

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**July 7, 2021**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Bill Anslow, Albany County  
Peter Comenzo, Town of Rotterdam  
Donald Csaposs, Town of Guilderland  
Todd Fabozzi, Capital District Regional Planning Commission  
Ross Farrell, Capital District Transportation Authority  
Steve Feeney, Schenectady County, Vice-Chair  
Michael Franchini, Capital District Transportation Committee, Secretary  
Stephen Iachetta, Albany County Airport Authority, Chair  
Elizabeth Kormos, Village of Ballston Spa  
Andrew Kreshik, City of Troy  
Randy Milano, City of Albany  
Jamie O'Neill, Town of Malta  
Robert Rice, NYS Department of Transportation - Region I  
John Scavo, Town of Clifton Park  
Joe Seman-Graves, City of Cohoes  
Michael Valentine, Saratoga County  
Tony Vasil, Albany Port District Commission  
Chris Wallin, City of Schenectady  
Adam Yagelski, Town of East Greenbush

#### **STAFF AND OTHERS ATTENDING**

Christian Bauer, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Jacob Beeman, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Michael Burns, Town of Glenville  
Chris Cate, McFarland-Johnson  
Jennifer Ceponis, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Joe Cimino, CHA Consulting  
Martin Daley, Capital District Regional Planning Commission  
Anthony Germano, Town of North Greenbush  
Brent Irving, Capital District Transportation Authority  
Teresa LaSalle, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Stephanie Long, NYS Department of Transportation - Region I  
Addyson Lyons, Greenman-Pedersen  
Fred Mastroianni, Greenman-Pedersen  
Glenn Posca, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Rima Shamieh, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Melissa Shanley, Capital District Transportation Authority  
Jordan Solano-Reed, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Steve Strichman, City of Troy

Andrew Tracy, Capital District Transportation Committee  
Joshua Wilsey, Creighton Manning Engineering

## **INTRODUCTION**

Steve Iachetta opened the video conference meeting at approximately 9:35 AM.

## **VISITORS' ISSUES**

There were no visitors' issues.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Previous Meeting Minutes – May 5, 2021**

Michael Valentine suggested revising the first sentence under 'CDTC/CDRPC Technical Assistance Program Projects from "*Sandy noted that CDTC funded...*" to "*Sandy noted that CDTC and CDRPC jointly funded...*" Michael Valentine motioned to approve the May 5, 2021 minutes as amended, Bob Rice seconded, and members approved the motion.

### **PRESENTATION – CDTA's Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Upgrades**

Ross Farrell gave a presentation on CDTA's Red Line Bus Rapid Transit Project Upgrades and the BRT Expansion Study. The Red Line has been operational for ten (10) years, and the Blue Line began operations in November 2020.

The upgrades include the purchase of 60-foot articulated buses and station upgrades. The station upgrades include shelter replacements, roadway and land reconfigurations, traffic calming, pedestrian improvements, raised medians, and transit signal priority infrastructure. The level of upgrades constructed will be dependent on the station location and roadway owner. The initial focus, Phases 1a and 1b, will be in the City of Schenectady. The project will be funded by TIP# RG131, the BRT set-a-side, and will be part of a potential TIP amendment at the August Planning Committee meeting.

The Red Line stations will be updated with the level of transit and pedestrian infrastructure applied to Blue Line and (future) Purple Line. The project will also provide an opportunity to enhance passenger amenities and to integrate new mobility services. The new station design will provide more capacity at the station for more vehicles. The new articulated buses will provide increased transit capacity.

Ross displayed a map illustrating the phases of the project along the Red Line, from the City of Schenectady to the City of Albany, and described the planned improvements for Phase 1a, the

Schenectady Gateway Mobility Hub, and Phase 1b, Outer Schenectady. The next Phases will be 2a (Colonie) and 2b (Outer Albany). Stations in Downtown Albany and Downtown Schenectady are not included in the project.

The Red Line articulated buses provide an additional 50% passenger capacity with little increase in operating costs. Prior to COVID, the Red Line had the highest ridership.

CDTA is also developing a BRT Expansion Study to examine the feasibility of expanding BRT services in the region. The study will identify corridors, station locations, and conceptual designs. The goal is to develop a report to allow for the project to enter into the FTA Small Starts Program. The study will be developed through a partnership between CDTC and CDTA.

