

SUMMARY: The Federal Trade Commission Rules of Practice are being amended to reflect a reconfiguration of the Commission's Regional Office structure and operations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 21, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the **Federal Register** notice should be sent to the Consumer Response Center, Room 130, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. The notice announcing the changes is available on the Internet at the Commission's website, "http://www.ftc.gov".

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donald S. Clark, Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580, telephone number (202) 326-2514, E-mail "dclark@ftc.gov".

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In July 1999 the Commission implemented a plan to reconfigure its Regional Office structure and operations. In particular, the Commission reduced the number of regions from ten to seven; closed the Boston and Denver Regional Offices, effective July 10, 1999; and changed the names and geographic areas of responsibility of the remaining Regional Offices.

List of Subjects in 16 CFR Part 0

Organization and functions (Government agencies).

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Federal Trade Commission amends Title 16, Chapter I, of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 0—ORGANIZATION

1. The authority for Part 0 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sec. 6(g), 38 Stat. 721 (15 U.S.C. 46); 80 Stat. 383 as amended (5 U.S.C. 552).

2. Section 0.19(b) is revised to read as follows:

§ 0.19 The Regional Offices.

* * * * *

(b) The names, geographic areas of responsibility, and addresses of the respective regional offices are as follows:

(1) *Northeast Region* (located in New York City, New York), covering Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Puerto Rico. Federal Trade Commission, One Bowling Green, Suite 318, New York, New York 10004.

(2) *Southeast Region* (located in Atlanta, Georgia), covering Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North

Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Federal Trade Commission, Suite 5M35, Midrise Building, 60 Forsyth Street, SW., Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

(3) *East Central Region* (located in Cleveland, Ohio), covering Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Federal Trade Commission, Eaton Center, Suite 200, 1111 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

(4) *Midwest Region* (located in Chicago, Illinois), covering Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Federal Trade Commission, 55 East Monroe Street, Suite 1860, Chicago, Illinois 60603-5701.

(5) *Southwest Region* (located in Dallas, Texas), covering Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Federal Trade Commission, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 2150, Dallas, Texas 75201.

(6) *Northwest Region* (located in Seattle, Washington), covering Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. Federal Trade Commission, 915 Second Avenue, Suite 2896, Seattle, Washington 98174.

(7) *Western Region* (located in San Francisco and Los Angeles, California), covering Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah.

(i) San Francisco Office: Federal Trade Commission, 901 Market Street, Suite 570, San Francisco, California 94103.

(ii) Los Angeles Office: Federal Trade Commission, 10877 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700, Los Angeles, California 90024.

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Donald S. Clark,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

23 CFR Parts 130, 480, 620, 630, 635, 645, 710, 712, and 713

[FHWA Docket No. FHWA-98-4315]

RIN 2125-AE44

Right-of-Way Program Administration

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This document amends the right-of-way regulations for federally

assisted transportation programs administered under title 23, United States Code. The FHWA clarifies and reduces Federal regulatory requirements and places primary responsibility for a number of approval actions at the State level. Conforming revisions are made to several regulatory parts to remove outdated, redundant, and unnecessary content. Also, the regulations are arranged to follow the same sequence as the development and implementation of a Federal-aid project to assist the public and State transportation departments (STDs) in locating regulations applicable to a specific point of interest.

DATES: This final rule is effective January 20, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. James E. Ware, (202) 366-2019, Office of Real Estate Services, HEPR-20, or Mr. Reid Alsop, Office of the Chief Counsel, HCC-31, (202) 366-1371. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

Internet users may access all comments received by the U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, by using the universal resource locator (URL): <http://dms.dot.gov>. It is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Please follow the instructions online for more information and help.

An electronic copy of this document may be downloaded by using a computer modem, and suitable communications software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512-1661. Internet users may reach the Office of the Federal Register's home page at: <http://www.nara.gov/fedreg> and the Government Printing Office's webpage at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

Background

The FHWA began the process of revising its regulations with an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) published on November 6, 1995 (60 FR 56004). As a first step in the comprehensive revision of the regulations, the FHWA removed obsolete and redundant parts by publishing an interim final rule on April 25, 1996, at 61 FR 18246. This action removed from title 23, CFR, all of parts 720 and 740, and portions of parts 710 and 712. Comments received in response to the ANPRM also identified the need for a comprehensive rewrite of the existing real estate program regulations.

An NPRM, published at 63 FR 71238, on December 24, 1998, proposed to revise the regulations and arrange them to follow the same sequence as the development and implementation of a Federal-aid project and thereby assist the public and State transportation departments in locating regulations applicable to a specific point of interest. The NPRM also proposed to clarify the State-Federal partnership.

The FHWA provides funds to the States and other organizations to reimburse them for the costs they have incurred in constructing highways and other transportation related projects. Regulations dealing with reimbursement and management of right-of-way (ROW) are contained in 23 CFR parts 710 through 713.

Discussion of Comments

ANPRM of November 6, 1995

Twenty comments were received: 2 from individuals, 2 from private groups or organizations, and 16 from STDs.

Based on the responses received, the FHWA concluded that the (ROW) regulations needed a comprehensive revision. During an initial review, the FHWA identified several parts of the regulations that were no longer needed.

NPRM of December 24, 1998

Twenty-eight comments were received in response to the December 24, 1998, NPRM. Comments were received from 25 States, one non-profit organization, a law firm representing five States, one individual, and a subcommittee of a right-of-way organization. The FHWA gratefully acknowledges the effort required to provide comprehensive comments, endorsements, and recommendations relating to the regulation.

Most commenters strongly supported the need to reorganize the regulations. A couple of comments noted that the regulations should not be reorganized and that reorganization could mean additional work for some States which had provided cross references by section number to the FHWA regulations. It was concluded that the advantages of completing a comprehensive rewrite of regulations which are nearly 25 years old outweighed the time and expense of changing cross references. Since the new regulations provide significant revisions, the text of State right-of-way manuals would require some revision in any event.

The NPRM proposed that Federal funds be allowed to participate in all costs necessitated by State law. Most commenters stated that they welcomed the reduction in Federal involvement in

State matters and that since State laws varied widely, it made sense to reimburse based on actual State expenditures. Some commenters believed that allowing Federal reimbursement of costs not previously permitted would encourage State legislatures and courts to expand both property damage payments and costs of acquisition, such as, payments of property owners legal fees, court costs, and perhaps loss of business costs. In developing the final rule, the FHWA concluded that neither the FHWA nor STDs may have sufficient resources to monitor a wide variety of State laws and court decisions and that an across-the-board reimbursement of State expenditures required by State law is the most practical and equitable solution.

As the comment of the Vermont STD correctly noted, business loss can partially overlap "damages" and there is great difficulty trying to isolate and separate items in which the FHWA could not previously participate versus items where participation was permitted. Court awards most often do not clearly separate the various elements of damages making it difficult to isolate historically "noncompensable" damages.

Several comments were received suggesting that specific wording should be revised to more closely mirror language used by individual States. In completing the final rule, the FHWA selected language which it believes is best understood and utilized by the majority of the States. Nuances in language can be accommodated in the State procedural manual.

Several comments were received that questioned the procedures for receiving either credit or reimbursement for early acquisitions. These comments typically reflected that the reader believed that the FHWA was too restrictive, and that there should be no impediment to States moving forward to acquire right-of-way and receive reimbursement or credit at a subsequent date. There were also comments that FHWA should advance Federal funds for use in corridor preservation.

At the present time the FHWA believes that TEA-21 offers a great deal of flexibility in considering early acquisition in selected situations. The FHWA was aware of the statutory requirements which must be met in order to obtain either credit or reimbursement at a later date, as well as, lawsuits which have challenged early acquisition approaches and has adopted an approach which it considers prudent, and cautious, while fully implementing the intent of TEA-21. As additional

experience is gained in the application of the TEA-21 principles, the FHWA will update the web page for "Questions and Answers" which will be developed continually to facilitate implementation of early acquisition concepts.

A limited number of comments were received questioning the FHWA's determination under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act that the proposed regulation would result in estimated annual costs of less than \$100 million. The regulation as developed should result in a reduction of costs to State, local, or tribal governments since they will not have to maintain staff to conduct surveillance to identify claims for elements of property damage that are not eligible for Federal reimbursement under the old regulation. The reduction in Federal approval actions should also result in cost savings by eliminating the time requirements for such approval.

The final rule also permits reimbursement to States for property acquisition costs and administrative costs which are not now reimbursed, so it is a benefit to those States.

A comment was received questioning the need for a reversionary clause when property is transferred at no cost by an STD to be used for public purposes under title 23, U.S.C. The FHWA concluded that where property to be used for public purposes is transferred at no cost, good stewardship and recognition of the public trust dictates that the property be placed in the use for which the disposal was approved. The reversionary clause is the most effective method to assure that use.

