

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW OF CDTC REGIONAL SET-ASIDE PROJECTS PROGRAMMED IN CDTC'S 2010-15 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

### **Background**

Since the inception of the first published Transportation Improvement Program document representing the 1977-82 program, considerable progress has been made toward upgrading and maintaining a viable system of transportation facilities and services. Projects have been identified and implemented in two ways. First, specific highway, transit, and bike/ped projects have been programmed based on an objective evaluation of the merits of candidate projects, and selection of projects in accordance with priorities, given funding and program constraints. Second, in order to reflect uncertainty in the programming process and in order to ensure that emerging needs can be met between major updates, CDTC chose to create what are known as "Regional Set-Aside Projects" to accommodate special infrastructure and maintenance needs, traffic operations, transit park-ride lot construction, and other general performance goals of the region's long range transportation plan. Set-asides have proven to be a good way to deal with smaller-scale projects quickly.

### **Set-Aside Projects in the 2010-15 TIP**

The current TIP includes 35 set-aside projects, covering a variety of highway and transit infrastructure and maintenance needs. The attached table summarizes the purpose, cost, and success of each project. Each of these projects has played, or is playing, a critical role in meeting the investment and performance goals of the CDTC's New Visions Plan. Faced with unprecedented financial issues, it is very unlikely that CDTC can maintain the same investment levels in these projects in the new 2013-18 TIP. CDTC staff has compiled this information so that the Planning Committee can carefully review the merits of each set-aside project.

### **Set-Aside Project Types**

There are two types of set-aside projects described in the attached table. **Block-funded** projects are designed to allow the responsible agency (NYSDOT, Counties, Municipalities, Authorities, etc) to implement specific projects without identifying specifics in the TIP. These projects generally address broad infrastructure needs like pavement markings, bridge painting, etc where the location of specific projects intended to meet a specific maintenance need are selected by the sponsoring agency with minimal Planning Committee involvement. **Placeholder** projects act as budgetary "placeholders" in anticipation of specific projects being named later. Drawdowns on these set-asides need detailed scopes, and require Planning Committee approval to be added to the TIP with funds being "drawn down" from the set-aside. Solicitation and evaluation is sometimes, but not always, required for this type of project. Projects programmed in this way are usually "small scale" compared to the traditional "TIP update" project. For the five-year 2010-15 period, funding for block projects totaled roughly \$62 million, and roughly \$50 million for placeholder projects. Funding for CDTA transit-related projects totaled about \$14 million. Funding all of these set-asides at historic investment levels will not be possible.

