

# Stimulating the infrastructure

## County planning several roadway projects with stimulus money

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Albany County could see key infrastructure improvements at several locations due to federal stimulus money, according to county officials.

Mike Franchini, commissioner of the Albany County Department of Public Works, said the county has several projects it is considering, including a corridor project connecting Western Avenue to Central Avenue.

The second part of that project includes constructing a roundabout at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Fuller Road, but there are no definite plans to commence that project yet, Franchini said.

"The first project is on a list that can be obligated, or authorized, within 120 days," Franchini said.

Franchini estimated the cost of the corridor project at \$12 million at an information meeting last summer.

David Jukins, a planner at the Capital District Transportation Committee, said the county is expecting between \$65 million and \$70 million in federal stimulus money for the counties of Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga and Rensselaer. The funds would cover about a year's worth of projects.

Jukins said the county is planning to move forward with projects it already has in the works with the stimulus money. He said the planning process for projects can be time consuming, and rather than begin new plans with the money, it would be easiest to fund projects that are as close to "shovel ready" as possible.

Jukins said the four counties hoped for closer to \$100 million for the projects, a number thrown around at initial discussions, but they will do the best they can with the allotted funds.

"It's better than nothing. It allows us to do more than we expected to do," he said.

He added that without the stimulus plan, there would be no extra money, and many projects would still be on the back burner.

Jukins said New York state is expecting \$1.1 billion in funding for public works from the federal government. That number is just short of the \$1.4 billion initially expected.

Despite the common perception that New York City takes more than its share of the pie, Jukins said, the \$300 million it will receive also comes short of expectations. He said the suburban areas surrounding the city fared better than the city itself.

Jukins added that a project to improve Delaware Avenue between Albany and Bethlehem is likely to get first dibs on the money. Its cost is estimated at \$11 million, according to the CDTC.

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