressways);
- their secondary alternatives (which entail more surface street travel); and
- other arterials that are strategically important because they are important travel corridors, although they are not viewed as alternative routes for expressway travelers.

Updates to the ITS priority network identified in the Working Group B: Expressway System Options report include:

- Extending coverage on the Northway to Exit 15 for the near term, and to Lake George for the long term;
- Extending coverage of the Thruway to the CDTC boundaries for the near term, and to Amsterdam for the long term;
- Extending parallel routes for the Northway and Thruway: Route 9 to the Warren County line; Route 9W to the Greene County line; and Route 5S to the Montgomery County line.
- Extending coverage of I-88 to the Schenectady County line;
- Adding several priority arterial corridors not in expressway corridors, including Route 7 from Albany Shaker Road to I-890, and arterial corridors in the cities of Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Saratoga Springs.

6) Explore changes in road ownership or state funding opportunities as ways to [level the playing field](#) between various roadway owners.

[Working Group D: Larger than Regional Policy Concepts](#) discusses the uneven playing field that exists in the Capital Region and therefore New York State with respect to cities and suburbs. With respect to road ownership, the report states:

“Highway jurisdictional policy focuses county highway spending outside city limits and provides for state jurisdiction of state touring routes outside city limits while leaving cities to fund arterial maintenance and rehab largely from city budgets.”

Although this is a statewide issue, CDTC can explore options that might help level the playing field between cities and suburbs. One approach to aligning funding with road function would be to consider increased state highway funding to cities in proportion to the mileage of state touring routes within their borders. Another approach would be to transfer jurisdiction of state touring routes to state ownership. A final approach would be to orchestrate a region-wide ownership swap. Higher-function non-state roads would be transferred to state jurisdiction, and lower-function state roads to local jurisdiction. Guidelines for such transfers could be developed, taking into account functional classification, volume of traffic and equity considerations. Complete consistency would require transfer of major arterials within the cities to state ownership. Legislation may be required to enable such widespread jurisdictional changes.

*Jurisdictional transfers
are one way to align
function with ownership.*

[2] PRO-ACTIVELY PLAN VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

While recognizing that land use decisions are made locally, providing a regional framework to achieve regional goals has seen demonstrated success at the local level. There continues to be a need to maintain and increase pro-active regional and local land use and transportation planning efforts as well as a need to educate local decision makers on the importance of pro-active planning. Considering the potential impacts of development *before* specific projects are proposed and having land use and transportation plans in place to address them is critical. Planning can be used to focus growth and to reinforce existing and create new mixed use, vibrant neighborhoods that are efficient to serve with transportation. Recognizing and addressing situations where transportation design or use is incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood is important. Projects should be designed such that they are sensitive to the communities through which they traverse. Improving site and access design practices to better accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, goods movement, transit, and auto access is a key aspect of this strategy.

7) Prepare and maintain [Regional Development Strategies](#)

Local governments make land use and development decisions in the Capital Region, at times showing little concern about long-term regional impacts. Municipalities weigh the costs of development and supporting infrastructure against the benefits of the taxes generated. Where public opposition to development exists, developers seek locations with the least barriers, which may not be the most desirable locations from a regional perspective. The result can be that development threatens the community character of suburban and rural areas, while cities decline.

Further, the lack of predictability in the development process can discourage economic development.

[Working Group E: Assisting Local Decision Making in a Regional Context](#) recognized the many challenges to regional planning in the Capital Region under current circumstances. As an alternative to mandated regional planning, the Working Group recommended that Regional Development Strategies be articulated as part of *New Visions 2030* to provide communities guidance with respect to how they can help implement the regional vision at the local level. Local communities would be encouraged to pursue these strategies in their everyday planning work. The strategies will focus on land use and transportation concepts and initiatives that support smart growth and potentially influence urban form wherever growth is occurring. Many of the land use and transportation planning concepts were in the 1997 version of the *New Visions* plan and simply needed to be updated and further highlighted.

The following transportation and land use planning concepts and initiatives will be encouraged as part of the Regional Development Strategies:

- **Development of municipal comprehensive plans that include a transportation element consistent with *New Visions 2030*.** Such plans will be encouraged to specifically include a bicycle and pedestrian element and a transit element. Inter-municipal or county wide comprehensive plans will also be encouraged as they provide additional regional benefits, particularly in the area of developing transit, bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- **Incorporation of the findings of the transportation element of the comprehensive plan into local regulations (zoning codes, design standards, etc.)** which
 - Allow for mixed use and/or transit oriented development in urban, suburban and rural areas alike;
 - encourage street layout and site design that supports a pedestrian scale and transit access;
 - avoid arterial conflict; and
 - promote arterial access management.
- **Incorporation of [arterial management strategies](#) into comprehensive plans, corridor plans and in local site plans** to mitigate land use/road function conflicts. Arterial management strategies include
 - Use of official maps to show present and proposed future roads and street connections, allowing for future expansion of the regional road network to include greater use of service roads and collector streets;
 - Securing easements for conflict reducing measures, such as service roads and shared driveways, as part of development mitigation for traffic impacts;
 - Requiring pedestrian linkages between adjacent parcels and shared parking lots, particularly when the uses are complementary in terms of time-of-day use.

- **Improve site design practices** through enhanced municipal land use and zoning policies that create a coordinated pattern of land use that limits direct access to major roadways, is transit friendly, supports pedestrian circulation, contributes to the safety of the traveling public and enhances the environment. Routine incorporation of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accommodation in site design practices minimizes their incremental costs.
 - Locating buildings closer to the street and the majority of the parking in the back;
 - Providing turning radii that meet bus requirements;
 - Locating bus stops and shelters in locations that are convenient to customers and integrating them into the architectural design of the development;
 - Providing for bike racks or lockers at shelters on site, allowing for bike "park-and-ride" at these locations;
 - Incorporating park-and-ride parking spaces that allow the site's use as a transit and carpool terminal;
 - Providing safe and effective pedestrian movement from the street to the site and from building to building on site;
 - Where needed, providing service roads or other connections to allow pedestrians, bikes, buses and other vehicles to visit adjacent sites without using the arterial; and
 - Designing subdivisions and shopping centers to facilitate pedestrian access to transit stops.
 - Incorporating "green" design techniques such as increasing tree coverage, the use of green parking lot design, innovative stormwater techniques, etc.
 - Incorporating appropriate site access practices that minimize traffic conflict, crashes and delay by limiting the number of conflict points, separate vehicle conflict areas, reduce vehicle deceleration requirements and remove turning vehicles and queues from the travel lanes.

- **Use of Integrated Community and Transportation Design techniques in the design of local, county and state road systems.** Transportation projects that are designed to support and adhere to land use plans that promote compact development and emphasize connected streets, sidewalks, convenient transit access and human-scale design are critical elements of the process for fostering a sense of place and community.

- **Elevate consideration of transportation alternatives in siting facilities that primarily serve elderly and handicapped populations.** Facilities that primarily serve the elderly and handicapped, if located in places where fixed route accessible bus service is available and usable, provide essential mobility to these populations at the least public cost.

- **Improve delivery access for commercial vehicles.** At new developments, consideration starts with basic site design. Commercial parking programs in urban areas resolve persistent double parking violations and allow timely local deliveries.

Targeted infrastructure improvements to improve delivery access include service roads in commercial areas, removal of clearance or other barriers on access routes, and implementation of arterial corridor management in areas with growing congestion. Regional goals of compact development and optimal use of existing industrial land can be fostered by encouraging freight-intensive industries to locate along active rail lines.

Cooperation among all parties, including attention to these issues by permitting agencies such as NYSDOT and the local municipality is critical to the success of this action. This can be facilitated if municipalities require formal site review of all major projects and provide for input from CDTA, CDTC, NYSDOT and others during the review process.

8) Develop a [New Visions Planning Guidebook](#)

A New Visions Planning Guidebook will serve as a resource for local planners, Planning Board members and others involved with community development. The Guidebook will:

- Encourage local consideration of the regional impacts of development in the planning and development review process, particularly with respect to the transportation system;
- Include an [Integrated Community and Transportation Design](#) toolkit to ensure pursuit of enhanced environmental quality for transportation projects;
- Include illustrated examples of the Regional Development Strategies, perhaps in the form of companion summaries, fact sheets or “how-to” guides. The Greenway Guides produced as part of the [Greenway Connections Report](#) in Dutchess County, NY will serve as a model. The Greenway Connections report was produced as part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Compact Program; and
- A smart growth/quality community matrix/checklist will be developed. Such a matrix/checklist could help Planning Boards assess the ability of a development proposal or a local comprehensive plan to meet local and regional goals as outlined in New Visions.

Local governments could also create incentives to entice developers to develop in a more sustainable way through tax breaks, reduced development fees, etc. Finally the Guidebook will list existing tools/data sets available from CDTC, CDRPC, NYSDOT and other state, regional and local entities. Partnerships with these and other entities will be critical in the development of the Guidebook and Training program for New Visions.

9) Continue to provide funding for and staff participation in community based planning through the [Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program](#).

A coordinated land use/transportation planning process at the community and corridor levels provides a framework for predictable development consistent with community goals. Cooperative studies with local governments are the cornerstone of CDTC's planning and public participation efforts and are essential to implementing the Regional Development Strategies. CDTC is not an implementing agency -- it has no land use powers, operates no transit service, and is not responsible for maintaining the roads or bridges. For CDTC's plans and programs to be successfully implemented, a cooperative relationship with local government and operating agencies is required. The *New Visions 2030* Principles call for a land use management program

or agreement to exist for any highway capacity expansion. Consideration of a transportation project's consistency with local, corridor and regional comprehensive plans has historically been and will continue to be an important part of the Transportation Improvement Program project selection process.

CDTC utilizes the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (referred to as the Linkage Program) as its primary method of local planning assistance. This groundbreaking program was initiated in 2000 and is designed to provide direct financial and technical assistance to communities undertaking local planning initiatives that integrate land use and transportation. The studies are conceptual in nature and recognize that good site and community design can help realize the region's potential and that transportation actions will play a role.

