

In the fall of 2005, a preliminary Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) was completed and circulated to the Federal cooperating agencies for review and comment. As a result of this coordination effort, the CBP requested that another alternative be considered for evaluation and inclusion in the DEIS.

In an effort to continue to move independent and critical road and bridge portions of the project forward, MDOT and FHWA have separated the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Study into two projects: (a) An EIS for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza that will focus specifically on plaza expansion and improvements, and (b) An Environmental Assessment that will address transportation improvements along I-69/I-94 and the creation of a new off-site welcome center. The improvements covered in the EA are independent of any of the alternatives under consideration for the plaza improvements. The FHWA has reviewed and concluded that the improvements that will be studied in the EA have independent utility and logical termini.

The purposes of the I-69/I-94 EA Corridor improvements are:

- Accommodate projected 2030 traffic growth,
- Improve the safety on the Black River Bridge and reduce weaving movements at the Water Street Interchange,
- Replace the aging Black River Bridge spans,
- Improve vehicle access to the Port Huron Area, and
- Create a more visible and accessible Welcome Center.

The need for improvements to the I-69/I-94 Corridor is supported by several key issues:

- Traffic growth,
- Traffic backups,
- Traffic conflicts and crash history,
- The current condition of existing roadways in the corridor, and
- The current condition of the Black River Bridge.

The study boundaries for the I-69/I-94 Environmental Assessment are located along I-69/I-94 and the M-25 connector. The northern terminus for the EA is the M-25 connector intersection with Hancock Street and the southern terminus is the I-69/I-94 bridge over Lapeer Road. The EA study area includes the I-69/I-94 ramps to and from the existing plaza, the Black River Bridge, the Water Street interchange and the Lapeer connector interchange.

The purpose and need and study boundaries for the plaza Environmental Impact Statement remain the same as

described earlier. The study area includes a potential location for a relocated plaza in Port Huron Township.

A range of plaza and transportation improvement alternatives for the plaza EIS, will be analyzed. Reasonable alternatives under consideration include: taking no action, expanding the existing plaza location in the City of Port Huron (two alternatives), and relocating the major plaza functions to an off-site plaza location in Port Huron Township. The EIS study area for the off-site plaza, along with subsequent improvements to I-94/I-69 and the EA improvements to I-94/I-69, overlap for this alternative, but only for this alternative.

Agencies and citizen involvement will continue to be solicited throughout this process. A public meeting and a public hearing will be held on the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS). Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

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

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

Issued on: October 31, 2006.

James A. Kirschensteiner,
Assistant Division Administrator, Lansing,
Michigan.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Sunshine Act Meetings; Unified Carrier Registration Plan Board of Directors

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, DOT.

TIME AND DATE: November 7, 2006, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and November 8, 2006 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

PLACE: Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport, O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, IL 60666.

STATUS: Open to the public.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: An overview of the Unified Carrier Registration Plan and Agreement requirements set forth under section 4305 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, and the administrative functioning of the Board. In addition, the Board will continue its work in developing the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement procedures and toward recommending UCRA fees to the Secretary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. William Quade, (202)366-2172, Director, Office of Safety Programs, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or Mr. Bryan Price, (412) 395-4816, FMCSA Pennsylvania Division Office.

Dated: November 2, 2006.

Rose A. McMurray,
Associate Administrator, Policy and Program Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Creation of an Electronic Docket for a Pending Environmental Impact Review on the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad's Powder River Basin Expansion Project Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program Loan Application

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of the Creation of an Electronic Docket for the Comments Received on the FRA's Adoption of the Environmental Impact Statements Issued by the Surface Transportation Board and FRA's Draft Section 4(f)/303 Statement and Participation as a Concurring Party to a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

SUMMARY: FRA is announcing the creation of an electronic docket containing comments submitted to the agency in connection with the agency's environmental and historic preservation review of the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad's application for loan to carry out its Powder River Basin Expansion Project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Valenstein, Environmental Program Manager, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW., Mail Stop 20, Washington, DC 20590; Phone (202) 493-6368.