

**Meeting Minutes - A/GFTC Planning Committee**

Thursday, July 14, 2022 – 11:00 AM

1. **Welcome / Municipal Roll Call** – Aaron Frankenfeld initiated the meeting at 11:02 AM and acknowledged the following participants (voting members shown in bold):

<b>Stuart Baker</b>	<b>Town of Queensbury</b>
<b>Dan Barusch</b>	<b>Town of Lake George</b>
Bill Collins	Mayor, City of Glens Falls
<b>Deb Donohue</b>	<b>Washington County Department of Public Works</b>
Pat Dowd	City of Glens Falls Community Development
Aaron Frankenfeld	A/GFTC
<b>Allison Gaddy</b>	<b>Lake Champlain – Lake George Regional Planning Board</b>
<b>Steve Godlewski</b>	Creighton Manning
<b>Maiken Holmes</b>	<b>Warren County Department of Public Works</b>
Kelley Kircher	NYS Department of Transportation Region 1
<b>Wayne LaMothe</b>	<b>Warren County Planning Department</b>
Jack Mance	A/GFTC
<b>Laura Oswald</b>	<b>Washington County EDC</b>
<b>Bob Rice</b>	<b>NYS Department of Transportation Region 1</b>
<b>Jeremy Schneible</b>	<b>City of Glens Falls Department of Public Works</b>
John Strough	Supervisor, Town of Queensbury, Chairman, A/GFTC
Joe Thompson	NYS Department of Transportation Region 1
<b>Mike Valentine</b>	<b>Saratoga County Planning Department</b>
Greg Wichser	NYS Department of Transportation Region 1

2. **Visitor Issues – no visitors present**

3. **TIP Amendment Request - City of Glens Falls – Feeder Canal connections project** - Aaron summarized the request. The City of Glens Falls is requesting Planning Committee approval to add \$0.857M to the program listing for A/GFTC Project WAR 197, PIN 176188 (a TAP award) to address a shortfall between recently received estimates and pricing and the original project estimate. Previous guidance from NYSDOT had been that TAP projects were capped, meaning all cost overruns would be the responsibility of the sponsor. That guidance has since been modified; MPOs are allowed to offset competitively awarded federally assisted projects with additional core funds from their regional suballocations.

Mayor Bill Collins spoke to the amendment request, thanking the committee for its consideration. Mayor Collins noted that this project would better connect the community with the Feeder Canal Trail, Pruyn’s Island and Hudson Avenue, continuing on to Queensbury in one direction and Hudson Falls in the other. A new bridge would separate bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic on Murray Street; a second bridge would establish a new connection to the Feeder Canal Trail through Fifth Ward neighborhoods. A long-term vision of nearby development (not included in this project) could include a bridge across the Hudson River to the Betar Byway in South Glens Falls. The cost increases associated with building the two bridges is driving the amendment request.

Wayne LaMothe asked what the original award amount was; Aaron replied that \$1.237M was initially programmed. Mike Valentine asked how far the project has been advanced with the existing funding level. Steve Godlewski replied that the TAP fund shortfall of \$0.857M is

largely attributable to the two bridges and noted that leaving out one of the bridges results in a shortfall of \$0.300M. Aaron recommended that the committee consider funding the entire project, expressing concern that a partial award could compromise the integrity of a competitively selected project. Wayne LaMothe asked where the additional funds would come from; Aaron replied that these would come from Region 1's share of core funds. Aaron added that ~ \$1.4M of programming capacity was not used when formulating the TIP update in anticipation of cost increases; that programming balance is effectively gone assuming that this request was to be accommodated by use of that.

**A motion was made to advance this request for additional discussion.**

**Moved by: Wayne LaMothe      Seconded by: Allison Gaddy**

Allison Gaddy noted that this project was complementary to regional bicycle and pedestrian objectives and recalled an instance during prior programming cycles when the A/GFTC bicycle and pedestrian program was undersubscribed and some of that funding balance was returned to highway projects. Laura Oswald asked if the requested amount was sufficient to complete the project as designed; Mayor Collins replied that this would complete the project. Mike Valentine asked what the source of the estimate discrepancy was; Aaron replied that the request letter stated that this cost increase was the result of inflationary forces that are prevalent in the industry. Mike Valentine also asked if the basis of the revised amount was an estimate or a bid; Steve Godlewski replied that this is from the bid amount. Mike continued, noting that all project sponsors were going to experience these cost increases. Aaron replied that some but not all project sponsors revised their project estimates as the new TIP was being developed, hoping to capture inflated costs. Continued cost increases could result in project delays for those projects that have yet to be initiated. Aaron reminded the committee that A/GFTC's organizational practice has always been to see committee projects through to completion. Supervisor Strough lent his support to the project. Laura Oswald asked if the \$857,000 was the matched amount; Steve Godlewski confirmed that the \$857,000 includes the proportional match from the City. Deb Donohue asked if this facility connected to the Empire State Trail; Aaron explained that the connection was indirect but that it did ultimately intersect with the Empire State Trail via the Feeder Canal Trail. Deb Donohue asked if TAP overruns were typically funded; Aaron responded that revised guidance from NYSDOT now allows MPOs to consider applying their own programming capacity towards these requests at their discretion. Deb Donohue asked if bike/ped projects were typically solicited separately by A/GFTC; Aaron replied that capital project solicitations are typically done at once and sponsors are asked if their proposed projects include related improvements; a free-standing B/P solicitation is done when there is dedicated funding to do so, as is upcoming in the third federal fiscal year of the new TIP. Deb Donohue asked if other sources had been explored to help close the funding gap. Mayor Collins replied that this was the first attempt at securing the additional necessary funds.

Aaron solicited a vote to approve the request for additional funds. Deb Donohue objected, citing concerns over deteriorating highway infrastructure. Aaron reminded the committee that a singular 'no' vote from a project sponsor effectively kills the request and asked if there was a way to make this request more acceptable. Deb Donohue asked if there was a chance to consider other funding sources for the offset. Aaron replied that the source requested was essentially the same program as the initial award. Bob Rice added that competitive solicitations that occur outside of the traditional programming process become distinct aspects of the State budget and that partially accounts for those amounts having been capped. All sponsors are facing project increases and Bob reiterated the importance of the MPO's commitment to the family of projects included in the TIP as opposed to pitting individual projects against one another. Jack Mance suggested there may be two alternatives, one that A/GFTC's Make the Connection setaside could possibly be reduced in a proportional amount or two, to advance the setaside for a new solicitation for that the City would compete. Aaron replied that he didn't think we were at a phase of program balancing that required an immediate accounting

of the impacts of the request. Bob Rice agreed. Aaron continued by stating that additional resources could become available through ongoing and under-development federal programs. Deb Donohue stated that it wasn't her intention to single-handedly hold up the project. Bob Rice suggested an abstention as a procedural option; Aaron confirmed that this was indeed an option. Wayne LaMothe noted that inflation was increasing; not approving the request today could result in further additional costs. The option would appear to be abandoning the project, which is not something the MPO typically does. Wayne LaMothe and Mike Valentine suggested soliciting another vote. No opposition was voiced; Deb Donohue abstained. **The request for an additional \$857,000 was hereby approved.**

4. **Other items of interest - none offered.**

5. **Next Meeting and Adjourn** – August 10, 2022 10:00 (Planning Committee)

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 AM.**

**Moved by: Mike Valentine      Seconded by: Stu Baker      Meeting adjourned**