

Draft PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2015

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Robert Cherry, NYS Department of Transportation- Region 1
Melissa Cherubino, City of Cohoes
Peter Comenzo, Town of Rotterdam
Ross Farrell, Capital District Transportation Authority
Rocky Ferraro, Capital District Regional Planning Commission
Michael Franchini, Capital District Transportation Committee,
Secretary
Stephen Iachetta, Albany County Airport Authority, Chair
Andrew Kreshik, City of Troy
Joseph LaCivita, Town of Colonie
Robert Leslie, Town of Bethlehem
Randy Milano, City of Albany
Tom Richardson, City of Mechanicville
Jeremy Smith, City of Watervliet
Michael Valentine, Saratoga County
Christopher Wallin, City of Schenectady
Brett Williams, representing Ahmad Ibrahim, NYS Thruway Authority

STAFF AND OTHERS

Denise Authement, NYS Department of Transportation- Region 1
Tom Baird, Barton & Loguidice
Chris Bauer, Capital District Transportation Committee
Anne Benware, Capital District Transportation Committee
Jennifer Ceponis, Capital District Transportation Committee
Jim Digioia, NYS Office of General Services
Richard Filkins, NYS Department of Transportation- Region 1
Tom Johnson, T.R. Johnson Engineering
David Jukins, Capital District Transportation Committee
Teresa LaSalle, Capital District Transportation Committee
Sophia Marruso, Town of Malta
Fred Mastroianni, Greenman-Pedersen
Michael McGlynn, Citizen
Christina Minkler, Clough Harbor Associates
Sreekumar Nampoothiri, Capital District Transportation Committee
Tim O'Brien, Times Union
Glenn Posca, Capital District Transportation Committee
John Scavo, Town of Clifton Park
Steven Strichman, City of Schenectady
Peter Tarantelli, Downtown Troy
Robert Wetmore, Capital District Transportation Committee

VISITORS' ISSUES

Steve Iachetta opened the meeting at approximately 9:35 AM and invited visitor comments.

Michael McGlynn requested CDTC develop and implement a Capital District Street Light Master Plan. He referenced a 2012 NYSDOT report on roadway lighting which estimated that 1.1 billion kilowatt hours of electricity per year is currently used for roadway lighting and that use of non-LED street lights results in significant emissions. Local governments around the country have retrofitted thousands of street lights. For municipalities that are part of DEC's Climate Smart Communities program funding may be available through the Consolidated Funding Application process.

Jim Digioia spoke next noting that a recent Business Review article on the I-787 study mentioned a few proposals for the future of the roadway. He works 10 pm to 8 am at the Empire State Plaza and thinks the proposal to bury 787 is too expensive and that the boulevard proposal won't handle the amount of traffic using it. He suggested tunnels and bridges over the roadway be used to provide bicycle and pedestrian access to the river.

ADMINISTRATION

Previous Meeting Minutes - January 7, 2015

Members approved the January 7, 2015 minutes.

NYSDOT PRESENTATION - I-890 RAMP RECONFIGURATION & SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (BIG CIRCLE/LITTLE CIRCLE) AND NY910 WASHINGTON AVENUE EXTENSION RECONSTRUCTION

Rob Cherry introduced Region 1 Design staff, Denise Authement and Rich Filkins. Rob noted that the I-890 project is funded with HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) funds. Denise Authement explained that the I-890 ramp reconfiguration project is located between Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) and General Electric in the City of Schenectady. The roadway and ramps were constructed when GE employed tens of thousands of people versus the much lower numbers working there today. Crash data analysis indicates a high accident rate mostly related to rear end crashes at the yield sign from Ramp N entering traffic trying to merge onto the big circle. Recommendations from the crash analysis include: remove the yield condition at the Big Circle and Washington Ave./Ramp N merge area, close the Little Circle, extend the westbound weave area with an additional lane to tie into the Big Circle, and improve the pavement markings and signage. The project objective is to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries from crashes in the vicinity of I-890's Big Circle and Little Circle. Three alternatives have been developed. Public information meetings are planned for the spring of 2015. A question about potential traffic impacts was asked. Denise responded this project is focused on improving safety and there is excess capacity. Chris Wallin noted that the barrier to separate traffic movements may create issues for Route 5S as shown in Alternative 2. Ross Farrell asked whether the pedestrian walkways over the roadway will be retained and improved? Denise responded that the project is focused on safety where the big and little circles meet and will not include the walkways.

