

CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.<sup>2</sup>

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the discontinuance of service shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham & Bonneville Counties, Idaho*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA)<sup>3</sup> to subsidize continued rail service has been received, this exemption will be effective on February 23, 2020, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues and formal expressions of intent to file an OFA to subsidize continued rail service under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2)<sup>4</sup> must be filed by February 3, 2020.<sup>5</sup> Petitions for reconsideration must be filed by February 13, 2020, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with Board should be sent to PNWR's representative, Justin J. Marks, Clark Hill PLC, 1001 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1300 South, Washington, DC 20004.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

Board decisions and notices are available at [www.stb.gov](http://www.stb.gov).

Decided: January 16, 2020.

By the Board, Allison C. Davis, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Kenyatta Clay,**  
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2020-01199 Filed 1-23-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-01-P**

<sup>2</sup> PNWR filed a corrected notice of newspaper publication and corrected letters providing notice to governmental entities on January 6, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Persons interested in submitting an OFA to subsidize continued rail service must first file a formal expression of intent to file an offer, indicating the intent to file an OFA for subsidy and demonstrating that they are preliminarily financially responsible. See 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2)(i).

<sup>4</sup> The filing fee for OFAs can be found at 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

<sup>5</sup> Because this is a discontinuance proceeding and not an abandonment, trail use/rail banking and public use conditions are not appropriate. Because there will be an environmental review during abandonment, this discontinuance does not require environmental review.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket Number FRA-2020-0004]

#### Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System

Under part 235 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), this provides the public notice that on January 7, 2020, WATCO Companies, LLC (WATCO) petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval to discontinue or modify a signal system. FRA assigned the petition Docket Number FRA-2020-0004.

*Applicant:* WATCO Companies, LLC, Mr. Scott Adams, Vice President of Engineering, 420 Hansen Street S, Twin Falls, ID 83301.

Specifically, WATCO requests permission to discontinue the automatic interlocking signal system at Chrisman, IL, where the Decatur Subdivision, milepost (MP) BD 209.3, crosses the Danville Subdivision, MP QSD 104.6.

Upon discontinuance of the automatic interlocking signal system the railroad crossing-at-grade will be protected by lighted STOP signs placed in each quadrant and General Code of Operating Rules 6.16, *Approaching Railroad Crossings, Drawbridges, and End of Multiple Main Track*, will be in effect.

A copy of the petition, as well as any written communications concerning the petition, is available for review online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and in person at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Docket Operations Facility, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, W12-140, Washington, DC 20590. The Docket Operations Facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested parties desire an opportunity for oral comment and a public hearing, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number and may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Website:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.

- *Mail:* Docket Operations Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, W12-140, Washington, DC 20590.

- *Hand Delivery:* 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.

Communications received by March 9, 2020 will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered if practicable.

Anyone can search the electronic form of any written communications and comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the document, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). Under 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its processes. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at [www.dot.gov/privacy](http://www.dot.gov/privacy). See also <http://www.regulations.gov/#/privacyNotice> for the privacy notice of [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Issued in Washington, DC.

**John Karl Alexy,**

*Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety, Chief Safety Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2020-01115 Filed 1-23-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-06-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### FY 2020 Competitive Funding Opportunity: Low or No Emission Grant Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO).

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the opportunity to apply for \$130 million in competitive grants under the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Low or No Emission Grant Program (Low-No Program) (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number: 20.526). As required by Federal public transportation law, funds will be awarded competitively for the purchase or lease of low or no emission vehicles that use advanced technologies for transit revenue operations, including related equipment or facilities. Projects

may include costs incidental to the acquisition of buses or to the construction of facilities, such as the costs of related workforce development and training activities, and project administration expenses. FTA may award additional funding that is made available to the program prior to the announcement of project selections.

**DATES:** Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the *GRANTS.GOV* "APPLY" function by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 17, 2020. Prospective applicants should initiate the process by registering on the *GRANTS.GOV* website promptly to ensure completion of the application process before the submission deadline. Instructions for applying can be found on FTA's website at <http://transit.dot.gov/howtoapply> and in the "FIND" module of *GRANTS.GOV*. The funding opportunity ID is FTA-2020-005-LowNo. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Victor Waldron, FTA Office of Program Management, 202-366-5183, or [victor.waldron@dot.gov](mailto:victor.waldron@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

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**A. Program Description**

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)) authorizes FTA to award grants for low or no emission buses through a competitive process, as described in this notice. The Low-No Program provides funding to State and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities such as recharging, refueling, and maintenance facilities. FTA recognizes that a significant transformation is occurring in the transit bus industry, with the increasing availability of low and zero emission bus vehicles for transit revenue operations.

