

CORRIDOR NEWS

I-93 CTAP Updates & Highlights

Fall 2007

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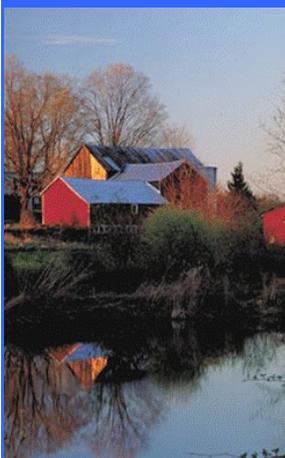
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Community Meeting Sets Phase 2 Goals

On May 31, 2007, nearly 90 members of the CTAP community met once again in Manchester to move ahead on the plans that began in 2006. Ansel Sanborn, Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) project manager with the New Hampshire DOT, opened the meeting with a brief review of the accomplishments of Year One (see page 2), a review of the current budget, and a discussion of the importance of leverage opportunities and partnerships.

However, the crucial business of this meeting

was to finalize the priorities for Phase Two. Participants cycled through presentations for each of the four working groups, reviewing the goals and action steps yet to be taken. Every participant was then invited to indicate his or her top priorities among the steps laid for each working group. All local government representatives were given an extra vote for their three highest priority actions at the end of the session.

The results of this process were instrumental in setting the program goals

for Phase Two. Some of the issues that participants rated as most important included strengthening local economies, reducing barriers to the development of affordable housing, identifying innovative land use approaches, minimizing the environmental impacts of development, preserving open space, and creating opportunities for regional cooperation and training.

To learn more about the new Phase Two program goals that were developed from the CTAP community's decisions at the May 31 meeting, turn to page 4. ■

CTAP: Helping Communities Grow Well

If you live along the I-93 corridor, you should know about CTAP. The I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program is a comprehensive program developed by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to help communities in this region address the challenges of growth that result in part from the reconstructed highway.

This five-year program is a collaboration between all of the stakeholders who will be affected by the I-93 expansion: local

governments, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies, as well as business people and the public. Together, their goal is to enhance the positive and minimize the negative impacts of growth on the 26 cities and towns in the region.

CTAP is helping these communities determine what kind of technical assistance they need to deal with the effects of growth on a wide range of factors such as community services and schools, com-

mercial and residential development, traffic patterns, open space, and environmental quality. The CTAP program is also providing local governments with the tools and resources necessary to achieve their goals, including financial assistance, training in planning techniques, and partnerships with other towns or organizations.

For more information on how CTAP is helping communities plan together for the future, visit www.NHCTAP.com. ■



STATUS REPORT: Year 1 Programs Make Progress

Town Spotlight

Pelham Works Toward Economic Development

The town of Pelham is meeting the challenge of economic development with its Local Government Discretionary Account. Partnering with the Center for Urban and Regional Policy (CURP) and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), the town will use its \$15,000 grant for a three-phase project that should pay dividends far into the future.

CURP will perform an economic assessment of the town's strengths and weaknesses for attracting industry and investment. Pelham will then host a summit to present the results and gather input from business leaders and stakeholders. Finally, NRPC will pool this information into a strategic economic development plan to help Pelham meet its goals.

The goals set out for CTAP's Year One programs were broad and ambitious. Significant progress has been made in many of these areas, providing useful resources and assistance to communities in the I-93 corridor. Following is a brief summary what CTAP members accomplished through several Year One programs.

✓ **"Year One" vs. "Phase Two."** One decision made this year was to shift away from identifying programs by their year. In some cases, CTAP members found that the work required for a particular program will necessarily take longer than a single year. To avoid creating a series of overlapping year-long programs, future CTAP programs will be struc-

tured in terms of phases.