Rich Filkins presented on the Washington Avenue Extension project; if designed by the end of the fiscal year, it can likely be funded. This is a pavement project using the crack and seat method with project limits extending from the end of the previous Washington Avenue reconstruction project near the Nano College to just east of Karner Road; the project does not include the Karner Road intersection.

Washington Avenue Extension was built in the 1960's and the surrounding land uses have changed. This project will therefore include treatments to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians including installation of pedestrian heads and striped crosswalks at all signals and at the frontage roads that are owned by the City of Albany. DOT will build a multi-use path to fill in a gap in the northern piece of frontage road near the Polish Community Center which will then connect to the Six Mile Waterworks trail.

The project should be let in May 2015 with construction over the summer. It is expected that there will only be partial road closures on two weekends for each section of roadway. The project will include landscaping improvements in both the center median and along the frontage roads. These include grasses and clusters of trees. Maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners will be required. In response to a question from the group Rich noted that the project does not include changes to lighting.

2013-18 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

S234 (PIN 1932.80): Grade Signal Crossing Upgrades, Burdeck Street, Town of Rotterdam

Rob Cherry explained this is a new project drawn from the regional set-aside, RG40 for \$0.653 M. Members approved the project.

DRAFT NEW VISIONS 2040 PLAN PUBLIC OUTREACH APPROVAL

Mike Franchini started the discussion by praising both staff and the task forces for their work in developing the white papers that basically make up the draft New Visions 2040 Plan. The meeting mail out included a link to the draft white papers as well as an Executive Summary and a separate summary of the recommendations contained in the white papers. Mike highlighted a few of these for the group:

The Infrastructure Task Force recommends use of scenario planning to investigate long term funding needs for streets, highways and bridges based on "what if" modeling analyses. An infrastructure report card will be developed which will give the public a good idea of progress.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) recommends establishment of a program to coordinate group purchases for bike racks and other items to help municipalities. Exploring a regional revolving loan fund specifically for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects is also recommended as is completion of the trail/greenway projects in the region including:

- Uncle Sam Bikeway

- Patroon Creek Greenway
- Mickey Mahar Trail
- Zim Smith Trail
- Albany County Rail Trail

The Complete Streets Advisory Committee recommends development of a Complete Streets Training and Education Program. Mike noted that Jen Ceponis has already put together an educational webinar series on bicycle and pedestrian issues with details previously emailed to the Planning Committee and the BPAC. This recommendation would expand education to complete streets issues. Development of complete streets design and implementation guidelines was also recommended.

The Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee recommends the TIP project review process be expanded to further evaluate operational needs and impacts. Mike noted that many task forces recommended changes to the project review process and that staff has been researching a new method to potentially assign points during TIP merit evaluation. Any new method would have to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Committee prior to the next TIP.

This group also recommended exploring establishment of both a community traffic engineering services program and a community safety evaluation program. For both, interested municipalities would apply and RFPs would be developed for consultant technical services on a small scale. Other recommendations related to Security Planning such as continuing the productive communication and collaboration with Local Emergency Planning Committees on modeling and other work.

The Environment and Technology Task Force recommends greenhouse gas emission impacts related to proposed projects should be considered in the project review process during TIP project selection. This group also explored issues related to autonomous vehicles which are coming on the market and will have a significant impact on transportation.