In FY 2020, FTA is encouraging applicants to propose projects that introduce innovative technologies or practices in support of FTA's Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) initiative. FTA is focused on the introduction of new technology not

commonly found within U.S. transit systems such as integrated fare payment systems permitting complete trips or advancements to propulsion systems. Innovation can also include practices such as new public transportation operational models, financial or procurement arrangements, or value capture.

**B. Federal Award Information**

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5338(a)(2)(M)) authorizes \$55,000,000 in FY 2020 for the Low-No Program. The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 appropriated an additional \$75,000,000 for the Low-No Program for a total \$130,000,000 available in FY 2020.

In FY 2019, the program received applications for 157 projects requesting a total of \$500 million. Thirty-eight projects were funded at a total of \$84.95 million. FTA may cap the amount a single recipient or State may receive as part of the selection process. In FY 2019, for example, the largest amount awarded to a single applicant was \$3 million and no State received more than 3.5 percent of the total funding available.

FTA will grant pre-award authority to incur costs for selected projects beginning on the date FY 2020 project selections are announced on FTA's website. Funds are available for obligation three fiscal years after the fiscal year in which the competitive awards are announced. Funds are only available for projects that have not incurred costs prior to the announcement of project selections.

**C. Eligibility Information**

*1. Eligible Applicants*

Eligible applicants include designated recipients, States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes. Proposals for funding projects in rural (non-urbanized) areas may be submitted as part of a consolidated State proposal. To be considered eligible, applicants must be able to demonstrate the requisite legal, financial, and technical capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program. States and other eligible applicants may submit consolidated proposals for projects in urbanized areas. Proposals may contain projects to be implemented by the recipient or its eligible subrecipients. Eligible subrecipients are entities that are otherwise eligible recipients under this program.

As permitted by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, applicants to the Low-No Program may submit applications that include

partnerships with other entities that intend to participate in the implementation of the project, including, but not limited to, specific vehicle manufacturers, equipment vendors, owners or operators of related facilities, or project consultants. If an application that involves such a partnership is selected for funding, the competitive selection process will be deemed to satisfy the requirement for a competitive procurement under 49 U.S.C. 5325(a) for the named entities. Applicants are advised that any changes to the proposed partnership will require FTA written approval, must be consistent with the scope of the approved project, and may necessitate a competitive procurement.

*2. Cost Sharing or Matching*

The maximum Federal share for projects that involve leasing or acquiring transit buses (including clean fuel or alternative fuel vehicles) for purposes of complying with or maintaining compliance with the Clean Air Act is 85 percent of the net project cost.

The maximum Federal share for the cost of acquiring, installing, or constructing vehicle-related equipment or facilities (including clean fuel or alternative fuel vehicle-related equipment or facilities) for purposes of complying with or maintaining compliance with the Clean Air Act is 90 percent of the net project cost of such equipment or facilities that are attributable to compliance with the Clean Air Act. The award recipient must itemize the cost of specific, discrete, vehicle-related equipment associated with compliance with the Clean Air Act to be eligible for the maximum 90 percent Federal share for these costs.

Eligible sources of local match include the following: Cash from non-Government sources other than revenues from providing public transportation services; revenues derived from the sale of advertising and concessions; amounts received under a service agreement with a State or local social service agency or private social service organization; revenues generated from value capture financing mechanisms; funds from an undistributed cash surplus; replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve; new capital; or in-kind contributions. Transportation development credits or in-kind match may be used for local match if identified and documented in the application.

*3. Eligible Projects*

Under the Low-No Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)(1)(B)), eligible projects include

projects or programs of projects in an eligible area for: (1) Purchasing or leasing low or no emission buses; (2) acquiring low or no emission buses with a leased power source; (3) constructing or leasing facilities and related equipment for low or no emission buses; (4) constructing new public transportation facilities to accommodate low or no emission buses; (5) or rehabilitating or improving existing public transportation facilities to accommodate low or no emission buses. As required by Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)(5)), FTA will only consider eligible projects relating to the acquisition or leasing of low or no emission buses or bus facilities that make greater reductions in energy consumption and harmful emissions than comparable standard buses or other low or no emission buses and are part of the recipient's long-term integrated fleet management plan.