Since the inception of the Linkage Program, 54 studies have been undertaken in 30 municipalities in the Capital Region representing over \$3 million in investment at all levels of government. The Linkage Program has been modified several times since its inception with the most recent, critical change being the introduction of seven specific program strategies which are related to the Regional Development Strategies articulated in *New Visions 2030*. These strategies identify the land use and transportation planning concepts that should be incorporated in all Linkage Program plans to help implement the regional vision. The strategies raise the bar for study proposals by challenging potential sponsors to incorporate smart growth concepts in their local planning. The seven program strategies are to:

- Support urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial/residential areas;
- Improve street connectivity and reduce driveway conflicts through access management;
- 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;
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian-friendly design standards;
- Create an integrated multi-modal transportation network.

Bicycle and pedestrian issues are a large part of many of the Linkage projects. If a study has a large bicycle/pedestrian component, a single Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force member may be invited to participate on the study advisory committee. The invitation would be on a case by case basis. This person would be responsible for representing the views of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force as well as reporting on the project status at the regularly scheduled Task Force meetings.

As part of this action, the Linkage Program will be evaluated with respect to the level of implementation of completed local plans, the degree to which CDTC can further assist communities in implementing local plans and the need for additional modifications to the Linkage Program. This effort may highlight areas that represent weaknesses in implementation opportunities, weaknesses in the plans themselves or other lessons learned that can lead to an enhanced Linkage Program or additional assistance initiatives. Along with this review, the Linkage Program section of the CDTC website will be elevated as a go to resource for local land use and transportation planning issues. The site will include examples of "best practices",

funding announcements, links to other reference material, links to services offered by CDRPC and other entities such as state agencies and professional planning organizations.

In addition, the Linkage Regional Coordination Forum will be further developed. CDTC recently broadened the membership of the Forum to include all municipalities in the region, not just those involved in the Linkage Program. Outreach will continue to be made to entities such as the Center for Economic Growth, the NY Planning Federation, state agencies and others with an interest in local planning. In addition, this group will be charged with additional tasks such as reviewing and developing material for the New Visions Planning Guidebook and Training program.

10) Develop a New Visions Training Program that specifically targets local planning board members and other local decision makers.

Local planning boards need to be further educated with respect to considering the regional impacts of local development decisions. These local decisions impact not only the transportation system, but many other aspects of regional quality of life. The normal development review process, which follows the environmental review process, does not easily facilitate a meaningful examination of the potential regional impacts of projects being locally reviewed. Even when state agencies are involved in such review, or coordinated review occurs, it is not guaranteed that a broader look will be taken.

Local agencies need tools to enhance their ability to think regionally.

CDTC, NYSDOT, CDTA, CDRPC, the Albany County Airport Authority and other state and regional agencies need to focus on providing local agencies with tools that will enable such consideration. In consultation with other partners in the Capital Region, particularly CDRPC and the New York State

Departments of State and Transportation among others, a New Visions Training program for community development directors, local planners and Planning Board members, local government officials, neighborhood associations, not-for-profits and a wide variety of other stakeholders will be developed. The training program will be a two hour program that focuses on the Regional Development Strategies contained in New Visions and how they can be applied at the local level. The training program will complement the New Visions Planning Guidebook.

Such a training program will increase the visibility of CDTC in the region, it will increase the awareness of New Visions as more than just a transportation plan and it will assist in CDTC's continuous public involvement and outreach activities. The training program will also demonstrate the public safety and capacity linkages of arterial corridor land use decisions and promote greater consideration of *New Visions* principles. CDTC staff will bring the training program to a wide variety of forums ranging from local planning board meetings to county or regional workshops. With the assistance of those at the local level, it is desired to have the local training program be eligible for education credits.

11) Engage county planning and encourage intermunicipal planning and information sharing

Of all the entities that serve in a regional capacity, county planning is one with real influence in New York State. County planning will be further engaged in all regional initiatives and will be viewed as true partners in getting the message to local governments. Some of this is already happening and additional effort will be made to help county planners support local planning while promoting the regional vision. The key is to get regional, county and local planners speaking the same language with respect to planning and development issues. A special working group comprised of county planners, CDTC and CDRPC staff will be considered.

Intermunicipal planning is also strongly supported by *New Visions 2030* and an incentive is offered in the Linkage Program for planning activities that involve more than one community. In addition to planning initiatives, transportation projects that are multi-jurisdictional are also supported by New Visions. For example, future trail improvement projects will be encouraged to be multi-jurisdictional. Additional financial incentives may be developed to further encourage multi-jurisdictional planning and project development activities.

12) Continue to undertake [access management plans](#) for priority network arterials as opportunities arise.

A common approach to address corridor traffic circulation and safety concerns is to resolve driveway access issues on a case-by case basis. The result allows proposed development and lot widths to essentially dictate the spacing of driveways along a roadway. Ideally, such issues should be addressed within the context of corridor-wide access management that integrates land use and transportation planning objectives along the entire route.

Although the Linkage Program provides a great deal of local assistance on access management issues, the limited funding makes comprehensive corridor-wide access management planning challenging. CDTC's Corridor Management Initiative has been made available to assist communities with access management corridor planning in key transit corridors. Most recently, the Route 5 corridor from downtown Albany to downtown Schenectady has been approved for a corridor-wide access management plan. This corridor is regionally significant and will soon contain the Capital Region's first Bus Rapid Transit system. The corridor is also important as it has a number of freight service issues, numerous driveways, vehicle and pedestrian crashes, and high travel delay.

Implementing this action will strengthen the relationship between transportation and land use planning and create a set of strategies and guidelines that will influence both land development and highway design, and protect previous highway system investments. Compatibility of the transportation investment with the community is elevated to a priority equivalent to moving traffic. Because of the uniqueness of each of the region's communities, arterial strategies are best examined on a case-by-case basis. The arterial management plans will be developed in cooperation with municipalities, the New York State Department of Transportation and county highway and planning departments.

13) Maintain a [program for transportation projects](#) directed explicitly at community enhancement or regional economic development.

There has been considerable community support and creative thinking on transportation projects as catalysts for urban revitalization and economic development. In preparation for this outcome, the *New Visions* budget in 1997 established a category for these types of projects.

Community enhancement and economic development can be fostered both by advancing new transportation projects and through sensitive execution of routine maintenance and reconstruction. A serious investment in pedestrian accommodation will have tremendous spillover benefits in urban revitalization and suburban livability. Coupled with sensible design policy that limits the width and speeds on urban thoroughfares, selective transportation infrastructure investments can make the Capital Region a better place to live. Projects that promote economic development in places where supportive infrastructure exists help the region as a whole.

*Transportation projects
are tools that advance
other goals.*

New highways, particularly bypasses of existing activity centers, are not the thrust of this program. However, there may be instances where a bypass could enhance community cohesiveness by removing trucks from residential areas. A new road might support economic development in targeted areas. Two such examples are the Selkirk Bypass and the I-90 Phase 2 Connector to the RPI Technology Park. Such projects, however, will not be considered by CDTC unless the local planning has been undertaken to justify their need and purpose.

[3] PLAN FOR A SAFER AND MORE SECURE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

CDTC has been actively engaged in safety planning and programming since its inception. Under recent progressive federal transportation legislation, including SAFETEA-LU, safety and security of the transportation system was elevated in their level of importance in state and MPO planning and programming processes. For safety, CDTC will work collaboratively with the NYSDOT and other state, regional and local safety partners on implementing the [NYS Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#). For security, CDTC will work collaboratively to address the issues outlined and work towards balancing security with system reliability and protect facilities while advancing other transportation goals.

CDTC's safety planning philosophy extends far beyond the traditional approach of identifying high accident locations and countermeasures (such as rumble strips, clear zones and wide shoulders). Safety planning is also an important aspect of integrated transportation and community design. Smart growth policies can result in safer transportation systems through appropriate, or context sensitive, designs. Engineering is also just one aspect of this integrated approach and education and enforcement efforts must also be a part of CDTC's planning and public outreach efforts.

14) Establish a [Safety Working Group](#) to coordinate CDTC's safety planning activities with regional safety partners.

CDTC will establish a Safety Working Group which will serve as the regional forum on transportation safety issues. This group, which will include representatives from state and local governments as well as enforcement, education and emergency service stakeholders, will be charged with the task of further articulating CDTC's safety planning program including:

- 1) Develop an appropriate performance measure for the long range plan.
- 2) Develop a new or refined process to evaluate candidate transportation improvement program projects for their safety benefits, including safety set-aside projects.
- 3) Work with NYSDOT Region 1 and the Adirondack-Glens Falls MPO on developing a process to program High Risk Rural Road funds when they are available along with other regional safety funds as appropriate.
- 4) Develop a catalog of innovative safety treatments using cutting edge resources to help guide local communities on the options available to them. This may include traditional countermeasures (signs, rumble strips, guiderails, etc.) as well as innovative techniques such as [Complete Streets](#), roundabouts, traffic calming, access management, walking and bicycling facilities, etc. which all seek to reduce fatalities and injuries on all public roads in the Capital Region. Facility function and the community context will also be considered in the articulation of appropriate countermeasures.
- 5) Evaluate CDTC's role in education and enforcement activities and if/how resources can be allocated to pursue those activities. Issues related to driver behavior will be a key component of the evaluation.
- 6) Work with emergency service providers on how best to incorporate their issues and concerns into the transportation planning process.

15) Develop a formal [safety](#) management system for the Capital Region that goes beyond traditional approaches.

CDTC's Safety Management System will go beyond the traditional approach of identifying high accident locations. It will recognize that safety is influenced by facility design, community design, enforcement and behavior. Safe accommodation of all modes of travel on all public roads is central to CDTC's safety planning work. Connecting our efforts with available data resources is vital to making progress on the most critical safety issues in the region. The forthcoming Accident Location Information System (ALIS) should enhance CDTC's access to safety data to enable regional safety analysis to be more efficiently undertaken.

The central elements to the CDTC Safety Management System are:

- 1) Collect, analyze and share available regional safety data with regional safety partners. CDTC plans to create a regional safety profile to help establish problem areas including locations experiencing a high number of crashes, particularly a high number of severe crashes, as well as to document trends related to driver behavior. This will help CDTC and the regions' safety stakeholders focus their safety planning resources on key issues. Particular focus will be given to the local road system. The safety needs of specific groups such as pedestrians and bicyclists, the elderly and disabled, motorcyclists and large trucks, including the other emphasis areas identified in the

[NYS Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) will be evaluated. In addition, the relationship between land use and transportation will be evaluated through safety data in before and after analysis of regional transportation projects. The data will feed into the work of the Safety Working Group and will be used in both planning and programming activities.

