

301/MD5 interchange at T.B., and the MD 5 corridor from T.B. to the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495). Within the Southern Corridor limits, there are four definable areas: the MD 5 corridor, LaPlata corridors, US 301 south of LaPlata to the Governor Nice Bridge and US 301 through the Waldorf area.

The EIS for this study will combine two tiered levels of documentation. Tier I documentation will be completed for the MD 5 and the LaPlata corridors, as well as for US 301 south of LaPlata to the Governor Nice Bridge. Tier II (or traditional NEPA studies) documentation will be completed for US 301 through the Waldorf area, due to the more immediate need for improvements in this area.

Existing and projected growth population and development is resulting in severe traffic congestion throughout southern Maryland, especially within Waldorf area. The roadways within and adjacent to the Waldorf area will soon reach capacity during peak travel periods and will be unable to accommodate increasing traffic volumes. This study will evaluate improvements, which will address safety problems and accommodate existing and projected travel demand. Alternatives for the Waldorf area will include the No-Build, Transportation Systems Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, Existing road upgrades and Bypass Alternative(s) east and west of existing US 301. The goal is to receive Location Approval on one or a combination of alternative for this area.

For the remaining corridors (MD 5, LaPlata, and south of LaPlata to the Governor Nice Bridge), the current level of traffic congestion is less acute. SHA has identified these corridors, where development is likely to occur and where preservation of right-of-way (within the specific corridor) may be needed to maintain options for future transportation improvements. The goal is to receive approval on a selected corridor(s), which will permit the use of federal funds for the purpose of hardship and protective right-of-way acquisition. The goal is to receive approval on a selected corridor(s), which will permit the use of federal funds for the purpose of hardship and protective right-of-way acquisition. This would ensure that land for implementing transportation options would still be available in this corridor(s) when the anticipated need for future improvements becomes more apparent.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local

agencies, and to private organizations and citizens and citizen groups who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in this proposal. A Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for the Fall of 2000. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to a Public Hearing. Public notice will be given of the availability of the Draft EIS for review and of the time and place of this hearing.

Project scoping activities include formation of the US 301 Task Force, with representatives of Federal, State and Local governments, elected officials, local area civic, environmental and business leaders, and land owners. A series of Task Force environmental and business leaders, and land owners. A series of Task Force Informational Workshops and Public Hearings were held on June 17, June 19, and July 9, 1996, in Bowie, Waldorf and Upper Marlboro, respectively. The meeting reviewed the history of the US 301 Task Force and its goals and also presented its preliminary recommendations consisting of the integration of new local land use policies, transportation demand strategies and transit and highway options. Since that time, a series of Public Workshops were held on September 14, September 15, and September 23, 1999 to share with the public conceptual improvements for the Waldorf area and identify the corridors for future improvement for the LaPlata area and MD 5 corridor.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestion are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning these proposed actions and EIS should be directed to FHWA at the address provide above.

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

Issued on: March 22, 2000.

Pamela S. Stephenson,

Environmental Protection Specialist,
Baltimore, Maryland.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. FHWA-1999-5381]

Implementation Information for Ferry Boat Discretionary Program Funds

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of final selection criteria for FY 2001 and beyond.

SUMMARY: This document provides implementation information on the Ferry Boat Discretionary (FBD) program for fiscal year 2001 and beyond. A memorandum with this information will be issued each year of the program to division offices soliciting candidate projects from State transportation agencies for FBD program funding.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jack Wasley, Office of Program Administration, (202) 366-4658; or Mr. Harold Aikens, Office of the Chief Counsel, (202) 366-0764; Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington D.C. 20590. 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. 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 database at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

The solicitation memorandum will be available each year of the program on the FHWA web site at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary>.

Background

On April 26, 1999, at 64 FR 20350, the FHWA solicited comments on the selection criteria to be used by the FHWA for evaluating candidate projects for the FBD program for FY 2001 and beyond. These are the same general selection criteria that the FHWA has

used for several years to evaluate candidates for this discretionary program.

Discussion of Comments

No comments or views were received in response to this invitation to submit written comments to the selection criteria to be used by the FHWA in docket number FHWA-1999-5381 by June 25, 1999.

The FHWA, therefore, will continue to use these same basic selection criteria for FY 2001 and beyond for the FBD discretionary program. A selection criterion may be added for an individual year that reflects a special emphasis area, but for the most part the selection criteria will remained unchanged.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 129(c) and 315; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: April 3, 2000.

Kenneth R. Wykle,
Federal Highway Administrator.