A low or no-emission bus is defined as a passenger vehicle used to provide public transportation that significantly reduces energy consumption or harmful emissions, including direct carbon emissions, when compared to a standard vehicle. The statutory definition includes zero-emission transit buses, which are defined as buses that produce no direct carbon emissions and no particulate matter emissions under any and all possible operational modes and conditions. Examples of zero emission bus technologies include, but are not limited to, hydrogen fuel-cell buses and battery-electric buses. All new transit bus models must successfully complete FTA bus testing for production transit buses pursuant to FTA's Bus Testing regulation (49 CFR part 665) in order to be procured with funds awarded under the Low-No Program. All transit vehicles must be procured from certified transit vehicle manufacturers in accordance with the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) regulations (49 CFR part 26). The development or deployment of prototype vehicles is not eligible for funding under the Low-No Program.

Recipients are permitted to use up to 0.5 percent of their requested grant award for workforce development activities eligible under Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5314(b)) and an additional 0.5 percent for costs associated with training at the National Transit Institute. Applicants must identify the proposed use of funds for these activities in the project proposal and identify them separately in the project budget.

If a single project proposal involves multiple public transportation

providers, such as when an agency acquires vehicles that will be operated by another agency, the proposal must include a detailed statement regarding the role of each public transportation provider in the implementation of the project.

#### **D. Application and Submission Information**

##### *1. Address To Request Application*

Applications must be submitted electronically through *GRANTS.GOV*. General information for submitting applications through *GRANTS.GOV* can be found at [www.fta.dot.gov/howtoapply](http://www.fta.dot.gov/howtoapply) along with specific instructions for the forms and attachments required for submission. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted. A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: The SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (available at *GRANTS.GOV*) and the supplemental form for the FY 2020 Low-No Program (downloaded from *GRANTS.GOV* or the FTA website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/lowno>). Failure to submit the information as requested can delay review or disqualify the application.

##### *2. Content and Form of Application Submission*

A strong transportation network is critical to the functioning and growth of the American economy. The nation's industry depends on the transportation network to move the goods that it produces, and facilitate the movements of the workers who are responsible for that production. When the nation's highways, railways, and ports function well, that infrastructure connects people to jobs, increases the efficiency of delivering goods and thereby cuts the costs of doing business, reduces the burden of commuting, and improves overall well-being.

Rural transportation networks play a vital role in supporting our national economic vitality. Addressing the deteriorating conditions and disproportionately high fatality rates on our rural transportation infrastructure is of critical interest to the Department, as rural transportation networks face unique challenges in safety, infrastructure condition, and passenger and freight usage. Consistent with the R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative, the Department encourages applicants to consider how the project will address the challenges faced by rural areas.

##### a. Proposal Submission

A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: (1) The SF-424

Application for Federal Assistance; and (2) the supplemental form for the FY 2020 Low-No Program. The supplemental form and any supporting documents must be attached to the "Attachments" section of the SF-424. The application must include responses to all sections of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the supplemental form, unless indicated as optional. The information on the supplemental form will be used to determine applicant and project eligibility for the program, and to evaluate the proposal against the selection criteria described in part E of this notice.

FTA will accept only one supplemental form per SF-424 submission. FTA encourages States and other applicants to consider submitting a single supplemental form that includes multiple activities to be evaluated as a consolidated proposal. If a State or other applicant chooses to submit separate proposals for individual consideration by FTA, each proposal must be submitted using a separate SF-424 and supplemental form.

Applicants may attach additional supporting information to the SF-424 submission, including but not limited to letters of support, project budgets, fleet status reports, or excerpts from relevant planning documents. Any supporting documentation must be described and referenced by file name in the appropriate response section of the supplemental form, or it may not be reviewed.

Information such as applicant name, Federal amount requested, local match amount, description of areas served, etc. may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF-424 and supplemental form. Applicants must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms. If information is copied into the supplemental form from another source, applicants should verify that pasted text is fully captured on the supplemental form and has not been truncated by the character limits built into the form. Applicants should use both the "Check Package for Errors" and the "Validate Form" validation buttons on both forms to check all required fields on the forms, and ensure that the Federal and local amounts specified are consistent.

