

PROGRAMMING NEW PROJECTS

Programming Criteria and Principles

The TIP as a whole, must, according to federal law, conform to the Federal Clean Air Act, be financially "reasonable", be consistent with the long-range plan, and address eight planning issues spelled out in SAFETEA-LU. Conformity with the Federal Clean Air Act must be determined, in cooperation with NYSDOT, using a methodology developed cooperatively by NYSDOT and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This methodology, which uses CDTC's Systematic Evaluation and Planning (STEP) model to estimate PM peak hour Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and speed data, incorporates projected changes in land use and population and emissions estimates from the Environmental Protection Agency's MOBILE 5B software. Model runs are done after the TIP had been formulated. Financial "reasonability" is determined both at the project level and for the program as a whole. Consistency with the long range plan is determined on a project level at the time projects were screened for inclusion in the TIP, and the implementation of *New Visions 2030* goals and objectives was one of the primary programming considerations, as outlined below. In addition, the Air Quality conformity analysis included examination of the long-range plan that has the five-year TIP as a component.

The goal of CDTC is to produce a "balanced" TIP that contributes to implementation of the *New Visions 2030* plan. The CDTC approach meets both the letter and spirit of federal regulations by allowing CDTC to look at the array of projects and their relative merit, and to establish a program that best implements the range of goals included in the MTP. The following criteria/principles were intended to produce the best possible program of projects to benefit the Capital District transportation system, regardless of mode.

Geographic and Sponsor Distribution

The STP and CMAQ programs have minimal requirements for geographic distribution of funding. Considerations of geographic equity must stem from considerations addressed in the planning process. CDTC based its programming decisions upon relative project merit and the balanced attainment of progress towards long-range goals -- not on geographic considerations apart from *New Visions 2030*.

Commitments Beyond Five Years

An emphasis on implementation of the long range plan goals and objectives should not lead to a program that creates larger future funding commitments than funds can reasonably be expected to be available.

CDTC's FTA Section 5307 Project Selection Process

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) is primarily responsible for submitting the requests to CDTC for transit related funded projects. This includes transit operating

assistance, equipment and support facilities. Unlike the project selection process for flexible funds described above, CDTC normally defers to the judgment of CDTA, the region's public transit operator, for project recommendations for transit fund sources from the state and federal governments.

Candidate capital projects are identified through transit improvement studies and evaluations of fleet and other capital requirements, keeping in mind transit development goals and supporting objectives established as part of CDTA's Capital Planning Process. CDTA maintains a short-range transit capital plan that identifies a series of actions and strategies that provide the basis for coordinating and prioritizing CDTA transit capital improvements. The TIP follows directly from the plan and generally is a simple project listing. The final decisions regarding project inclusion in the program are made by CDTC on a recommendation from the Planning Committee.

Private Sector Participation in the Transit TIP

Projects proposed by private operators are also entertained under CDTC's TIP process, in accordance with CDTC's *Private Operators Policy*, adopted on February 19, 1987. For these projects, public sponsorship is a prerequisite for receiving federal or state financial assistance. Programming of funds by CDTC is based on the priority of the service need and on integration of the service into the regional transit system. CDTC's *Private Operators Policy* also identifies a set of policies and evaluation criteria with which to review private operator proposals. Involvement in the planning process is encouraged through routine notification of private operators.

New Project Programming Procedure

Round One Programming

Round One programming is the phase of program building that considers new projects based on merit. Projects are grouped by category and arrayed according to merit after filtering the projects. The filtering process used is identical to that which proved successful in the last major CDTC programming effort in 1997. The filtering process focuses upon assigning Round One funds to cost-effective projects in important locations.

In each category, projects are listed in descending order of quantitative benefit/cost ratio in two groups: those that pass at least two filters and those that do not. The three filters are detailed below.

Benefit/Cost Ratio: Projects whose Benefit/Cost ratios are in the top half of the Benefit/Costs of a given category pass this filter. Those in the bottom half, fail this filter. For Bicycle/Pedestrian projects, a Weighted Score is used instead of Benefit/Cost ratios.

Functional Classification: Projects are awarded a passing status for this filter if the proposed work is on an NHS road or Principal Arterial. Other projects fail this filter. This filter serves as a way to make sure that regionally significant facilities are elevated in consideration.

Priority Network Score: Every project is assigned a priority network score. Projects in the top half of the priority network scores of a given category pass this filter. New Visions task forces defined priority networks as a way to focus investment where it is needed most and where the ultimate project design is likely to achieve multiple objectives. Priority network status is used as (an admittedly imperfect) proxy for the extent to which a project implements New Visions goals and principles. Relevant priority networks are assigned by project type, namely:

Project Category	Relevant Priority Networks
Bridge	Bicycle/Pedestrian and Freight
Pavement	All
Safety	All
Transit	All but Freight
Economic Development	All
Mobility	All
Bicycle/Pedestrian	Bicycle/Pedestrian, Access Management, Transit

CDTC Staff assigned points to specific projects as follows:

- ◆ 3 points for being on a relevant priority network with features that address priority network concerns;
- ◆ 2 points for being on the network (but no known features at this time);
- ◆ 1 point for including features (even if not on the network); and
- ◆ 0 points for not being on the network, and including no known features.