- 2) Pilot Safety Projects. Since early 2006, CDTC has been working with Rensselaer County on a pilot safety data project. The purpose of the project is to review all available safety data files related to the county and create a detailed crash profile on all public roads. The timeliness and quality of the data on the local road system, particularly with respect to geographic coding, has been problematic. It is hoped that the ALIS project and the further implementation of TraCS (Traffic and Criminal Software) throughout the region will improve crash location data. CDTC will continue to work on this pilot effort to develop a manageable safety data analysis process for the other three counties in the region.
- 3) Use of Regional Geographic Information System (GIS). CDTC's GIS contains crash data for both the state and local road systems from roughly 1996 through 2003 for all crashes and 2004 through 2006 for reportable crashes. This data was extracted from the NYSDOT SIMS and is used for many of CDTC's data analysis and mapping activities. CDTC will continue and increase the use of GIS in its safety planning activities.

16) Facilitate interagency cooperation and coordination of [security planning](#) activities.

Security planning involves having a communication and cooperation strategy in place before an incident occurs that contains the number and type of resources available in the region and the offices that are equipped to dispatch those resources to the locations and residents in need. A strategy plan should include elements such as routing, sheltering, or public education. CDTC will continue to follow the lead of NYSDOT and CDTA with security related issues and continue to provide a forum for operational discussions related to the transportation system in the Capital Region. In addition, CDTC will provide a forum for discussion on coordinating incident/emergency response, for emergency agencies to coordinate surveillance and prevention strategies and coordinating public information dissemination strategies. If needed, CDTC will assist a security coordinating agency to the extent possible.

[4] REACH OUT FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

Reach out to local communities, policy makers, businesses and individuals through an open, participatory process with information, technical assistance and on-going opportunities to assist CDTC and its members in making transportation-related decisions. Partnerships should be built among all transportation stakeholders so that transportation investments achieve multiple community objectives.

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

Transportation planning, programming, and project implementation must have a high level of *meaningful* public participation. A public involvement orientation leads one away from "engineering" solutions and towards problem-solving that integrates community values, goals, and desires. An ongoing, inclusive dialogue about fundamental transportation decisions that impact everyone's lives is required. Traditionally underrepresented communities, such as the mobility-impaired, low income, minorities and senior citizens, deserve special outreach efforts as well as those in rural towns and villages that are not often directly involved with CDTC. CDTC will continue public participation efforts when involved with project implementation, although that usually falls with project sponsors and NYSDOT.

*Meaningful participation
changes outcomes.*

The cornerstone of CDTC's public participation efforts at the planning level is through the [Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program](#). Each Linkage Program study is required to have at minimum two formal public workshops/meetings in which to elicit comment on the concepts being developed and articulated for the community. In addition, CDTC will continue to develop its website to clearly display products and make announcements with respect to planning, programming and implementation activities in the Capital Region. The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other relevant software will also continue to provide visual devices such as maps, graphs and tables to display information. CDTC will provide opportunities for web-based comments to be received and considered. Specific portions of the website will be established to receive comments regarding specific plans, programs, policies, and any other transportation related issue.

Additional outreach techniques that will be utilized by CDTC include:

- The New Visions Training Program for local decision makers.
- Presentations to local groups on topics of interest and more formal presentations at conferences and other larger events.
- Continuing to have an open relationship with the press and granting reasonable interview requests.
- Formalizing the newsletter, with the format, content, and frequency of distribution to be determined. Each new version will be mailed to the overall CDTC mailing list and posted on the CDTC website.

CDTC will review and judge the effectiveness of its public participation strategy using the following performance measures:

- People were heard and respected during the conduct of CDTC business, particularly in the development of the RTP, TIP, UPWP, Linkage Program and major studies.
- The CDTC process is generally perceived by participants to be fair.
- Consensus was reached on major documents.
- Certification reviews reveal no deficiencies.

[5] DESIGN EFFECTIVE FACILITIES

The New Visions definition of effective facilities changes project design parameters.

CDTC's existing commitments make a substantial contribution to pavement and bridge conditions, preservation of transit services, intermodal connections and strategic transportation improvements linked to land use plans. Honoring CDTC's commitments to strategic transit and highway projects can best be accomplished by refining project scopes and designs to fit with the *New Visions 2030* principles. Effective transportation facilities accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians where appropriate, address the needs of an aging society, provide for goods movement and delivery, and reduce conflicts between local and through traffic. Community compatibility is as important as moving traffic under this definition of effectiveness. Multiple objectives are embraced in **major** projects, rather than primarily focusing on physical condition or traffic capacity in the design process.

18) Improve continuity between the planning, programming and design of transportation projects, regardless of fund source and road ownership.

Transportation project design has historically been conducted in a step-wise fashion -- after planning but before construction. Connections to both involved "hand-offs" between departments, agencies, or contractors. A systems approach uses a team of planners, designers, and construction personnel to develop projects. Project-specific decisions are put in the context of overall transportation system policy, goals, and budget constraints. Particular emphasis must be placed between the planning and design processes to ensure that local planning priorities are integrated to the greatest extent possible in transportation projects. The Linkage Program has significantly enhanced local planning activities in the Capital Region and those studies have already been seen to have a positive impact on the quality of transportation project proposals. Carrying good ideas through the design process must be further enhanced. Implementing actions include:

More resources need to be devoted to early and inclusive project development.

- Increase use of steering committees in the project development process that include local, county, state and regional officials;
- Revise NYSDOT's project scoping and development procedures manual to allow increased flexibility in the design process;
- Enhance the existing [TIP](#) evaluation process by requiring that all of CDTC's competitive programs such as the Spot Improvement Program for small scale bicycle and pedestrian projects specifically require consistency with local land use planning in their evaluation criteria;
- Ensure that environmental issues (NEPA requirements), bicycle and pedestrian issues, safety issues and other issues are properly identified and appropriately addressed;
- Increase involvement of NYSDOT design personnel and city engineering departments in planning processes as has already occurred in CDTC's Linkage studies;
- Increase inter-agency communication and coordination; and

- Provide more effective (earlier, more frequent) public participation in project design.

The [project programming process](#) at CDTC is a very comprehensive process with each project facing intense scrutiny with respect to long established project evaluation criteria. These criteria must be refined as circumstances change in the region and more is learned. The *New Visions 2030* process has identified several areas for further investigation with respect to CDTC's transportation improvement program.

- CDTC's safety benefits calculation for the project evaluation process should be updated to reflect the availability of new safety data and new options with respect to project evaluation.
- The project justification package and the programming process (screening and merit evaluations) need to be updated to reflect *New Visions 2030* priorities. This will be undertaken in a manner consistent with Appendix A to Part 450 of SAFETEA-LU regarding linking the transportation planning and NEPA process/project development. This will ensure that candidate project scopes as provided in project justification packages are descriptive enough to reflect project purpose and need consistent with New Visions principles and environmental quality goals.
- Project descriptions should be expanded in both the TIP and the STIP to effectively highlight initial project objectives.

19) Routinely make road projects [bicycle, pedestrian](#) and [transit](#) friendly.

CDTC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force has been very active since its inception during the development of New Visions in 1995. The [Bicycle and Pedestrian Game Plan and Toolbox](#) states that: "The region is doing well providing pedestrian accommodations to priority network facilities but lacking considerably in bicycle accommodations." Bicycle and pedestrian improvements will continue to be encouraged for inclusion in transportation projects throughout the region and an attempt to track the costs of the bike/pedestrian components of larger projects (reconstruction or resurfacing) will be made. In addition, there is still a need to pay particular attention to pedestrian accommodations on bus routes, particularly in the area of accessibility (i.e. ADA curb ramps). The positive trend of increasing support for pedestrian facilities will require continued attention.

The safety and accessibility of bicyclists and pedestrians continues to be a key concern in the project design process. New York State identified pedestrians as an emphasis area to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes in its [2007 Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#). CDTC's safety and bicycle and pedestrian planning activities will more strongly encourage the incorporation of safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities in project design.

Referencing and distributing the [CDTC's Bicycle Signage Guidelines](#) to establish consistency along trail systems in the region will be continued. Projects that are not consistent with the signage guidelines should not receive priority for funding even if the signage is a small

component of a larger scope of work (widening, resurfacing, or reconstruction). There should be increased awareness of the guidelines to the region as a whole.

In 2004, CDTA formalized the criteria used to determine placement of new bus shelters. Lower volume stops may be offered a bench as a way to stretch the budget and provide basic accommodation. Candidates for the shelter program are evaluated using a point system. The point system not only considers passenger densities, but also the presence or absence of safe pedestrian access, adjacent land uses and the road re-construction schedule—particularly if the capital project will pay for the concrete pad and electrical hookup.

There is one emerging area of road design – [roundabouts](#) – where particular attention to transit must be paid from the beginning, not as an afterthought. While there are considerable safety benefits to roundabouts in general, there is an inherent conflict between road design based on keeping traffic moving (albeit at a slower pace) and with urban transit operation that requires the vehicle to stop to pick up and discharge passengers. Only if transit is taken into account from the beginning can this inherent conflict be addressed in a way that minimizes the negative impact on customers.

Some specific areas for continued consideration of bicycle, pedestrian and transit issues include:

- Increasing the capacity for cyclists and pedestrians at the limited number of river crossings should be a priority. When a Linkage, or similar type study, has a river crossing in the study area, a task should be dedicated to accommodating non-motorized travel on the bridges.
- Bicycle and pedestrian treatments will be particularly considered on the bicycle and pedestrian priority network or where such treatments would connect to and support the development and access to regional systems. Linking these treatments with the transit priority network or where there are transit routes is vital.
- [Traffic calming](#) is an umbrella term for a variety of actions ranging from allowing on-street parking to installing speed bumps or speed tables to street closures. Traffic calming reduces dangerous conflicts between cyclists/pedestrians and motor vehicles and creates a comfortable balance between motor vehicle and non-motor vehicle activity. These actions make a street or area less attractive to cars, although only the most aggressive applications actually prohibit car use. When traffic calming occurs, motorists determine new "best routes" and traffic works towards a new equilibrium. Communities can advance traffic calming plans at modest cost, and if properly designed, at limited impact on regional mobility.