One comment was received concerning the need to insure that FHWA approval is required for the disposal of property at nominal or no costs in exceptional circumstances. Several comments were received suggesting that no FHWA approval for any disposal should be mandated. The requirement for FHWA approval is based on the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 156(b) and remains in the final rule. The rule's intent is that disposals for less than fair market value are to be the exception, rather than the rule. Language has been added encouraging that the criteria for disposals at less than fair market value be clearly stated in the STD manuals.

It is our intent to maintain current program guidance and information in an electronic format with "Questions and Answers" and policy interpretations. Technical air space guidance will also be maintained in this manner. The URL for up-to-date guidance is: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/index.htm>. This final rule seeks to further clarify and reduce Federal regulatory

requirements and to place primary responsibility for a number of approval actions at the State level. The adoption of these regulatory changes impacts other parts of 23 CFR, and in developing the final rule, attention has been given to conforming revisions as necessary. Such other parts include: 23 CFR part 130, Subpart D, Advance right-of-way revolving funds; 23 CFR part 480, Use and disposition of property previously

acquired by States for withdrawn Interstate segments; 23 CFR part 620, Subpart B, Relinquishment of highway facilities; 23 CFR part 630; 23 CFR part 635; and 23 CFR part 645.

This final rule substantially revises the order of regulatory materials and completes the process of removing redundant, outdated, and unnecessary content from the existing rule. A unified purpose and applicability statement

along with definitions is included in part 710, subpart A of this final rule. This consolidates material now found in several locations of the existing regulations.

The following table highlights the reordering of the content and intended revisions and redesignations for each subpart of the existing regulation:

Old part, subpart or section	New part, subpart or section
Part 130, subpart D	Removed.
Part 480	Removed.
620.202	620.202 [Revised].
620.203(j)	620.203(j) [Revised].
630.106(c)(3)	630.106(c)(3) [Revised].
635.307(b)(3)	635.307(b)(3) [Revised].
645.103(c), 645.111(c) and (d), and 645.113(i)	645.103(c), 645.111(c) and (d), and 645.113(i) [Revised].
710, subpart A [Reserved]	710, subpart A [Added].
710, subpart B (§§ 710.201–710.205)	710.201.
710, subpart C (710.301–710.306)	710.203.
712, subpart A [Reserved]	Removed.
712, subpart B (712.201–712.204)	710, subpart C.
712, subpart C [Reserved]	Removed.
712, subpart D (712.401–712.408)	710.105, 710.203.
712, subpart F (712.601–712.606)	710.509.
712, subpart G (712.701–712.703)	Removed.
713, subpart A (713.101–713.103)	710.101–710.103.
713, subpart B (713.201–713.205)	710.405.
713, subpart C (713.301–713.308)	710.407–710.409.

Part and Section Analysis

Part 130, Subpart D—Advance Right-of-Way Revolving Funds

Part 130, subpart D is removed from title 23, CFR, because section 1211 (e) of the TEA–21 eliminated the right-of-way revolving fund.

Part 480—Use and Disposition of Property Previously Acquired by States for Withdrawn Interstate Segments

Part 480 is removed from title 23, CFR, since section 1303 of the TEA–21 now allows States to retain the proceeds for the lease or sale of real estate on Federal projects as long as the proceeds are used for title 23, U.S.C., type projects. Other provisions of part 480 are obsolete.

Part 620, Subpart B—Relinquishment of Highway Facilities

Part 620 is amended to clarify that it is applicable only to transfers of highway facilities for continued highway use. Approvals for other disposals and modifications of access are governed by 23 CFR part 710.

Section 630.106(c)(3)

In § 630.106(c)(3), the reference to “23 CFR part 712” is revised to read “23 CFR part 710” to provide a current reference.

Section 635.307(b)(3)

In § 635.307(b)(3), the reference to “23 CFR 713, subpart A” is revised to read “23 CFR 710.403” to provide a current citation.

Part 645—Utilities

Sections 645.103(c) and 645.111 (c) and (d) are amended to revise the reference “23 CFR chapter I, subchapter H, Right-of-Way and Environment” to read “23 CFR 710.203.” Section 645.113(i) is amended to revise the reference “23 CFR part 712, the Acquisition Functions” to read “23 CFR 710.503.”

Parts 710—Right-of-Way—General; 712—The Acquisition Function; and 713—Right-of-Way—The Property Management Function

Parts 710, 712, and 713 are removed in their entirety, and replaced by six new subparts under a new part 710. The reorganization includes: subpart A—General; subpart B—Program Administration; subpart C—Project Development; subpart D—Real Property Management; subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives; and subpart F—Federal Assistance Programs. These new sections clarify the purpose of the regulation and include a new definition section. Detailed requirements and rules have been replaced by a provision that

will allow States to include their acquisition process in a State manual to be approved by the FHWA.

This final rule seeks to further clarify and reduce Federal regulatory requirements and to place primary responsibility for a number of approval actions at the State level. It substantially revises the order of regulatory materials and completes the process of removing redundant, outdated, and unnecessary content from the existing rule.

Part 710, Subpart A—General

A unified purpose and applicability statement along with definitions is included in subpart A of this final rule. This consolidates material now found in several locations of the existing regulations.

Part 710, Subpart B—Program Administration

Section 710.201 clarifies that the STD has the overall responsibility to assure compliance with State and Federal laws and regulations. The methods and practices of the STDs are to be specified in ROW operations manuals submitted for approval by the FHWA no later than January 1, 2001, and certified as current every five years thereafter.

State ROW manuals are considered to be a sound basis for implementing appropriate procedures at the State and local level. It is a State responsibility to

maintain the manual and complete the various right-of-way phases in accordance with Federal law and regulations. The manual provides a documented reference for use by State ROW personnel, local public agencies, affected individuals, and the FHWA. Alternative methods to achieve program objectives have been explored in developing this final rule, specifically, efforts were made to reduce the level of Federal oversight, required recordkeeping, and mandated reporting. The FHWA believes that the need for project level surveillance has diminished since the era of the Interstate program when Federal funding was allocated on the basis of the cost to complete the system. Now States receive a fixed allocation of Federal funds based largely on formula. Hence, it is clearly in the States' best interest to use their Federal-aid funds prudently in all areas, including the acquisition, management, and disposition of real property.

Section 710.203(b)(1) expands Federal reimbursement for right-of-way acquisition costs beyond the current limit of "generally compensable" costs. Under former regulations, the States and the Federal government were required to ascertain which types of acquisition costs were generally compensable across the nation and limit Federal reimbursement to those activities. This limits State flexibility, imposes a "one size fits all" philosophy, and creates administrative burdens for both the States and the FHWA. State and Federal staff time devoted to isolating and extracting these costs does not add value to the overall transportation program accomplishments. Moreover, States should have greater discretion in determining the best use of formula-allocated Federal funds for acquisition purposes, as they now have in virtually every other aspect of projects funded with Federal-aid.

Since 1991, the kinds of activities that are eligible for Federal-aid funds have greatly increased, and States have received greatly expanded discretion in the use of Federal-aid funds. This final rule echoes statutory and policy changes that have occurred throughout the rest of the Federal-aid program for the surface transportation program.

Part 710, Subpart C—Project Development

The sections in this subpart were taken from part 712, subpart B and revised to provide a brief chronology of the sequence and actions which are necessary to qualify for Federal-aid funding. Section 710.305 provides new agency requirements mandating that in

areas in which Clean Air Act conformity determination has lapsed, special coordination is necessary prior to initiating new projects or continuing activity on existing projects. Section 710.311 includes a new TEA-21 provision which provides that an oversight agreement between the STD and the FHWA must specify responsibility for the review of projects at the plan, specification, and estimate (PS&E) stage.

Part 710, Subpart D—Real Property Management

The sections in this subpart were taken from part 712, subpart B and revised to provide that the STD will charge fair market value for the use or disposal of real estate acquired with title 23, U.S.C., funding. Exceptions to the requirement to collect fair market value or rent may be approved by the FHWA. The air rights guidelines are to be maintained on the Internet. The STD may retain the Federal share of rental and disposal proceeds if used for projects eligible under title 23, U.S.C.

Section 710.401 provides that property disposals or any other use of right-of-way along the Interstate requires the STD to obtain FHWA concurrence, but this would no longer be required for non-Interstate highways. Instead, the STD ROW manual would specify procedures for the leasing, maintenance and disposal of property rights, including access control.

