

Issued on: June 3, 1997.

**J. Bruce Turner,**

*Transportation Planner, Richmond, Virginia.*  
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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Highway Administration

#### Weather Information for Surface Transportation; Request for Participation

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

**ACTION:** Notice; request for participation.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) supports the continuing development of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) in rural areas, as defined in the Advanced Rural Transportation Systems (ARTS) program, and as contained in section 6051-6059 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) Public Law 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914 (1991), as amended. This Request for Participation (RFP) focuses on the development of a system that meets highway operators' and users' needs for clear and accurate weather and road condition information. Such a system will cut across all of the Critical Program Areas (CPA) of the ARTS Strategic Plan, since all operators and users have a need for this type of information. Proposals are solicited from public/private partnerships to design, develop and evaluate an integrated system that meets these needs, especially in a rural environment. Proposals will be assessed on their technical and financial merit, and the funding will be provided through one cooperative agreement between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and a State DOT.

**DATES:** Proposals must be received by 4 p.m., e.t., on August 1, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Proposals should be submitted directly to Mr. Paul Pisano, Federal Highway Administration, HSR-30, 6300 Georgetown Pike, McLean, Virginia 22101-2296.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Paul Pisano, FHWA, Office of Safety and Traffic Operations R&D, (703) 285-2498 at the address above; or Mr. Raymond Resendes, ITS Joint Program Office, (202) 366-2182; or Mr. Robert Robel, FHWA, Office of Acquisition Management, (202) 366-4227; or Ms. Beverly Russell, FHWA, Office of the Chief Counsel (202) 366-1355, Department of Transportation, 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:** Copies of the ARTS Strategic Plan, which describes the program goals and the CPAs are available from ITS America, 400 Virginia Avenue, SW., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20024, telephone (202) 484-4847. Electronic copies are available on the ITS America Internet Home Page, <http://www.itsa.org>.

#### I. Introduction

Subpart B of title VI (secs. 6051-6059) of the ISTEA provides for the Intelligent Transportation Systems Act of 1991 which authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to establish a program to research, develop, and operationally test "intelligent transportation systems" (ITS)—that is, the development or application of electronics, communications, or information processing to improve the efficiency and safety of surface transportation systems. Surface transportation weather information is vital to highway operators and users for making decisions about snow and ice control, traffic management, hazardous driving condition warnings, travel planning, and other activities. Progress has been made in developing weather information systems for snow and ice control. This progress is to be extended to other applications, by augmenting the existing Road Weather Information System (RWIS) and incorporating weather information into the developing ITS architecture. The quality of weather information affects costs of road operation and travel, as well as travel safety and security. These effects are particularly important in rural environments, as indicated in previous rural transportation needs assessments.

A weather information system begins with observational data of atmospheric, surface and subsurface conditions. These data may be used directly for weather-related decisions in highway operating and travel activities, but generally the data are assimilated into fused and filtered datasets, that may serve as "nowcasts" or enter into forecasting models. The weather data, and related decisions, exist at particular scale ranges, referred to as micro-, meso-, synoptic, and climatic-scale. The synoptic scale (horizon of days, large area resolution) is generally what is available to the public now; however, critical decisionmaking for highway use and operation requires information improvements generally in the meso-scale (hour and sub-hour horizons,

down to kilometers of resolution), as well as in existing conditions (e.g., nowcasts). Observed and predicted data are analyzed to produce weather condition indicators of interest to decision makers. Weather information, at whatever stage of processing, is packaged in forms suitable for end-user applications, and disseminated to them by various communications links.

The weather information of interest to highway operators and travelers includes both atmospheric and road surface condition information. Atmospheric conditions of visibility, wind and precipitation are relevant, and must be combined with road surface conditions—especially snow, ice and water coverage—to complete the weather information package. This package can then be formatted and disseminated for use by applications for: maintenance personnel, emergency medical service (EMS) operators, emergency management personnel (e.g., during evacuations), school bus operators, transit operators, commercial vehicle operators, traffic managers and travelers.

The existing components for producing and disseminating weather information can be combined with newly developed components to form an integrated weather information system. This system must make maximum use of existing and standardized data, forecasts and products. Collecting data and operating forecast models are expensive for specialized users, and most users depend on the forecasts and datasets of the National Weather Service (NWS) under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Weather-related decisionmaking can be improved by matching the nature of the decisions to local or specialized data collection, and to specialized analysis, packaging and dissemination of weather information from existing assimilated or forecast data.

The usefulness of weather information is maximized, and its cost minimized, by the sharing of information. This requires standards for data formats and products. The NWS is dominant in affecting standards for dissemination of observational data and forecasts. The National ITS Architecture, primarily via National Transportation Communications Interface Protocol (NTCIP) activities, is establishing standards for transportation weather information systems. An important issue is how improvements in integration of information systems will merge with and comply with these standards and existing systems such as the RWIS.

Much of the value added to existing weather information for specialized users will be by private service providers who analyze data and provide focused dissemination of products. The public sector highway operators will always play a major role in such an integrated system, whether as system maintainer or as end user. Consequently, it is clear that partnerships with the private sector in selected, value-added information processing and dissemination to highway operators and users could be a lost opportunity if not promoted and developed.