##### b. Application Content

The SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the supplemental form will prompt applicants for the required information, including:

##### i. Applicant name

- ii. Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number
- iii. Key contact information (including contact name, address, email address, and phone)
- iv. Congressional district(s) where project will take place
- v. Project information (including title, an executive summary, and type)
- vi. A detailed description of the need for the project
- vii. A detailed description on how the project will support the Low-No Program objectives
- viii. Evidence that the project is consistent with local and regional planning documents
- ix. Evidence that the applicant can provide the local cost share
- x. A description of the technical, legal, and financial capacity of the applicant
- xi. A detailed project budget
- xii. An explanation of the scalability of the project
- xiii. Details on the local matching funds
- xiv. A detailed project timeline
- xv. Whether the project impacts an Opportunity Zone

### 3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to: (1) Be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FTA. These requirements do not apply if the applicant has an exemption approved by FTA under Federal grants and agreements law (2 CFR 25.110(d)). FTA may not make an award until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FTA is ready to make an award, FTA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. All applicants must provide a unique entity identifier provided by SAM. Registration in SAM may take as little as 3–5 business days, but since there could be unexpected steps or delays (for example, if there is a need to obtain an Employer Identification Number), FTA recommends allowing ample time, up to several weeks, for completion of all steps. For additional information on obtaining a unique entity identifier, please visit [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### 4. Submission Dates and Times

Project proposals must be submitted electronically through *GRANTS.GOV* by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 17, 2020. *GRANTS.GOV* attaches a time stamp to each application at the time of submission. Proposals submitted after the deadline will only be considered under extraordinary circumstances not under the applicant's control. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

Within 48 hours after submitting an electronic application, the applicant should receive an email message from *GRANTS.GOV* with confirmation of successful transmission to *GRANTS.GOV*. If a notice of failed validation or incomplete materials is received, the applicant must address the reason for the failed validation, as described in the email notice, and *resubmit before the submission deadline*. If making a resubmission for any reason, include all original attachments regardless of which attachments were updated and check the box on the supplemental form indicating this is a resubmission.

FTA urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the due date to allow time to receive the validation messages and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification. *GRANTS.GOV* scheduled maintenance and outage times are announced on the *GRANTS.GOV* website. Deadlines will not be extended due to scheduled website maintenance.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the *GRANTS.GOV* site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered applicants may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) Registration in SAM is renewed annually, and (2) persons making submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in *GRANTS.GOV* by the AOR to make submissions.

### 5. Restrictions

Funds under this NOFO cannot be used to reimburse applicants for otherwise eligible expenses incurred prior to FTA award of a grant agreement until FTA has issued pre-award authority for selected projects.

### 6. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case

insufficient funding is available to fund a project at the full requested amount. If an applicant indicates that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget would be affected by a reduced award. FTA may award a lesser amount regardless of whether a scalable option is provided.

### E. Application Review Information

#### 1. Criteria

Projects will be evaluated primarily on the responses provided in the supplemental form. Additional information may be provided to support the responses; however, any additional documentation must be directly referenced on the supplemental form, including the file name where the additional information can be found. FTA will evaluate proposals for the Low-No Program based on the criteria described in this notice.

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department recognizes that rural transportation networks face unique challenges. To the extent that those challenges are reflected in the merit criteria listed in this section, the Department will consider how the activities proposed in the application will address those challenges, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

#### a. Demonstration of Need

Since the purpose of this program is to fund vehicles and facilities, applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they demonstrate how the proposed project will address an unmet need for capital investment in vehicles and/or supporting facilities. For example, an applicant may demonstrate that it requires additional or improved charging or maintenance facilities for low or no emission vehicles, that it intends to replace existing vehicles that have exceeded their minimum useful life, or that it requires additional vehicles to meet current ridership demands.

FTA will consider an applicant's responses to the following criteria when assessing the need for capital investment underlying the proposed project:

- i. *Consistency with Long-Term Fleet Management Plan*: As required by

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)(5)(b)), all project proposals must demonstrate that they are part of the intended recipient's long-term integrated fleet management plan, as demonstrated through an existing transit asset management program, fleet procurement plan, or similarly documented program or policy. These plans must be attached to the application. FTA will evaluate the consistency of the proposed project with the applicant's long-term fleet management plan, as well as the applicant's previous experience with the relevant low or no emissions vehicle technologies.

