

Capital Region Transportation Council

TIP Task Force: Meeting #7

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 13, 2023

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Megan Quirk*	CDTA
Randy Milano	DOT Region 1
Kim Lambert	Saratoga County
Susan Barden*	Saratoga Springs
Lisa Ramundo*	Albany County
Steve Feeney	Schenectady County
Andrew Tracy	Transportation Council
Jacob Beeman	Transportation Council
Sandy Misiewicz	Transportation Council

*Attended Virtually

1) Welcome and Introduction

Jacob began the meeting with introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. The primary purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Final Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Guidelines, updates to the TIP Evaluation process, gather input on advisory committee guidelines, and discuss design-only funding for TIP projects.

2) Final Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Guidelines

Jacob presented a summary of changes made to the TIP Amendment Guidelines from the draft version to the final version. These changes included: removal of the footnote for 1(a) and rewording this item to make it clear that it is still a minor amendment when the new project is over \$1 million; removal of item 1(b) "Addition of projects from a statewide solicitation" at the request of NYSDOT Region 1; and changing item 4(d) "Changes between FTA fund sources" from a minor amendment to an administrative modification to make it easier for CDTA to move money between projects as needed.

Sandy asked about the recent Sand Lake Bridge project, and where it would fall within the revised guidelines (i.e. a small change to the project cost that would typically fall in the administrative modification category, however, is a capped fund source from Bridge NY, TAP, CMAQ etc.). Jacob suggested adding a "Cost Change – Other" item to cover these cases, which would still require Policy Board approval. The finalized guidelines will be brought to Planning Committee in January, and Policy Board in March.

3) TIP Evaluation

Jacob presented the proposed changes to TIP project categories. The purpose of these changes is to align project application types with the project scoring categories, and to align the categories with federally-mandated performance measure rules and Metropolitan Plan goals. 'Pavement' and 'Bridge' categories would remain. 'Bicycle' and 'Pedestrian' applications would be merged into one category, 'Non-vehicular' or 'Bike & Ped Only'. The former 'Intersection/Safety' category would be split into a dedicated 'Safety' category and a new category, 'Congestion-Freight-Air Quality'. Finally, an 'Other' category would remain for projects such as PEL studies that do not fit elsewhere.

Lisa Ramundo asked if a pavement & sidewalk project should apply under 'Pavement' or 'Bike & Ped'. Jacob replied that any project involving the roadway should apply under 'Pavement', even when Complete Streets elements are included. There was additional discussion regarding the 'Safety' category and how projects that provide both safety and congestion benefits (such as roundabouts) would fit in. Discussion regarding project categories will be ongoing.

4) Transportation Council Advisory Committees

Sandy presented the discussion on updated Advisory Committee guidelines. The Transportation Council has several Advisory Committees covering a range of topics, including the TIP Task Force. There is a desire to redefine the roles and functions of Advisory Committees as they relate to providing comments on TIP projects at evaluation time. In the past, certain Advisory Committees have prepared comments on individual TIP projects during the evaluation period. Steve Feeney added that we should be cautious of Advisory Committees having influence on project scoring – input on MPO planning products is helpful, but commenting on in-design projects is challenging, as the engineering work is in progress and is constrained by real-world factors and design standards. Sandy replied that the TIP is an MPO product too. Randy Milano stated that comments could become contentious – for example, how would we respond to a comment asked for costly project add-ons when the sponsor only wants pavement preservation? Steve Feeney suggested that they should be called something other than Advisory Committees as they lack the structure of a formal 'committee', and act as more of an educational forum. Discussion relating to Advisory Committee guidelines will be ongoing.

5) Design-only Funding for TIP Projects

Jacob asked the group how Design-only funding should be handled in the upcoming TIP update. Steve Feeney suggested that in the prior TIP update, the Design-only projects felt like consolation prizes awarded at the very end of the process. Lisa Ramundo stated that Albany County received a Design-only project, and that the project is expected to have County funding for the construction phase. Lisa asked if Design-only would cover both preliminary and final design. Jacob replied that no, final design needs construction funding to be shown before it can be authorized. Randy Milano added that it seemed like a good idea at the time, but to go after discretionary grants the timing needs to be right. Randy expressed concern about the shelf-life of designs when construction funding can't be quickly sourced. Also, designing to a federal standard is more costly. Sandy suggested that more PEL studies would help. The Task Force concluded that we want to see how the current Design-only projects play out and not encourage more of them until the outcomes are known.

6) Meeting Adjourned

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:31.
- The next meeting of the TIP Task Force will be scheduled for February 2024