



MEMORANDUM

ERIE COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

DATE: July 25, 2024

TO: Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive & Chair of the Capital Projects Committee

FROM: Natalie Nitsche

RE: 2025 Capital Projects Committee Meeting #5

Attendance: County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Deputy County Executive Lisa Chimera, Chief of Staff Benjamin Swanekamp, Comptroller Kevin Hardwick, Budget Director Mark Cornell, Deputy Budget Director Kim Kajdasz, Commissioner Troy Schinzel, Commissioner William Geary, Commissioner Daniel Castle, Deputy Commissioner Thomas Baines, Legislator John Mills, Legislator Timothy Meyers, Jessica Schuster (virtual), Scott Kroll, Brian Fiume, Erich Weyant, Jeremy Toth (virtual), Catherine Walsh (virtual) and Natalie Nitsche.

The County Executive called to order the fifth meeting of the Capital Project Committee Meetings for 2025 and recognized a quorum. Comptroller Hardwick motioned to approve the previous meeting's minutes, which was seconded by Minority Leader Mills.

Deputy Commissioner Karen Hoak advised that the projects are ranked in order of priority.

Federal Aid Road Construction – McKinley Parkway

This project is for the rehabilitation of McKinley Parkway from Quinby to Southwestern, which is 2.03 miles. The road score is 6.7. The pavement is distressed, requiring multi-course mill and overlay. There are intersection safety and drainage improvements. This project is currently in design. The total cost is \$9 million; the County share is \$5,444,000. The project will not begin until 2026; however, the funds are needed in 2025 to allow for sufficient lead time with construction materials.

Director Cornell asked if there will be any remaining design funds that can be utilized. Commissioner Geary advised that the federal funding can only be used for design, but any leftover funds can be used on the design of another federal aid project.

County Executive Poloncarz asked for clarification on the priority list as the New Road project is one of the last items. Commissioner Geary explained that it is lower priority, because there is no federal aid that can be applied to that project.

Federal Aid – Road Construction – Maple Street

This is for the reconstruction of Maple Street from Route 20A to East Aurora Village Line. This project includes new pavement and drainage. The road score is 4 and is .4 miles. The pavement is showing signs of distress and pavement failure. The total cost of this project is \$5,250,000; the County share is

\$2,210,000. This project is currently in design. It would be bid in the fall of 2025 with construction to begin in 2026.

2025 Capital Overlay – Maintenance

The Capital Overlay Program provides for the rehabilitation, maintenance, and reconstruction of the County Highway Network including pavement restoration, shoulder widening, sign distance, and safety improvements. The pavement is showing signs of distress and pavement failure. The funding request is \$10 million. Design will be done by Erie County DPW engineers.

Federal Aid Bridge Replacement – Dennis Road Bridge

This is for the replacement of the Dennis Rd bridge over Little Sister Creek, the current state of the bridge is beyond economical rehabilitation. The bridge was awarded a full bridge replacement as a BridgeNY project. The total cost is \$1,543,000 and the county share is \$77,150. This project is currently in design.

Federal Aid Bridge Replacement – Marshfield Road Bridge

This is for the replacement of the Marshfield Rd bridge over North Branch Clear Creek, the current state of the bridge is beyond economical rehabilitation. The bridge was awarded a full bridge replacement as a BridgeNY project. The total cost of this project is \$2,034,000 and the County share is \$101,700. This project is currently in design.

County Executive Poloncarz asked if this bridge would be formed elsewhere and brought in. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised it could be formed elsewhere or brought in pieces. The County Executive then asked if design is complete, and the Deputy Commissioner advised they are currently in design.

Minority Leader Mills asked if this bridge had been flagged by the State. Deputy Commissioner Hoak explained that if it was flagged, it would most likely be a yellow flag, not a red flag. Commissioner Geary advised that because of new FEMA guidelines, some structures previously classified as culverts have been reclassified as bridges.

Federal Aid Bridge Replacement – East Eden Road Bridge

This is for the replacement of the East Eden Rd bridge over Hampton Brook Creek, the current state of the bridge is beyond economical rehabilitation. The bridge was awarded a full bridge replacement as a BridgeNY project. The total cost of this project is \$2,829,000 and the County share is \$141,450. This project is currently in design.

The County Executive asked for the length of the bridge. The Deputy Commissioner explained that it has to be over 20 feet to be classified as a bridge.

Comptroller Hardwick confirmed the funding versus the County share. Commissioner Geary advised BridgeNY just awarded the County seven bridges. Commissioner Geary and the County Executive discussed bipartisan infrastructure.

