

## **Early Solicitation Options for Bridge Preservation Projects Discussed by CDTC's Bridge Group at its September 12, 2014 Meeting**

### **Background**

- CDTC's 2013-18 TIP (Local Bridge Preservation Set-Aside RG126) includes \$40.8M for bridge preservation work for the period 2015-18 of which \$24.1M is in NHPP funds. Another \$16.7M exists in a combination of STP-Bridge and STP-Flex funds. NHPP funds can only be used to repair bridges on the Region's NHS system. Out of almost 400 local bridges, only 19 are NHPP eligible. STP-Bridge funds can only be programmed for off-system local bridges -- there are 284 local off-system bridges in the Capital District.
- CDTC commissioned a consultant study to identify local bridge preservation candidates. The study is underway and will be completed in about five months. TIP projects are expected to be drawn from this candidate list upon completion of the study. Full solicitation is anticipated to occur next spring, prior to the next summer's formal update.
- CDTC's Bridge Group expressed interest in an earlier solicitation (briefly introduced at July's Planning Committee) to program projects for construction in the period 2015-16. Roughly \$11.6M in NHPP and \$2.2M in a combination of STP-Bridge and STP-Flex funds are available for FFY 2014-16. The purpose of an early solicitation would be to more expeditiously address the needs of local bridges.
- There are 39 local bridges that have been red or yellow-flagged, including the NY 67 Bridge over the B&M Railroad in the City of Mechanicville. According to NYSDOT, this bridge is likely to be red-flagged in the near future and needs repair sooner rather than later. There is no TIP mechanism currently in place to accommodate funding this bridge repair outside of a broader solicitation process.

### **Early Solicitation Options**

CDTC's Bridge Group discussed three options for early solicitation for Planning Committee considerations as follows:

**Option 1 - Expedite certain tasks under the Bridge Preservation Study, and use those preliminary results to solicit projects from across the region:** The overall process that includes candidate identification, solicitation, community response, and CDTC evaluation would require 4-5 months at a minimum. It is unlikely that projects added to the TIP under this approach would be able to be designed and funds obligated in time for the 2015-16 construction season, unless the design is currently well underway. The Group was also uncomfortable using partial and preliminary results.

**Option 2 – Solicit Preservation Projects based on existing bridge management programs:**

Some municipalities which own and maintain local bridges have some form of bridge management process which can be used to develop preservation proposals. Like Option 1, this approach would not include the full set of candidates, but may have a better chance of obligating resources in 2015-16 because the information in existing bridge management programs can help the process move along more quickly. This option may put some smaller bridge owners at a disadvantage.

**Option 3 – Solicit Preservation Projects for Bridges that are Currently Flagged:** Preference would be given to preservation treatments that would extend the life of bridges in urgent need of repair. Under this option, we would ask CDM to evaluate the 39 or so local bridges that are red or yellow-flagged. Those eligible for preservation would be offered to bridge owners for possible submission to CDTC for programming. A variation of this option, depending upon the level of funding available in each funding source, would be to draw preservation candidates from the subset of local bridges that are on a Federal Aid route.

**Option 4 – Delay formal solicitation until Next Spring (before the formal 2015-20 TIP update begins next Summer):** Solicitation would be based on findings of the completed Bridge Preservation Study. Waiting would not address near-term problems like the NY 67 Bridge maintained by the City of Mechanicville. This bridge serves the City and Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility, and carries more than 5,000 cars and trucks daily, and is danger of closing in the next 6-12 months (depending on results of the next inspection).