Section 710.403(e) of the final rule includes a TEA-21 provision that the Federal share of proceeds from the sale or lease of real estate originally acquired as part of a Federal-aid project (not limited to airspace) could be retained by the STD, if used for projects that would be eligible for funding under title 23, U.S.C. Section 710.403(d) of the final rule requires that, with certain exceptions, the STD charge fair market value for the sale or lease of real property if the property was acquired with Federal assistance made available from the highway trust fund. This reflects the provision of 23 U.S.C. 156, as amended by section 1303 of TEA-21. This revision reduces administrative burdens on States and the FHWA and gives States and local governments greater flexibility in use of funds, while also protecting Federal interests by ensuring funds are used on purposes permitted under title 23, U.S.C. This procedure applies to all disposals, including surplus property from withdrawn Interstate projects, processed subsequent to June 9, 1998, the effective date of TEA-21. Under the rule, income from all property uses and dispositions is treated in a uniform manner.

The final rule in § 710.405 continues to specify procedures the States will be required to follow in use of airspace on the Interstate facilities which have received funding under title 23, U.S.C., in any way. However, these airspace requirements will no longer be mandated for non-Interstate highways.

The final rule in § 710.405 relocates a significant amount of detail relating to the management of airspace. The detailed provisions for airspace, particularly the detailed geometric requirements for the use of property over or under a highway, will be developed and updated through an airspace technical guidance document. An advantage of an airspace technical guidance document is that it is easier to update.

Part 710, Subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives

The sections in this subpart were taken from part 712, subparts E and F. Subpart G relating to the right-of-way revolving fund is removed since TEA-21 eliminated the revolving fund.

The final rule in § 710.501 also includes a TEA-21 provision (section 1301) that the value of property acquired by State or local governments before project agreement could be credited toward the State share of project cost, as long as certain conditions, including those relating to the environmental process, have been met. Prior to TEA-21, private property donated to a Federal project could be credited to the non-Federal share, but no such credit was permitted for publicly-owned property. The regulation fulfills TEA-21 statutory provisions by allowing a State credit toward the non-Federal share of the cost of a project, and mandating the credit in the case of locally-owned property. The conditions which must be met to allow the credit would include careful observance of the environmental process.

As a basis for protective buying, significant increased cost may be used as a justification under § 710.503(b).

The final rule in §§ 710.505 and 710.507 contains separate sections for property donations by private parties and contributions by State or local governments to clearly distinguish between these distinct actions, both of which can generate credits for the State or local matching share of a project.

The final rule in § 710.513(b) clarifies that where property is to be used for environmental mitigation or environmental banking, the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Public Law 91-645, 84 Stat. 1894,

as amended) apply in the acquisition of the property.

In general, FHWA approval actions in § 710.409 and 710.405 for disposal of property and use of air space were revised in the final rule to more closely parallel the assumptions of responsibilities principles, as outlined in section 1305 of TEA-21 to stress FHWA approval actions on the Interstate system.

Part 710, Subpart F—Federal Assistance Programs

Sections 710.601 and 710.603 were taken from part 712, subpart F and revised to provide updated references to new legislation and to conform the regulatory references to this final rule.

Part 712—The Acquisition Function

Part 712 is removed from title 23, CFR. The provisions of current part 712, subpart B, concerning general provisions and project procedures are relocated and revised as new part 710, subpart C, project development.

We are removing current part 712, subparts A and C (empty reserved slots) and G, right-of-way revolving fund. Subpart G was eliminated by section 1211(e) of the TEA-21. The revolving fund was a pool of money that could be used by States to acquire right-of-way in advance of the time that State funding was available.

The information in current part 712, subpart D regarding administrative and legal settlements and court awards is relocated to new §§ 710.105 (Definitions) and 710.203 (Funding and reimbursement).

Federal land transfers and direct Federal acquisition policies and procedures found in current part 712, subpart E are relocated to new part 710, subpart F (Federal assistance programs), §§ 710.601 and 710.603.

Current part 712, subpart F, concerning functional replacement of real property in public ownership is relocated to new part 710, subpart E, specifically § 710.509.

A major objective of the final rule is to reorder the regulation so that it follows the same sequence as the development and implementation of a Federal-aid project. This rearrangement in chronological order should aid the public and State transportation departments (STD) in effectively using the regulation.

The final rule also clarifies the State-Federal partnership, which is not considered a major or significant change.

Part 713—Right-of-Way—The Property Management Function

Part 713 is removed from title 23, CFR. Current subpart A concerning purpose, applicability, policies and procedures of property management are relocated to new part 710, subpart A (§§ 710.101 and 710.103) and included in the general statement for real property.

Current part 713, subpart B regarding management of airspace on Federal-aid highway systems for non-highway purposes is relocated to new part 710 at § 710.405 (air rights on the Interstate). The FHWA approval for the use of airspace is limited to Interstate projects. Disposal of rights-of-way provisions found in current part 713, subpart C are relocated to new part 710, subpart D (real property management) at §§ 710.407 (leasing) and 710.409 (disposals). This section clarifies that income received by the STDs may be retained when used for projects eligible under title 23, U.S.C.

Provisions relating to the real estate issues contained in sections 1301 and 1303 of the TEA-21 have been incorporated into these regulations, notably: (1) Allowing credit to the non-Federal share when a State or local government contributes land to a project; (2) allowing States to retain income from sale or lease of real property, as long as the income is used for projects eligible under title 23, U.S.C.; and (3) eliminating the right-of-way revolving fund and clarifying credit for private property donations.

Rulemaking Analyses and Notices

All comments received before the close of business on March 24, 1999, were considered in developing the final rule and late comments were considered to the extent practicable. The comments are available for examination using docket number FHWA 98-4315 in the docket room at the above address or via the electronic addresses provided above.

Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review) and DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures

The FHWA has determined that this action is not a significant regulatory action within the meaning of Executive Order 12866, nor is it a significant regulatory action within the Department of Transportation's regulatory policies and procedures. The economic impact of this rulemaking will be minimal; therefore, a full regulatory evaluation is not required. The FHWA does not consider this action to be significant because these regulations simplify, clarify, reorganize, and/or eliminate

existing requirements. The procedures would simply implement current law and eliminate constraints on FHWA reimbursement for certain right-of-way expenditures when those expenditures are made under provisions of State law. Neither the individual nor cumulative impact of this action is significant because this rule does not alter the funding levels available to the States for Federal or federally-assisted programs covered by the TEA-21.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

In compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601-612), the agency has evaluated the effects of this rule on small entities, such as local agencies and businesses. This action would merely update and clarify existing procedures. Also, this rule reduces Federal regulatory requirements and allows State procedures to be utilized. Local entities could also adopt State procedures for advancing Federal-aid projects under the State transportation plan. Accordingly, the FHWA certifies that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Environmental Impact

The FHWA has also analyzed this action for the purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), and concludes that this action will not have any effect on the quality of the human and natural environment.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)

This action has been analyzed in accordance with the principles and criteria contained in Executive Order 13132, dated August 4, 1999, and it has been determined this action does not have a substantial direct effect or sufficient federalism implications on States that would limit the policymaking discretion of the States. Nothing in this document directly preempts any State law or regulation.

Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995

This rule does not impose a Federal mandate resulting in the expenditure by

State, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100 million or more in any one year. (2 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), 49 U.S.C. 3501–3520, Federal agencies must determine whether requirements contained in rulemaking are subject to the information collection provisions of the PRA.

The FHWA has determined that this final rule places a requirement on the STDs, for Right-of-Way Manuals, that requires Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval.

The FHWA is allowing STDs to develop and submit the manuals by January 1, 2001. The FHWA estimates the annual burden of this requirement is approximately 4,000 hours on a national basis.

A request for OMB approval of the manual requirement will be submitted in the near future.

Executive Order 12988 (Civil Justice Reform)

This action meets applicable standards in sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform, to minimize litigation, eliminate ambiguity, and reduce burden.

Executive Order 13045 (Protection of Children)

We have analyzed this action under Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. This rule is not an economically significant rule and does not concern an environmental risk to health or safety that may disproportionately affect children.

Executive Order 12630 (Taking of Private Property)

This rule will not effect a taking of private property or otherwise have taking implications under Executive Order 12630, Governmental Actions and Interference with Constitutionally Protected Property Rights.

Regulation Identification Number

A regulation identification number (RIN) is assigned to each regulatory action listed in the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulations. The Regulatory Information Service Center publishes the Unified Agenda in April and October of each year. The RIN contained in the heading of this document can be used to cross reference this action with the Unified Agenda.

List of Subjects

23 CFR Part 130

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Real property acquisition, Rights-of-way, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

23 CFR Part 480

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Intergovernmental relations, Mass transportation, Rights-of-way, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

23 CFR Part 620

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Rights-of-way.

23 CFR Part 630

Government contracts, Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Project authorization, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

23 CFR Part 635

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Real property acquisition, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

23 CFR Part 645

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Rights-of-way, Utilities.