*ii. For low or no emission bus projects (replacement and/or or expansion):* Applicants must provide information on the age, condition, and performance of the vehicles to be replaced by the proposed project. Vehicles to be replaced must have met their minimum useful life at the time of project completion. For service expansion requests, applicants must provide information on the proposed service expansion and the benefits for transit riders and the community from the new service. For all vehicle projects, the proposal must address whether the project conforms to FTA's spare ratio guidelines. Low or no emission vehicles funded under this program are not exempted from FTA's standard spare ratio requirements, which apply to and are calculated on the agency's entire fleet.

*iii. For bus facility and equipment projects (replacement, rehabilitation, and/or expansion):* Applicants must provide information on the age and condition of the asset to be rehabilitated or replaced relative to its minimum useful life.

#### b. Demonstration of Benefits

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will support the statutory requirements of the Low-No Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)(5)(A)). In particular, FTA will consider the quality and extent to which applications demonstrate how the proposed project will: (1) Reduce Energy Consumption; (2) Reduce Harmful Emissions; and (3) Reduce Direct Carbon Emissions. FTA will also evaluate the potential of the proposed project to accelerate innovation.

*i. Reduce Energy Consumption:* Applicants must describe how the proposed project will reduce energy consumption. FTA will evaluate applications based on the degree to which the proposed technology reduces energy consumption as compared to

more common vehicle propulsion technologies.

*ii. Reduce Harmful Emissions:* Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed vehicles or facility will reduce the emission of particulates that create local air pollution, which leads to local environmental health concerns, smog, and unhealthy ozone concentrations. FTA will evaluate the rate of particulate emissions by the proposed vehicles or vehicles to be supported by the proposed facility, compared to the emissions from the vehicles that will be replaced or moved to the spare fleet as a result of the proposed project, as well as comparable standard buses.

*iii. Reduce Direct Carbon Emissions:* Applicants should demonstrate how the proposed vehicles or facility will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from transit vehicle operations. FTA will evaluate the rate of direct carbon emissions by the proposed vehicles or vehicles to be supported by the proposed facility, compared to the emissions from the vehicles that will be replaced or moved to the spare fleet as a result of the proposed project, as well as comparable standard buses.

*iv. Accelerating Innovation:* Applicants may also demonstrate how the project will accelerate the introduction of innovative technologies or practices such as integrated fare payment systems permitting complete trips or advancements to propulsion systems. Innovation can also include practices such as new public transportation operational models, financial or procurement arrangements, or value capture.

#### c. Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project is consistent with local and regional long-range planning documents and local government priorities. FTA will evaluate applications based on the quality and extent to which they assess whether the project is consistent with the transit priorities identified in the long-range plan; and/or contingency/illustrative projects included in that plan; or the locally developed human services public transportation coordinated plan. Applicants may submit copies of the relevant pages of such plans to support their application. FTA will consider how the project will support regional goals and applicants may submit support letters from local and regional planning organizations attesting to the consistency of the proposed project with these plans.

Evidence of additional local or regional prioritization may include

letters of support for the project from local government officials, public agencies, and non-profit or private sector partners.

#### d. Local Financial Commitment

Applicants must identify the source of the local cost share and describe whether such funds are currently available for the project or will need to be secured if the project is selected for funding. FTA will consider the availability of the local cost share as evidence of local financial commitment to the project. Applicants should submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project; for example, by including a board resolution, letter of support from the State, or other documentation of the source of local funds such as a budget document highlighting the line item or section committing funds to the proposed project. In addition, an applicant may propose a local cost share that is greater than the minimum requirement or provide documentation of previous local investments in the project, which cannot be used to satisfy local matching requirements, as evidence of local financial commitment. Additional consideration will be given to those projects that propose a larger local cost share. FTA will also note if an applicant proposes to use grant funds only for the incremental cost of new technologies over the cost of replacing vehicles with standard propulsion technologies.

#### e. Project Implementation Strategy

FTA will rate projects higher if grant funds can be obligated within 12 months of selection and the project can be implemented within a reasonable time frame. In assessing when funds can be obligated, FTA will consider whether the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion (CE), or whether the required environmental work has been initiated or completed for projects that require an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. As such, applicants should submit information describing the project's anticipated path and timeline through the environmental review process. The proposal must state when grant funds can be obligated and indicate the timeframe under which the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) can be amended to include the proposed project.

