

The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program

An integrated land use and transportation planning assistance program offered by the Capital District Transportation Committee



Program Overview

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for New York's Capital Region (Albany, NY). CDTC initiated the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (Linkage Program) in 2000 as an implementation program for its New Visions regional transportation plan. At that time, a regional consensus emerged around the notion that the region's quality of life, mobility and economic vitality were dependent upon improved local land use planning and on better integration of land use development and the transportation system.

The Linkage Program provides consultant or CDTC staff technical assistance for joint regional-local planning initiatives that integrate land use and transportation planning. Each planning effort is consistent with at least one of the below program strategies, which are consistent with Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) concepts.

Linkage Program Strategies

- Support **urban revitalization** and **redevelopment** of existing commercial and/or 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**.



Bus Plus Veeder/Nott Station, Schenectady, NY

Eligible Initiatives

The current focus of the Linkage Program is on initiatives that implement or further refine the recommendations of completed Linkage Program plans or other local planning work. Eligible initiatives must have a clear and direct connection to transportation issues. Applicants are encouraged to apply for strategic zoning code changes/zoning code overlays, site design standards or guidelines, official mapping, and multi-modal traffic studies. Other types of planning work are eligible but will only be considered after all worthy candidate projects related to the above four activities have been funded. Inter-municipal initiatives are also encouraged.

Progress to Date

The program has been recognized as a national best practice in livability planning and is the cornerstone of CDTC's public outreach efforts. As of September 2013, CDTC has funded 76 Linkage Program studies and completed 68 with 40 unique sponsors. Roughly \$5.0 million in federal, state and local funds have been invested in the program through 2013 with additional staff commitment from the CDTC and the study sponsor(s).

Key Program Aspects Related to CSS

The process used in the development of a Linkage Program planning project reflects CSS principles in the following ways:

- The planning projects are considered to be **joint regional-local efforts**. CDTC works closely with the community throughout the entire process and serves directly on the study advisory committee, serves as the administrator of the consultant contract, and assists the sponsor with study oversight. **Sharing resources** in this manner **reduces the burden on local communities**, particularly smaller towns or villages which may lack professional planning staff to assist in project administration.
- The use of a **multi-disciplinary study advisory committee** ensures that a broad range of perspectives are brought to the table from the beginning. **Direct participation is required** of the regional planning commission, the regional transit authority, the **New York State Department of Transportation**, the municipality (ies) that is (are) directly involved in the project and the county in which the project is located.
- An **extensive public involvement process** is required for each planning initiative. **Two major in-person public involvement opportunities** such as workshops, charrettes, etc. are required as well as ongoing opportunities for engagement through options such as websites, social media, etc. **Ongoing engagement opportunities build the trust** of stakeholders including business owners, land owners and community leaders. **Transparency and communication** are keys to the success of the Linkage Program.
- The process helps to **identify the tradeoffs** that may need to be made when developing the **land use and transportation concept options** for the planning study. Preliminary and draft concepts are presented with some discussion as to the issues that need to be considered if a future project is to be pursued.
- The Linkage Program has been **successful in developing transportation concepts that fit the context of the community**.



For more information on the Linkage Program, visit CDTC's web site at www.cdtcmo.org/linkage.htm or contact Sandy Misiewicz, AICP at (518) 458-2161 or E-mail: cdtclinkage@cdtcmo.org.