23 CFR Parts 710, 712, and 713

Grant programs—transportation, Highways and roads, Real property acquisition, Rights-of-way, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, and under the authority of 23 U.S.C. 107, 108, 111, and 315, the FHWA amends 23 CFR chapter I as set forth below:

PART 130—[REMOVED]

1. Remove part 130.

PART 480—[REMOVED]

2. Remove part 480.

PART 620—[AMENDED]

3. The authority citation for part 620 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315 and 318; 49 CFR 1.48; and 23 CFR 1.32.

4. Revise § 620.202 to read as follows:

§ 620.202 Applicability.

The provisions of this subpart apply to highway facilities where Federal-aid funds have participated in either right-of-way or physical construction costs of a project. The provisions of this subpart apply only to relinquishment of

facilities for continued highway purposes. Other real property disposals and modifications or disposal of access rights are governed by the requirements of 23 CFR part 710.

5. Revise § 620.203(j) to read as follows:

§ 620.203 Procedures.

* * * * *

(j) If a relinquishment is to a Federal, State, or local government agency for highway purposes, there need not be a charge to the said agency, nor in such event any credit to Federal funds. If for any reason there is a charge, the STD may retain the Federal share of the proceeds if used for projects eligible under title 23 of the United States Code.

PART 630—[AMENDED]

6. Revise the authority citation for part 630 to read as follows:

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 105, 106, 109, 115, 315, 320, and 402(a); 23 CFR 1.32; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

§ 630.106 [Amended]

7. Amend § 630.106(c)(3) by revising the citation “23 CFR part 712” to read “23 CFR part 710”.

PART 635—[AMENDED]

8. Revise the authority citation for part 635 to read as follows:

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 101(note), 109, 112, 113, 114, 116, 119, 128, and 315; 31 U.S.C. 6505; 42 U.S.C. 3334, 4601 *et seq.*; sec. 1041(a), Pub. L. 102–240, 105 Stat. 1914; 23 CFR 1.32; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

§ 635.307 [Amended]

9. Amend § 635.307(b)(3) by revising the citation “23 CFR part 713, subpart A” to read “23 CFR 710.403”.

PART 645—[AMENDED]

10. The authority citation for part 645 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 101, 109, 111, 116, 123, and 315; 23 CFR 1.23 and 1.27; 49 CFR 1.48(b); and E.O. 11990, 42 FR 26961 (May 24, 1977).

11. Amend §§ 645.103(c) and 645.111(c) and (d) by revising the words “23 CFR chapter I, subchapter H, Right-of-Way and Environment” to read “23 CFR 710.203”.

11–A. Amend § 645.113 (i) by revising the words “23 CFR part 712, the Acquisition Functions” to read “23 CFR 710.503”.

PART 712—[REMOVED]

12. Remove part 712.

PART 713—[REMOVED]

13. Remove part 713.
14. Revise part 710 to read as follows:

PART 710—RIGHT-OF-WAY AND REAL ESTATE**Subpart A—General**

- Sec.
710.101 Purpose.
710.103 Applicability.
710.105 Definitions.

Subpart B—Program Administration

- 710.201 State responsibilities.
710.203 Funding and reimbursement.

Subpart C—Project Development

- 710.301 General.
710.303 Planning.
710.305 Environmental analysis.
710.307 Project agreement.
710.309 Acquisition.
710.311 Construction advertising.

Subpart D—Real Property Management

- 710.401 General.
710.403 Management.
710.405 Air rights on the Interstate
710.407 Leasing.
710.409 Disposals.

Subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives

- 710.501 Early acquisition.
710.503 Protective buying and hardship acquisition.
710.505 Real property donations.
710.507 State and local contributions.
710.509 Functional replacement of real property in public ownership.
710.511 Transportation enhancements.
710.513 Environmental mitigation.

Subpart F—Federal Assistance Programs

- 710.601 Federal land transfer.
710.603 Direct Federal acquisition.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 101(a), 107, 108, 111, 114, 133, 142(f), 145, 156, 204, 210, 308, 315, 317, and 323; 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 4633, 4651–4655; 49 CFR 1.48(b) and (c), 18.31, and parts 21 and 24; 23 CFR 1.32.

Subpart A—General**§ 710.101 Purpose.**

The primary purpose of the requirements in this part is to ensure the prudent use of Federal funds under title 23 of the United States Code in the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property. In addition to the requirements of this part, other real property related provisions apply and are found at 49 CFR part 24.

§ 710.103 Applicability.

This part applies whenever Federal assistance under title 23 of the United States Code is used. The part applies to programs administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Where Federal funds are transferred to other Federal agencies to administer, those

agencies' procedures may be utilized. Additional guidance is available electronically at the FHWA Real Estate services website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/index.htm>

§ 710.105 Definitions.

(a) Terms defined in 49 CFR part 24, and 23 CFR part 1 have the same meaning where used in this part, except as modified in this section.

(b) The following terms where used in this part have the following meaning:

Access rights means the right of ingress to and egress from a property that abuts a street or highway.

Acquiring agency means a State agency, other entity, or person acquiring real property for title 23 of the United States Code purposes.

Acquisition means activities to obtain an interest in, and possession of, real property.

Air rights means real property interests defined by agreement, and conveyed by deed, lease, or permit for the use of airspace.

Airspace means that space located above and/or below a highway or other transportation facility's established grade line, lying within the horizontal limits of the approved right-of-way or project boundaries.

Damages means the loss in value attributable to remainder property due to severance or consequential damages, as limited by State law, that arise when only part of an owner's property is acquired.

Disposal means the sale of real property or rights therein, including access or air rights, when no longer needed for highway right-of-way or other uses eligible for funding under title 23 of the United States Code.

Donation means the voluntary transfer of privately owned real property for the benefit of a public transportation project without compensation or with compensation at less than fair market value.

Early acquisition means acquisition of real property by State or local governments in advance of Federal authorization or agreement.

Easement means an interest in real property that conveys a right to use a portion of an owner's property or a portion of an owner's rights in the property.

NHS means the National Highway System as defined in 23 U.S.C. 103(b).

Oversight agreement means the project approval and agreement concluded between the State and the FHWA to outline which projects will be monitored at the plans, specifications, and estimate stage by FHWA as required by 23 U.S.C. 106(c)(3).

Real property means land and any improvements thereto, including but not limited to, fee interests, easements, air or access rights, and the rights to control use, leasehold, and leased fee interests.

Relinquishment means the conveyance of a portion of a highway right-of-way or facility by a State highway department to another government agency for continued transportation use. (See 23 CFR part 620, subpart B.)

Right-of-way means real property and rights therein used for the construction, operation, or maintenance of a transportation or related facility funded under title 23 of the United States Code.

Settlement means the result of negotiations based on fair market value in which the amount of just compensation is agreed upon for the purchase of real property or an interest therein. This term includes the following:

(1) An *administrative settlement* is a settlement reached prior to filing a condemnation proceeding based on value related evidence, administrative consideration, or other factors approved by an authorized agency official.

(2) A *legal settlement* is a settlement reached by a responsible State legal representative after filing a condemnation proceeding, including stipulated settlements approved by the court in which the condemnation action had been filed.

(3) A *court settlement or court award* is any decision by a court that follows a contested trial or hearing before a jury, commission, judge, or other legal entity having the authority to establish the amount of compensation for a taking under the laws of eminent domain.

State agency means a department, agency, or instrumentality of a State or of a political subdivision of a State; any department, agency, or instrumentality of two or more States or of two or more political subdivisions of a State or States; or any person who has the authority to acquire property by eminent domain, for public purposes, under State law.

State transportation department (STD) means the State highway department, transportation department, or other State transportation agency or commission to which title 23 of the United States Code funds are apportioned.

Uneconomic remnant means a remainder property which the acquiring agency has determined has little or no utility or value to the owner.

Uniform Act means the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Public Law 91–646, 84 Stat.

1894), and the implementing regulations at 49 CFR part 24.

Subpart B—Program Administration

§ 710.201 State responsibilities.

(a) *Organization.* Each STD shall be adequately staffed, equipped, and organized to discharge its real property-related responsibilities.

(b) *Program oversight.* The STD shall have overall responsibility for the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property on Federal-aid projects. This responsibility shall include assuring that acquisitions and disposals by a State agency are made in compliance with legal requirements of State and Federal laws and regulations.

(c) *Right-of-way (ROW) operations manual.* Each STD which receives funding from the highway trust fund shall maintain a manual describing its right-of-way organization, policies, and procedures. The manual shall describe functions and procedures for all phases of the real estate program, including appraisal and appraisal review, negotiation and eminent domain, property management, and relocation assistance. The manual shall also specify procedures to prevent conflict of interest and avoid fraud, waste, and abuse. The manual shall be in sufficient detail and depth to guide State employees and others involved in acquiring and managing real property. The State manuals should be developed and updated, as a minimum, to meet the following schedule:

(1) The STD shall prepare and submit for approval by FHWA an up-to-date Right-of-Way Operations Manual by no later than January 1, 2001.