Preservation of Large Culverts – Construction

This is a large-scale construction project for the preservation of large culverts and small bridges throughout the county. Currently 12 culverts are rate 3 or less and need replacing. Over the next 10 years, 25% of the culverts in the county are reaching the end of their life and will need replacing. The

Cost of this project is \$10,000,000. Design is taking place in 2024, and construction would begin in 2025.

The County Executive stated that this number is significantly increased from the past requests. The Deputy Commissioner confirmed these culverts are all reaching end of life. Commissioner Castle asked if they were all built around the same time. Deputy Commissioner Hoak explained that many of these are reaching the 100-year mark.

Deputy County Executive Chimera asked who inspects and rates the bridges. The Deputy Commissioner explained that the County issues an RFP for a consultant to do the work. Culverts are on a four-year cycle.

Photos were shown of culverts in need of repair. The County Executive asked if any of the roads are closed, and Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised they are not.

Vehicle & Equipment Replacement – Highways

This is for the replacement of front-line equipment (plow trucks, high lifts, tractors, sweepers and mowers, and other specialized equipment). The current equipment is aged and in need of major repairs. It is more efficient to replace rather than maintain a fleet of this age and size. The cost of this project is \$4,000,000. Deputy Commissioner Hoak provided the estimated replacement costs for the different types of equipment.

The County Executive asked what is being purchased with the 2024 funding. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised tractors, excavators, snow blower attachments. She will provide a list. Commissioner Geary advised that about five highway trucks a year get replaced.

Springville Dam Compliance Rehabilitation Construction

This project is to rehabilitate the Springville Dam to address its spillway capacity, stability and other safety repairs. These rehabilitations are required to bring the dam into compliance with NYSDEC regulations. The cost of the project is \$500,000. The design for this project has not begun yet. The request is for \$500,000 for 2025, because Public Works is using an incremental approach. There are going to be multiple construction lettings going into bringing this dam into compliance. This would most likely be used for site work for construction to get ready for the larger compliance items that funding will be requested for in future years – tree trimming, re-grading, etc. The project is in design.

The County Executive what would happen if the County does not fund this. Deputy Commissioner Hoad advised that the County has already committed to the DEC that this would be done. Chief of Staff Swanekamp advised funding from the State and Army Corp would be lost.

County Executive Poloncarz expressed concern about the final cost of the project and asked about outside funding. Deputy Commissioner Hoad explained \$8 million is expected from the Army Corps, and the DEC's portion has not been finalized. Commissioner Geary advised that until the hydraulics are done, the cost is going to be unknown.

Minority Leader Mills asked if this was the same project from seven years ago. The CE advised it is. Minority Leader Mills, the County Executive, and Commissioner Geary discussed the funding and the phases.

Commissioner Geary advised the dam has been out of compliance for over ten years. New York State and DEC are pushing for this to be done. Minority Leader Mills asked if a fish ladder is included. Commissioner Castle advised Army Corps funding is contingent on the fish ladder. Chief of Staff Swanekamp stated that the County has stalled as long as it can. Commissioner Castle stated that, down the line, there will be a question of downstream land acquisition – potential for flooding due to the dam. Deputy Commissioner Hoad advised there will not be an answer on this for about two years.

Preservation of Dams – On-Call Dam Design

This is for overall maintenance and preservation of the County's dams. This will keep them in compliance with NYSDEC regulations and services would be contracted on an as-needed basis. The cost of this project is \$760,000. Also included in this is the design for the Scoby Dam project. The County has eight dams.

Culvert and Federal Aid Bridge Preservation – Design

The total cost for design is \$1.5 million. This is designed for federal aid bridge preservations or capital culvert projects. This work would include bridge deck repairs, overlays, deck ceiling, joint, and bearing replacement. There is no State or Federal funding available for the design state of these projects. The projects would be designed in 2025 and constructed in 2026.

The County Executive asked if the County is expecting the same percentage of funding for these bridges as the 2025 bridges. Commissioner Geary advised it is the same.

Preservation of Roads Construction – Borden Road

This is for the preservation of Borden Rd from Seneca Creek to French in Cheektowaga and West Seneca. The road score is 8-9 and the road is 1.2 Miles. This project would provide drainage infrastructure and improve underlaying pavement deterioration. The cost of this project is \$7.5 million. The design for this project is ongoing. This is the final phase of the project.

The County Executive asked if phase two will be completed this year to start phase three next year. The Deputy Commissioner explained that it is contingent on the drainage structures being fabricated. It is anticipated that they will be completed next month. It will likely go into next year. Phase three could start next year.

Director Cornell and Deputy Commissioner Hoak discussed total mileage and cost of the project.