Ross noted the BRT systems in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Spokane, Washington as comparable peers to the CDTA system and CDTC region.

Steve Iachetta inquired about the feasibility of connecting the BRT network to the airport. Ross said the airport's central location in the region allows CDTA to serve it easily with its Flex service. Direct BRT service and connections to/from the airport will be studied further as part of the BRT Expansion Study.

Todd Fabozzi suggested there will need to be buy-in from suburban communities to develop transit-supportive land uses and infrastructure. Ross emphasized that supportive land use is an important criteria for BRT expansion. Todd also suggested considering extending the lines to southern Saratoga County as part of the BRT Expansion Study. Ross mentioned transit services could be improved in Saratoga County with or without BRT expansion into the county.

Chris Wallin mentioned there has been coordination between the City of Schenectady and CDTA on the project.

Ross said CDTA currently tracks ridership patterns and uses onboard surveys to inform the BRT Expansion study of potential future BRT services.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **FISCAL CONSTRAINT DISCUSSION - TIP SUMMARY TABLE 4**

Michael Franchini noted that there have been small changes to TIP Summary Table 4 since the last meeting. The updated table shows fiscal constraint is being maintained within the guidance provided by FHWA.

## **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

### **T136, Bus Rapid Transit Expansion Study**

Ross Farrell said this new TIP project is created by a drawdown of funds from a TIP BRT set-a-side. The study will identify multiple corridors around the region for the potential expansion of CDTA's Bus Rapid Transit system and perform conceptual design work at a sufficient level of detail to enter Project Development under the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program.

Chris Wallin motioned to approve the amendment as presented, Bill Anslow seconded, and members approved the motion.

### **T134, 1824.71, Washington/Western BRT Phase 4**

Ross Farrell said the proposed amendment reflects additional federal funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) that has been allocated to CDTA for the Washington/Western Bus Rapid Transit Phase 4 project. The ARP funding is required to be programmed in the STIP.

CDTA was allocated \$2,490,772 (Discretionary ID# 02021-RPSS-OII) for the Albany Washington/Western Bus Rapid Transit (Bus Plus Purple Line). The total funding allocated to each phase remains unchanged, no budget offset is needed.

Randy Milano motioned to approve the amendments as presented, Adam Yagelski seconded, and members approved the motion.

## **CDTC/CDRPC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Martin Daley presented two (2) new requests for Technical Assistance Program assistance. The Town of Guilderland is requesting a Development Growth Trends Analysis. CDTC and CDRPC will prepare the analysis to assist the Town in developing a realistic approach in planning for growth over the next 10 to 20 years. The Town's growth trends analysis will assess historical traffic conditions, demographic data, and development based on building permits over the past 20 to 30 years, resulting in a market study report. Content from the report will be used in an update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of North Greenbush is requesting an Existing Conditions and Resource Mapping effort. CDTC and CDRPC will prepare a series of maps that inventory transportation and natural resources. The map set will be a supporting document for the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan to assist the Town, landowners, and prospective developers when considering land use and protection.

Bob Rice motioned to approve the new projects as presented, Chris Wallin seconded, and members approved the motion.

## **UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) AMENDMENTS**

### **2020-2021 UPWP Year-end Budget Revision/ FTA (030) & PL Revisions**

CDTC requests UPWP budget revisions annually as part of the Fiscal Year Closeout. Funds are moved from programs that have underspent to programs that have overspent. CDTC has unanticipated cost increases to support virtual public participation during the COVID 19 pandemic, to support the Federal MPO Recertification process, and the TIP development process. Steve Iachetta motioned to approve the amendments as presented, Randy Milano seconded, and members approved the motion.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **TIP APPLICATION & EVALUATION UPDATE PRESENTATION**

Michael Franchini gave an update on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project application and evaluation process. The project has several facets, including a new web-based project application, an updated merit evaluation score, and an updated data management process.

Jordan Solano-Reed gave an overview of the new online project application using JotForm software. The software will present questions based on the sponsor selected project type and eligibility. The software will allow for auto-filling some fields if a sponsor is submitting multiple projects. The form is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Jordan ran through a hypothetical roadway project application and highlighted the streamlined components of the application. The online application allows users to upload supporting documentation.