(2) Every five years thereafter, the chief administrative officer of the STD shall certify to the FHWA that the current ROW operations manual conforms to existing practices and contains necessary procedures to ensure compliance with Federal and State real estate law and regulation.

(3) The STD shall update the manual periodically to reflect changes in operations and submit the updated materials for approval by the FHWA.

(d) *Compliance responsibility.* The STD is responsible for complying with current FHWA requirements whether or not its manual reflects those requirements.

(e) *Adequacy of real property interest.* The real property interest acquired for all Federal-aid projects funded pursuant to title 23 of the United States Code shall be adequate for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the resulting facility and for the protection

of both the facility and the traveling public.

(f) *Recordkeeping.* The acquiring agency shall maintain adequate records of its acquisition and property management activities.

(1) Acquisition records, including records related to owner or tenant displacements, and property inventories of improvements acquired shall be in sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with this part and 49 CFR part 24. These records shall be retained at least 3 years from either:

(i) The date the State receives Federal reimbursement of the final payment made to each owner of a property and to each person displaced from a property, or

(ii) The date a credit toward the Federal share of a project is approved based on early acquisition activities of the State.

(2) Property management records shall include inventories of real property considered excess to project needs, all authorized uses of airspace, and other leases or agreements for use of real property managed by the STD.

(g) *Procurement.* Contracting for all activities required in support of State right-of-way programs through use of private consultants and other services shall conform to 49 CFR 18.36.

(h) *Use of other public land acquisition organizations or private consultants.* The STD may enter into written agreements with other State, county, municipal, or local public land acquisition organizations or with private consultants to carry out its authorities under paragraph (b) of this section. Such organizations, firms, or individuals must comply with the policies and practices of the STD. The STD shall monitor any such real property acquisition activities to assure compliance with State and Federal law and requirements and is responsible for informing such organizations of all such requirements and for imposing sanctions in cases of material non-compliance.

(i) *Approval actions.* Except for the Interstate system, the STD and the FHWA will agree on the scope of property related oversight and approval actions that the FHWA will be responsible for under this part. The content of the most recent oversight agreement shall be reflected in the State right-of-way operations manual. The oversight agreement, and thus the manual, will indicate for which non-Interstate Federal-aid project submission of materials for review and approval are required.

(j) *Approval of just compensation.* The amount determined to be just

compensation shall be approved by a responsible official of the acquiring agency.

(k) *Description of acquisition process.* The STD shall provide persons affected by projects or acquisitions advanced under title 23 of the United States Code with a written description of its real property acquisition process under State law and of the owner's rights, privileges, and obligations. The description shall be written in clear, non-technical language and, where appropriate, be available in a language other than English.

§ 710.203 Funding and reimbursement.

(a) *General conditions.* The following conditions are a prerequisite to Federal participation in the costs of acquiring real property except as provided in § 710.501 for early acquisition:

(1) The project for which the real property is acquired is included in an approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);

(2) The State has executed a project agreement;

(3) Preliminary acquisition activities, including a title search and preliminary property map preparation necessary for the completion of the environmental process, can be advanced under preliminary engineering prior to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) clearance, while other work involving contact with affected property owners must normally be deferred until after NEPA approval, except as provided in 23 CFR 710.503 for protective buying and hardship acquisition; and in 23 CFR 710.501, early acquisition. Appraisal completion may be authorized as preliminary right-of-way activity prior to completion of the environmental document; and

(4) Costs have been incurred in conformance with State and Federal law requirements.

(b) *Direct eligible costs.* Federal participation in real property costs is limited to the costs of property incorporated into the final project and the associated direct costs of acquisition, unless provided otherwise. Participation is provided for:

(1) *Real property acquisition.* Usual costs and disbursements associated with real property acquisition required under the laws of the State, including the following:

(i) The cost of contracting for private acquisition services or the cost associated with the use of local public agencies.

(ii) The cost of acquisition activities, such as, appraisal, appraisal review, cost estimates, relocation planning,

right-of-way plan preparation, title work, and similar necessary right-of-way related work.

(iii) The cost to acquire real property, including incidental expenses.

(iv) The cost of administrative settlements in accordance with 49 CFR 24.102(i), legal settlements, court awards, and costs incidental to the condemnation process.

(v) The cost of minimum payments and appraisal waiver amounts included in the State approved manual.

(2) *Relocation assistance and payments.* Payments made incidental to and associated with the displacement from acquired property under 49 CFR part 24.

(3) *Damages.* The cost of severance and/or consequential damages to remaining real property resulting from a partial acquisition, actual or constructive, of real property for a project based on elements compensable under applicable State law.

(4) *Property management.* The net cost of managing real property prior to and during construction to provide for maintenance, protection, and the clearance and disposal of improvements until final project acceptance.

(5) *Payroll-related expenses and technical guidance.* Salary and related expenses of employees of an acquiring agency are eligible costs in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>). This includes State costs incurred for managing or providing technical guidance, consultation or oversight on projects where right-of-way services are performed by a political subdivision or others.

(6) *Property not incorporated into a project funded under title 23 of the United States Code.* The cost of property not incorporated into a project may be eligible for reimbursement in the following circumstances:

(i) *General.* Costs for construction material sites, property acquisitions to a logical boundary, or for eligible transportation enhancement, sites for disposal of hazardous materials, environmental mitigation, environmental banking activities, or last resort housing.

(ii) *Easements not incorporated into the right-of-way.* The cost of acquiring easements outside the right-of-way for permanent or temporary use.

(7) *Uneconomic remnants.* The cost of uneconomic remnants purchased in connection with the acquisition of a partial taking for the project as required by the Uniform Act.

(8) *Access rights.* Payment for full or partial control of access on an existing highway (*i.e.*, one not on a new

location), based on elements compensable under applicable State law. Participation does not depend on another real property interest being acquired or on further construction of the highway facility.

(9) *Utility and railroad property.* (i) The cost to replace operating real property owned by a displaced utility or railroad and conveyed to an STD for a highway project, as provided in 23 CFR part 140, subpart I, Reimbursement for Railroad Work, and 23 CFR part 645, Subpart A, Utility Relocations, Adjustments and Reimbursement, and 23 CFR part 646, Subpart B, Railroad-Highway Projects.

(ii) Participation in the cost of acquiring non-operating utility or railroad real property shall be in the same manner as that used in the acquisition of other privately owned property.

(c) *Withholding payment.* The FHWA may withhold payment under the conditions in 23 CFR 1.36 where the State fails to comply with Federal law or regulation, State law, or under circumstances of waste, fraud, and abuse.

(d) *Indirect costs.* Indirect costs may be claimed under the provisions of OMB Circular A-87. Indirect costs may be included on Federal-aid billings after the indirect cost rate has been approved by FHWA.

Subpart C—Project Development

§ 710.301 General.

The project development process typically follows a sequence of actions and approvals in order to qualify for funding. The key steps in this process are provided in this subpart.

§ 710.303 Planning.

State and local governments conduct metropolitan and statewide planning to develop coordinated, financially constrained system plans to meet transportation needs for local and statewide systems, under FHWA's planning regulations contained in 23 CFR part 450. In addition, air quality non-attainment areas must meet the requirements of the U.S. EPA Transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR parts 51 and 93). Projects must be included in an approved State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in order to be eligible for Federal-aid funding.

§ 710.305 Environmental analysis.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, as described in FHWA's NEPA regulations in 23 CFR part 771, normally must be conducted

and concluded with a record of decision (ROD) or equivalent before Federal funds can be placed under agreement for acquisition of right-of-way. Where applicable, a State also must complete Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*) project level conformity analysis. In areas in which the Clean Air Act conformity determination has lapsed, acquiring agencies must coordinate with Federal Highway Administration for special instructions prior to initiating new projects or continuing activity on existing projects. At the time of processing an environmental document, a State may request reimbursement of costs incurred for early acquisition, provided conditions prescribed in 23 U.S.C. 108(c) and 23 CFR 710.501, are satisfied.

§ 710.307 Project agreement.

As a condition of Federal-aid, the STD shall obtain FHWA authorization in writing or electronically before proceeding with any real property acquisitions, including hardship acquisition and protective buying (see 23 CFR 710.503). The STD must prepare a project agreement in accordance with 23 CFR part 630, subpart C. The agreement shall be based on an acceptable estimate for the cost of acquisition. On projects where the initial project agreement was executed after June 9, 1998, a State may request credit toward the non-Federal share, for early acquisitions, donations, or other contributions applied to the project provided conditions in 23 U.S.C. 323 and 23 CFR 710.501, are satisfied.