Providing additional travel choices connects communities in new ways. Children will significantly benefit from this approach. Instead of being chauffeured, they will be able to be more self-sufficient, as long as the alternatives provided are safe, affordable, and convenient.

[6] ENHANCE THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The use of highway, transit, toll/fare and communications technology improves the safety, reliability and efficiency of the entire transportation system. Grouped together under the [Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\)](#) umbrella, these technologies can help meet congestion relief, air quality, and accessibility goals. Coordination of public safety agency efforts create a unified, effective system that responds to accidents and other traffic tie-ups quickly on all major highways, therefore improving their operations. Improved data collection efforts and continued public education regarding arterial management techniques also offer opportunities to improve transportation system management and operations.

20) Implement [Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\)](#) on the priority network.

ITS applies advanced technology to transportation management and uses a system approach which interconnects and coordinates various functions, services and emergency response and transportation agencies. It is multimodal and integrates public transit and demand management. ITS services such as electronic payment services allow for the integration of electronic transit fare, parking and toll collection, and the consideration of demand management through congestion pricing. In the Capital Region, transit technology is an explicit and important component of the overall ITS strategy.

The ITS initiative includes a major effort to coordinate signal timing on major city and suburban arterials. Transit-friendly application of that technology will include designing the operation of the signal system to achieve multiple objectives. Rather than optimizing signal timing for maximum traffic flow, signal system design can be developed that allows for efficient traffic progression at travel speeds that are compatible with pedestrian, bike and transit movements. This may provide for a win/win outcome. Even modest improvements in basic signal timing will show important results.

<p><i>Improved signal equipment and timing is basic to the ITS initiative.</i></p>
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Many ITS initiatives have been implemented since *New Visions* was first adopted in 1997. The [Transportation Management Center \(TMC\)](#) has been implemented and is being utilized to improve traveler information and enhance incident management. E-Z Pass is now commonplace and is used at non-Thruway facilities such as the Albany International Airport to allow users to pay parking fees. CDTA has implemented an electronic fare collection system including Swiper passes, has installed automated vehicle locator and communication systems on its buses, and has implemented the region's first queue jumper in the City of Troy. CDTA now sells transit fares on-line and is developing a 10 day "debit" card for riders that use the bus, but not frequently enough to make the Swiper pass an economical option. In addition, CDTA in partnership with the Albany Parking Authority has piloted the use of "smart parking meters" where transit customers with valid transit passes can occasionally use Albany Parking Authority surface lots in the Central Avenue corridor at a reduced rate when they need daytime access to their vehicles. Other technologies in the pipeline include more "real-time" passenger information at major bus stops and on the web, a web-based trip planner (possibly linked to Google Transit), increased use of alternative fueled vehicles and solar-powered shelters and transit signal priority technology.

Reliable and complete travel condition information will be one of the most important features of a flexible and functional transportation system in the future. CDTC will continue to support the TMC and other ITS information systems. CDTC will also take advantage of new and emerging technologies for traveler information, both in the near and long terms. The long term holds great promise for vehicle technologies, personal computer technologies, cell phone or other technologies that will improve traveler information and the quality of travel in the region and beyond.

21) Continue to support the [Transportation Management Center](#) and incident management activities.

Incident management is the planned, coordinated process of detecting and removing incidents to restore normal traffic operations as quickly as possible. With an estimated 60 percent of all expressway system delay caused by incidents -- ranging from vehicles with flat tires on shoulders to major accidents -- quick detection and removal are critical to maintaining traffic flows, particularly during peak travel periods.

The Capital Region Transportation Management Center (TMC), located at State Police Headquarters in Albany, enables State Troopers, DOT HELP Trucks, and other emergency personnel to respond swiftly to crash scenes and other highway problems. When it is appropriate, DOT maintenance crews are dispatched quickly to help restore traffic flow quickly. Since the establishment of the TMC, traffic flow has improved for all Capital Region highway users. CDTC will continue to support the TMC.

In addition, CDTC along with NYSDOT Region 1 has established a [Regional Operations Committee](#) that focuses on coordination between transportation agencies, public safety, and emergency response teams and where appropriate, will be active participants in regional integrated corridor studies which include an operations component. The Operations Committee will also be looking at further developing performance measures for incident management and operations. Security issues and incident response mechanisms and plans will be integrated into operational plans for the region.

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.

Major roadways, including all of the region's surface arterials and certain strategic collectors serve both as the primary network for moving people and goods and are the focus for commercial and residential development. If access to arterial roadways is not properly designed, these roads can not accommodate development *and* retain their primary transportation function. Good access management is the single most effective element in improving safety and preserving arterial capacity.

The arterial management policy, adopted by CDTC and endorsed by its members, has helped to ensure that new and existing curb cuts meet appropriate standards. The four components of the access management policy are:

1. Reinforce Street Hierarchy: Access to property should reinforce the roadway hierarchy in order to maintain traffic flow, preserve roadway capacity, and enhance safety. As a rule, access to property should be from local streets or collector roads and not from the arterial itself. Traffic should flow to and from the arterial over collector roads and enter/exit the arterial at controlled intersections.
2. Guidelines for Driveway Spacing on Commercial Corridors: Driveway spacing standards limit the number of curb cuts on a roadway by stating the minimum desirable distance between driveways. Proper spacing helps reduce collisions, encourages sharing of access for smaller parcels, reduces conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists, and improves community character by discouraging haphazard placement of driveways along corridors.
3. Signal Spacing Guidelines: Preserving the quality of traffic flow and safety along public streets requires spacing of traffic signals that assures continuous, progressive movement. This normally entails relatively uniform spacing of signals at sufficient distances to travel at reasonable speeds.
4. Residential Street Standards: The intrusion of heavy traffic into residential neighborhoods impacts regional quality of life. The guidelines were developed using objective criteria from CDTC's highway system review and current research.

Guidance regarding driveway and intersection spacing and other strategies is set forth in the planning report, [*Development of an Arterial Corridor Management Strategy for the Capital District Region*](#), which will be updated following adoption of New Visions 2030. Guidance in this report allows for a reasonable balance between traffic engineering criteria and economic development demands.

Examples of the kinds of design treatments that would help achieve the driveway and signal spacing standards described above include but are not limited to:

- Regulate the maximum number of driveways per property.
- Increase property frontage along major roadways.
- Provide opportunities for shared access with adjacent developments.
- Encourage access between developments across parking lots.
- Require adequate internal design and circulation plans in addition to a traffic study for system impacts.
- Consolidate existing access whenever separate parcels are assembled under one development plan.
- Locate driveways away from the functional area of intersections.
- Allow access to arterials instead of a collector or local street only if a traffic study shows it is necessary or beneficial to overall traffic circulation.

Minimizing the number of driveways and traffic signals decreases traffic conflicts and preserves the traffic-carrying capacity of the region's arterial streets. Equally important is the maintenance/improvement of the living environment and visual character of the region's older residential arterials.

Incremental costs attendant to accommodating driveway and signal spacing, constructing local roads to complement the arterial street system, and fostering well-designed circulation systems are minimal if addressed during the development process. Some costs to the business community will be offset by additional development opportunities created by increased land and transportation efficiency. Retrofitting existing developed corridors will be more difficult and costly, but can be accomplished either in conjunction with site redevelopment or as part of routine public highway reconstruction projects. For example, driveway and traffic signal consolidation was successfully implemented as part of the recent Wolf Road resurfacing project.

23) Facilitate the collection of transportation data to foster regional transportation planning and analysis.

Collecting transportation data is critical to regional transportation planning and analysis. Through this action, CDTC is making a renewed commitment to facilitate data gathering on a variety of subjects including traffic counts, trip generation (cars and trucks in particular), the percentage of trucks in the motor vehicle traffic mix, pavement condition data, safety data, transit data, bicycle level of service, and pedestrian infrastructure. Such data will be used in a wide variety of planning activities as well as in CDTC's regional travel model and regional Geographic Information System for data analysis.

Building on the performance measures in the [Congestion Management Process](#), the Regional Operations Committee will develop enhanced performance measures for management and operations, including incident management. Data collection for these performance measures will include mining the new and emerging databases that are being made possible by ITS, including the MIST database, and the TRANSMIT system.

[7] SUPPORT INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Intermodal transport is an important component of the overall transportation system. Improving connections between modes -- both for freight and for people -- helps the whole system work better and provides economic benefits.

24) Improve [intermodal passenger connections](#) throughout the region.

Tailoring transit service to meet the overall transportation needs of the 21st century includes improved intermodal passenger connections. Efficient transfer between private operator transit service and CDTA service is one component. Effective connections of local transit and taxi service with inter-regional bus, rail and airline service is another.

Easy passenger connections allow entire trips to be taken using transit.

The Rensselaer Amtrak and Saratoga Springs Amtrak stations were reconstructed several years ago. Both provide staging areas for buses. Park and Ride spaces are designated at the Saratoga Springs station; the NX and Saratoga Springs city service both serve the station. Additional transit connections are provided during the busy Saratoga track season. A new convention center has been proposed for downtown Albany. The existing Greyhound/Trailways station is in the primary study area of the convention center planning effort and the concept of incorporating an intermodal facility into the design is now being explored. CDTA's Transit Development Plan will consider opportunities for improving intermodal connections through alterations to CDTA's route system where they are appropriate. Coordination and information sharing is a key aspect of this action.

25) Continue to support and facilitate [goods movement planning](#) and intermodal activities.

CDTC's Goods Movement Task Force has been active since the mid 1990's with respect to facilitating discussion on regional freight and goods movement issues, particularly with respect to major trade corridors such as I-87, I-90 and I-88. The task force has focused on intermodal activities in the region as they relate to trucks, rail, water and air. An issue of particular importance is that of freight security. As part of this action, CDTC will support implementation of security measures throughout the freight system, as identified by state and federal security agencies. In addition, the use of technology will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible to minimize the impact on freight movement efficiency and where feasible, extended to achieve motor safety objectives. For example, truck stop electrification at the New York State Thruway and NYSDOT rest areas should be encouraged and promoted for private truck stops as well.

The [Goods Movement Task Force](#) would also like to examine the contribution of truck traffic to expressway congestion in the Capital Region and attempt to identify the component of future congestion related to the growth in truck traffic. That would help to determine if investment in rail systems / intermodal systems for long-haul freight would have a noticeable impact on highway congestion in the region. To do this, local and through truck growth factors would need to be identified.