✓ **Community Planning Assessments.** Many towns are starting to see the benefits of the baseline assessments conducted by their regional planning commissions. The assessments give each community a snapshot of where they are in terms of their master plan and land use issues. Some towns have begun using their assessments to target their use of other CTAP resources such as the Local Government Discretionary Accounts. The Central N.H. RPC has completed all of its towns' assessments. The other three RPCs expect to be finished this fall.

✓ **Local Open Space Planning.** In cooperation with the Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests and the RPCs, the development of open space assessment methods have been finalized and initial steps of the assessment process have begun. After the assessments are completed, towns that wish to go further will receive help in preparing or updating open space planning for their communities.

✓ **Enhanced GIS-Based Information.** The RPCs have used current aerial photography to improve the land-use infor-

Town Spotlight

Danville Seeks Consensus on Downtown Zoning

Under increasing pressure from residential growth, the town of Danville has looked for a way to broaden its tax base and create a nucleus of development without harming the town's character. To address this issue, Danville is using its Local Government Discretionary Account to bring mixed-use zoning to the town center.

The grant supports a multi-part process that begins with building consensus within the community on zoning amendments through education materials and public meetings. Danville has also been able to hire a consultant to assist with the project as the town moves through the drafting and approval process to achieve its goal.

CTAP has moved forward on many of its first year goals and several towns are now taking advantage of the resulting opportunities and benefits.



mation available for corridor communities in the state's Geographic Information System (GIS) databases. This updated information has been passed along to the state's GIS provider, which will consolidate it and make it available to communities for more accurate and effective planning efforts. GIS mapping of land uses for all 26 communities, and for the whole region, will be available in September.

✓ **GIS Buildout Analysis.** The RPCs have jointly developed common standards and methods for the GIS buildout analysis that will be used for all 26 communities. By this fall, nine communities will have received a baseline analysis based on current land-use regulations and expected trends. Two alternative scenarios will show how growth would impact the town. One alternative will be based on how a community would look if certain areas identified in the Natural Services Network effort were protected and the growth projected in the baseline scenario were distributed in other areas of the community. The other will be a town's own scenario choice developed through a consultation process. Buildout analysis for the remaining communities will be completed in future phases.

✓ **Local Government Discretionary Accounts.** This program has enabled communities to begin achieving some of their CTAP goals. Several communities had specific plans and took advantage of the funds early on in the year. Other communities are in the process of applying, while others are still deciding how best to allocate the funds. Since the discretionary accounts do not lapse, towns have the opportunity to take their time in making a decision.

✓ **External Communications Plan.** A consultant has been selected to assist with developing and implementing an effective CTAP communications plan. The work has just begun in August with a meeting of the management team, the steering committee, and those from related I-93 corridor projects.

✓ **Local Government Cluster Workshops.** One region-wide workshop has been held, which focused on transit oriented development (TOD). CTAP members have provided

many suggestions for additional workshop topics, which will be implemented later in the fall. ■

Town Spotlight

Goffstown Expands Its Transportation Options

For several years, Goffstown residents have wanted to convert a former railroad line into a five-plus mile recreational trail for walking and biking. Using its Local Government Discretionary Account, the town is another step closer to achieving that goal.

Goffstown is using its grant to contract out the planning and preliminary engineering of the rail-trail, including necessary survey work to establish trail boundaries. Once complete, the trail will link Goffstown with Manchester and New Boston, providing an alternative transportation route for commuters. It will also provide a safe route for kids and adults to get from schools to parks to ball fields.

Town Spotlight

Bow Builds a Vision of Its Local Economy

The town of Bow is considering a big-ticket investment in water and sewer infrastructure. But before they commit, the town is using its Local Government Discretionary Account to ensure that the project fits with its economic vision.

With a portion of its grant, Bow will receive a detailed economic assessment from the Center for Urban and Regional Policy (CURP). The report will be discussed at a series of professionally facilitated public meetings. The results of the report and the meetings will be used to create an economic strategy and vision to which the community of Bow can give its full support.



CTAP members prioritize goals at the May 31 Community Meeting, leading to the development of the Phase Two programs.