One of the ongoing committees, the **Freight Advisory Committee** is in the middle of developing a regional Freight Plan which involves a lot of outreach to freight operators. White paper recommendations are many including one to improve surface access to the Port of Albany.

Transit Task Force recommendations are broken down by immediate term and long term and range from support of the transit centers proposed by CDTA to exploring bus-only travel lanes and light rail options. Mike noted dedicated lanes provide a better transit level of service.

Quality Region Task Force recommendations include improving public outreach and marketing efforts to engage all users of the transportation system, to educate them and to get their input, especially in non-traditional communities. Other recommendations include developing a training program for local planners and decision makers and maintaining a program for community enhancement/economic development type transportation projects. The Quality Region Task Force also recommends that project selection criteria include economic

development considerations and that regional equity is important, including environmental justice.

The Draft Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan includes recommendations on improving coordination among the many human service/transportation agencies in the region and access for the transportation disadvantaged. Funds are mostly limited to 5310.

Mike acknowledged this is a lot of material and offered a special Planning Committee meeting for more thorough review. The group didn't indicate this was needed. Steve Iachetta asked how public input will be sought. Mike said there will be two sets of public meetings with the first set serving as an introduction. There will be at least one meeting in each county, with two possible for Albany County. These introductory meetings will include a short presentation and then work stations discussing the different topic areas. In addition to the initial meetings covering the four counties, the plan is to hold 40 small group meetings through the contract held with the marketing consultant. Press releases, meeting notice flyers, and website announcements will also be used. We will then come back to the Planning Committee in May to summarize public input. Based on this a hard copy of the draft 2040 New Visions Plan will be compiled, incorporating the draft white papers and changes made due to comments received. It is anticipated that the Policy Board will release the final draft for public review in June and then will vote at their September 2015 meeting to adopt the revised final plan. Members approved release of New Visions 2040 public review draft.

LOCAL BRIDGE PRESERVATION PROJECT PROGRAMMING REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Dave Jukins reported CDTC staff solicited for bridge preservation candidates under the RG 126 Set-Aside. Only bridges located on non-state federal-aid roads were considered, with projects eligible for NHPP or STP-Flex funding. Under RG 126, there is \$2.101 million in STP-Flex and \$11.628 million in NHPP. Rob Wetmore reviewed information from the mail out: the cost of proposed local non-NHPP bridge projects totals more than \$3 million while for NHPP candidates there is plenty of funding.

CDTC staff ran through merit evaluations on the proposals as shown in Table 1 and the programming options included in the mail out. Highway bridges were evaluated separately from pedestrian bridges. Dave Jukins noted that based on quantitative measures all of the proposed projects had good benefit cost ratios, mostly due to the relatively low cost of proposed improvements. In addition, qualitative measures based on New Visions principles and community context were considered. Route 67 while not the highest B/C ratio, plays an important role in the system and is near the new intermodal center in Mechanicville. It is a critical piece of infrastructure and it has been yellow flagged for a few years. Similarly Duaneburg Churches Road is an important link to schools and for commuting. Dave reviewed the options laid out by CDTC staff which include: for NHPP eligible candidates, consider programming all submitted candidates for a total of \$2.520 million, leaving \$9.11 million on the table for additional programming next

year. For STP-Flex eligible candidates, one option is to consider programming the NY 67 bridge for the reasons listed. For geographic balance, a second candidate from a different county could also be programmed. Outside of Saratoga County the only STP-Flex eligible candidate is Duanesburg Churches Road in Schenectady County. Programming these two bridges would use up the available \$2.1 M in STP Flex. It was noted that during the next TIP update there will be new STP allocations and that the project proposals on this list would remain eligible. Members approved these staff programming options.

