

## **A Proposed Approach to Economic Stimulus Project Planning & Programming**

We have been notified that Region One plans to introduce a draft TIP amendment to address the need for MPO action in anticipation of the proposed Economic Recovery Act (ERA) infrastructure component.

Much discussion and negotiation has ensued over the past few weeks culminating in the issuance of a press release by Governor Paterson providing an initial list of potential capital needs for funding within the ERA. The Department of Transportation believes it prudent and urgent to lay the necessary groundwork to begin project development for a number of projects which could be funded with the stimulus monies. They have provided the explanatory information as follows which would support a proposed project listing to be provided at the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Region 1 staff has been instructed by Commissioner Glynn to seek TIP amendments as necessary to support an immediate initiative to develop additional shovel ready capital projects within 180 days. While numerous details need to be worked out, many dependent on the final legislative language, some basic assumptions and requirements appear common to all discussions in play in Congress. Most particularly for the State's MPOs are the need to follow TIP requirements for new projects and to anticipate MPO participation in the selection and prioritization of those projects. The Governor's press release stated the need for more such discussions among local government officials. To that end, the Department expects the MPOs to play a strong role in developing the transportation segments of the stimulus package.

The Region plans to introduce 10-15 new State administered projects which are infrastructure oriented and , in most cases, could be applied to not only State system facilities but to local government owned highways on the federal aid system. The Region will be asking the Committee to consider approval of these projects primarily as scope set-asides to the current TIP (e.g. similar to the "RG" projects for similar purposes). The Region anticipates working directly with CDTC, CDTA and the affected (and interested) municipalities to determine the highest priority individual locations to apply funding.

It is anticipated that a second 'round' of stimulus funded work will be available over a subsequent 18-24 month period. That second round would take up more ambitious capital proposals including deferred projects in the TIP. These are projects that will take longer to make shovel- ready. The members should be aware that we anticipate all federal regulations currently applicable to federally aided projects will be applicable to stimulus projects. This includes NEPA, permitting processes and as necessary public participation or review. Further we expect to have to certify a 'maintenance of effort' to Congress; i.e. we will need to show that the stimulus projects indeed are new, or additional, work that

created additional jobs and capital outlays. Although much remains unclear at this point , not acting could mean jeopardizing funding sorely needed , not only for economic recovery but for basic infrastructure repair and improvement.

CDTC staff has preliminarily discussed this amendment proposal with Region 1 staff and have advised them that they should not expect action on it at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. They have agreed that the Planning Committee members will need a week or so to evaluate and discuss it with appropriate officials. Staff anticipates a follow up meeting on this the week of January 19<sup>th</sup>.