The following text is lifted from the *New Visions 2030* plan to describe the contents of each of the priority networks. Further descriptions and maps are available at <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/maps.htm>.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network: A bicycle and pedestrian priority treatment network provides a "backbone" for a region-wide bicycle and pedestrian travel system. In 1995, the original network of approximately 355 miles was established and contained those facilities which have high existing or potential bicycle and pedestrian travel but also present many barriers, including high traffic volumes/speeds, limited pavement space and busy or confusing traffic patterns. These facilities connect major activity centers, are accessible to residential areas via local roads, and have few practical alternatives nearby. In 2007, the CDTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force updated the Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network using the same criteria, adding 25 new facilities. The now 468 miles of facilities included in the network are listed in the *New Visions 2030: Bicycle and Pedestrian Game Plan and Toolbox May 2007* technical report.

Arterial (or Access) Management Priority Network: The *New Visions* report entitled *Land Use/Traffic Conflict Inventory and Measurement* from 1995 contains level of compatibility

ratings for over 275 roads covering nearly 850 miles of Capital District roadway. The access management priority network is defined as:

- ◆ Those road segments that show a high degree of conflict between commercial or residential land use and traffic, resulting in poor compatibility (Level of Compatibility D, E or F); and
- ◆ Additional road segments where either the potential for commercial development or intrusion of vehicle traffic through residential corridors is high, or significant deterioration in arterial corridor function is forecast to occur by 2015.

This priority network tentatively includes about 220 miles of roadway. The network is predominantly composed of state highways in suburban towns.

Goods Movement Priority Network: The proposed priority road network for goods movement in the Capital District includes:

- ◆ The National Highway System, including intermodal connectors (approximately 826 lane-miles); and
- ◆ State touring routes that currently carry more than 10% trucks in the traffic flow (approximately 150 centerline miles).

Transit Priority Network: Traditionally-strong transit corridors such as NY 5, NY 32, US 20, US 4, and downtowns and potentially-strong corridors such as NY 7, US 9, NY 155 and Wolf Road represent priorities for improvements to transit amenities. Transit amenities include bus stops, pull outs, and park and ride facilities. However, the single most important action to improve transit accessibility is a significant increase in sidewalk and crosswalk provision and maintenance throughout the region.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Network: In 1995, the Expressway Management Task Force identified a network of expressway and arterial facilities as the platform for the regional ITS. There should be centrally coordinated traffic control and/or guidance along these facilities. The logic is that advising travelers of preferable alternatives before they enter the most congested areas and facilitating smooth flows along the alternatives can keep overall traffic conditions from worsening. The regional ITS network contains:

- ◆ Priority expressways
- ◆ Arterials representing their immediate alternatives (ordinarily either parallel to or connecting the expressways)
- ◆ Their secondary alternatives (which entail more surface street travel), and
- ◆ Other arterials that are strategically important because they are spurs of the priority arterials and/or carry traffic across major travel gateways.

Working Group B updated the ITS priority network in 2007 as part of *New Visions 2030* to include ITS improvements to arterials which parallel the expressways as they will have direct benefits to expressway travel, especially by providing alternate routes during expressway

incidents. ITS benefits from signal coordination, transit signal priority, or other improvements will also provide significant benefits to normal daily arterial function.

Updates to the ITS priority network include:

- ◆ Extending coverage on the Northway to Exit 15 for the near term, and to Lake George for the long term;
- ◆ Extending coverage of the Thruway to the CDTC boundaries for the near term, and to Amsterdam for the long term;
- ◆ Extending parallel routes for the Northway and Thruway: Route 9 to the Warren County line; Route 9W to the Greene County line; and Route 5S to the Montgomery County line.
- ◆ Extending coverage of I-88 to the Schenectady County line;
- ◆ Adding several priority arterial corridors not in expressway corridors, including Route 7 from Albany Shaker Road to I-890, and arterial corridors in the cities of Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Saratoga Springs.

Table 14 and Map 11 of the *Working Group B Report: Expressway Systems Options* lists the over 440 centerline mile ITS Priority Network (www.cdtcmmpo.org/rtp2030/materials/wb-doc.pdf).

Round Two Programming

Round Two provides funds for projects from any category for any reason, insuring an opportunity for projects whose benefits do not quantify well.

Round Three Programming

After public review, in step three, CDTC may program the balance of the funds to projects, insuring some ability to respond to public comment.