§ 710.309 Acquisition.

The process of acquiring real property includes appraisal, appraisal review, establishing just compensation, negotiations, administrative and legal settlements, and condemnation. The State shall conduct acquisition and related relocation activities in accordance with 49 CFR part 24.

§ 710.311 Construction advertising.

The State must manage real property acquired for a project until it is required for construction. Clearance of improvements can be scheduled during the acquisition phase of the project using sale/removal agreements, separate demolition contracts, or be included as a work item in the construction contract. On Interstate projects, prior to advertising for construction, the State shall develop ROW availability statements and certifications related to project acquisitions as required by 23 CFR 635.309. For non-Interstate projects, the oversight agreement must specify responsibility for the review and

approval of the ROW availability statements and certifications. Generally, for non-NHS projects, the State has full responsibility for determining that right-of-way is available for construction.

Subpart D—Real Property Management

§ 710.401 General.

This subpart describes the acquiring agency's responsibilities to control the use of real property required for a project in which Federal funds participated in any phase of the project. Prior to allowing any change in access control or other use or occupancy of acquired property along the Interstate, the STD shall secure an approval from the FHWA for such change or use. The STD shall specify in the State's ROW operations manual, procedures for the rental, leasing, maintenance, and disposal of real property acquired with title 23 of the United States Code funds. The State shall assure that local agencies follow the State's approved procedures, or the local agencies own procedures if approved for use by the STD.

§ 710.403 Management.

(a) The STD must assure that all real property within the boundaries of a federally-aided facility is devoted exclusively to the purposes of that facility and is preserved free of all other public or private alternative uses, unless such alternative uses are permitted by Federal regulation or the FHWA. An alternative use must be consistent with the continued operation, maintenance, and safety of the facility, and such use shall not result in the exposure of the facility's users or others to hazards.

(b) The STD shall specify procedures in the State manual for determining when a real property interest is no longer needed. These procedures must provide for coordination among relevant STD organizational units, including maintenance, safety, design, planning, right-of-way, environment, access management, and traffic operations.

(c) The STD shall evaluate the environmental effects of disposal and leasing actions requiring FHWA approval as provided in 23 CFR part 771.

(d) Acquiring agencies shall charge current fair market value or rent for the use or disposal of real property interests, including access control, if those real property interests were obtained with title 23 of the United States Code funding, except as provided in paragraphs (d) (1) through (5) of this section. Since property no longer needed for a project was acquired with public funding, the principle guiding

disposal would normally be to sell the property at fair market value and use the funds for transportation purposes. The term fair market value as used for acquisition and disposal purposes is as defined by State statute and/or State court decisions. Exceptions to the general requirement for charging fair market value may be approved in the following situations:

(1) With FHWA approval, when the STD clearly shows that an exception is in the overall public interest for social, environmental, or economic purposes; nonproprietary governmental use; or uses under 23 U.S.C. 142(f), Public Transportation. The STD manual may include criteria for evaluating disposals at less than fair market value. Disposal for public purposes may also be at fair market value. The STD shall submit requests for such exceptions to the FHWA in writing.

(2) Use by public utilities in accordance with 23 CFR part 645.

(3) Use by Railroads in accordance with 23 CFR part 646.

(4) Use for Bikeways and pedestrian walkways in accordance with 23 CFR part 652.

(5) Use for transportation projects eligible for assistance under title 23 of the United States Code.

(e) The Federal share of net income from the sale or lease of excess real property shall be used by the STD for activities eligible for funding under title 23 of the United States Code. Where project income derived from the sale or lease of excess property is used for subsequent title 23 projects, use of the income does not create a Federal-aid project.

(f) No FHWA approval is required for disposal of property which is located outside of the limits of the right-of-way if Federal funds did not participate in the acquisition cost of the property.

(g) Highway facilities in which Federal funds participated in either the right-of-way or construction may be relinquished to another governmental agency for continued highway use under the provisions of 23 CFR 620, subpart B.

§ 710.405 Air rights on the Interstate.

(a) The FHWA policies relating to management of airspace on the Interstate for non-highway purposes are included in this section. Although this section deals specifically with approval actions on the Interstate, any use of airspace contemplated by a STD must assure that such occupancy, use, or reservation is in the public interest and does not impair the highway or interfere with the free and safe flow of traffic as provided in 23 CFR 1.23.

(1) This subpart applies to Interstate facilities which received title 23 of the United States Code assistance in any way.

(2) This subpart does not apply to the following:

(i) Non-Interstate highways.

(ii) Railroads and public utilities which cross or otherwise occupy Federal-aid highway right-of-way.

(iii) Relocations of railroads or utilities for which reimbursement is claimed under 23 CFR part 140, subparts E and H.

(iv) Bikeways and pedestrian walkways as covered in 23 CFR part 652.

(b) A STD may grant rights for temporary or permanent occupancy or use of Interstate system airspace if the STD has acquired sufficient legal right, title, and interest in the right-of-way of a federally assisted highway to permit the use of certain airspace for non-highway purposes; and where such airspace is not required presently or in the foreseeable future for the safe and proper operation and maintenance of the highway facility. The STD must obtain prior FHWA approval, except for paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) An STD may make lands and rights-of-way available without charge to a publicly owned mass transit authority for public transit purposes whenever the public interest will be served, and where this can be accomplished without impairing automotive safety or future highway improvements.

(d) An individual, company, organization, or public agency desiring to use airspace shall submit a written request to the STD. If the STD recommends approval, it shall forward an application together with its recommendation and any necessary supplemental information including the proposed airspace agreement to the FHWA. The submission shall affirmatively provide for adherence to all policy requirements contained in this subpart and conform to the provisions in the FHWA's Airspace Guidelines at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realstate/index.htm>.

§ 710.407 Leasing.

(a) Leasing of real property acquired with title 23 of the United States Code, funds shall be covered by an agreement between the STD and lessee which contains provisions to insure the safety and integrity of the federally funded facility. It shall also include provisions governing lease revocation, removal of improvements at no cost to the FHWA, adequate insurance to hold the State and the FHWA harmless,

nondiscrimination, access by the STD and the FHWA for inspection, maintenance, and reconstruction of the facility.

(b) Where a proposed use requires changes in the existing transportation facility, such changes shall be provided without cost to Federal funds unless otherwise specifically agreed to by the STD and the FHWA.

(c) Proposed uses of real property shall conform to the current design standards and safety criteria of the Federal Highway Administration for the functional classification of the highway facility in which the property is located.

§ 710.409 Disposals.

(a) Real property interests determined to be excess to transportation needs may be sold or conveyed to a public entity or to a private party in accordance with § 710.403(c).

(b) Federal, State, and local agencies shall be afforded the opportunity to acquire real property interests considered for disposal when such real property interests have potential use for parks, conservation, recreation, or related purposes, and when such a transfer is allowed by State law. When this potential exists, the STD shall notify the appropriate resource agencies of its intentions to dispose of the real property interests. The notifications can be accomplished by placing the appropriate agencies on the States' disposal notification listing.

(c) Real property interests may be retained by the STD to restore, preserve, or improve the scenic beauty and environmental quality adjacent to the transportation facility.

(d) Where the transfer of properties to other agencies at less than fair market value for continued public use is clearly justified as in the public interest and approved by the FHWA, the deed shall provide for reversion of the property for failure to continue public ownership and use. Where property is sold at fair market value no reversion clause is required. Disposal actions described in 23 CFR 710.403(d)(1) for less than fair market value require a public interest determination and FHWA approval, consistent with that section.

Subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives

§ 710.501 Early acquisition.

(a) *Real property acquisition.* The State may initiate acquisition of real property at any time it has the legal authority to do so based on program or project considerations. The State may undertake early acquisition for corridor

preservation, access management, or other purposes.

(b) *Eligible costs.* Acquisition costs incurred by a State agency prior to executing a project agreement with the FHWA are not eligible for Federal-aid reimbursement. However, such costs may become eligible for use as a credit towards the State's share of a Federal-aid project if the following conditions are met:

(1) The property was lawfully obtained by the State;

(2) The property was not land described in 23 U.S.C. 138;

(3) The property was acquired in accordance with the provisions of 49 CFR part 24;

(4) The State complied with the requirements of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–2000d–4);

(5) The State determined and the FHWA concurs that the action taken did not influence the environmental assessment for the project, including:

(i) The decision on need to construct the project;

(ii) The consideration of alternatives; and

(iii) The selection of the design or location; and

(6) The property will be incorporated into a Federal-aid project.

