

contingent on the project being included in the relevant planning documents, applicants should demonstrate they can reasonably expect to have the project included in such planning documents by March 30, 2013. We suggest the March 30 milestone since applicants should demonstrate in their project schedule that all additional, necessary pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or requirements before the total award is obligated will be complete on or before June 30, 2013, and planning must be complete before other pre-construction or other activities can be completed. DOT is suggesting these dates so that all the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be obligated in advance of the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline, and that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated. The applicant should provide a schedule demonstrating when the project will be added to the relevant planning documents.

**Environmental Approvals:** Projects should have received all environmental approvals, including satisfaction of all Federal, State and local requirements and completion of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") process at the time the application is submitted or should demonstrate, through their project schedule, that receipt of NEPA approval, and all additional, necessary pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or other approvals can occur by June 30, 2013, so that the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be fully obligated in advance of the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline, and that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated.

If the obligation of TIGER Discretionary Grant funds for construction or other activities is contingent on completion of other approvals that can only take place after the environmental approvals process, the applicant should demonstrate, through their project schedule, that they can reasonably expect to obtain all environmental approvals by March 30, 2013, or other date sufficiently in advance of June 30, 2013. Like planning, the environmental approvals must be obtained prior to completing other pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or other activities. We are suggesting the March 30 date for environmental approvals since all pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or other activities should be completed by June 30, 2013, so that the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be fully obligated in advance of the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline. DOT also wants to ensure that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated, because it may be difficult to complete environmental and regulatory review as well as any other necessary pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or other activities that must be completed before funds can be obligated for construction or other activities that will fully obligate the TIGER funding.

To demonstrate that this suggested milestone is achievable, applicants should provide information about the anticipated class of action, the budget for completing NEPA, including hiring a consultant if necessary, and a schedule that demonstrates when NEPA will be complete. The schedule should show how the suggested milestones described in this section will be complied with, and include any anticipated coordination with Federal and State regulatory agencies for permits and approvals. The budget should demonstrate how costs to complete NEPA factor into the overall cost to complete the project. The budget and schedule for completing NEPA should be reasonable and be comparable to a budget and schedule of a typical project of the same type. The applicant should provide evidence of support based on input during the NEPA process from State and local elected officials as well as the public. Additionally, the applicant should provide environmental studies or other documents (preferably by way of a Web site link) that describe in detail known potential project impacts and possible mitigation for these impacts. The applicant should supply sufficient documentation for DOT to adequately review the project's NEPA status.

**Right-of-Way and Design:** If the obligation of TIGER Discretionary Grant funds for construction or other activities by an operating administration may be contingent on completion of right-of-way acquisition and final design approval, applicants should demonstrate, through their project schedule, that they reasonably expect to have right-of-way and design completed, and completion of any other needed pre-construction steps if a project element is for pre-construction activities, or other approvals by June 30, 2013, so that the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be fully obligated in advance of or by the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline, and that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated. If the obligation of TIGER Discretionary Grant funds for construction or other activities is contingent on the project completing right-of-way acquisition and design, and additional approvals contingent on completion of right of way acquisition and design, applicants should demonstrate, through their project schedule, they can reasonably expect to have right-of-way acquisition and design completed, along with the additional required approvals by June 30, 2013, so that the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be fully obligated in advance of or by the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline, and that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated. Applicants should submit a reasonable schedule of when right-of-way (if applicable), design, and any other required approvals are expected to be obtained. Applicants may expect that DOT may obligate TIGER funds for right-of-way and design completion only after planning and environmental approvals are obtained.

**Completion of Obligation:** Applicants should plan to have all necessary pre-construction or other approvals and activities

completed by June 30, 2013, so that the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds will be fully obligated in advance of the September 30, 2013, statutory deadline, and that any unexpected delays will not put TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated. In some instances, DOT may not obligate for construction or other activities until all planning and environmental approvals are obtained and right-of-way and final design are complete. If a project is selected for a TIGER Discretionary Grant and the TIGER Discretionary Grant funding will be used to complete all of these activities, DOT may obligate the funding in phases, in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of the operating administration that is administering the grant.

\* \* \* \* \*

Issued on: August 9, 2011.

**Ray LaHood,**

*Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Highway Administration

#### Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP)

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

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**SUMMARY:** Section 5207 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP). The FHWA anticipates that the STEP or a similar program to provide resources for national research on issues related to planning, environment, and realty will be included in future surface transportation legislation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, the FHWA expects to seek partnerships that can leverage limited research funding in the STEP with other stakeholders and partners in order to increase the total amount of resources available to meet the Nation's surface transportation research needs. The purpose of this notice is to announce the STEP implementation strategy for FY 2012 and to request suggested lines of research for the FY 2012 STEP via the STEP Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/index.htm> in anticipation of future surface transportation legislation.

**DATES:** Suggestions for lines of research should be submitted to the STEP Web site on or before November 10, 2011.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Lucy Garliauskas, Director, Office of Human Environment, (202) 366-2047, [Lucy.Garliauskas@dot.gov](mailto:Lucy.Garliauskas@dot.gov) or Adam Sleeter, Office of the Chief Counsel, (202) 366-8839; Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Electronic Access**

An electronic copy of this notice may be downloaded from the Office of the Federal Register's home page at <http://www.archives.gov/> and the Government Printing Office's Web site at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/>.

**Background**

Section 5207 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Pub. L. 109-59, Aug. 10, 2005), established the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program in section 507 of Title 23, United States Code. The FHWA anticipates that the STEP or a similar program to provide resources for national research on issues related to planning, environment, and realty will be included in future surface transportation legislation. The general objective of the STEP is to improve understanding of the complex relationship between surface transportation, planning, and the environment.

The SAFETEA-LU provided \$16.875 million per year for FY 2006-2009 to implement this cooperative research program. Due to obligation limitations, rescissions, and congressional designation of Title V Research in SAFETEA-LU, on average \$14.5 million of the \$16.875 million authorized was available each fiscal year.

The STEP is the primary source of funds for FHWA to conduct research and develop tools and technologies to advance the state of the practice regarding national surface transportation and environmental decisionmaking. In FY 2012, the FHWA expects to seek partnerships that can leverage limited research funding in the STEP with other stakeholders and partners in order to increase the total amount of resources available to meet the nation's surface transportation research needs.

The FY 2012 STEP will support the implementation of a national research agenda that includes:

(1) Conducting research to develop climate change mitigation, adaptation and livability strategies;

(2) Developing and/or supporting accurate models and tools for evaluating transportation measures and developing indicators of economic, social, and environmental performance of transportation systems to facilitate alternative analysis;

(3) Developing and deploying research to address congestion reduction efforts;

(4) Developing transportation safety planning strategies for surface transportation systems and improvements;

(5) Improving planning, operation, and management of surface transportation systems and rights-of-way;

(6) Enhancing knowledge of strategies to improve transportation in rural areas and small communities;

(7) Strengthening and advancing State/local and tribal capabilities regarding surface transportation and the environment;

(8) Improving transportation decisionmaking and coordination across international borders;

(9) Improving state of the practice regarding the impact of transportation on the environment;

(10) Conducting research to promote environmental streamlining/stewardship and sustainability;

(11) Disseminating research results and advances in state of the practice through peer exchanges, workshops, conferences, etc;

(12) Meeting additional priorities as determined by the Secretary; and

(13) Refining the scope and research emphases through active outreach and in consultation with stakeholders.

The FHWA is issuing this notice to: (1) To announce the STEP Implementation Strategy for the FY 2012 STEP in anticipation of future surface transportation legislation, and (2) to solicit comments on proposed research activities to be undertaken in the FY 2012 STEP via the STEP Web site. The STEP Implementation Strategy can be found at [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/about\\_step/strategy/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/about_step/strategy/). That Strategy updates information on the graphs and charts regarding historical planning and environment research funding, and adds information about the proposed FY 2012 STEP including proposed funding levels, goals, and potential research activities. We invite the public to visit this Web site to obtain additional information on the STEP, as well as information on the process for forwarding comments to the FHWA

regarding the STEP implementation plan. The URL for the STEP Web site is: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/>.

The FHWA will use this Web site as a major mechanism for informing the public regarding the status of the STEP.

**Authority:** 23 U.S.C. 507.

**OMB Approval for Specific Forms, Surveys, Questionnaires: Burden Statement**

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to identify potential research for the creation of a research plan for the FHWA STEP Program. Public reporting burden is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. No confidential information will be collected; therefore, no assurances of confidentiality will be provided. Please note that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 2125-0627 (Expiration 6/30/14). Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

**Authority:** 5 CFR 1320.8.

Issued on: August 8, 2011.

**Victor M. Mendez,**  
Administrator.

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration**

[Docket No. FMCSA-2011-0177]

**Agency Information Collection Activities; Request for Comment; Extension of an Information Collection: Hours of Service (HOS) of Drivers Regulations**

**AGENCY:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995