The Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program for 2014-15

Introduction

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) has continued its support of the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program (the Linkage Program), reserving $150,000 for consultant assistance and $150,000 for staff technical assistance in its proposed 2014-2016 Unified Planning Work Program for new projects from April 2014 through March 2015. CDTC solicited for new projects in November 2013 with a December 16, 2013 deadline. Six submissions were received requesting $232,500 in federal planning funds for consultant assistance. See the 2014-2015 Linkage Program Proposal list for project details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Consultant Total</th>
<th>Federal Planning Funds</th>
<th>Local Cash</th>
<th>CDTC staff</th>
<th>Local In-Kind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany Complete Streets Policy and Design Manual</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
<td>$67,500</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Glenmont Area Transportation Study</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>$48,750</td>
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<td>Cohoes Route 470 Zoning Code Update</td>
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<td>$37,500</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
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<td>Schodack Town Center Zoning Code Amendments and Site Design Guidelines</td>
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<td>$33,750</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$232,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$77,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$50,500</strong></td>
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2014-2015 Linkage Program Focus

The 2014-2015 Linkage Program is focused on implementation activities related to completed Linkage Program plans or other completed local planning work (i.e. Comprehensive Plans, Waterfront Redevelopment Plans, etc.). New for 2014-2015, CDTC prioritized the programming of Linkage Studies following three tiers of eligibility as described below.
Tier 1: Feasibility studies in corridors that have a funding commitment for a federal, state or local corridor pavement project or other multi-modal transportation project in the next two to three years.

Tier 2: Any of the following four project types that do not have a funding commitment for a federal, state or local corridor pavement project or other multi-modal transportation project in the next two to three years:

- Feasibility studies to determine the feasibility of linkage or other local planning study transportation concepts such as road diets, complete streets, trails/sidewalks on new alignments, etc.
- Strategic zoning code changes/zoning code overlays
- Site design standards or guidelines
- Official mapping

Tier 3: Other types of planning work.

Note that for all three tiers the following will apply:

The proposed initiative must:

- Be directly related to a recommendation of a Linkage study or other local plan.
- Have a clear and direct connection to transportation issues.
- Be consistent with the Linkage Program and New Visions 2035 principles and strategies.

Evaluation Process

Following CDTC’s evaluation procedures, CDTC staff screened the applications to ensure they were complete and met all program requirements. After clarification with one of the sponsors (Town of Malta) on their local cash match, all proposals were noted as being complete.

Each project then received an initial prioritization by Tier as described above. It was determined by CDTC staff that all of the projects fit into Tier 2 as none of the sponsors provided direct evidence of the availability of transportation project implementation funds in the next two or three years.

CDTC staff then screened the applications based on budget and scope to ensure that the requested funds would be adequate to meet the needs of the project. Staff determined that the budgets of the six applications were appropriate with one note on the Cohoes project. Much of the mapping, zoning code research and draft code writing would be undertaken by University at Albany and Albany Law School students outside of the consultant budget.

An evaluation team consisting of staff from CDTC, CDRPC and CDTA then used the following evaluation criteria to discuss each of the proposals in detail. The evaluation criteria are not presented in order of importance however an indication of their relative importance is noted. All efforts are required to meet the first two criteria with the first criterion serving as an initial
priority rating. Addressing the remaining five criteria will help improve the priority of the submission. Submissions that best meet all seven evaluation criteria will be considered first for funding. If there are more worthy submissions than available funding, funding options will also consider geographic balance and project type.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Is the initiative in Tier 1, 2 or 3 as described on page 1? What is the need for the project? Is there a sense of urgency? (mandatory and improves priority)

2. Is the effort consistent with CDTC’s Linkage Program strategies and New Visions 2035 ([www.cdtcmpo.org/rtp2035/2035.htm](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/rtp2035/2035.htm)) regional planning principles? (mandatory)

3. What is the sponsors’ plan for implementation? Does the proposal indicate a path for success? (improves priority)

4. Will the project have a positive impact on the transportation system when implemented? Is the project located on one or more of CDTC’s Priority Networks ([www.cdtcmpo.org/maps.htm](http://www.cdtcmpo.org/maps.htm), scroll to priority networks)? (improves priority)

5. Is the proposal an inter-municipal initiative? (improves priority)

6. Is the submission supported locally through complementary activities and/or funding commitments beyond the minimum match requirements? (improves priority)

7. For past sponsors of Linkage studies: Was the sponsor’s performance adequate and appropriate as determined by CDTC staff? (improves priority)

**Evaluation Results**

The evaluation team had a lengthy discussion regarding each of the six submissions. A relative ranking chart was created to illustrate how well each proposal met the evaluation criteria (see Table 1). The following summarizes the perspective of the review team on each submission.

**Albany:** This Tier 2 (complete streets, guidelines) project would implement recommendations in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and would assist in implementing the City’s Complete Street’s ordinance. The multi-modal approach is consistent with New Visions and will have a positive long term impact on the City’s transportation system with the potential to enhance the transportation options related to CDTC’s priority networks. The product of this project could be a model for other communities.

**Bethlehem:** This project was categorized in Tier 2 (as it relates to official mapping) but some evaluators thought it should be considered a Tier 3 project. The intent is to improve the transportation connections in the Glenmont area based on recent and potential development. Methods that implement street connections could be a regional model but the town’s application
was unclear as to what will be done with the plan once completed and it was a bit vague on multi-modal aspects.

**Cohoes:** This Tier 2 project (zoning, complete streets) intends to implement the concepts of Linkage studies by updating the zoning along NYS Route 470 in the City of Cohoes to create a complete street with appropriate surrounding land use site designs. The method of zoning revisions will be determined by a consultant with significant assistance from students at the University at Albany and Albany Law School. The overall approach to this study as proposed raised some concerns with the evaluation team.

**Halfmoon:** This Tier 2 project (zoning) is proposing to rezone lands adjacent to the major transportation corridors in the town to allow for more mixed use, walkable development patterns. The project might help to preserve the existing transportation corridors by creating more transportation options. However, the project as proposed does not appear to address the land uses that are internal to these transportation corridors, some of which may be developed as traditional suburban auto-oriented subdivisions.

**Malta:** This Tier 2 project (feasibility study) is intended to answer a number of questions regarding the feasibility of redesigning Route 9 from its current highway style configuration to a Core, complete street in the town center. With new development in the planning stages, the town would like to direct developers to a more detailed, cohesive plan for the future of Route 9 as their sites are being designed. This project will complement other transportation studies being undertaken in the town.

**Schodack:** This Tier 2 project (zoning and site design guidelines) is intended to implement the land use concepts identified in the recently completed Schodack Town Center Master Plan. This effort will complement the NYSDOT investment being made in 2014 that will implement a road diet along Routes 9 & 20. The zoning changes and site design guidelines would support the creation of a more walkable community that is consistent with New Visions principles and complete streets. There is strong support to protect the transportation investment being made in the town through land use regulations.

**Programming Recommendation:**

For the 2014-2015 Linkage Program, the Albany, Malta and Schodack projects are recommended for funding by the evaluation team. If approved, the funding amount would be $131,250 in federal planning funds and the remaining $18,750 will be reserved and added to the proposed $150,000 in federal planning funds for the 2015-2016 Linkage Program.