Also as part of this action, CDTC supports the improvement of the Canadian Pacific north-south rail corridor from Schenectady north toward the Canadian border to improve operating speed and travel time reliability for both Amtrak and freight movements. The I-87 Corridor Study High Speed Rail recommendations for implementation phasing, incorporating the freight benefit of the rail improvements into the evaluation of statewide priorities will be reviewed to identify future actions that CDTC might be able to support. In addition, the tandem truck lots currently at Exits 24 and 23 of the New York State Thruway should be relocated or fully redesigned for operational and safety reasons.

Finally, the location of freight-intensive industries is an important factor in regional goods movement. Attainment of regional goals regarding compact development and optimal use of existing industrial land would be fostered by public policies encouraging the location of freight-intensive industries near existing rail lines and intermodal terminals.

26) Improve surface access to the [Port of Albany](#).

On the Albany side, the Port of Albany is adjacent to I-787, but access is circuitous and hampered by the presence of at-grade railroad crossings. Two of the three access points to the Port of Albany (at Church Street and from South Pearl Street) have at-grade crossings that can cause major delays for egress and ingress, particularly with heavy rail traffic at the Kenwood Yards. Within the Port proper, signage and pavement condition is poor. Direct ship/rail, ship/truck, and rail/truck connections do exist, but would benefit from road and track improvements.

A two-pronged approach to improving surface access is proposed. In the long term, a direct access ramp from I-787 to the Port, eliminating the Green Street grade crossing and providing tandem facilities is desirable. In the short term, pavement, grade crossing, and signage improvements to the existing road network are desirable. Improvements to dockside rails should also be considered. Implementing the recommendations related to this area from the Albany County Commercial Transportation Access Study is desired.

27) Continue to support improved surface access to the [Albany International Airport](#).

Surface access to the Albany International Airport has been identified as a long-standing regional priority. The [2007-12 TIP](#) includes a commitment to a \$45 M project to build a new Exit 3 (or redesigned Exit 4) specifically to provide direct access to the Airport from I-87. Full construction of I-87 Exit 3 will require upwards of \$10 M (as of 2007) in right-of-way costs alone. Major environmental issues involving historic sites and wetlands are being examined under NYSDOT's design process, currently underway. Lower cost alternatives that minimize environmental impacts are being explored in the scoping effort and are being given serious consideration. Improvements to Albany Shaker Road have been completed and are underway on Watervliet Shaker Road.

Improving surface access to the Albany Airport is a high regional priority.

Albany International Airport provides state-of-the-art inter-modal air freight facilities with ongoing capital improvements including a new 5,500 square foot air-freight building for the US Postal Service that opened in 2004. A 53,000 square foot air cargo terminal and 15 acre ramp was opened in August 1998 housing FedEx, Wiggins, UPS and DHL/Airborne Express. In 2004, Mobile Air Transport, a freight forwarding company joined the cargo exclusive tenants of this terminal. Air cargo access improvements between the air cargo terminal and the National Highway System at State Route 7 and Interstates 87 and 90 were recently completed to facilitate the transport of 130,000 tons of cargo annually.

28) Eliminate [at-grade railroad crossings](#) where feasible and improve at-grade railroad crossing safety.

Grade crossings are considered a constraint to rail movement because of safety and liability considerations, particularly for high-speed train operation. An inventory of railroad grade crossings in the Capital Region was conducted in the mid 1990's and will be updated. SAFETEA-LU has a specific program targeting safety at rail-highway grade crossings. A new reporting requirement under SAFETEA-LU requires NYSDOT in its HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) to develop an annual Rail Highway Crossing Report which documents the effectiveness of the [state highway rail grade crossing program](#). To complement this, CDTC has a Grade Crossing Safety Improvements set-aside in its Transportation Improvement Program.

Public at-grade crossings are generally adequately protected in the Capital Region.

In general, basic protection at public railroad grade crossings in the Capital Region has been achieved through previous efforts. The major locations where this is not the case are where local land use is impacting road traffic volumes significantly, or where a major change in rail service, namely high-speed operation, is being explored. Where practical and allowable under federal and state law, NYSDOT is allowed to fund improvements or consolidation of private crossings along intercity passenger rail corridors, and is required to promulgate standards and specifications for design and protection at such crossings in order to insure public safety. Funding for private grade crossing consolidation or safety upgrades is problematic as public funding often is not available for such improvements.

Grade crossing elimination has multiple transportation system benefits:

- improved railroad and highway safety,
- improved efficiency of freight movement, and
- allowance for technological advances that would otherwise be impeded.

The NYSDOT Grade Crossing Program “focuses on improving safety at existing highway-railroad crossings primarily through the installation of warning devices. Ultimately, the safest option regarding highway-railroad grade crossings is to eliminate or close them, thereby eliminating all possibility of vehicle/train contact. Such an objective can be obtained via crossing consolidation, closure and/or grade separation. Consequently, it has been the policy of New York State to reduce, wherever possible, the number of highway-railroad grade crossings on public thoroughfares. As a result of these efforts, New York has one of the lowest grade crossing accident rates in the country, even though traffic volumes on both the rail and highway system have shown steady and significant increases over the last 30 years.” (From the website <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/divisions/operating/oss/rail/grade-crossings>)

[8] PROVIDE RELIABLE, EFFICIENT AND ACCESSIBLE [TRANSIT SERVICE](#)

Capital Region transit service must adapt to meet 21st century needs. Identified needs include reduced auto dependence, provision of essential mobility to those without cars (including those with special needs), management of congestion, and support of local development policy. [CDTA's Transit Development Plan](#) will restructure transit routes in the region, creating a more

efficient and reliable transit system with improved regional accessibility. Implementation of the region's first [Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\) system on the Route 5](#) corridor is well underway and exploration of additional regional BRT systems will likely be pursued. High quality transit service must be complemented by transit priority on key transit routes and transit supportive land use and urban design techniques.

29) Continue to restructure and enhance [transit service](#) to meet 21st century needs.

CDTA recently undertook a major study of their services called the Transit Development Plan, or TDP. The TDP looked at CDTA service according to type of route: Trunk routes, Express Routes, Neighborhood Routes, Suburban Shuttle services and Rural/Other services. CDTA has established an annual service review process to look at service performance by these categories, and to establish implementation plans based on that analysis.

CDTA restructured its fares in 2006. CDTA's fare system, called SimpleFare, was developed to simplify the fare structure and ease the ride for their customers. Zone and express surcharges and free transfers were eliminated. A \$3.00 day card good for unlimited rides is now offered in place of the free transfer. There are fewer Swiper fare card options now that there is no longer a zone system. A person can purchase a 5-day Swiper or 7-day Swiper. In addition, the Swiper pass, STAR fare and the "summer fun pass" can be purchased on-line. Ten ride ticket books for the Northway Express service can also be purchased on-line. Under the SimpleFare structure, seniors and customers with disabilities with a valid ID card pay half fare all the time. Half-fare Swipers are also available. The SimpleFare was well received by the public, and was one of the major factors in increasing ridership. CDTA plans to simplify the fare structure for the NX and explore the market for additional fare products, such as a 3-day pass aimed at visitors, a ten-ride debit card, and a 30-day pass that is not tied to the calendar month, but rather the day of first use.

In general, CDTA has begun to explore alternative service design. Starting in 2006, CDTA began to use contracted taxi service to meet some of the demand for STAR service for those not in wheelchairs. The Saratoga Transit Plan calls for an exploration of "Dial-A-Ride" as an alternative service model in low-density rural areas. These initiatives, in combination with coordinated human services transportation, have the potential to improve service quantity and quality and to stretch program funding.

30) Support [transit](#) through design of the built environment and use of technology.

Transit ridership is highly dependent upon travel time in comparison to auto travel. Bus transit in mixed traffic cannot compete head-to-head with auto traffic based on travel time for the vast majority of trips. The combination of increased congestion (from which the bus cannot escape) and continued scattering of development (which is more difficult for the bus to serve with frequent service) provide significant challenges. That said, there are some physical and technologic measures that can be taken to support transit on the regional roadway network.

*Travel time differences
strongly influence mode
choice.*

Bus Rapid Transit

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) describes an approach to transit service that focuses on integrated information, passenger amenities, technology, expedited fare collection, vehicle design and roadway treatment to improve transit reliability and speed. Bus Rapid Transit would be supported by stations at regular intervals, supplemental feeder service and traffic signal preemption to assure reliable and competitive operating speeds. CDTC and CDTA have committed to the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Route 5 Corridor from downtown Albany to downtown Schenectady and are preparing to explore BRT in the Western/Washington Avenue corridor, which has the potential to incorporate exclusive right of way to enhance the rapid part of BRT. Additional BRT corridors may be evaluated at some future time.

Preferential Treatment

A major feature of Bus Rapid Transit is the ability of the transit service to bypass congestion and provide a travel time advantage to transit users. Some portion of that advantage can be provided to bus transit through preferential treatment in important corridors and service areas. Preferential bus treatment includes:

Preferential bus treatment shows promise.

- *transit signal priority* that allows early or extended green time when a bus approaches a traffic signal;
- *slip ramps* between Interstate Highways and park-and-ride lots that can be used only by buses (or carpools); and
- limited *congestion bypasses such as queue jumpers* or more extended *bus lanes* that allow the bus to avoid recurring highway delay.

In the planned BRT for the Route 5 Corridor, BRT vehicles will be able to travel the corridor about 25% faster than current local buses, saving up to 17 minutes end to end, utilizing transit signal priority and queue jumper technology.

Intensify Transit Corridors

As noted earlier, an important opportunity present in the Capital Region is the opportunity to build upon a strong base of walkable, mixed land use development in the cities and along transit corridors linking these cities. Private sector initiatives supported by public policies should be encouraged to invest in development along traditionally-strong and potentially-strong transit corridors, such as NY 5, NY 32, US 20, US 4, NY 7, US 9 and others. The opportunity to constrain the growth in vehicle travel associated with new economic activity is maximized when development is located within walking distance of transit routes. Opportunities for large-scale, new mixed-use development or transit oriented development exist within the strong transit service area.

This action effectively increases the size of the transit market without requiring increases in overall levels of activity or overall development densities. The number of trips that can safely and conveniently use the transit is increased.

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.

