

2007-2012 TIP Set-asides: Candidate Project Evaluation Summary

Introduction

As part of the 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update process, funds were allocated to several set-asides to help address needs in the areas of Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects, Intersections/Queue Jumpers/ Roundabouts, ITS for local signals (all funded with Congestion Mitigation, Air Quality (CMAQ) funds), and Safety for Non-State Roads (funded with Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds).

CDTC solicited project candidates for these funds via a solicitation letter sent on February 14, 2008 with a submission deadline of March 31, 2008. Each set-aside was subject to specific program requirements and evaluation criteria as described in the Project Justification Package (PJP) developed for each. The solicitation resulted in 22 submissions.

Project Screening

An initial screen of the 22 proposals for these set-asides led to only one project being screened out, leaving 21 that moved on to the merit evaluation phase. Two projects (Providence/Hillside and River/Rosendale traffic signals) passed screen but were not eligible for the ITS set-aside they were originally proposed for. They are however eligible for both the roundabout and local safety set-asides. These two projects were evaluated for roundabouts, with the Providence/Hillside project also evaluated as safety project. The East Lydius St. project was submitted under the Safety set-aside but was moved to the Bike/Ped category for evaluation as that seemed a better fit according to the project submittal; it is still eligible for the Safety set-aside, however, as are a number of the Bike/Ped project candidates.

Merit Evaluation

Table 1 provides a summary of the screened candidate projects including project description, and total project cost, local share and federal funds requested, all in 2012 dollars, as well as other funds procured by project sponsors. The amount of federal funding available for each set-aside category is also listed to assist in the Planning Committee programming discussion.

Table 2 summarizes project cost information. CDTC staff adjusted sponsor costs to reflect better scoping information, engineering and inspection costs, and inflation to 2012 (the expected year-of-construction).

Tables 3 and 4 provide results of the merit evaluation for each Bike/Ped project and all other projects by set-aside category, respectively. The accompanying fact sheets provide additional detail on each project. The traditional CDTC merit evaluation process was used as described in the 2007-2012 TIP document. The cost-effectiveness and market potential factors used in the Bike/Ped evaluations were based on federal share of the projects rather than the total cost to reflect sponsor overmatches. It should also be noted that the safety benefits evaluation process was modified to reflect the availability of specific information on crash severity, consistent with the NYSDOT safety plan, resulting in severity-specific crash costs being utilized in contrast to the prior method where crash cost was an overall average across all crash severity types; this change results in a greater range of safety benefits due to the fact that projects where there were mostly property damage crashes received a much lower safety benefit than they would have using the prior methodology.

Programming Approach

Tables 5 and 6 present one programming approach for the Bike/Ped projects and all other projects by set-aside category, respectively, for Planning Committee consideration. This programming option is sorted similar to the merit tables whereby projects were filtered and then ranked by weighted score or benefit/cost, again following the traditional TIP project selection process for round one programming. For each set-aside category the cumulative amount of 2012 Federal Funds is tallied in a running total to show how many projects can be potentially “reached” with available funds. Projects that could be programmed under this approach are highlighted in yellow in Tables 5 and 6.

This approach under-programs both the CMAQ and HSIP federal funds. Leaving CMAQ funds under-programmed at this time is prudent because federal program rescissions may require changes to the current TIP. Under-programmed HSIP funds will remain in the local safety set-aside available for future programming of local projects that clearly address local safety needs.

The programming approach will be reviewed, and variations explored if desired, by the Planning Committee on July 2.