The text of the FHWA implementation information to accompany solicitation memoranda for FBD projects for FY 2001 and beyond follows:

Ferry Boat Discretionary Program: Program Information

Background

The Ferry Boat Discretionary (FBD) Program, which provides a special funding category for the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities,

was created by Section 1064 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) (Public Law 102-240). Section 1207 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Public Law 105-178) reauthorized the FBD funding category through FY 2003.

Statutory References

23 U.S.C. 129(c); sec 1064, Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914 (1991)(ISTEA); sec. 1207, Pub. L. 105-178, 112 Stat. 107 (1998) (TEA-21).

FUNDING

[In millions of dollars]

Fiscal Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Competitive	30	18	18	18	18	18
NHS Set-aside	20	20	20	20	20	20

The TEA-21 provides \$30 million in fiscal year 1998 and \$38 million in each of fiscal years 1999 through 2003 for the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminals in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 129(c). The TEA-21 requires that \$20 million from each of fiscal years 1999 through 2003 be set-aside for marine highway systems that are part of the National Highway System for use by the States of Alaska (\$10 million), New Jersey (\$5 million), and Washington (\$5 million). As a result, for each of fiscal years 1999 through 2003, the amount of FBD funding available for open competition among all States is \$18 million with a non-competitive amount of \$20 million set-aside for Alaska, New Jersey, and Washington.

The \$18 million available for open competition is also impacted by any obligation limitation imposed on the Federal-aid highway program under the provisions of TEA-21 section 1102(f), Redistribution of Certain Authorized Funds. Under this provision, any funds authorized for the program for the fiscal year, which are not available for obligation due to the imposition of an obligation limitation, are not allocated for the FBD program, but are redistributed to the States by formula as STP funds.

After these reductions, it is expected that approximately \$14 million will be available for candidate projects each of fiscal years 2000 through 2003. This available funding may also increase or decrease each year depending on the obligation limitation calculation and on

the estimated receipts to the Highway Trust Fund.

Federal Share

In accordance with section 1064(b) of the ISTEA, the Federal share of the costs for any project eligible under this program is 80 percent.

Obligation Limitation

The FBD discretionary funds are subject to obligation limitation; however, 100 percent obligation authority is normally provided with the allocation of funds for the selected projects. The obligation limitation reduces the available funding for the program under the provisions of the TEA-21 section 1102(f) discussed above.

For FY 1999, obligation of the FBD funds was controlled by a special requirement included in the FY 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 105-277). The Act limited the obligation of FBD funds during FY 1999 to \$38 million. Consequently, there was not enough obligation authority to cover both fiscal years 1998 and 1999 funding allocated to the States. Therefore, distribution of the FY 1999 obligation authority was on an "as needed" basis during FY 1999.

For FY 2000, a proportional share of obligation authority accompanied allocated funds.

Eligibility

As specified in section 1064(b) of the ISTEA, this program is for the

construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 129. Proposals should meet the basic eligibility criteria in 23 U.S.C. 129(c).

Competitive FBD funds are available for improvements to ferry boats or ferry boat terminals where:

- The ferry facility is providing a link on a public road (other than Interstate) or the ferry facility is providing passenger only ferry service.
- The ferry and/or ferry terminal to be constructed or improved is either publicly owned, publicly operated, or a public authority has majority ownership interest where it is demonstrated that the ferry operation provides substantial public benefits.
- The ferry does not operate in international water except for Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Alaska, and for ferries between a State and Canada.

The set-aside discretionary funds for marine highway systems for use by the States of Alaska, New Jersey, and Washington are available for the construction or refurbishing of ferry boats and ferry terminals and their approaches that are part of the NHS. In general, a proposed project must meet the eligibility criteria set forth in 23 U.S.C. 129(b) and (c), with the following requirements specifically applying to location of the projects and the type of activity eligible for funding:

- For a ferry facility that provides a direct link on the NHS, both the ferry boat (must transport four wheel vehicles) and the ferry terminals,

including approaches, are eligible for funding.

- For a ferry facility that lies at the end of an approved connector to the NHS, only the ferry terminal (can serve either vehicle or passengers) and approach is eligible for funding. The ferry boats serving the ferry terminal are not eligible for funding.

Selection Criteria

Several criteria are used to evaluate the submitted candidates for selection for the competitive portion of the FBD program. Although there are no statutory criteria and FHWA has not established regulatory criteria for selection of FBD projects, the following criteria are considered in the evaluation of candidates for this program:

- **Expeditious completion of project**—Consideration is given to requests that will expedite the completion of a viable project. This is a project's ability to expeditiously complete usable facilities within the limited funding amounts available.