The new application form will be used for the next TIP update. A PDF of the JotForm application example will be sent to the Planning Committee. Steve Iachetta suggested adding a user guide and FAQ, if applicable. A PDF of the TIP application will be sent to the Planning Committee.

Michael Franchini showed the summary output for the evaluations including draft TIP Fact Sheets and Summary Tables, and requested that all comments be emailed to CDTC.

The final TIP materials will be presented for approval at the August 4, 2021, Planning Committee Meeting. If approved, the TIP materials will be presented to the Policy Board for consideration at their September 2, 2021 meeting. The TIP solicitation is expected to begin in Fall 2021.

## **NEW YORK STATE OPEN MEETINGS LAW**

On June 24, 2021, Governor Cuomo rescinded Executive Order 202.1 of March 12, 2020, which allowed for our Planning Committee and Policy Board meetings to be held entirely virtually. The result is that the exceptions to the NYS Open Meetings Law which were allowed during the pandemic, no longer exist. Members of public bodies may only participate via videoconference in

a manner that allows the public (a) to view and hear the public body members and (b) to be present at any of the locations from which a public body member is participating in the meeting.

Michael presented options to proceed in compliance with the law. First, CDTC could wait and see if there are changes made to the Open Meetings Law either by the State Legislation or by legal opinions. CDTC could purchase new video and audio equipment. The Policy Board and Planning Committee meeting could be in-person only. Finally, CDTC could offer both in-person and remote attendance (hybrid meetings) and open the other locations to the public.

Liz Kormos inquired if there were any suggested changes to the law to account for new virtual platforms. Michael said there are several bills in the state legislature; however, it may be several months before action is taken. In-person attendance applies only to voting members of the Planning Committee and Policy Board, not other staff and guests.

Chris Wallin noted the benefits to the public by having the meeting online.

John Scavo mentioned an upcoming [open meetings law virtual training](#) on July 15, 2021. John suggested waiting until standards or guidance are released to purchase additional equipment.

#### **CDTC PROJECT DELIVERY UPDATE**

Jacob Beeman provided the CDTC Project Delivery Update. The plans, specifications, and estimate (PS&E) for the City of Schenectady Rosa Rd / Nott St/Wendell Ave Intersection Improvements was submitted in May 2021.

The Town of Clifton Park received NEPA concurrence in May 2021 for the Moe Road Multi-use Path project.

Design Approval was granted in April 2021 to the Town of Guilderland for the West Old State Road Sidewalks project.

Sponsors updates for next month will be the City of Rensselaer, the Town of East Greenbush, the Town of Rotterdam, and the City of Troy.

#### **NYS DOT PROJECT DELIVERY SCHEDULE**

Bob Rice said the letting program remains the same as the table distributed at the last Planning Committee meeting. All lettings remain on schedule for this construction year.

## **STATUS OF CDTC PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **Ballston Spa Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan**

Jordan Solano-Reed said a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) volunteer team completed a sidewalk condition inventory of the sidewalks in the study area on May 5th. Stakeholder focus group sessions were held on May 20th, May 24th, and May 26th. SAC meeting #3 was held on June 22nd to review input gathered from focus sessions and materials for the first public meeting and bike & pedestrian demonstration project. A public Open House was held on June 30th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the Kelley Park Pavilion in the Village and a bike lane demonstration project was held on Hyde Blvd. from Grove St. to Chapman St. from Monday, June 28th, through Tuesday, July 6th. The consultant team is currently compiling public comments and beginning the development of the draft pedestrian and bicycle master plan.

### **Menands Land Use Regulations Update**

Rima Shamieh said the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) has met twice and completed a self-paced field visit of key locations around the Village. The project team is developing a list of contacts for focus groups and stakeholder interviews. The project website is live. Since there is a large non-English speaking population, the public engagement will include translation services for six languages.

### **Scotia Downtown Connections Plan**

Andrew Tracy said the existing conditions report is complete. The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) has met 3 times. The project consultant has prepared and presented public outreach materials. The project website will be live this week, including a form for public comments. The first public workshop will be held in the last week of July, and also the consultant is planning to deploy a pop-up table at several local events.

