Regional Operations and Safety Advisory Committee
Draft October 21, 2016 Meeting Notes

Attendance: Mark Kennedy (NYSDOT), Rob Cherry (NYSDOT), Tom Benware (NYSDOT), Rocky Ferraro (CDRPC), Chris Wallin (City of Schenectady), Sandy Misiewicz (CDTC), Chris O’Neill (CDTC), Aaron Spies (CDTC), Jim Mearkle (Albany County), Mike Doody (NYSDOT), Tom Werner (Saratoga County).

1. Introductions

2. HSIP application review-

The committee first began its review of the three recent HSIP funding applications. All of the applications were noted as having a relatively similar score, and that even with the low number of submissions the total requested was higher than the current available amount.

The committee began its review of the HSIP projects with the City of Schenectady project at Broadway. Mark Kennedy asked questions about certain aspects of the project, such as the connection between the rear end crash prevalence and the use of high visibility signals and cross walks, and what he perceived as a relatively low number of crashes. Sandy Misiewicz pointed out that the crash rate at the location was over five times the state average, and that signal visibility is a contributing factor to the crashes at the location. Chris Wallin noted that adjacent land uses such as affordable housing and a social security office make this an area with heavy pedestrian usage, which has become problematic without the proper signage and facilities for pedestrians in the area. He also noted that this was a complementary project to an already approved pavement preservation project at the intersections.

The committee continued its review of projects with Schenectady County’s Nott Street project. While many of the crashes were attributed to the intersection of Nott St and Balltown Rd, there were also many related to the adjacent co-op where vehicles coming out of the parking lot and pedestrians crossing Nott were noted as major contributing factors to crashes. The reconfiguration of the intersection including certain traffic calming elements, as well as pedestrian accommodations and protected parking on the North side of Nott adjacent to the co-op were planned fixes to the crash patterns. Mark noted that certain streetscape elements on Nott adjacent to the co-op were not as pertinent to the crash patterns observed at the intersection and may not be an appropriate use of HSIP funds as such.

Review of NYSDOT’s NY 146/ NY146a roundabout proposal began with a discussion of the location’s long history of rear end and turning crashes dating back to the 90’s. The proposal of a roundabout was based largely on this crash pattern with relatively light scoping and feasibility information. Issues of right of way were mentioned by Sandy. Chris O’Neill questioned the need for this treatment, suggesting consideration of either a one lane roundabout or the closure of the current slip ramps with potential intersection widening, both of which were cheaper options. Rocky Ferraro noted he did not think a one
lane roundabout would be sufficient for the current volume, but questioned the safety for pedestrians of a two lane roundabout in an area experiencing increasing development that attracts pedestrians, and which features an adjacent trail. He also questioned whether the continuous roundabout traffic would provide traffic windows for shoppers at adjacent developments to enter and exit.

3. **NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Presentation by Tom Benware**-

Tom Benware presented the new Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, a data driven analysis of pedestrian safety issues state wide with accompanying solutions. The plan hones in on key areas of the state with high incident rates, two of which (the cities of Schenectady and Albany) are within the CDTC region. Major initiatives of the plan included coordination with stakeholders on education/enforcement like local police departments, the Department of Health, the Governor’s Traffic Safety Board etc., as well as a media blitz on radio and television educating citizens about dangerous behaviors on the road. The plan also promoted the use of tip cards for drivers and pedestrians, and innovative enforcement practices like the decoy program used to encourage yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks. The plan further promotes low cost system wide improvements like high visibility crosswalks, signals, and signs. Chris Wallin asked what kind of funding would accompany suggestions. Tom noted there would be funding down the road, but only for state assets at first.

4. **State Strategic Highway Safety Plan Status and Discussion**-

Sandy discussed the SHSP as providing data and context for future infrastructure investments aimed at providing safer roads. It is a necessary aspect of safety planning for receiving HSIP funding. It is meant to complement other safety work around the state, including local safety planning initiatives as well as planning work from the Governor’s office. In coordination with these planning initiatives, the plan will help to establish current crash trends and goals for the state, while also detail solutions and practices aimed at reducing the most severe crashes.

After discussion Chris Wallin asked about the option of setting aside HSIP funding for use in regular TIP cycles to make blended funding in projects easier for sponsors who wanted to add safety elements to projects without waiting for separate solicitations. The group said they were amenable to bringing this up at later meetings or at the upcoming planning meeting.