In assessing whether the proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete, FTA will review the

proposed project implementation plan, including all necessary project milestones and the overall project timeline. For projects that will require formal coordination, approvals, or permits from other agencies or project partners, the applicant must demonstrate coordination with these organizations and their support for the project, such as through letters of support.

For project proposals that involve a partnership with a manufacturer, vendor, consultant, or other third party, applicants must identify by name any project partners, including, but not limited to, other transit agencies, bus manufacturers, owners or operators of related facilities, or any expert consultants. FTA will evaluate the experience and capacity of the named project partners to successfully implement the proposed project based on the partners' experience and qualifications. Applicants are advised to submit information on the partners' qualifications and experience as a part of the application. Entities involved in the project that are not named in the application will be required to be selected through a competitive procurement.

#### f. Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the technical, legal, and financial capacity to undertake the project. FTA will review relevant oversight assessments and records to determine whether there are any outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues with the applicant that would affect the outcome of the proposed project.

## 2. Review and Selection Process

In addition to other FTA staff that may review the proposals, a technical evaluation committee will evaluate proposals based on the published evaluation criteria. Members of the technical evaluation committee and other FTA staff may request additional information from applicants, if necessary. Based on the findings of the technical evaluation committee, the FTA Administrator will determine the final selection of projects for program funding. In determining the allocation of program funds, FTA may consider geographic diversity, diversity in the size of the transit systems receiving funding, projects located in or that support public transportation service in a qualified opportunity zone designated pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 1400Z-1, the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards, the percentage of the local share

provided, and whether the project includes an innovative technology or practice. FTA may consider capping the amount a single applicant may receive and prioritizing investments in rural areas. Projects that have a higher local financial commitment may also be prioritized.

After applying the above criteria, the FTA Administrator will consider the following key Departmental objectives:

- a. Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- b. Utilizing alternative funding sources and innovative financing models to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- c. Accounting for the life-cycle costs of the project to promote the state of good repair;
- d. Using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and,
- e. Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance and achieving specific, measurable outcomes identified by grant applicants.

Prior to making an award, FTA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Award Performance and Integrity Information System accessible through SAM. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. FTA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200.205).

## F. Federal Award Administration Information

The FTA Administrator will announce the final project selections on the FTA website. Recipients should contact their FTA Regional Offices for additional information regarding allocations for projects under the Low-No Program. At the time the project selections are announced, FTA will extend pre-award authority for the selected projects. There is no blanket pre-award authority for these projects before announcement.

### 1. Federal Award Notices

Funds under the Low-No Program are available to States, designated recipients, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes. There is no minimum or maximum grant award

amount; however, FTA intends to fund as many meritorious projects as possible. Only proposals from eligible recipients for eligible activities will be considered for funding. Due to funding limitations, applicants that are selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested. In those cases, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the proposed projects are still viable and can be completed with the amount awarded.

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

### a. Pre-Award Authority

FTA will issue specific guidance to recipients regarding pre-award authority at the time of selection. FTA does not provide pre-award authority for competitive funds until projects are selected, and even then, there are Federal requirements that must be met before costs are incurred. For more information about FTA's policy on pre-award authority, please see the FY 2019 Apportionment Notice published on July 3, 2019. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-07-03/pdf/2019-14248.pdf>.

### b. Grant Requirements

If selected, awardees will apply for a grant through FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). All Low-No Program recipients are subject to the grant requirements of the Urbanized Area Formula Grant program (49 U.S.C. 5307), including those of FTA Circular "Urbanized Area Formula Program: Program Guidance and Application Instructions" (FTA.C.9030.1E). All recipients must also follow the Award Management Requirements (FTA.C.5010.1) and the labor protections required by Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5333(b)). Technical assistance regarding these requirements is available from each FTA regional office.

### c. Buy America

FTA requires that all capital procurements meet FTA's Buy America requirements (49 U.S.C. 5323(j)), which require that all iron, steel, or manufactured products be produced in the United States. Federal public transportation law provides for a phased increase in the domestic content for rolling stock between FY 2016 and FY 2020. For FY 2020 and beyond, the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States must be more than 70 percent of the cost of all components. There is no change to the requirement that final assembly of rolling stock must occur in the United

States. FTA issued guidance on the implementation of the phased increase in domestic content on September 1, 2016 (81 FR 60278). Applicants should read the policy guidance carefully to determine the applicable domestic content requirement for their project. Any proposal that will require a waiver must identify in the application the items for which a waiver will be sought. Applicants should not proceed with the expectation that waivers will be granted. Consistent with Executive Order 13858 *Strengthening Buy-American Preferences for Infrastructure Projects*, signed by President Trump on January 31, 2019, applicants should maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States, in Federal procurements and through the terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards.

#### d. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

FTA requires that its recipients receiving planning, capital, and/or operating assistance that will award prime contracts exceeding \$250,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year comply with Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program regulations (49 CFR part 26). Applicants should expect to include any funds awarded, excluding those to be used for vehicle procurements, in setting their overall DBE goal. Note, however, that projects including vehicle procurements remain subject to the DBE program regulations. The rule requires that, prior to bidding on any FTA-assisted vehicle procurement, entities that manufacture vehicles, or perform post-production alterations or retrofitting, must submit a DBE program plan and goal methodology to FTA. Further, to the extent that a vehicle remanufacturer is responding to a solicitation for new or remanufactured vehicles with a vehicle to which the remanufacturer has provided post-production alterations or retrofitting (e.g., replacing major components such as an engine to provide a "like new" vehicle), the vehicle remanufacturer is considered a transit vehicle manufacturer and must also comply with the DBE regulations.

FTA will then issue a transit vehicle manufacturer (TVM) concurrence/certification letter. Grant recipients must verify each entity's compliance with these requirements before accepting its bid. A list of compliant, certified TVMs is posted on FTA's web page at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/eligible-transit-vehicle-manufacturers>. Please note that this list is nonexclusive, and recipients must

contact FTA before accepting bids from entities not listed on this web-posting. Recipients may also establish project-specific DBE goals for vehicle procurements. FTA will provide additional guidance as grants are awarded. For more information on DBE requirements, please contact Scheryl Portee, Office of the Chief Counsel, 202-366-0840, email: [scheryl.portee@dot.gov](mailto:scheryl.portee@dot.gov).

#### e. Planning

FTA encourages applicants to notify the appropriate State Departments of Transportation and metropolitan planning organizations in areas likely to be served by the project funds made available under these initiatives and programs. Selected projects must be incorporated into the long-range plans and transportation improvement programs of States and metropolitan areas before they are eligible for FTA funding. As described under the evaluation criteria, FTA may consider whether a project is consistent with or already included in these plans when evaluating a project.

#### f. Standard Assurances

The applicant assures that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, directives, FTA circulars, and other Federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA grant. The applicant acknowledges that it is under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement issued for its project with FTA. The applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies, and administrative practices might be modified from time to time and may affect the implementation of the project. The applicant agrees that the most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise. The applicant must submit the Certifications and Assurances before receiving a grant if it does not have current certifications on file.

#### 3. Reporting

Post-award reporting requirements include the electronic submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone Progress Reports in FTA's electronic grants management system. Recipients of funds made available through this NOFO are also required to regularly submit data to the National Transit Database.

#### G. Technical Assistance and Other Program Information

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." FTA will consider applications for funding only from eligible recipients for eligible projects listed in Section C. Complete applications must be submitted through [GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 17, 2020. For issues with [GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov), please contact [GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov) by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Contact information for FTA's regional offices can be found on FTA's website at [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov).

#### H. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice, please contact the Low-No Program manager, Victor Waldron, by phone at 202-366-5183, or by email at [victor.waldron@dot.gov](mailto:victor.waldron@dot.gov). A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 800-877-8339. In addition, FTA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on FTA's website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/lowno>. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, applicants are encouraged to contact FTA directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions. FTA staff may also conduct briefings on the FY 2020 competitive grants selection and award process upon request.

#### K. Jane Williams,

*Acting Administrator.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maritime Administration

#### Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement/Joint Planning Advisory Group Meeting

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) program requires that a notice of the time, place, and nature of each VISA Joint Planning Advisory Group (JPAG) meeting be published in the **Federal Register**. On January 14, 2020, the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) co-hosted a classified VISA JPAG meeting at Scott Air Force