- **Leveraging of private or other public funding**—Because the annual requests for funding far exceed the available FBD funds, commitment of other funding sources to complement the requested FBD funding is an important factor.

- **Amount of FBD funding**—The requested amount of funding is a consideration. Realizing the historically high demand of funding under this program, modest sized requests for funding (generally less than \$2 million) to allow more States to receive funding under this program are given added consideration.

- **State priorities**—For States submitting more than one project, consideration is given to the individual States priorities.

- **National geographic distribution of funding within the FBD program**—Consideration is given to selecting projects over time among all the States competing for funding.

Because the concept of equity was important in the development of TEA-21, project selection will also consider national geographic distribution among all of the discretionary programs as well as congressional direction or guidance provided on specific projects or programs.

Solicitation Procedure

Each year, usually around March, a memorandum is sent from the FHWA Headquarters Office of Program Administration to the FHWA division offices requesting the submission of candidate projects for the following fiscal year's funding. The FHWA

division offices provide this solicitation request to the State transportation departments, who are the only agencies that can submit candidates. The State transportation departments coordinate with local agencies within their respective States in order to develop viable candidate projects. The State transportation departments submit the candidate applications to the FHWA division offices, who send them in to the Office of Program Administration. Candidate projects are due in FHWA Headquarters on a specific date in July (usually around the middle of July).

The specific timetable for the solicitation process for any particular fiscal year is provided in the solicitation memorandum.

The candidate project applications are reviewed and evaluated by the Office of Program Administration and an allocation plan is prepared for presentation of the candidate projects to the Office of the Federal Highway Administrator, where the final selection of projects for funding is made. The announcement of the selected projects and the allocation of funds is usually accomplished by the middle of November.

Set-aside FBD funds are allocated directly to the three named States with no solicitation.

Submission Requirements

Only State transportation departments may submit applications for funding under this program. Although there is not a prescribed format for a project submission, the following information must be included to properly evaluate the candidate projects. The applications must be submitted electronically in either Word Perfect or MS Word format. With the exception of the project area map, all of the following must be included to consider the application complete. Those applications that do not include these items are considered incomplete and will be returned.

1. State(s) in which the project is located. If more than one State, indicate which State is the applicant.

2. County(ies) in which the project is located.

3. U.S. Congressional District No.(s) in which the project is located.

4. U.S. Congressional Member's Name(s) for each District.

5. Facility or Project Name commonly used to describe the facility or project.

6. **Service Termini and Ports**—Describe the ferry boat operation including the name of water crossing. A statement must be included for ferry boat operations carrying motorized vehicles, describing the link in the roadway system. Clearly identify any

“passenger only” ferry service, and explain how the ferry service is linked to public transportation or is part of a transit system. Also, for each project indicate if the project is part of an existing link or service, or if it is new service. Also identify if the ferry operates in domestic, foreign, or international waters.

7. **Ownership/Operation**—Specify which of the following apply (a, b, or c):

- (a) The boat or terminal is publicly-owned. The term “publicly-owned” means that the title for the boat or terminal must be vested in a Federal, State, county, town, or township, Indian tribe, municipal or other local government or instrumentality.

- (b) The boat or terminal is publicly-operated. The term “publicly-operated” means that a public entity operates the boat or terminal.

- (c) The boat or terminal is “majority publicly-owned” (as opposed to public owned). This means that more than 50 percent of the ownership is vested in a public entity. If so, does it provide substantial public benefits?

Documentation of substantial public benefits, concurred in by the division office, is required for ferry facilities that are in majority public ownership.

8. **Current and Future Traffic**—Provide a general description of the type and nature of traffic, both current and future (projected) average daily traffic and/or average daily passenger volumes, on the ferry route if available. If the ferry links public roads or is a link on a highway route, provide the functional classification of the public road or route that the project is located. The general description could include information on year round or seasonal service; commuter, recreational or visitor ridership; traffic generators and attractions.

9. **Proposed Work**—Describe the project work that is to be completed under this particular request, and whether this is a complete project or part of a larger project.

10. **Amount of Federal FBD Discretionary Funds Requested**—Indicate the total cost of the proposed work along with the amount of FBD funds being requested for FY 2001 (the maximum Federal share for this program is 80 percent). The State may request partial funding (less than the 80 percent maximum), committing a larger portion of State or local funds. If the State is willing to accept partial funding of the request, that should be indicated. Partial funding along with the commitment of other funds (see item 11 below) will be used to determine leveraging of funds, and allow funding

to more projects, since the requests far exceed the funding available.

11. **Commitment of Other Funds**—Indicate the amounts and sources of any private or other public funding being provided as part of this project. Only indicate those amounts of funding that are firm and documented commitments from the entity controlling the funds.

12. **Previous FBD Discretionary Funding**—Indicate the amount and Federal fiscal year of any previous FBD discretionary funds received for this project, terminals or ferry boats operating on this route or transit system. Only include previous FBD discretionary funds, not other funding sources.

13. **Future Funding Needs**—Indicate the estimated future funding needs for the ferry boat operation, including vessels and terminals, if known. Also, provide estimated time schedules for implementing future projects.

14. **Project Purpose and Benefits**—Each State's request for ferry boat discretionary funds must describe the project benefits and purpose. This information should not be lengthy, it should be in short and concise (three to five) statements. Layman's language should be used to the extent possible so as to be understood by a reader that is not closely familiar with the highway and ferry boat operations. This information will also be used for briefings and bulletins.

15. **Project Area Map**—A readable location/vicinity map showing the ferry route and terminal connections is helpful if available. The map may be submitted electronically along with the candidate application or separately as a hard copy (black and white, letter or legal paper size).

State Transportation Agency Responsibilities

1. Coordinate with State and local agencies within the State to develop viable candidate projects.
2. Ensure that the applications for candidate projects meet the submission requirements outlined above.
3. Establish priorities. If the State submits more than one candidate project, we request that the State rank the projects according to the State's overall needs and priorities.
4. Submit the applications to the local FHWA division office, in advance of the established FHWA Headquarters deadline (contained in the FHWA Headquarter's solicitation memorandum). The Division's request for candidate projects should allow enough time to meet the responsibilities outlined below and any additional coordination as mutually agreed upon.

FHWA Division Office Responsibilities

1. Provide the solicitation memorandum and this program information to the State transportation agency.
2. Request candidate projects be submitted by the State to the FHWA division office to meet submission deadline established in the solicitation memorandum.
3. Review all candidate applications submitted by the State prior to sending them to FHWA Headquarters to ensure that they are eligible, complete and meet the submission requirements.
4. Submit the candidate applications to FHWA Headquarters by the established submission deadline.

FHWA Headquarters Program Office Responsibilities

1. Solicit candidates from the States through annual solicitation memorandum.
2. Review candidate project submissions and compile program and project information for preparation of allocation plan.
3. Submit allocation plan to the Office of the Federal Highway Administrator for use in making final project selections.
4. Allocate funds for the selected projects.

FHWA Headquarters Program Office Contact

Mr. Jack Wasley, Highway Engineer, Office of Program Administration, Phone: (202) 366-4658, Fax: (202) 366-3988, E-mail: jack.wasley@fhwa.dot.gov.

[FR Doc. 00-9080 Filed 4-11-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket No. MARAD-2000-7204]

Information Collection Available for Public Comments and Recommendations

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) intentions to request approval for three years of an existing information collection entitled "Request for Transfer of Ownership, Registry, and Flag, or Charter, Lease, or Mortgage of U.S. Citizen Owned Documented Vessels,"

DATES: Comments should be submitted on or before June 12, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Raymond R. Barberesi, Director, Office of Sealift Support, MAR-630, Maritime Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Room 7307, Washington, D.C. 20590, telephone number—202-366-2323 or 202-493-2180. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: "Request for Transfer of Ownership, Registry, and Flag, or Charter, Lease, or Mortgage of U.S. Citizen Owned Documented Vessels".

Type of Request: Approval of an existing information collection.

OMB Control Number: 2133-0006.

Form Number: MA-29, MA-29A, MA-29B (Note: MA-29A is only used in cases of a National Emergency.)

Expiration Date of Approval: Three years from the date of approval.

Summary of Collection of Information: In accordance with Section 9 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended, the Maritime Administration is required to approve the sale, transfer, charter, lease, or mortgage of U.S. documented vessels to non-citizens, or the transfer of such vessels to foreign registry and flag, or the transfer of foreign flag vessels by their owners as required by various contractual requirements.

Need and Use of the Information: This information collection requires a vessel owner to submit an application for a prospective foreign transfer of a U.S.-flag vessel. This information will assist in the determination of whether the vessel proposed for transfer will initially require retention under the U.S.-flag statutory regulation. In such instances, the application is reviewed and cleared for approval by specialists within MARAD and the Department of Defense, U.S. TRANSCOM.

Description of Respondents: Respondents are vessel owners who have applied for foreign transfer of U.S.-flag vessels.

Annual Responses: 100 responses.

Annual Burden: 200 hours.

Comments: Comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document. Written comments may be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Comments may also be submitted by electronic means via the Internet at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>. Specifically, address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the function of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this