(7) The original project agreement covering the project was executed on or after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Reimbursement.* In addition to meeting all provisions in paragraph (b) of this section, the FHWA approval for reimbursement for early acquisition costs, including costs associated with displacement of owners or tenants, requires the STD to demonstrate that:

(1) Prior to acquisition, the STD made the certifications and determinations required by 23 U.S.C. 108(c)(2)(C) and (D); and

(2) The STD obtained concurrence from the Environmental Protection Agency in the findings made under paragraph (b)(5) of this section regarding the NEPA process.

§ 710.503 Protective buying and hardship acquisition.

(a) *General conditions.* Prior to the STD obtaining final environmental approval, the STD may request FHWA agreement to provide reimbursement for advance acquisition of a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels, to prevent imminent development and increased costs on the preferred location (Protective Buying), or to alleviate hardship to a property owner or owners on the preferred location (Hardship Acquisition), provided the following conditions are met:

(1) The project is included in the currently approved STIP;

(2) The STD has complied with applicable public involvement requirements in 23 CFR parts 450 and 771;

(3) A determination has been completed for any property subject to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 138; and

(4) Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are completed for properties subject to 16 U.S.C. 470(f) (historic properties).

(b) *Protective buying.* The STD must clearly demonstrate that development of the property is imminent and such development would limit future transportation choices. A significant increase in cost may be considered as an element justifying a protective purchase.

(c) *Hardship acquisitions.* The STD must accept and concur in a request for a hardship acquisition based on a property owner's written submission that:

(1) Supports the hardship acquisition by providing justification, on the basis of health, safety or financial reasons, that remaining in the property poses an undue hardship compared to others; and

(2) Documents an inability to sell the property because of the impending project, at fair market value, within a time period that is typical for properties not impacted by the impending project.

(d) *Environmental decisions.*

Acquisition of property under this section shall not influence the environmental assessment of a project, including the decision relative to the need to construct the project or the selection of a specific location.

§ 710.505 Real property donations.

(a) *Donations of property being acquired.* A non-governmental owner whose real property is required for a Federal-aid project may donate the property to the STD. Prior to accepting the property, the owner must be informed by the agency of his/her right to receive just compensation for the property. The owner shall also be informed of his/her right to an appraisal of the property by a qualified appraiser, unless the STD determines that an appraisal is unnecessary because the valuation problem is uncomplicated and the fair market value is estimated at no more than \$2500, or the State appraisal waiver limit approved by the FHWA, whichever is greater. All donations of property received prior to the approval of the NEPA document must meet environmental requirements as specified in 23 U.S.C. 323(d).

(b) *Credit for donations.* Donations of real property may be credited to the

State's matching share of the project. Credit to the State's matching share for donated property shall be based on fair market value established on the earlier of the following: either the date on which the donation becomes effective, or the date on which equitable title to the property vests in the State. The fair market value shall not include increases or decreases in value caused by the project. Donations may be made at anytime during the development of a project. The STD shall develop sufficient documentation to indicate compliance with paragraph (a) of this section and to support the amount of credit applied. The total credit cannot exceed the State's pro-rata share under the project agreement to which it is applied.

(c) *Donations and conveyances in exchange for construction features or services.* A property owner may donate property in exchange for construction features or services. The value of the donation is limited to the fair market value of property donated less the cost of the construction features or services. If the value of the donated property exceeds the cost of the construction features or services, the difference may be eligible for a credit to the State's share of project costs.

§ 710.507 State and local contributions.

(a) *General.* Real property owned by State and local governments incorporated within a federally funded project can be used as a credit toward the State matching share of total project cost. A credit cannot exceed the State's matching share required by the project agreement.

(b) *Effective date.* Credits can be applied to projects where the initial project agreement is executed after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Exemptions.* Credits are not available for lands acquired with any form of Federal financial assistance, or for lands already incorporated and used for transportation purposes.

(d) *State contributions.* Real property acquired with State funds and required for federally-assisted projects may support a credit toward the non-Federal share of project costs. The STD must prepare documentation supporting all credits including:

(1) A certification that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR 710.501(b); and

(2) Justification of the value of credit applied. Acquisition costs incurred by the State to acquire title can be used as justification for the value of the real property.

(e) *Credit for local government contributions.* A contribution by a unit

of local government of real property which is offered for credit, in connection with a project eligible for assistance under this title, shall be credited against the State share of the project at fair market value of the real property. Property may also be presented for project use with the understanding that no credit for its use is sought. The STD shall assure that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR 710.501(b), and that documentation justifies the amount of the credit.

§ 710.509 Functional replacement of real property in public ownership.

(a) *General.* When publicly owned real property, including land and/or facilities, is to be acquired for a Federal-aid highway project, in lieu of paying the fair market value for the real property, the State may provide compensation by functionally replacing the publicly owned real property with another facility which will provide equivalent utility.

(b) *Federal participation.* Federal-aid funds may participate in functional replacement costs only if:

(1) Functional replacement is permitted under State law and the STD elects to provide it.

(2) The property in question is in public ownership and use.

(3) The replacement facility will be in public ownership and will continue the public use function of the acquired facility.

(4) The State has informed the agency owning the property of its right to an estimate of just compensation based on an appraisal of fair market value and of the option to choose either just compensation or functional replacement.

(5) The FHWA concurs in the STD determination that functional replacement is in the public interest.

(6) The real property is not owned by a utility or railroad.

(c) *Federal land transfers.* Use of this section for functional replacement of real property in Federal ownership shall be in accordance with Federal land transfer provisions in subpart F of this part.

(d) *Limits upon participation.* Federal-aid participation in the costs of functional replacement are limited to costs which are actually incurred in the replacement of the acquired land and/or facility and are:

(1) Costs for facilities which do not represent increases in capacity or betterments, except for those necessary to replace utilities, to meet legal, regulatory, or similar requirements, or to

meet reasonable prevailing standards; and

(2) Costs for land to provide a site for the replacement facility.

(e) *Procedures.* When a State determines that payments providing for functional replacement of public facilities are allowable under State law, the State will incorporate within the State's ROW operating manual full procedures covering review and oversight that will be applied to such cases.

§ 710.511 Transportation enhancements.

(a) *General.* Section 133(b) (8) of title 23 of the United States Code authorizes the expenditure of surface transportation funds for transportation enhancement activities (TEA).

Transportation enhancement activities which involve the acquisition, management, and disposition of real property, and the relocation of families, individuals, and businesses, are governed by the general requirements of the Federal-aid program found in titles 23 and 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), except as specified in paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(b) *Requirements.* (1) Displacements for TEA are subject to the Uniform Act.

(2) Acquisitions for TEA are subject to the Uniform Act except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3), (b)(4), and (b)(5) of this section.

(3) Entities acquiring real property for TEA who lack the power of eminent domain may comply with the Uniform Act by meeting the limited requirements under 49 CFR 24.101(a)(2).

(4) The requirements of the Uniform Act do not apply when real property acquired for a TEA was purchased from a third party by a qualified conservation organization, and—

(i) The conservation organization is not acting on behalf of the agency receiving TEA or other Federal-aid funds, and

(ii) There was no Federal approval of property acquisition prior to the involvement of the conservation organization. [“Federal approval of property acquisition” means the date of the approval of the environmental document or project authorization/agreement, whichever is earlier.

“Involvement of the conservation organization” means the date the organization makes a legally binding offer to acquire a real property interest, including an option to purchase, in the property.]

(5) When a qualified conservation organization acquires real property for a project receiving Federal-aid highway funds on behalf of an agency with eminent domain authority, the

requirements of the Uniform Act apply as if the agency had acquired the property itself.

(6) When, subsequent to Federal approval of property acquisition, a qualified conservation organization acquires real property for a project receiving Federal-aid highway funds, and there will be no use or recourse to the power of eminent domain, the limited requirements of 49 CFR 24.101(a)(2) apply.

(c) *Property management.* Real property acquired with TEA funds shall be managed in accordance with the property management requirements provided in subpart D of this part. Any use of the property for purposes other than that for which the TEA funds were provided must be consistent with the continuation of the original use. When the original use of the real property is converted by sale or lease to another use inconsistent with the original use, the STD shall assure that the fair market value or rent is charged and the proceeds reapplied to projects eligible under title 23 of the United States Code.

§ 710.513 Environmental mitigation.

(a) The acquisition and maintenance of land for wetlands mitigation, wetlands banking, natural habitat, or other appropriate environmental mitigation is an eligible cost under the Federal-aid program. FHWA participation in wetland mitigation sites and other mitigation banks is governed by 23 CFR part 777.

(b) Environmental acquisitions or displacements by both public agencies and private parties are covered by the Uniform Act when they are the result of a program or project undertaken by a Federal agency or one that receives Federal financial assistance. This includes real property acquired for a wetland bank, or other environmentally related purpose, if it is to be used to mitigate impacts created by a Federal-aid highway project.

Subpart F—Federal Assistance Programs

§ 710.601 Federal land transfer.