2014-2015 LINKAGE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mike Franchini reported that CDTC solicited for new Linkage projects and ten proposals were received by the December 19, 2014 deadline requesting \$327,500 in federal planning funds for consultant assistance; \$150,000 is available. \$100,000 in CDTC staff assistance is also available. Information on each proposal and the evaluation process was included in the mail out. The evaluation committee included staff from CDTC, CDRPC, NYSDOT, CDTA and for the first time NYSDOH. The Table 1 shows the ranking by the committee with a proposal to fund the top three proposals including those from the City of Albany, City of Schenectady and the City of Troy for a total of \$128,750 in federal funds for consultant services, leaving a balance of \$21,250.

Rob Leslie noted the Town of Bethlehem's proposal for the Delaware Avenue Complete Streets Feasibility Study ranked fourth. He made a proposal in which the Town of Bethlehem would increase the local match to \$38,000 and the un-programmed amount of \$21,250 in federal funds would be used to fund the consultant services cost. He noted the Town received letters of support from Delaware Plaza, the Chamber of Commerce and CDTA, among others. Members approved the evaluation committee recommendation and the Bethlehem proposal for a total of four Linkage studies to be added to the 2014/15 UPWP.

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Mike Franchini described this administrative update and reported that next year at this time there will be an on-site FHWA/FTA certification review. The main items to note for this update include an increase in funding to cover the certification review and for the ADA Working Group task. A decrease in funding is shown in the financial tables for the Environmental Justice task as the report has been completed. In addition, because FHWA/NYSOT are providing HERE traffic data at no cost to the MPOs in the state it isn't necessary to purchase INRIX data as was originally budgeted. Safety funds have also been proposed to be increased; the four new Linkage Studies will also be added. The total increase in federal PL (Planning) funds is \$72,000. Members approved the UPWP Administrative Update.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

NYSDOT PROJECT DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Karen Williams distributed a handout (attached) providing a status of project delivery and reported that NYSDOT has been setting up meetings with project sponsors' consultants, results of which are then reported back to the sponsors. Rob Cherry noted that the information on costs and anticipated schedules is then used for the Regional Director's commitment list that is created for each upcoming fiscal year. Randy Milano asked that the project sponsor listed for the Sheridan Avenue sidewalk project be corrected to list the City of Albany, not County.

STATUS OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

CDTC

Mike Franchini said that there will be a Bikeshare Symposium at SUNY Albany on Friday February 2nd.

CDRPC

Rocky Ferraro reported that Sean Maguire has been hired and is updating CDRPC's website. The employment projections are moving forward and Climate Action Associates are completing initial regression analysis prior to meeting with CDTC staff. CDRPC will be holding a 1 day Planning and Zoning Conference at HVCC on March 27th. The Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Project is being implemented but is complicated due to the way it is financed by the different partners and the requirements of the NYSDEC consent order. The discharge notification system website is up and running.

CDTA

Ross Farrell reported that CDTA has hired a new planner who will be working with Mike Williams. The RFP for project development for both new BRTs, Washington Western and the River Corridor, has been released. Ridership has increased on the Route 5 BRT (905) and service improvements have been made. This will be the last service improvement for a while due to funding issues for operations. Mike Valentine asked about the correlation between gas price drops and ridership. Ross responded that this time as the price of gas has decreased ridership has still increased, although at a lower rate than in the past. Ross offered to give a presentation on the next Route Performance Report which will be available in April.

THRUWAY

Brett Williams reported that the Thruway has a new director and that all capital projects, staffing and budgets are being reviewed.

NYSDOT

Rob Cherry said programming scenarios continue to be examined. They are looking to fold this into the next TIP update. Chris Wallin asked NYSDOT to keep him informed of plans for I890 project public meetings.

A presentation at a City Council meeting might be a good idea.

Albany County Airport Authority

Steve Iachetta reported that enplanements continue to increase by 1 to 2%. Cancellations due to storms cause problems.

Other Business

Mike Franchini noted that the Freight Advisory Committee had a meeting in January to discuss the Freight Study with current tasks focusing on data collection and stakeholder engagement, including a questionnaire that is on CDTC's website. The next meeting will be held in April.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:34 AM. The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2015.

There is no March Planning Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Franchini
Secretary