

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SPOT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Spot Improvement Program is the mechanism for funding small-scale projects which will improve the region's bicycle and pedestrian travel environments through "spot improvements" to the transportation system.

### **"Spot Improvements" Defined**

Spot Improvements are actions that address problems at specific locations such as intersections, short lengths of roadway, or single destinations (e.g., an office building or shopping center). They can be distinguished from other bicycle or pedestrian-related projects such as development of new trails in that they bridge physical or functional *gaps* in the system rather than in and of themselves providing new *routes*.

### **Why the Spot Improvement Program is Needed**

CDTC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force found that many obstacles to increasing the roles of cycling and walking in the transportation system are small -- such as short stretches of roadway where there is no place to walk, or destinations where there is no place to securely park a bicycle. This program provides a means of strategically identifying and resolving these obstacles.

### **Examples of ELIGIBLE Projects**

A list of *sample* eligible project types follows. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of the *only* eligible types, but rather it illustrates the major types of actions which could be included in the projects.

Eligible actions include the following:

- ◆ purchase and installation of bike racks and/or lockers
- ◆ bike/hike trail spot repairs or improvements
- ◆ purchase and installation of cautionary, navigational, or informational signage
- ◆ construction of short-length "connector" or "spur" sidewalks
- ◆ installation of pavement markings which would enhance cyclists or pedestrian safety or abilities to navigate the transportation system

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- ◆ pavement repairs on bikeable areas (e.g., bike lanes) of roadways
- ◆ pedestrian actuation system button or signal head *repairs or replacement* (also see "Examples of INELIGIBLE Projects" below)
- ◆ sidewalk reconstruction
- ◆ safety improvements\*

*\*While many of the project types listed above would enhance cyclist and/or pedestrian safety, "package" projects addressing known safety problems at specific locations using a variety of treatments are also encouraged. For example, a proposal might seek to improve a high pedestrian crash location through the installation of a raised traffic island, signage, pavement markings, and speed humps.*

### **Examples of INELIGIBLE Projects**

The rule of thumb would be that projects need to specifically benefit bicycle and/or pedestrian mobility or accessibility, with individual elements confined to a fairly small, definable area (e.g., single sites, intersections or short functional connections between points).

Examples of ineligible projects might include the following:

- ◆ pavement improvements or markings which will primarily benefit motor vehicles (e.g., repaving a roadway or installing lane delineation markings)
- ◆ complete upgrades of traffic signal hardware, even if the upgrade would bring pedestrian actuation to the intersection(s)
- ◆ any project that is contingent on the completion of unscheduled work by another entity (e.g. if a sidewalk is desired along a state highway where there existing drainage issues, these issues may have to be resolved with NYSDOT or others before the project could be approved)
- ◆ any project eligible for Transportation Enhancements Program funding which primarily falls under project categories OTHER THAN "provision of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians"

*Potential applicants are encouraged to be creative in developing ideas for projects not explicitly listed above. Please feel free to contact CDTC with any questions regarding the eligibility or ineligibility of possible projects.*

### **Project Cost Issues**

*No Minimum or Maximum Project Costs:* The Program does not have a set floor or ceiling for project costs, although the overall budget for the program is modest. The aim

is to achieve what the Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues Task Force had in mind for the Program -- funding several low-cost and short-length projects not ordinarily funded through the CDTC process. Thus, by not indicating cost limits, the Program provides maximum flexibility to applicants looking for creative ways of enhancing the bicycle and pedestrian travel environments. That said, the remaining points are worth keeping in mind when weighing the question of how to best develop a proposal.

- ◆ *Requirements of Federal Funding:* Federal highway funds come with specific administrative requirements in areas such as consultant solicitation, project design and reporting. For example, if you do not have in-house engineering staff with experience administering a federal-aid highway project, you will need to engage a consultant via a method of solicitation consistent with the applicable Federal Highway Administration rules. The "Bundling and Partnering" section below discusses some ways in which you may be able to reduce the administrative burdens of small projects.
- ◆ *Maximized Distribution of Funds:* In considering how *large* a proposal to submit, it should be kept in mind that the aim of the Program is to use the funds available in this fourth round -- \$300,000 -- to fund a *variety of projects across the region*. While proposals will not be disqualified for being too costly, evaluations will take cost and this overall aim into consideration.
- ◆ *Fiscal Management:* Also with regard to large projects, bear in mind that this is a *reimbursement* program -- a successful applicant will have to complete the necessary paperwork and receive construction authorization from NYSDOT Region 1 and then "front" the entire cost of the project before getting the federal share back, particularly when (as expected for many projects) the entire project can be completed in a single construction season (that is, there is no opportunity for periodic reimbursements during the course of the project). In addition, the amount of federal funding a project receives will remain the same even if the cost ultimately increases. If the project ends up costing more than originally projected, you will be required to cover any additional costs needed to complete the project.

### **Bundling and Partnering**

One way to reduce the administrative efforts attendant to these funds would be to *bundle* your project with other federal aid projects for which you have responsibility. For example, you may be able to add your Spot Improvement Program project via a TIP amendment to another project on the current CDTC TIP. Under such an arrangement, it could then be possible to handle necessary engineering or design costs through a modification to the consultant services agreement for the TIP project.

Alternatively, multiple communities are encouraged to submit joint Program applications under which one community serves as the primary applicant. Under such an arrangement, the primary applicant would be responsible for managing all of the projects under a single agreement with NYSDOT. Again, should the opportunity present itself, the partnership could in turn bundle its package of projects with an existing TIP project.

Should applicants be interested in a partnering arrangement but be unable to develop a partnership opportunity prior to proposal submission, the CDTC staff can work with successful Program applicants to identify and broker partnering opportunities. (As the partnering issue does not enter into the evaluations of Program proposals, these partnerships do not need to be finalized prior to submitting a proposal.)

### **Proposal Evaluation Basis**

An evaluation team will use the set of questions below to guide its determination of which proposals merit funding. They will not assign specific point scores to the proposals based on the answers to these questions; rather they will weigh the questions individually and in their group discussions to identify the most appropriate projects for funding.

- ◆ Is the project eligible? (mandatory)
- ◆ **Is the project implementing a recommendation from a completed Linkage Project? (greatly increases priority)**
- ◆ Is the project feasible (i.e., are the necessary approvals in place/is it reasonable to expect that they will be granted; can the work be completed in the proposed time frame; are there obstacles to the project which are either not adequately addressed or not at all addressed in the application?)?
- ◆ How great are the transportation and/or safety benefits of the project?
- ◆ Are the applicant's cost numbers realistic (i.e., "can they do what they propose for the indicated cost")?
- ◆ Is the project cost effective?
- ◆ Does the applicant provide an "overmatch" of funds (e.g., more than the required 20% local **cash match**)?
- ◆ If an applicant received funds previous rounds, have they made progress in completing the project(s)?

**Program Timetable**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Milestone</i>
May 9	Solicitation mailout
July 11	<b>Three copies</b> of proposal material due to CDTC (attention Jason Purvis)
July 14-28	Evaluations by CDTC/NYS DOT team
July 29	Recommended list for funding sent to Planning Committee
Aug 6	Recommended list/alternative approved by Planning Committee
Aug 29	Project Sponsors notified of Planning Committee decision
Early-Mid Sept	Required informational session for successful Round 5 project sponsors

This solicitation is for round four of CDTC's Spot Improvement Program. The federal-aid highway process may be initiated shortly after Planning Committee approval, for construction between 2009 and 2011.

**For More Information**

Contact Jason Purvis of the CDTC staff at 458-2161.