Highway Safety Improvements

This is for Highway safety improvements which are necessary to maintain and provide safe travel. These funds would be used for replacing damaged guiderail, correcting deficiencies and upgrading appurtenances that are determined to be hazardous. The cost of this project is \$1.25 million. This project will begin in Spring of 2025. This is an annual request. A lot of this funding is used to replace guiderail.

Director Cornell asked the status of the damage-related work from the November storm. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised repairs – safety issues – have been completed.

2025 IT & GIS Services

This is to continue an existing contract for technical support of GIS systems and implementation of the new work order system and hardware expenses. The cost of this program is \$200,000. This system is heavily relied on during emergency situations. Hardware equipment includes tablet and surface pros. This also includes a server upgrade.

Federal Aid Bridge Replacement – BridgeNY – Design

This is for the design of bridges and culverts that Erie County is anticipated to be awarded funding for by the federal government. The total cost of this project is \$5 million, and the County Share is \$1 million. This is funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law. Design would begin in 2025 with construction to begin in 2027.

The County Executive asked for clarification regarding federal funding paying for design. Commissioner Geary explained that with this funding, design is covered. Commissioner Geary also explained the difference between federal and BridgeNY funding percentages.

Federal Aid Bridge Preservation – Construction

This is for additional funding for bridge preservation projects which are already receiving federal funding. Erie county has 6 maintenance projects funded by federal aid in the 2023-2027 TIP program. This work includes bridge washing, sealing, deck repairs, joints, painting, substructure, repairs, and replacing bearings on bridges. The Total cost of this project is \$2.4 million, and the County share is \$824,000. The design will be completed in 2024 and construction will start in 2025.

Road Slide Construction – Hopkins Road

This is for slope stabilization between Hopkins Road and Ransom Creek at Smith Road in Amherst. It has a road Score of 6 and spans .2 miles. Work will include highway reconstruction, drainage improvements, and right-of-way acquisitions will also be required to complete this project. Design is currently in process. Bidding is anticipated to take place in the first quarter of 2025, and construction completion is anticipated before the end of 2025. The total cost of this project is \$450,000.

Minority Leader Mills asked how much longer the road will last in its current condition. Deputy Commissioner Hoak explained that it is dependent on weather conditions. There is no way to guarantee how long the road could remain open. Minority Leader Mills suggested contacting Mark Gaston regarding stabilization. Commissioner Geary advised he helped with two smaller ones. Deputy Commissioner Hoak believes he was consulted, and the size of this project may have been outside of his scope.

The County Executive asked if the County has reached out to Senator Schumer's office – he has previously provided funding for a similar project. Commissioner Geary advised the County has not. The County Executive suggested that be done.

2025 Engineering Capital Overlay

This is an engineering request for projects designed in-house by County engineers. Designed right now are George Urban, Colvin, Greiner, Wehrle, and Youngs. These have been designed and are ready to go, depending on the amount of funding obtained. The pavement on these roads is showing signs of distress and pavement failure. These projects are CHIPS and PaveNY reimbursable. CHIPS is funding \$11.64 million, EWR is funding \$1.74 million, CHIPS is funding \$3.03 million, and Pave Our Potholes is

funding \$2.2 million. This project will be phased in with bidding in Spring 2025 and 2026. The cost of this project is \$8 million.

County Executive Poloncarz asked for clarification regarding the already awarded funding and the funding request. Commissioner Geary and Deputy Commissioner Hoak explained that the federal funding is only reimbursable. Commissioner Geary also explained the caveats.

The County Executive asked about the not-low road scores. Deputy Commissioner Hoak explained that there are sometimes band aids put down or there may be drainage issues. The CE then asked for a description of each section of roadway this would target to be provided.

Preservation of Roads – Construction – Eggert and Colvin

This is for the reconstruction of Eggert Road (7) and Colvin (4-7) from Twin Cities to South of Eggert in Tonawanda. The pavement is showing signs of distress and pavement failure. Emergency joint repairs have already been made. The cost of this project is \$7.75 million. Designs began in 2023. This project is so expensive, because it includes the replacement of concrete pavement and drainage underneath. Utilities are essentially encased in the concrete under the asphalt.

As Directed / Emergency Engineering Design Services

This is an annual request to fund the design of repairs which must be completed based on bridge/culvert inspection reports. Erie County owns and helps to maintain hundreds of bridges which may need repairs rapidly designed. The cost of this project is \$400,000.

Preservation of Bridges and Culverts Construction – Repair/Rehab Bridges & Culverts

This is for the repairs that have the potential to be flagged during construction. These projects would have to be completed within six weeks of them being flagged. The cost of this project is \$500,000.