### **East Greenbush Route 4 Corridor Study: Inter-Municipal Update**

Chris Bauer said the project is an update of a 2006 Linkage Study. The project is sponsored by the Town of East Greenbush but includes the Town of North Greenbush, too. The study area includes the US Route 4 Corridor from NY 43 (W Sand Lake Rd) to Mannix Rd. This is an area of the region that is experiencing change and growth, making traffic congestion one of the top concerns for the public. A draft Request for Expressions of Interest (REI) and scope of work have been developed, and are currently being reviewed by the Town. After the Town's review, the REI will be sent to NYSDOT and Rensselaer County for their input, and released later this summer.

### **Rensselaer Waterfront Connectivity Study**

Jordan Solano-Reed said the project will study multimodal connections in the City of Rensselaer along the Washington Ave and Forbes Ave corridor between the Hudson River and I-90. The Request for Expressions of Interest (REI) is being developed and will be released later this summer.

## **Troy Federal Street Corridor Study**

Michael Franchini said the study will evaluate options for redesigning Federal Street, between River Street and Sixth Avenue, including a roundabout at River St. The MOU was signed, and staff is working with the City on the draft Request for Expressions of Interest.

## **Smart Communities Toolbox**

Jen Ceponis said CDTC is contracting with WSP and River St Planning to develop a Smart Communities Toolbox. The objective of the project is to define “Smart Communities” in the context of the Capital Region and identify ways to integrate it into planning. The toolbox project will create an implementation roadmap to define the software, data management strategies, and/or organizational changes needed to implement the recommended technologies. Jen said the project will kick off at the July 22, 2021, Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee (ROSAC) meeting.

## **STATUS OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **CDRPC**

Martin Daley gave an update on the City of Troy Technical Assistance project. The project includes a growth analysis of traffic conditions and methods for inter-municipal coordination for sewer permitting.

Todd Fabozzi said the Village of Ballston Spa Technical Assistance project is complete. The 2020 Census data is not yet available. The Clean Energy Communities program has entered its second phase, which includes campaigns to promote participation in community solar projects, installation of heat pumps, and adoption of electric vehicles.

CDRPC is soliciting applications for the 2021 Erastus Corning Awards for Inter-municipal Cooperation. More information about the award can be found at <https://cdrpc.org/about-us/awards>.

### **NYSDOT**

Bob Rice said the BridgeNY application review is underway. The NY 378 Troy-Menands bridge PEL study scope of services has been completed and approved by FHWA. NYSDOT will now procure consultant services either through an existing Design Service contract or via an advertised solicitation. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program solicitations are now underway. An application pre-review process will take place in August, and final applications are due September 29, 2021. NYSDOT is transitioning to using the statewide financial services (SFS) and business services center (BSC) systems, which has affected the timing of payments.

Michael Valentine asked about a TAP CMAQ requirement that ADA transition plans must be in place. Bob said clarification from NYSDOT Main Office is pending.

**Albany County Airport Authority**

Steve Iachetta advised that Airport collaboration with HVCC on the new Aeronautical Technical Training Center is advancing well for aircraft mechanical training and regional job development. Passenger enplanements are slowly returning but approximately 30% less than 2019 levels and business/ international travel appears to be a key lagging component. Cargo movement is approximately 10% above 2019 levels. The Airport Authority is advancing several capital projects including four new boarding bridges, and runway and taxi-way pavement rehabilitation.

**Albany Port District Commission**

Tony Vasil said there has been a 20% increase in the number of ships and barges, and a 25% increase in tonnage, compared to 2020. Wood pulp shipments have increased. The offshore wind project is starting to have an impact on the region. The Port is developing the recently purchased 83-acre site in the Town of Bethlehem, to be completed in 2024. The Port recently completed construction of a new 60,000 square foot warehouse.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

Steve Iachetta summarized upcoming meetings as noted on the agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Steve Iachetta thanked Michael Franchini for his years of public service and provided well wishes for his retirement.

Steve Iachetta motioned to adjourn, Michael Valentine seconded, and the members approved the motion at 11:26 AM. The next Planning Committee meeting will be on August 4, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael V. Franchini  
Secretary