Announcing the New Phase 2 Work Plan

Phase 2 programs will focus on implementation of CTAP goals.

After the results of the May 31st Community Meeting were tabulated, the CTAP Steering Committee turned participants' top priorities into nine new programs for Phase Two. The programs address goals related to public awareness, educating local officials, direct technical assistance, and assistance with tools and analysis.

1. External Communications Plan Implementation. This program builds on the Year One communications program aimed at implementing an effective approach for the external communication of CTAP's messages. Targeted at individuals and organizations that make or influence planning decisions, the program will focus on encouraging practices that can help communities achieve CTAP goals. **Phase Two Budget: \$70,000**

2. Innovative Local Government Training. Using a variety of innovative approaches, this program will offer training to local officials on topics of value to them related to CTAP goals. The program may use customized one-on-one training, peer-to-peer education, or discussion boards, as well as post-training support. Topics for training will be cul-

tivated from multiple sources, including outcomes of Year One community assessments, suggestions from the Theme Working Groups, and requests from communities themselves. Topics such as capital improvement plans, open-space plan preparation, and "transit-oriented development" could be covered. **Phase Two Budget: \$100,000**

3. Targeted Local Government Accounts. This program offers each community \$10,000 to fund CTAP-related projects that either tie in with their Community Assessment results, support implementation of an innovative land use technique, or support other priorities approved by the Steering Committee. Projects may be managed by the community or by its RPC. The targeted accounts do not affect Year One discretionary accounts, but the two may be used together, and all funds will roll over. **Phase Two Budget: \$260,000**

4. Local CTAP Collaborative Grants. To support CTAP inter-community collaboration, this program provides \$10,000 per community for use on projects conducted jointly with at least one other town. Funds may be used for any pro-

ject that addresses a CTAP goal. There is no limit to how many towns may collaborate on a project, and each participating town may put up to \$10,000 of its grant toward the project. Funds from this program will roll over, and may be used in conjunction with Local Discretionary Accounts and Targeted Local Government Accounts. **Phase Two Budget: \$260,000**

5. Local Open Space and Conservation Planning. In the Year One program, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests assisted communities with open space assessments. In Phase Two, this program will help towns create or update their open space plans using a consistent approach and analysis of recently collected data. **Phase Two Budget: \$100,000**

6. Assistance in Support of Agriculture Resources. In partnership with the N.H. Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture, the focus of this program is to support the formation of local Agricultural Commissions that will help manage, protect, and promote farming and agricultural resources. The program will empower communities to address their agricultural issues, with assis-

tance from the N.H. Coalition, by providing consultation, training, and small grants for the development of local Agricultural Commissions. **Phase Two Budget: \$25,000**

7. Enhanced GIS-Based Information. In the second step of a process begun in Year One, this program will continue to enhance the GIS-based information for the CTAP region. During Phase Two, work will focus on updating the conservation lands data layer and will provide updated information for the GRANIT database. **Phase Two Budget: \$10,000**

8. Inclusionary Zoning Implementation. For communities that wish to address affordable housing issues, this program will provide assistance with the drafting and implementation of inclusionary zoning ordinances. It will coordinate with, and extend, the N.H. Housing and Finance Authority's Inclusionary Zoning Implementation Program (IZIP) to provide funding for zoning development and public education consultants. **Phase Two Budget: \$30,000**

9. GIS Buildout Analysis and Alternatives. Continuing with efforts begun during Year One, this program will provide additional funds to complete the buildout analysis, consisting of a base scenario and two alternatives, for all of the CTAP communities. Using unified methods developed by the regional planning commissions, the program will also produce a summary analysis of buildout for the entire region. **Phase Two Budget: \$95,000 ■**



Working Group co-chairs present some of the action steps that were incorporated into the Innovative Local Government Training program in Phase Two.