SAFETEA-LU requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 Elderly Individuals with Disabilities Program, the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (Section 5316), and the New Freedom Program (Section 5317) be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan”, and that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.” Toward that end, a Regional Transportation Coordination Committee was formed to guide the work of the coordinated plan and to work toward better integration and coordination of services.

The [2007 “Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the Capital District”](#), required under SAFETEA-LU guidelines, contains recommendations for service coordination among and between area human service agencies and CDTA services. One recommendation requires future recipients of Section 5310 funding to participate in a forum of human service agency coordination. In addition, on a parallel but separate track, Albany County through its United We Ride Effort, has initiated coordination of vehicles owned and operated by the agencies receiving funds from the Department of Aging. Group purchasing is also being pursued as part of the United We Ride effort. The United We Ride initiative, coupled with the proposed Section 5310 evaluation guidelines should result in two models of coordination that can be adopted by other counties and entities that currently do not coordinate service.

The Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) will continue to meet quarterly for the next year to oversee the project solicitation and evaluation for JARC and New Freedom projects. The committee’s frequency of second and third year meetings will be determined by the progress that is made in 2007/2008 with respect to coordination. The RTCC is committed to its goal of improving communication amongst agencies and in achieving improved levels of coordination. The RTCC will continue to meet to help foster these goals.

[9] TREAT ALL MODES FAIRLY IN THE CAPITAL PROGRAM

A comprehensive re-examination of the project evaluation criteria used at CDTC, NYSDOT, and CDTA is a necessary implementation step in making *New Visions 2030* a reality. Doing this will ensure that all transportation projects reflect *New Visions 2030* principles, strategies and budgets. The main changes that are perceived to be needed are ones that better capture the external impacts of transportation decisions -- regional quality of life, environmental issues, and compatibility of transportation with adjacent land use.

New Visions policies need to be applied to project evaluation criteria.

32) Direct transportation [funding](#) to support *New Visions 2030* concepts.

The TIP is CDTC's primary implementation mechanism for New Visions.

Flexible federal funding is expected to continue in coming years although currently resources are scarce and in high demand. The challenge of assigning priority to competing uses of scarce resources may become even greater in the future. CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the vehicle through which federal highway and transit funds are assigned to particular projects. When *New Visions* was adopted in 1997, CDTC implemented changes to its TIP project selection procedures, including its project *screening*, "fact sheet" *evaluation*, and *program development* to ensure consistency with *New Visions* concepts. Tying the TIP strongly to the *New Visions* Plan resulted in funding a far different set of projects than would have been the case prior to the plan's adoption. CDTC will again review its TIP project selection procedures to ensure continued linkage to the *New Visions 2030* plan.

33) Continue to provide [funding](#) for implementation of small, cost-effective improvements.

Regional "set-asides" are currently used in the TIP to provide funding to implement small, cost effective projects related to traffic signals, pavement markings, bridge inspections, small scale bicycle and pedestrian improvements (through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Spot Improvement Program), Travel Demand Management (including transit pass subsidy programs and the guaranteed ride home program), grade crossing improvements and ITS. In the 2007-2012 TIP, several new set-asides were established including alternative fuel retrofits, bicycle/pedestrian network improvements, safety improvements for non-state roads and a set-aside for intersections, queue jumpers and roundabouts. These commitments total roughly \$45 M over the five years of the TIP and continued support for these set-asides is expected to continue. New initiatives to be considered for incorporation in the next TIP development process include:

[Spot Goods Movement Improvements](#)

Coordinate through the CDTC Planning Committee the possibility of using CDTC funds for small scale goods movement related projects. This would be modeled after the Spot Improvement Program for bicycles and pedestrians.

[Replace Street and Highway Signs to Accommodate Older Drivers](#)

Older people, because of the aging process, experience visual problems related to depth perception, visual field, visual acuity and glare sensitivity. Many of these people could continue to drive safely as they age with improvements in sign letter heights, sign reflectivity and improvements in stopping site distances.

In 1995, the standard letter height was 1 inch of letter height to 50 feet of legibility distance. In 2000, the standard was changed to 1 inch per 40 feet of legibility distance. Recent research suggests that a 1 inch to 33 feet standard would benefit older users. In addition, signs should be made of high performance retroreflective sheeting. With regard to retroreflectivity, no minimum standards have been set. However, in 2000, the standard was changed from "only regulatory and

warning signs shall be retroreflective or illuminated” to “all signs shall be retroreflective or illuminated”. The 2003 MUTCD states, “regulatory, warning, and guide signs shall be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night, unless specifically stated otherwise in the text discussion in this Manual of a particular sign or group of signs.” Finally, FHWA is proposing to amend the MUTCD to include a standard for minimum maintained levels of traffic sign retroreflectivity and methods to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above these levels. Adopting a 3.5-second perception-to-reaction time in determining stopping sight distances would better accommodate older drivers.

[10] ENHANCE DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The economic health of the Capital Region can be enhanced by decreasing drive-alone, rush-hour trips. Demand management initiatives offer a number of benefits including the reduction of accident costs, emissions, and energy consumption together with reduced congestion. Demand Management initiatives include everything from offering incentives to use transit to encouraging carpooling to working with employers to encourage less drive alone trips through parking management techniques, telecommuting and a wide variety of other techniques.

34) Continue and expand [demand management initiatives](#) using the best available technologies.

This area provides a large opportunity area for travel demand management in the region and should remain a regional priority. Demand management activities have taken the form of many initiatives over the past decade. CDTC maintains a local ridesharing board called the Commuter Register, which is an on-line mechanism that allows people to advertise for free for a carpool. It has become increasingly apparent that the [Commuter Register](#) needs a major facelift in format, to keep up with the technology that is currently state of the art. Currently, the Commuter Register is a self matching system; this needs to be modified using GIS technologies, so that potential carpoolers can receive a map based match list. Links to [CDTA](#) and other commuter services (Schoharie County Public Transportation, Brown Coach, Yankee Trails, etc) are also provided and those services are promoted. Guaranteed Ride Home programs are available through CDTA’s Swiper program and for non-CDTA bus riders and carpoolers through the Commuter Register Program.

With regard to vanpools, the 2007-12 Transportation Improvement Program contains a \$120,000 set-aside for a Saratoga County Van Pool pilot project. The pilot will likely be coordinated with the Saratoga Economic Opportunity Council and will be coordinated with the Job Access and Reverse Commute program.

CDTA has made significant progress in their sales of corporate Swipers. Approximately 100 companies take advantage of the corporate Swiper program. CDTA has dedicated staff to market transit pass programs. The County of Albany partnered with CDTA to provide free (phase I) and low cost (phase II) Swiper passes to employees rescinding their parking permits. This program provides about 100 passes per month; it was pioneered when the parking facility used by the county was demolished. CDTA sells Swiper passes at a deep discount to NYS

employees that belong to the PEF and CSEA unions. Overall, CDTA sells about 3000 Swipers per month through its corporate accounts.

Several private companies, through the encouragement of CDTA staff have adopted Internal Revenue Code Section 132, which allows employees to purchase their transit passes using pre-tax dollars, up to \$105 per month. NYS offers this incentive to downstate employees; negotiations are on-going to bring this benefit to the Capital Region. CDTA has specifically crafted targeted “Try Transit” campaigns with Downtown Saratoga Springs visitors, the healthcare industry and restaurants to introduce the benefits of taking transit.

CDTA and CDTC have also initiated a Homeowner’s Incentive to try to encourage the revitalization of urban neighborhoods with transit service and transit supportive features (pedestrian accommodations, limited parking or limited car ownership, transit dependent populations) that have homeowner incentive programs to attract and retain population at transit-supportive densities.

Another tool that offers great promise for the Capital Region is a Transportation Management Association (TMA). A TMA is a member-controlled organization that provides transportation services in a particular area, such as a commercial district, mall, medical center or industrial/office park. They are generally public-private partnerships, consisting primarily of area businesses with local government support. TMAs provide an institutional framework for a wide variety of transportation demand management programs and services.

35) Engage New York State as a full partner in parking management and transit promotion.

New York State is in a unique position with regard to its responsibilities in the Capital Region. First, it is the region's primary employer. Second, it is the owner and operator of the highest function, most heavily-traveled highways. Third, it provides significant financial assistance to CDTA and other transit providers and is responsible for overseeing its effective use. Fourth, it is responsible under federal law together with CDTC and CDTA for providing a long-range transportation plan that meets the needs of the region. Fifth, it holds primary responsibility for meeting federal Clean Air Act requirements.

In coming years, New York State has an opportunity to help fulfill its multiple roles in the Capital Region with [Transportation Demand Management](#) initiatives. The State's actions as an employer that spread peak traffic loads; encourage ridesharing, walk, bike or transit use; or increase telecommuting all benefit its role as highway provider and transit financier, and as the primary agent responsible for an effective transportation plan and air quality attainment.

CDTA and CDTC staffs conducted a highly successful pilot transit subsidy program for NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) employees in 2000, when they moved their offices from Wolf Road to downtown Albany. The program offered \$17 discounts for the purchase of weekly bus fare on three of the private commuter bus companies that serve the Capital Region -- Upstate Transit (now Northway Express), Brown Coach, and Schoharie

County Public Transportation. The program was very successful—over 60 commuters permanently changed their commute mode to transit. An additional 40 people became part-time bus riders. About 35 employees rode the bus but determined that it did not work for them. Only 475 employees lived in zip codes that could potentially be served by these three bus companies. Over 12 percent permanently switched their commute mode to transit. Surveys indicated that the majority of these employees would not have given the bus a try had the transit subsidy not been offered.

NYS Office of General Services and more recently, the governor’s office has become aware of this program. CDTC and CDTA staffs, along with advocates from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation are trying to “sell” the concept to other NYS agencies within the Capital Region. NYS allows employees located in NYC to purchase their transit fare using pre-tax dollars; negotiations are on-going to bring this benefit to the Capital Region. Other proposed TDM benefits for NYS employees include the provision of low-cost, occasional daily parking for employees who suspend their OGS parking permit because they take transit or carpool to work, the appointment of transportation coordinators in all state agencies (for disseminating information regarding commutation choices such as mass transit, telecommuting, carpooling and compressed work week), and the provision of direct transit subsidies. The DEC Bus Subsidy Pilot Program revealed that employees who take mass transit to work are much more likely to give up their state-issued, OGS parking permits if they know that they can retain their seniority rights on their respective parking waiting list in case they need their permit back in the future.

