

Capital Region Transportation Council

TIP Task Force: Meeting #4

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 21, 2023

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Sandra Misiewicz	The Transportation Council
Jacob Beeman	The Transportation Council
Andrew Tracy	The Transportation Council
Susan Barden	City of Saratoga Springs
Greg Wichser	NYS DOT Region 1
Kelley Kircher	NYS DOT Region 1
Kim Lambert	Saratoga County
Mike Valentine	Saratoga County
John Scavo	Town of Clifton Park
Andrew Kreshik	City of Troy
Randy Milano	City of Albany
Steve Feeney	Schenectady County

1) Welcome and Introduction

Jacob Beeman began the meeting with introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. The TIP Task Force objective was reviewed. The primary purpose of this meeting was to review the final draft TIP Policy Document, which incorporated changes based on comments received from task force members.

Jacob also reviewed the primary objective of the TIP Task Force:

Objective: To develop a TIP Policy Document that discusses recommended improvements to how the TIP is developed and managed. This document will then be brought to the Planning Committee for review and approval. Approval of this document will empower Transportation Council staff to prepare updates to the TIP application, evaluation, and programming processes in accordance with guidelines established by the TIP Task Force.

Caveat: Policies related to the updated regional transportation plan may require an amendment of the TIP Policy Document.

2) Draft TIP Policy Document Review

Hard copies of the TIP Policy Document were distributed. The document was previously distributed by email to the task force. Jacob presented a list of changes made to the document based on comments received at meeting #3. Changes included:

- Benefit-cost and Merit Evaluation Section:
 - added recommendation - ‘Consider re-evaluating the ratio between the quantitative and qualitative parts of the review’
 - added recommendation – ‘Consider incorporating locally funded design into the Project Delivery merit category criteria’
- General Recommendations Section:
 - added recommendation - ‘Continue the discussion on developing criteria for adding federally funded “Design Only” projects to the TIP’
 - added recommendation - ‘Develop a TIP Process Guidance document before the next TIP update’.

Sandy noted that the branding in the document would also change to reflect the recent name change (CDTC is becoming the Capital Region Transportation Council) prior to the document being presented to the Planning Committee in August. Jacob and Sandy also stated that the planned TIP process guidance document would resemble the NYSDOT TAP guidance and would replace the information currently spread throughout the website.

Mike Valentine asked about the recommendation to incorporate locally-funded design into the scoring process and adding design-only funded projects to the TIP process. Mike asked what were the next steps, and has there been any hesitancy or opposition? Andrew Kreshik stated that there is some hesitancy, as if the TIP contains too many design-only projects it constrains future funding. Mike stated that he wasn’t certain about this either, but the design-only projects added to the current TIP were an opportunity that maybe should be available again. Sandy suggested that this task force would be a good forum for future discussion on this topic. Jacob clarified that the TIP Policy Document doesn’t commit to including design-only projects, but instead says that this would be considered later. Greg Wichser added that there should be a focus on identifying the best discretionary funding opportunities for design-only projects, such as a large bridge replacement that won’t fit into the TIP budget.

Further discussion covered the use of performance measures to guide project selection. Mike Valentine asked about the frequency of performance measure reporting. Jacob and Sandy replied that safety is annual, and the others are typically updated every two years. Sandy elaborated that the intention of the federal performance measures is to guide how federal funding is spent and to monitor progress toward performance goals. Regarding preservation vs. non-preservation, Greg Wichser added that they prefer to keep that distinction for bridge projects. Sandy added that even trail projects may have some ‘beyond preservation’ projects now as older trails reach the end of life, so current definitions of preservation vs. non-preservation must be revisited.

Jacob presented the final recommendations relating to benefit-cost and merit evaluations. Mike Valentine asked how much time would be allocated at the August Planning Committee and the September Policy Board meeting for discussion. Sandy stated that there would be enough time, and that this is a strategic document guiding later changes to the scoring process prior to the next TIP. Steve Feeney added that he doesn’t expect pushback from committee members. Sandy noted that the timing is that the next TIP update will happen before the next long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, so the next TIP needs to operate under the current plan. The current plan lacks policy on how to distribute funding by project type.

3) TIP Amendment Guidelines

Jacob presented an overview of the current TIP amendment guidelines, noting that there is an opportunity for revisions for improved clarity and usability. Greg Wichser concurred and offered an example of a roundabout project amendment with no federal funding involved requiring Policy Board approval, prolonging the process. Jacob stated that the matrix format would remain, but the language could be re-worded. Jacob asked the task force to review and send comments/questions on how to improve the guidelines, or where the guidelines were unclear. Certain terms such as 'Project Selection changes' would be re-worded to Administration Modification instead, to distinguish from a TIP Update project selection. The scope and cost change table was noted as needing clarification as well. Dollar amount changes could be changed to flat rate instead of percentages (as some larger changes end up needing less approval levels in the current scheme). Steve Feeney suggested keeping the percentage threshold for smaller projects. Greg suggested that minor scope clarifications (clarifying limits, etc.) could be exempt from Planning Committee or Policy Board approvals. The term 'Significant Scope Change' should be more clearly defined.

4) Future TIP Task Force Meetings

Jacob presented a list of potential topics for future task force meetings and asked for feedback on continuing the committee on a quarterly basis. Future topics could include TIP Fiscal Constraint, Online TIP Information Display, Criteria for adding federally funded design only projects to the TIP, Pavement and Bridge Modeling Software / Techniques, or Ongoing Construction issues facing local projects. The next task force meeting would be held in August and would focus on the TIP Amendment Guidelines.

5) Next Steps

Jacob discussed the next steps. The July Planning Committee meeting is cancelled, so the Draft TIP Policy Document will be considered at the August Planning Committee meeting and, if approved, brought to the Policy Board in September. The next meeting of the TIP Task Force will be held in August and will focus on revisions to the TIP amendment guidelines.

6) Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39.

The next meeting will be scheduled for August 2023.