CTAP Effectiveness Survey Results Reveal Successes and Challenges

This summer, the CTAP community was asked to step back and assess the program's effectiveness. Respondents rated the execution, delivery, and content of a wide range of CTAP activities, and noted what they believed to be the most—and least—helpful or beneficial components of CTAP. Approximately 45 people responded to the survey.

Many aspects of CTAP were rated well, though the results also suggest room for improvement in several areas. One of the highest rated items

was the process allowing input and feedback, with the majority of respondents finding it to be very effective. (See the CTAP Effectiveness Survey Results chart for details.) CTAP's engagement of multiple stakeholders was also rated well. The setting of CTAP priorities was rated fairly well by most respondents, too. However, some members perceived challenges such as multiple priorities spreading efforts thin and redundancy of objectives.

Community meetings, annual corridor work-

shop meetings, and meeting facilitation all received mostly positive ratings. Comments from respondents suggest that meetings are generally well organized and provide for active participation of all attendees. The theme working groups were praised for being an effective venue for getting concrete work accomplished. Many respondents commented on the value of meetings for networking with other stakeholders for ideas, support, and cooperative opportunities.

Dissemination of information was rated fairly

(continued on page 6)



"Knowing that issues in my town are also experienced in other towns helps me keep a positive outlook for change."

– Survey Respondent

CTAP Survey Reveals Successes and Challenges

(continued from page 5)



"We need to get more information into the hands of the stakeholders."

– Survey Respondent

effective overall, but comments from respondents suggest room for improvement. Some members think that information on CTAP issues, programs, and opportunities is not getting out to enough stakeholders, including the public and community leaders. A need for improvement of the CTAP website was noted as well.

Local Government Discretionary Accounts also received mixed ratings. While many respondents found them at least some-

what helpful for communities, others suggested a need for refinement. This program received one of the highest "neutral/too soon to tell" rankings in the survey, suggesting that respondents haven't yet had enough time to judge its effectiveness.

Another challenge the survey highlighted is responding to local community CTAP needs, which received more "not effective" and "neutral/too soon to tell" votes than did most other issues. Similarly, engagement of local community members in CTAP

Year-One programs was also rated slightly lower than other issues. Respondents spoke of the need to increase interest and participation from town leaders and citizens in communities that are not yet actively involved so that all 26 affected communities are part of the process.

These results have already been used to improve future CTAP programs and implementation approaches. Thank you to all who participated in this survey. ■

CTAP Effectiveness Survey Results June 2007

How effective are each of the following items and activities?	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Neutral/Too Soon to Tell
Local Government Discretionary Accounts	27.5%	35.0%	5.0%	32.5%
Website	19.5%	36.6%	17.1%	26.8%
Corridor News	19.0%	57.1%	9.5%	14.3%
Resource Books 1, 2, & 3	45.2%	31.0%	14.3%	9.5%
Vision to Action Document	41.5%	39.0%	12.2%	7.3%
Meeting Materials	51.2%	43.9%	4.9%	0.0%
Annual Corridor Workshop Meetings	42.5%	37.5%	0.0%	20.0%
Connecting Land Use & Transportation Workshop	33.3%	15.4%	12.8%	38.5%
CTAP Community Meetings	41.0%	41.0%	5.1%	12.8%
Meeting Facilitation	80.0%	12.5%	5.0%	2.5%
The ability of the process to allow your input/feedback	68.3%	29.3%	2.4%	0.0%
Dissemination of CTAP information	41.9%	44.2%	11.6%	2.3%
Setting CTAP program priorities	38.1%	52.4%	2.4%	7.1%
Engagement of multiple stakeholders	52.5%	32.5%	12.5%	2.5%
Responding to local community needs relating to CTAP	28.6%	35.7%	14.3%	21.4%
Engagement of local community members in Year 1 programs	23.3%	44.2%	18.6%	14.0%

Project Manager's Notes: Phase 2 Begins

From the beginning, CTAP has faced the challenge of trying to be more than just a grant program. This year, I have seen the CTAP community become a stronger organization whose benefits are beginning to be felt by the towns in the I-93 corridor. We have made a lot of progress, but there is still much more to achieve.