In order for NYS employees to take advantage of some of these TDM initiatives, the state must implement the DEC “inactive waiting list” concept for all Capital Region state agency parking lists. Approximately 30,000 NYS employees work in the downtowns of Albany, Schenectady and Troy. A statewide TDM program such as the one described above could significantly reduce the need for constructing additional parking structures while at the same time reducing fuel consumption and air pollution.

36) Consider highway pricing (particularly congestion pricing) and broad parking policies (including cashing out).

Modest highway pricing schemes may be achievable and can have many benefits. Congestion pricing on major facilities is one feasible option for the Capital Region. As the Thruway's electronic toll collection technology matures, it is a relatively small step to vary the toll by time of day or by carpool status, or to extend tolls to other facilities (such as the Northway on a managed lane). By adding a surcharge for peak hour usage, customers are encouraged to either shift mode or shift the time of travel, resulting in reduced congestion, reduced emissions, and lower overall costs of travel. The primary benefit of congestion pricing is better management of existing highway resources and reduced need for highway widening. However, the modest shift in demand to transit service warrants a recommendation for consideration of pricing strategies from the transit perspective alone.

*Modest pricing schemes
deserve further
exploration.*

One of the goals of introducing a fast, high-performance transit service to the Route 5 corridor is to bring new riders onto the system. One of the ways to improve access to the transit system is to provide park-and-ride spaces at the proposed [BRT](#) stations. In this way, people who do not live along the Route 5 corridor but who work along the corridor can drive to a station and use the BRT to reach their destination. Within Phase I, it is recommended to provide up to 250 park-and-ride spaces, some 20% of the ultimate total. Due to the lower cost and faster implementation of the capital leasing alternative over land acquisition and construction, shared use lots are recommended. These spaces will be built/leased at the following stations, in descending order of importance:

- Balltown
- Colonie Center
- Washington (Travel Center in Schenectady)
- North Allen
- McClellan
- Any other location where the opportunity arises

While improving access to the BRT service is important, and the park-and-ride spaces must be built in a location convenient to the station, the provision of such spaces should not override the goal of improving land use in the NY 5 corridor, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the stations. Thus, care must be taken in the design phase to ensure that a park-and-ride lot does not preclude new development that provides a comfortable and lively pedestrian environment at the stations.

Broad **parking policies** incorporate employer cash out and transportation allowance programs described under other actions, but go beyond. Increased transit ridership to urban, and potentially suburban centers of employment, is supported by parking surcharges or other means and the availability of park and ride facilities outside of these employment centers. Further, should the City of Albany, the City of Troy or other urban communities successfully obtain authority to create residential parking permit programs, the free on-street parking supply for commuters may drop significantly. Demand for, and market prices for commercial space would then rise. Residential parking programs adopted to meet residents' needs should be folded into a parking management program. Such a program would accommodate the loss in downtown parking through increased peripheral and remote parking, increased employer participation in transit pass programs and other transit service actions (as described above).

There is a direct relationship between parking policy and transit use.

The Capital Region has fewer employers that rely on paid, commercial parking for employees than most metropolitan areas. This is largely due to the presence of state government as the primary downtown employer and the fact that it provides for its own parking facilities. Even so, there would be value in adoption of parking "cash out" legislation such as that in place in California and other areas. Cash out legislation requires any employer that purchases commercial parking spaces for employees to offer the cash value of the parking space directly to the employee as an alternative. This allows the employee

"Cash out" programs are promising.

the option of foregoing the parking space and applying the cash towards transit. Alternatively, the cost of a parking space could be shared with a carpool partner and the savings pocketed. The entire cash allowance could be retained by walking or biking to work. Cash out programs do not increase employer costs or prevent employer-subsidized parking.

Parking cash out was marketed as part of the CDTA/CDTC joint venture that provided transit pass subsidies to employees that worked in the Albany Downtown Business Improvement District (BID). However, none of the employers located in the BID took advantage of this program. There is an opportunity to again market this concept through a Transportation Management Association that may be developed at the Harriman Campus or other large developments in the region.

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

Protecting the environment and creating a more sustainable transportation system is an important *New Visions 2030* strategy, particularly in light of global climate change. The environment must be considered in planning and programming processes at CDTC and steps must be taken to identify potential impacts of transportation decisions on the environment. Review of natural and cultural resource mapping and consulting with federal, state and local agencies on environmental issues are important aspects of the environmental mitigation process. CDTC also seeks to: 1) promote the use of alternative fuels, 2) ensure that traditionally underrepresented population groups are not unduly harmed by transportation actions and in fact may be helped by them, and 3) provide more transportation choices beyond the single occupant motor vehicle.

37) Support the deployment and use of [Clean Fuels and Clean Fuel Technology](#) in the Capital Region

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) [Clean Cities](#) program is a voluntary, locally based government/industry partnership. It is designed to mobilize local stakeholders in the effort to expand the use of alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel by accelerating the deployment of alternative fuel vehicles (AFV's) and building a local AFV refueling infrastructure. The Clean Cities program mission is to “advance the national, economic and energy security of the United States by supporting local decisions to reduce use of petroleum fuels in vehicles.” Clean Cities carries out this mission through a network of more than 80 volunteer coalitions, which develop public/private partnerships to promote alternative fuels and vehicles, fuel blends, fuel economy, hybrid vehicles, and idle reduction.

Local efforts to participate in the federal Clean Cities program were undertaken by Schenectady County in early 1996. The county recognized the importance of this program and began to build a coalition of public agencies and private businesses. Schenectady County formed a partnership with thirty-nine organizations, including Niagara Mohawk, NYSERDA, the New York State Thruway Authority, CDTC, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the

Environmental Business Association, Environmental Advocates and others. This partnership became known as the **Capital District Clean Communities**. This group met regularly and, with Schenectady County and Niagara Mohawk taking the lead, they submitted a Clean Cities program plan to the U.S. Department of Energy on behalf of the Capital District Clean Communities. DOE accepted the program plan and the Capital District Clean Communities coalition became a designated member of Clean Cities in April 1999.

The Capital District Clean Communities (CDCC) formed primarily to take advantage of the environmental, public health, energy, and economic benefits that the Clean Cities program offers. Specifically, alternate fuels can benefit the Capital Region by creating commercial opportunities and jobs in the sale, conversion, and maintenance of AFV's and in the installation and service of associated infrastructure. In addition, benefits come from the research and development of new technologies and products through the reduced dependence on imported fuel.

The CDTC assumed the coordinator role for the CDCC in 2001. CDTC is the only MPO within NYS that supports the coordinator position. CDTC agreed to be the "home" of the Capital District Clean Communities program because the goals of the program fit well with the planning and investment principles that CDTC adopted as part of New Visions. The Capital Region provides substantial opportunities for the expansion of the alternative fuel marketplace, particularly with the large state vehicle fleet that operates in the area. Stakeholders in CDCC recognize the need to provide greater fuel choices in the Capital Region and to reduce its dependence on imported oil.

The CDCC advances the goals of the Clean Cities program through coalition building and networking. Currently, ethanol, bio-diesel, CNG, and Propane are the alternate fuels of choice in the Capital Region. Hybrid-electric technologies have also gained support. CDTA ordered its first six hybrid-electric vehicles in 2006 for deployment in the NY5 corridor. CDTA has set a goal of 20% of all future fleet purchases being hybrid technology, contingent upon funding availability and positive evaluation results from the initial purchases. In 2007, the incremental cost per vehicle of hybrid technology is about \$165,000/bus. This incremental difference may decrease over time as the technology matures and achieves greater market penetration.

CDTA is also willing to work with partners on emerging clean air technologies, including fuel cells and hydrogen power. With NYSERDA backing, the Albany County Airport Authority and CDTA will be looking at a hydrogen-powered sedan and SUV (sport utility vehicle) for non-revenue operation beginning 2008.

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.

CDTC's Title VI-Environmental Justice initiative is intended to ensure that EJ principles are inherently integrated into the planning process at both the system and project level. The [Environmental Justice Analysis Report](#) documents the equitable distribution of transportation projects throughout the region (urban, suburban and rural areas) and provides an evaluation of

CDTC's plans, programs and processes in relation to EJ issues. Policies related to public involvement are addressed in detail in CDTC's Public Involvement Policy. Additional transportation concerns with Title VI / Environmental Justice aspects (noise, etc.) have been fairly examined in the "big ticket, big initiative" work. CDTC's approach to Title VI/EJ policy, analysis, and documentation will continue to be updated and enhanced as programs change and as more recent and improved data becomes available.

39) Specifically consider [environmental and cultural resource impacts](#) of transportation planning, project programming and design

CDTC has considered the environmental impacts of its decisions as part of its planning and programming processes for some time. However, the SAFETEA-LU requirement for environmental mitigation has heightened awareness of this issue and has challenged CDTC to do more. As part of this action, CDTC will revise the TIP candidate project justification package, including the section in which preliminary identification of potential environmental issues is made. This revision will be undertaken to be consistent with Appendix A to Part 450 of SAFETEA-LU regarding linking the transportation planning and the NEPA process/project development process. This will ensure that candidate project scopes as provided in project justification packages are descriptive enough to reflect the project purpose and need which must be consistent with New Visions principles and environmental quality goals. Geographic information systems (GIS) information will be used to overlay the limits of candidate TIP projects that have the potential for significant environmental impacts against natural and cultural resources mapping. CDTC will coordinate with NYSDOT, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and others on updating this mapping and corresponding GIS databases.

In addition, expanding CDTC's membership to restore the NYSDEC as a CDTC member will be explored. Adding NYSDEC as a member agency will allow for enhanced communication and information sharing regarding the region's critical environmental issues, environmental resources, and to ensure broader coordination of land use/transportation planning efforts (DEC withdrew from active participation years ago). As a CDTC member, NYSDEC would have a role in project planning, programming and design.

40) Explore [Green Corridors](#) and opportunities to reinforce open space protection efforts in the Capital Region.