Preservation of Roads – General Road Design Program

This is for the design of one or more roads and/or retaining walls. Candidates for this project are: French (6), Dodge (5-6), Ransom (7), East Ave (5), or other County roads. Improvements made will address the aging infrastructure of these walls. The cost of this project is \$2.5 million. Project Designs will begin in 2025.

County Executive Poloncarz asked what the cost would be to fire an architect to do the engineering design rather than pay a consultant. Commissioner Geary explained that the County does not have a certified land surveyor or the proper software.

Preservation of Roads – Retaining Walls – New Oregon Road

This is for repairs to the retaining wall on New Oregon Road, south of Belcher Road, or any other locations in need of wall repairs. The existing wall has significant spalling of the concrete face and undermining of the footings. Repairs are needed in order to keep the wall stable. The cost of this project is \$1.25 million. Designs are being made in 2024, and construction will start in 2025.

Large Culvert/Small Bridge & Pedestrian Bridge Inspection Program – Countywide

This is for the inspection of 487 large culverts/small bridges and 10 pedestrian bridges distributed over a 4-year program. These inspections would follow the NYSDOT recommendations for frequency to ensure safety. Contracts are issued on a two-year cycle. This is a bi-yearly budget request item. The

cost of this project is \$250,000.

Director Cornell asked if the funding from 2022, 2023, and 2024 has been spent. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised that they may not have been closed out but will find out.

Zoar Valley Road Slide Design

This is for slope stabilization between Zoar Valley and Otto Rd in Collins, with a road score of 6, spanning .2 miles. There are continued subsurface movements causing maintenance to be regularly required to keep the roadway in a travelable condition. Without these funds a road closure may be required. The cost of the project is \$400,000. Designs would begin in 2025 with construction commencing in 2026.

The County Executive asked if the County is doing any roadwork on Zoar Valley in 2024. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised work has been done in 2022 (twice), 2021, 2013, and 2011.

2025 Capital Right-of-way

This is for a right-of-way procurement by fee or easement to facilitate projects including those of maintenance and preservation. To facilitate the various projects that DPW undertakes it is necessary at times to acquire right-of-way. The cost of this project is \$100,000.

The County Executive asked if there is money set aside from previous years. Commissioner Geary explained that New York State DOT had agreed to the right-of-way acquisitions on William Street in Cheektowaga and Lancaster, but the regional director retired, and now the County has to foot the bill. The CE asked whose project William Street is. Commissioner Geary explained that it is a County project, but the State had agreed to the rights-of-way. This project is supposed to begin in 2026. DOT delayed the project due to wanting to add sidewalks.

County Executive Poloncarz inquired about the construction costs. Commissioner Geary advised it was on the TIP. The CE, Commissioner Geary, and Deputy Commissioner Hoak discussed property owners and public meetings as well as the loss of 15 feet of frontage in some cases.

Preservation of Roads – Retaining Walls – Rapids Road Design

This is for the design of repairs to the retaining wall on Rapids Road in Clarence or any other walls in need of repair or replacement design. The existing wall is made of precast concrete blocks which are deteriorating and crumbling. Continued deterioration could lead to a failure of the wall. The cost of this project is \$200,000. Designs will take place in 2025 and construction will begin in 2026.

The County Executive and Deputy Commissioner Hoak discussed why the concrete blocks cannot simply be replaced. There are a lot of environmental challenges.

Preservation of Roads Construction – New Road

This would be phase two and would enclose the ditches, widen shoulders, mill, and overlay on New Road between Smith and Tonawanda Creek Roads. The total cost of this project is \$11,950,000. The project is in its final design and expected to be ready for bid in 2025.

County Executive Poloncarz asked when phase one of construction would begin. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised the County is waiting on the fabrication of the drainage structures. There

is no firm date; it is based on the arrival of the structures.

The CE asked if there would be a phase two or a phase three. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised phase two is the final phase.

Preservation of Bridges – Construction – Emery Road Bridge

This is for the construction of a replacement structure for Emery Road Bridge. The current existing one has collapsed in some areas causing a lack of embankment which is impacting the road and railing. The cost of this project is \$2.5 million. Preliminary design is ongoing.

The County Executive asked if there was a final cost without a design. Deputy Commissioner Hoak advised that the final price will be determined once construction is done.

Commissioner Geary and The County Executive discussed the William Street project and the purpose of the project. The County Executive suggested telling developers that the County will not widen roads for the sake of traffic speed.

Motion to adjourn by Majority Leader Meyers with a second from Commissioner Schinzel. The next meeting is to be held on August 8, 2025.