In late August, recommendations for the Phase Two programs were accepted by the Steering Committee. Phase Two will focus more heavily on implementation, building on the first year's focus on

assessment and prioritization. It will also encourage seeking collaborative solutions to problems shared by communities. The new Collaborative Grant program and peer-to-peer training sessions between towns should help begin this effort. I believe that by working together, we can expand the range of solutions and resources available to meet our goals.

Phase Two will also see the continuation of several programs that require more time or resources to complete, such as the buildout analysis and the open space planning pro-

gram. New discretionary accounts will be offered in a more focused form, and the external communications program will enter its implementation phase.

While Phase Two will bring a few changes to CTAP, one thing that won't change is CTAP's goal of helping communities achieve their visions for the future. I look forward to the exciting opportunities to come and I hope you do too.

– Ansel Sanborn,
NHDOT Project Manager



Buildout Analysis Program Benefits From Partnerships

Cooperative action is a critical factor in CTAP's ability to achieve its goals. Partnerships with other organizations can provide important leveraging opportunities, as is the case with the program for GIS-based community buildout analysis that began during Year One.

This program brings the four I-93 corridor regional planning commissions (RPCs) together to analyze current and future buildout for all 26 communities in the CTAP region. Spearheaded by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, the RPCs are using standard-

ized methods and criteria they developed jointly that will allow every town's data to be aggregated and summarized to create a regional picture. In this ambitious goal, CTAP has found many partners: The Jordan Institute, the Orton Family Foundation, New Hampshire Audubon, N.H. Fish and Game, and the UNH Cooperative Extension, among others.

The Jordan Institute had been working on a similar buildout analysis project for several communities, including CTAP towns Hooksett and Chester, with funding from N.H. Fish and Game and with

technical assistance from New Hampshire Audubon. Now, they are working with the RPCs to use the same standardized methods so that their data may be pooled with the rest. The RPCs had planned to analyze seven communities in the first year. Because of these partnerships, they now expect to have two more completed at no extra cost to CTAP.

The Orton Family Foundation was instrumental in providing training to the RPCs and to Jordan Institute staff on valuable community planning software called Community Viz™. The Orton Family



Foundation originally created the software, and paid for the trainer at the three-day session held with additional support from the UNH Cooperative Extension.

The results of these partnerships are just beginning to emerge, but because of this cooperative effort, CTAP communities will be able to maximize their benefits from the buildout analysis program as they plan for the future. ■



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2007 Training Conference on September 29

If you are a local government member for an I-93 corridor community, we encourage you to register and join us on Saturday, **September 29**, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the annual **CTAP Training Conference** sponsored by the N.H. Department of Transportation.

The conference sessions will provide focused training on growth management topics requested by local government leaders. Three sessions during the day will offer a choice of four topics each:

Plenary Session: CTAP Snapshot 2007 (9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.)

Session A (10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.)

- Track 1:** Stormwater Management
- Track 2:** Strategic Planning for Grant Proposals
- Track 3:** Workforce Housing
- Track 4:** Economic Development

Session B (1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

- Track 1:** Conservation Design
- Track 2:** Matching Community Needs With Grant Opportunities
- Track 3:** Transit Oriented Development
- Track 4:** Getting Your Community Engaged

Session C (2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

- Track 1:** Traffic Impact Studies
- Track 2:** Writing a Winning Proposal
- Track 3:** Creating Energy Committees in Your Town
- Track 4:** Building Successful Training

The conference will take place at **The Radisson Hotel Manchester**, 700 Elm St., in Manchester. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is **no cost for local government leaders** to attend, but you must **pre-register before the conference** by contacting Ellen Keech at (603) 283-2105 or ellen_keeche@antiochne.edu, or online at www.anei.org.



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