Green Corridors is an approach Saratoga County has utilized for its [Green Infrastructure Plan](#). Green corridors can help protect existing riparian buffers and woodlands, improve water and air quality, and lower storm water management costs. Greenways and trails are key components of green corridors. The Green Infrastructure Plan is a regional initiative to identify and safeguard valued community open space resources. The plan brings together the county's most important open space resources, including natural systems such as streams, wetlands and watersheds; working landscapes such as farms and managed forests; recreational and trail opportunities such as multi-use trails and fishing access; and cultural resources such as scenic and historic corridors.

CDTC will explore opportunities to reinforce open space protection efforts in the region. Along with the Green Infrastructure Plan in Saratoga County (which includes an open space

component), the Open Space Institute's Open Space for Tomorrow: A Capital District Sprawl and Open Space Action Strategy, the NYSDEC's Open Space Plan and other resources will be reviewed to ensure open space protection efforts are considered at the regional level.

[12] EXPLORE BIG TICKET/BIG IDEA INITIATIVES

CDTC's exploration of Big Ticket/Big Idea Initiatives resulted in the identification of six common themes or pre-requisites for a big initiative like a regional greenway system to reach a point of regional commitment and implementation. Although 16 big initiatives were identified as possibilities for the region, none represent firm commitments in *New Visions 2030*. Examples of these initiatives include a riverfront access and urban redevelopment program, guideway transit system with transit oriented development, a managed lane program, clean, efficient vehicle program, and a highway noise program. Further exploration and refinement of these initiatives should be undertaken, including whether or not the six pre-requisites can be met in order to garner regional support for their commitment and implementation. The budget impact of Big Ticket/Big Idea initiatives is significant. Although some are relatively more modest in impact (less than \$100 M) some go well beyond what the region can currently afford (billions of dollars). New sources of revenue may need to be found or developed if a commitment to a big initiative is made at some future time.

41) Refine and further articulate the [Big Ticket/Big Idea Initiatives](#) for the Capital Region

Big Ticket/Big Idea initiatives such as new rail systems, major expressway widenings or construction of significant mileage of new streets and highways **are not contained in *New Visions 2030***. CDTC's current policies hold that such big budget items are not feasible. The need is not urgent, the benefits are not cost-effective, and the large scale resources required are not available to pursue them seriously.

At the same time, CDTC realizes that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process is the public forum at which big ideas as well as incremental actions should have a place. To this end, the *New Visions 2030* effort has revisited a wide range of "big idea" and "big ticket" initiatives to determine if major, region-shaping projects and programs should be afforded status in a new 25-year transportation plan. The results of this review are included in the Big Ticket/Big Idea report.

The Big Ticket/Big Idea initiatives report noted that if the documented findings in the report are confirmed through additional public dialogue, then the implications for CDTC's planning process and *New Visions 2030* are that CDTC and its members and participants should:

- Continue to clarify, document and secure broad buy-in to statements of community values and regional objectives.
- Explore in a sketch manner the potential Capital Region application of those hypothetical "big initiative" concepts rated as being consistent with community values and standing a good chance of achieving a regional consensus for implementation.

- Explore the future feasibility of including a scaled-down version of those concepts in a financially-constrained long-range plan by raising the threshold of “reasonably expected” funding.
- Monitor the emergence of a sense of urgency and of potential champions that are necessary to generate support and financial resources for implementation of the consensus concepts.
- Be prepared to initiate serious consideration of the consensus concepts as soon as warranted by urgency and other conditions. Urgency can come from desire as well as need. The region may choose to pursue ideas because they are good, not just because they seem necessary.

The CDTC Planning Committee and Policy Board will be utilized in the decision making process for which Big Ticket/Big Idea Initiatives are refined in more detail, following the model of the Regional Greenway Concept.

42) Continue to explore options for the [Regional Greenway Concept](#)

Along with work to describe and discuss other “big idea” initiatives, CDTC will continue exploring options and provide a forum for discussion regarding the Regional Greenway concept already articulated. The Greenway Concept will continue to be presented whenever possible to inform elected officials and advocates of the concept’s regional benefits and to encourage local decision makers to consider integrating the Greenway Concept into their local planning as opportunities arise. It should be noted that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force is very enthusiastic about finding ways to implement the concept while understanding that a regional champion has not been identified and resources are limited. The Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail and the Zim Smith Trail would likely be major components of a Regional Greenway System.

[13] SECURE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

This strategy makes all of the other strategies happen. The *New Visions 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 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 Finance Report outlines different scenarios from basic system preservation to full implementation, but emphasizes the desirability of full implementation. Securing adequate funding is clearly going to require cooperative efforts, innovative thinking, and a lot of public support.

43) Build a coalition to lobby for regional transportation projects.

Because the Capital Region has four central cities instead of a single central city, a unified lobbying position is necessary to be competitive in securing local, state and federal legislative support for regional transportation projects. The importance of regional transportation projects recommended in *New Visions 2030* will be promoted through the efforts of the Center for Economic Growth, ARISE, and other state, regional and local stakeholders. These groups and individuals can generate political support for projects that would benefit the Capital Region.

As part of the historic growth in [funding](#), note that CDTC’s five-year 1989-1994 TIP averaged only about \$40 M annually in state and federal-aid projects (urban and rural, highway and transit), including match. The 2007-12 TIP averages nearly **\$140 M** annually for the same fund sources. Over time, there has been and can be expected to be some shifts among the sources of funds (user fees vs. bonds, state vs. federal, toll vs. other). Funding for maintenance and very modest system expansion requires conscious effort but can be reasonably anticipated based on this history; funding for major (“big ticket”) initiatives cannot be reasonably anticipated at the present time.

CDTC and its members must also communicate regularly with the region's representatives to Congress and USDOT regarding the federal role in Capital Region system preservation and improvement. New York's Congressional delegation was quite successful in protecting the state's and the region's interests in the passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005. Further, Congressional action to provide earmarked funds for Bus Rapid Transit in the Route 5 Corridor, the Western Gateway Transportation Center, Erie Boulevard reconstruction, and the I-90 Exit 8 Phase 2 Connector and ITS components are remarkable -- not only for the level of financing, but also because of their solid connection to the New Visions Plan. Continued communication will be critical in coming years as SAFETEA-LU comes up for reauthorization.

44) Explore [local funding mechanisms](#) for implementation of the plan.

Local funding will insure plan implementation.

If the Capital Region truly desires implementation of *New Visions*, local funding will need to be brought to bear. Working together to get the region's "fair share" of state and federal transportation funding will not be enough. Local funds leverage other funding sources (both public and private) and provide money for programs that truly advance the regional interest. Implementing this action will reduce the Capital Region's dependence on limited state and federal transportation fund sources, making us more regionally self-sufficient.

Certain local fund sources, particularly for local road and bridge maintenance operations, are assumed in the *New Visions* budgets. These represent a base line for preserving the function of the existing transportation system. New transportation initiatives in this region will require exploration of additional locally generated revenues.

Nationwide, it is typical for major local transportation initiatives to include partial or primary financing through dedicating a portion of a broad-based tax, such as the sales tax. Few metropolitan areas in the nation undertake a major highway upgrade or fixed guideway system without new local funding. Generally these actions are offered to the public on a referendum basis and often are part of a broad package of both highway and transit initiatives.

Local option sales taxes are a common transportation finance tool nation-wide.

45) Increase the use of mitigation costs and public/private partnerships to finance transportation improvements.

Local governments in areas where development is occurring are encouraged to assess traffic impact in accordance with CDTC's public/private financing guidelines. This encouragement includes:

- distribution to and education of municipal staff and planning boards of the guidelines;
- technical assistance in implementation (on contract basis, as with the current arrangement with the Town of Colonie in the Airport Area);
- technical assistance in the creation of assessment districts for parking or other improvements; and
- additional legislation (if needed) to aid in the formation of transportation development districts.

Traffic mitigation costs provide local revenue and mitigate negative effects of development.

Traffic mitigation costs on development can mitigate the negative local impacts of increased activity, while providing a revenue source for needed transportation improvements. Standard large-lot residential subdivision development has documented costs associated with it, including traffic congestion, land consumption, water pollution, air pollution, and impacts on environmentally sensitive areas. Publicly born costs include schools, public facilities (sewer, solid waste, water) and parks, the provision of public services, the construction and maintenance of roads, and public administration. These fiscal impacts occur over the long term regardless of whether mitigation to the initial development is collected. An initial assessment of impact provides at least some recompense to local governments trying to balance budgets over the long term.

CDTC will document examples of best practices from around the region and the state regarding the use of transportation mitigation costs, public private partnerships, transportation development districts, and other innovative financing techniques. This resource will be provided to decision

makers at the local level and will be used to educate them on the available financing options. Due to scarce state and federal funds for transportation projects, the need to develop innovative project financing techniques has never been greater.

46) Include demand management and transit support in developer-financed traffic mitigation programs.

Travel demand management, including reliance upon transit use, can reduce the traffic mitigation costs of individual developments. Mitigation costs and other exactions and contributions from developers to offset traffic impacts should be routinely made available not only for highway construction activities but also for ridesharing and transit services that serve as traffic mitigation.

The Town of Colonie is the only Capital Region community that provides direct subsidy to Travel Demand Management programs through developer mitigation costs. The Harriman Campus Linkage Study, recently released for public review, includes a major recommendation for the formation of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) to promote multi-modal travel in various ways, using parking fees as a finance mechanism. This TMA – the first of its kind in the Capital Region – would in the long term provide an internal shuttle system with connections to CDTA’s regional routes, bulk purchase and distribute transit passes for site tenants, support walk/bike connections in various ways, work with the regional agencies on carpooling and vanpooling initiatives, and other transportation coordination efforts. This TMA could be a model for other such developments in the region (such as the Luther Forest Technology Park and other existing large office park complexes).

47) Explore changes in funding rules to better align funding with function.

Existing funding rules don't always allow for the proper treatment of road function.

The alternative to changing ownership is to alter funding arrangements to provide for the necessary repair work on all facilities, regardless of ownership. This would be helped by the creation of direct revenue streams, such as user-based fees and tolls. Technological advances will permit time-based (higher for congested times) and impact-based (higher for heavy vehicles)

fee structures. Legal authority would be required to extend these structures beyond current toll roads. These fees would finance the system-wide provision of safe facilities in a state of good repair.

To assist with aligning funding with function, CDTC can ensure that state touring routes and other facilities serving regional needs within city limits have equitable access to federal, state and county funding. Greater use of federal-aid money for local repair strategies would be required as part of this action.