(a) The provisions of this subpart apply to any project undertaken with funds for the National Highway System. When the FHWA determines that a strong Federal transportation interest exists, these provisions may also be applied to highway projects that are eligible for Federal-aid under Chapters 1 and 2 of title 23, of the United States Code, and to highway-related transfers that are requested by a State in conjunction with a military base closure under the Defense Base Closure and

Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–510, 104 Stat. 1808, as amended).

(b) Sections 107(d) and 317 of title 23, of the United States Code provide for the transfer of lands or interests in lands owned by the United States to an STD or its nominee for highway purposes.

(c) The STD may file an application with the FHWA, or can make application directly to the land-owning agency if the land-owning agency has its own authority for granting interests in land.

(d) Applications under this section shall include the following information:

(1) The purpose for which the lands are to be used;

(2) The estate or interest in the land required for the project;

(3) The Federal-aid project number or other appropriate references;

(4) The name of the Federal agency exercising jurisdiction over the land and identity of the installation or activity in possession of the land;

(5) A map showing the survey of the lands to be acquired;

(6) A legal description of the lands desired; and

(7) A statement of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332, *et seq.*) and any other applicable Federal environmental laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470(f)), and 23 U.S.C. 138.

(e) If the FHWA concurs in the need for the transfer, the land-owning agency will be notified and a right-of-entry requested. The land-owning agency shall have a period of four months in which to designate conditions necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of the reserve or to certify that the proposed appropriation is contrary to the public interest or inconsistent with the purposes for which such land or materials have been reserved. The FHWA may extend the four-month reply period at the timely request of the land-owning agency for good cause.

(f) Deeds for conveyance of lands or interests in lands owned by the United States shall be prepared by the STD and certified by an attorney licensed within the State as being legally sufficient. Such deeds shall contain the clauses required by the FHWA and 49 CFR 21.7(a)(2). After the STD prepares the deed, it will submit the proposed deed with the certification to the FHWA for review and execution.

(g) Following execution, the STD shall record the deed in the appropriate land record office and so advise the FHWA and the concerned agency.

(h) When the need for the interest acquired under this subpart no longer

exists, the STD must restore the land to the condition which existed prior to the transfer and must give notice to the FHWA and to the concerned Federal agency that such interest will immediately revert to the control of the Federal agency from which it was appropriated or to its assigns.

Alternative arrangements may be made for the sale or reversion or restoration of the lands no longer required as part of a memorandum of understanding or separate agreement.

§ 710.603 Direct Federal acquisition.

(a) The provisions of this section apply to any land and or improvements needed in connection with any project on the Interstate System, defense access roads, public lands highways, park roads, parkways, Indian reservation roads, and projects performed by the FHWA in cooperation with Federal and State agencies. For projects on the Interstate System and defense access roads, the provisions of this part are applicable only where the State is unable to acquire the required right-of-way or is unable to obtain possession with sufficient promptness.

(b) To enable the FHWA to make the necessary finding to proceed with the acquisition of the rights-of-way, the STDs written application for Federal acquisition shall include:

(1) Justification for the Federal acquisition of the lands or interests in lands;

(2) The date the FHWA authorized the STD to commence right-of-way acquisition, the date of the project agreement and a statement that the agreement contains the provisions required by 25 U.S.C. 111;

(3) The necessity for acquisition of the particular lands under request;

(4) A statement of the specific interests in lands to be acquired, including the proposed treatment of control of access;

(5) The STDs intentions with respect to the acquisition, subordination, or exclusion of outstanding interests, such as minerals and utility easements, in connection with the proposed acquisition;

(6) A statement on compliance with the provisions of part 771 of this chapter;

(7) Adequate legal descriptions, plats, appraisals, and title data;

(8) An outline of the negotiations which have been conducted by the STD with landowners;

(9) An agreement that the STD will pay its pro rata share of costs incurred in the acquisition of, or the attempt to acquire rights-of-way; and

(10) A statement that assures compliance with the applicable provisions of the Uniform Act. (42 U.S.C. 4601, *et seq.*)

(c) If the landowner tenders a right-of-entry or other right of possession document required by State law any time before the FHWA makes a determination that the STD is unable to acquire the rights-of-way with sufficient promptness, the STD is legally obligated to accept such tender and the FHWA may not proceed with Federal acquisition.

(d) If the STD obtains title to a parcel prior to the filing of the Declaration of Taking, it shall notify the FHWA and immediately furnish the appropriate U.S. Attorney with a disclaimer together with a request that the action against the landowner be dismissed (*ex parte*) from the proceeding and the estimated just compensation deposited into the registry of the court for the affected parcel be withdrawn after the appropriate motions are approved by the court.

(e) When the United States obtains a court order granting possession of the real property, the FHWA shall authorize the STD to take over supervision of the property. The authorization shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) The right to take possession of unoccupied properties;

(2) The right to give 90 days notice to owners to vacate occupied properties and the right to take possession of such properties when vacated;

(3) The right to permit continued occupancy of a property until it is required for construction and, in those instances where such occupancy is to be for a substantial period of time, the right to enter into rental agreements, as appropriate, to protect the public interest;

(4) The right to request assistance from the U.S. Attorney in obtaining physical possession where an owner declines to comply with the court order of possession;

(5) The right to clear improvements and other obstructions;

(6) Instructions that the U.S. Attorney be notified prior to actual clearing, so as to afford him an opportunity to view the lands and improvements, to obtain appropriate photographs, and to secure appraisals in connection with the preparation of the case for trial;

(7) The requirement for appropriate credits to the United States for any net salvage or net rentals obtained by the State, as in the case of right-of-way acquired by the State for Federal-aid projects; and

(8) Instructions that the authority granted to the STD is not intended to preclude the U.S. Attorney from taking action, before the STD has made arrangements for removal, to reach a settlement with the former owner which would include provision for removal.

(f) If the Federal Government initiates condemnation proceedings against the owner of real property in a Federal court and the final judgment is that the Federal agency cannot acquire the real property by condemnation, or the proceeding is abandoned, the court is required by law to award such a sum to the owner of the real property that in the opinion of the court provides reimbursement for the owner's reasonable costs, disbursements, and expenses, including reasonable attorney, appraisal, and engineering fees, actually incurred because of the condemnation proceedings.

(g) As soon as practicable after the date of payment of the purchase price or the date of deposit in court of funds to satisfy the award of the compensation in a Federal condemnation, the FHWA shall reimburse the owner to the extent deemed fair and reasonable, the following costs:

(1) Recording fees, transfer taxes, and similar expenses incidental to conveying such real property to the United States;

(2) Penalty costs for prepayment of any preexisting recorded mortgage entered into in good faith encumbering such real property; and

(3) The pro rata portion of real property taxes paid which are allocable to a period subsequent to the date of vesting title in the United States or the effective date of possession, whichever is the earlier.

(h) The lands or interests in lands, acquired under this section, will be conveyed to the State or the appropriate political subdivision thereof, upon agreement by the STD, or said subdivision to:

(1) Maintain control of access where applicable;

(2) Accept title thereto;

(3) Maintain the project constructed thereon;

(4) Abide by any conditions which may set forth in the deed; and

(5) Notify the FHWA at the appropriate time that all the conditions have been performed by the State.

(i) The deed from the United States to the State, or to the appropriate political subdivision thereof, shall include the conditions required by 49 CFR part 21. The deed shall be recorded by the grantee in the appropriate land record office, and the FHWA shall be advised of the recording date.

Issued on: December 13, 1999.

Kenneth R. Wykle,

Federal Highway Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

32 CFR Part 296

National Reconnaissance Office Freedom of Information Act Program Regulation

AGENCY: National Reconnaissance Office, DoD.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule establishes the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) regulation governing the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act. This part is reissued pursuant to the Department of Defense rule, which implements the Freedom of Information Act and it conforms to the Department's rule and schedule. As a component of the Department of Defense, the Department rules and schedules with respect to the Freedom of Information Act, as amended, will also be the policy of the NRO.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 20, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barbara Friemann, Chief, Information Access and Release Center, (703) 808-5029, Reading Room Appointments (703) 808-2474 or (703) 808-5500.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NRO published a final rule of this part on November 16, 1993 (58 FR 60382). This rule does not constitute a significant regulatory action within the meaning of Executive Order 12866. Neither the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601-612), nor the reporting or record-keeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) apply. It is hereby certified that this final rule does not exert a significant economic impact nor impose new requirements on a number of small entities. This determination is made based upon the fact that the rule merely codifies the procedural aspects of the NRO Freedom of Information Act Program, as amended by the "Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendment of 1996". It includes guidance on how and from whom to request information pertaining to the NRO.

List of Subjects 32 CFR Part 296

Freedom of information.

Accordingly, 32 CFR part 296 is revised to read as follows: