

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes
July 2, 2008

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Melissa Ashline-Heil, City of Cohoes
Wayne Bonesteel representing, Fred Howard, Rensselaer
County
Todd Fabozzi representing, Rocky Ferraro, Capital District Regional
Planning Commission
Steve Feeney, Schenectady County
Michael Franchini, Albany County (Chairman)
Jackie Hakes representing, Brandley Birge, City of Saratoga
Springs
Robert Hansen, NYS Department of Transportation Region 1
Steve Iachetta, Albany County Airport Authority
Joseph La Civita, Town of Colonie
Barbara McHugh, Town of Clifton Park
John Poorman, Capital District Transportation Committee (Secretary)
Thomas Richardson, City of Mechanicville
Bill Roehr, City of Troy
Phil Serafino, NYS Thruway Authority
Bernie Sisson, City of Schenectady
Mike Valentine, Saratoga County
Steve Watts, Town of Halfmoon
Kristina Younger, Capital District Transportation Authority (Vice-
Chair)

STAFF AND OTHERS

Anne Benware, Capital District Transportation Committee
Samuel Blanchard, Capital District Transportation Committee
Frank Bonafide, NYSDOT Region 1
Jamie Cepler, Capital District Transportation Committee
Jennifer Ceponis, Capital District Transportation Committee
Rob Cherry, NYSDOT Region 1 Planning
Joe Cimino, Clough Harbour & Associates
Shelly Johnston, Creighton Manning
Sandy Misiewicz, Capital District Transportation Committee
Fred Nero, Town of East Greenbush
Chris O'Neill, Capital District Transportation Committee
Jason Purvis, Capital District Transportation Committee
Deborah Stacey, Capital District Transportation Committee
Matthew Vasilow, NYSDOT Region 1 Design
Karen Williams, NYSDOT Region 1 Planning

VISITORS ISSUES

Chairman Franchini opened the meeting at approximately 9:35 am.
There were no visitor's issues.

ROTTERDAM EXIT 26 LINKAGE PRESENTATION

Jim Levy from Wilbur Smith Associates attended the meeting to provide a brief overview of the Rotterdam Thruway Exit 26 Linkage Study. The Exit 26 & I-890 Land Use and Transportation study area includes approximately 475 acres of land located along the southern shore of the Mohawk River in the Town of Rotterdam between the Thruway Exit 26 and Mabie Lane. The improvements proposed in this study maintain an acceptable level of service, but also help mitigate issues or factors that influence the higher than expected crash rates. Particular attention was given to studying the crossing of the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail over Route 5S just south of Lower Rotterdam Junction. This crossing has been a safety concern for town residents and trail users for years. Safety at this crossing is still a significant concern and as a result, detailed analysis and consideration of potential measures that could make the crossing safer were undertaken and considered for this study. The Town has submitted a project under the Bicycle and Pedestrian set-aside as a result of this study.

Action Items

ADMINISTRATION

Approval of the May 7, 2008 Meeting Minutes

The meeting notes from the May 7th meeting were approved with one minor correction. Tom Richardson's name will be added under "Members Attending".

2007-12 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

TIP Set-Aside Programming

CDTC solicited for candidate projects with a submission deadline of March 31, 2008. An Initial screen of 22 proposals led to one project being screened out. Two projects passed screen but were not eligible for the ITS set-aside, so they were evaluated under the roundabout and safety set-aside criteria. Staff prepared several tables that summarize the 21 projects and their merit evaluations. Each set of projects (under each set-aside category) was discussed in turn.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Set-aside (CMAQ)—The Lydius street project was moved from the Safety category to the bike/ped category and evaluated as a bike/ped project. \$800,000 was available for programming under the bicycle/pedestrian set-aside. The cumulative cost of the four top ranked projects is \$612,000. CDTC staff recommended that these top four be funded, since the fifth ranked project would exceed the \$800,000 threshold. With rescission, it is wise to leave some money un-programmed. Members approved the top four projects as provided in Table 5 at the meeting. The federal share of these projects will be capped.

ITS for Local Signals Set-aside (CMAQ)—The City of Albany did not respond to staff inquiries regarding their proposed ITS projects. Both Albany's and Troy's projects include transit system priority, but neither city contacted CDTA to discuss the details of the projects. The city of Albany's ITS project (New Scotland ITS) was ranked higher than the city of Troy's. There is not sufficient funding in this set-aside to fund both projects. Committee members tabled action until additional information on the transit component, maintenance commitments and overall scope of the project is received from the city of Albany and until the city is present at the Planning Committee table.

Intersection/Roundabouts/Queue Jumper Set-aside (CMAQ) —Schenectady County's proposed signal project at Providence and Hillside Avenue was evaluated under both this set-aside and the safety set-aside. The project was not one of the top ranked projects under this set-aside, but was under the safety set-aside. Members agreed to approve the top three ranked projects (shaded in grey in Table 6 which was provided at the meeting).

Safety Set-aside (HSIP)—There was some discussion regarding the proposed signal project at Providence and Hillside Avenue. The application called for the addition of a right turn lane at the intersection along with a new traffic signal. Although the safety data offers support for the signal, staff was concerned that it may not support the addition of the right turn lane. The County requested that they be allowed to come back with additional information regarding the right turn lane, much like what was granted to the City of Albany for their ITS project. Even if Schenectady County's project is funded, a large amount of money remains in this set-aside. This is due to the \$500,000 cap on federal funds that was put on this set-aside at an earlier Planning Committee meeting. This cap potentially eliminated worthwhile safety projects from contention. Members agreed to fund the top three shaded projects under the safety set-aside in Table 6 and table action on the Providence/Hillside project until more information is collected from the sponsor. If the cost exceeds \$500,000, the project will have to be considered during the general TIP update when a follow-up solicitation on the safety set-aside will likely occur.

Amendments to the TIP

TIP Project SA104, Batchellerville Bridge replacement will be let in November. The cost is expected to be \$5.000 million over the amount currently programmed in the TIP. NYSDOT plans to push four projects to the fifth year of the TIP to accommodate the \$5.0M cost increase. The four projects to be delayed are A468 (I-787 NB Ramp to SME), A483 (Dunn Memorial bridge repairs), SA 220 (Stewart dam) and SA221 (Bridge over D&H). Toll credits will likely be used as match (needs Policy Board concurrence). The Planning Committee members approved all five amendments.

Discussion Items

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Twenty-nine applications were received in Region 1; twenty one are located in the CDTC planning area (7 Albany County, 2 Rensselaer County, 9 Saratoga County, 3 Schenectady County). One application is for a project located in the Glens Falls Planning area. CDTC staff is assembling a review committee. Evaluations will be presented to the Planning Committee in October.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

2008-13 Program Update

With a certain change in administration at the federal level and an upcoming new federal transportation bill slated for 2009, it is difficult to estimate how much money will be available for programming during the 2008-13 TIP update. John Poorman noted that we should assume continuation of federal authorization and assume modest increases to the budget. The term "right sizing" has been used to describe a process of programming below 100% of the federal allocation and leave at least some of the old "balances" un-programmed. Mr. Poorman reported that he proposed that the MPO community identify projects that reflect need, not budget. Most of the NYS MPO's have opted not to complete this exercise, but it might be beneficial for CDTC to undertake such an effort during the 2008-13 update.

Spot Improvement Program

The Spot Improvement Program solicitation was distributed; the submission deadline is August 29th.

2008-09 Rescission of Federal Aid and PL Funds

\$150 million in un-obligated balances must be rescinded statewide and spread out over all fund sources except safety. \$3.0 million of the \$150 million must come out of PL. CDTC will be required rescind \$170,000 in PL which can be absorbed without too much impact (the Linkage program can be scaled back, for example). State SPR is not subject to rescission.

STATUS OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

CDTC

The conversion of the Commuter Register carpool website to the GIS based instant carpool matching software (GreenRide) is currently underway. The new site should be fully operational by the end of the month. A new logo is being developed. A press release/PR campaign will follow once the site is functional. Interest in carpooling has tripled over last year's level due to the price of fuel.

CDTA

Ridership is up 22 percent. The Authority is facing a \$10M deficit. There will be fare increases in the fall unless additional funding is received.

CDRPC

CDRPC staff is working on a local planning guide with CDTC and CDTA staff. CDRPC is interviewing Town Board members for input. The draft guide will likely be distributed for review by the end of the summer.

NYSDOT

AMD notified NYSDOT that all requirements have been met and that plant design has begun for the LFTC site. NYSDOT has started the paperwork for the diesel retrofit program.

ALBANY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

American Airlines will cease operations out of Albany beginning November 2008. American Airlines has been at the Albany Airport for 80 years. Southwest Airlines has added a direct route from Albany to Ft. Lauderdale. Southwest continues to have a strong market in the Albany area.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Bids and Lettings

Exit 6 was bid with a low bid of \$42 million. Only two bids were received. The Bid is 10% over the engineer's estimate due to the increased price of materials.

OTHER

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. The August Planning Committee meeting will be held on August 6th.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Poorman
Secretary