The rural highway system is characterized by a few, highly traveled routes, and many miles of low use, isolated routes. Both types of routes can traverse areas where weather extremes create dangerous travel situations, and where information or aid is now difficult to access. In 1995, there were 20,712 fatal accidents in rural areas, and nationally about 13 percent of such accidents occur in inclement weather. Better weather information to affect highway treatment, traffic operations, trip-making decisions and driver behavior can reduce the number of accidents. Rural highway operators have the bulk of the nation's highway mileage to operate. There is a need to operate these highways more efficiently and effectively under budget constraints. This can be aided by weather information that is more reliable for specific routes and locations. The challenges are not only in matching weather information to decisions, but in dealing with data collection and information transmission over the wide expanses and rugged terrain of rural areas.

## II. Objectives

The objectives of this project are to develop an integrated weather information system that improves and broadens the scope of atmospheric and road surface condition information available to highway users and operators, and to assess the benefits of integrating the functions of RWIS, other weather information sources (e.g., NOAA/NWS), and transportation management and traveler information operations for a rural part of the transportation system.

The hypothesis is that if such a system is developed, then risk exposure will decrease, which improves safety and operations; maintenance and traffic management will be conducted more cost-effectively, which saves time and money by public agencies; and customer satisfaction will increase due to

improved and more available information.

Evaluation is an integral part of this project, and measures of success shall be of two types: output and outcome. The output measures consist of evaluating the performance of the system (i.e., does the integrated system function as designed). The outcome measures consist of measuring the benefits of the service, such as the operational improvements achieved by developing such an integrated system. Outcome measures should be in a variety of terms, such as cost savings by public agencies, time savings, reductions in crashes, etc. When possible, improvements shall be measured incrementally (i.e., measure the value added when X is integrated, then Y, then Z, etc). Efforts should also be included to document the many benefits that are intangible or are very difficult to measure.

## III. Partnerships

The USDOT will work with a public/private partnership, with the State DOT taking the lead role. The State DOT will ensure that needed institutional and partnership arrangements are in place and required funding is available, that the project can be completed within the required timeframe, and that the private sector is involved as an infrastructure provider (e.g., data collection and processing), as a franchisee (e.g., for information dissemination), or in another capacity contributing significant resources to the project.

All needed partnership arrangements and institutional agreements to support the project should be documented with signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that clearly define responsibilities and relationships. Copies of the MOUs should be included in the proposal. Partners are also strongly encouraged to seek participation from certified minority business enterprise firms, women business enterprise firms, disadvantaged business enterprise firms, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and other minority colleges.

## IV. Scope

This project involves the integration of multiple information systems and improvement of information presentation of atmospheric and road surface condition information to highway users and operators. Any or all facets of the integrated system can be further developed and expanded in order to meet the project objectives. This includes, but is not limited to alternative approaches to data collection

(e.g., outfitting snow plows with automatic vehicle location devices), advanced data processing and fusing to develop improved "nowcasts" and forecasts (e.g., extrapolating Doppler radar data and combining it with meso-scale numerical forecasts), two-way integration of specialized observations and forecasting (e.g., linking a RWIS and a Traffic Operations Center (TOC) with a provider to develop meso-scale forecasts), and improved information packaging and dissemination (e.g., providing route-specific atmospheric and road surface condition information to a range of users and operators in a timely and cost-efficient manner).

## V. Delineation of Work

The following task descriptions are intended to provide a framework for completing the project. The selected project team will be expected to describe a detailed effort in its Technical Plan that demonstrates an understanding of the project objectives and can be realistically accomplished within the time and funding constraints.

### 1. Establish Baselines and Refine System Design

Establish baselines of existing systems (i.e., the RWIS and TOC infrastructure currently in place, and the extent to which it is integrated), describing the state-of-the-practice in weather and road condition data collection, information processing, and information packaging and dissemination that are provided within the project area. Describe in a similar manner ITS-based services that are also provided within the area affected by this project. It is recognized that these systems will not be strictly rural, and will include urban components.

Document weather-based decisionmaking by a range of highway operators and users in the project area. Characterize the activities and decisions of highway users and operators in terms of their use and need for weather and road condition information. Identify the sources of the information, the agencies responsible for each type of information, and the means of information dissemination.

Refine the system design concept that was submitted in the proposal in coordination with the independent evaluator. Comments from the FHWA technical representative on the system design concept should be incorporated, as well as the information gathered within this task. The report should document all aspects of the system, especially system integration and information packaging. It should identify areas in need of improved

weather and road condition information, and how these areas will be improved within the scope of this project. It should also include estimates of the projected benefits of these improvements, as well as a description of the capabilities to collect the data needed for an independent evaluation. Submit this report to the FHWA for approval.

**Note:** The project team shall not proceed with the following tasks without written approval of the refined system design from the FHWA technical representative.

## 2. System Development

Develop the integrated system as defined in the system design. Demonstrate that the system functions as designed, including the expanded information packaging, in a controlled environment prior to full-scale operations. The system integration can be done over a distributed network, or centrally, e.g., in a TOC. Throughout system development, document technical and institutional issues that impact the project, including issues regarding the architecture and standards of the system, especially within the context of the National ITS Architecture and National Weather Service architecture.

## 3. System Operation

Operate the system over a period of time sufficient for evaluation, coordinating system operations with the independent evaluator to ensure that the appropriate data is collected. Throughout system operations, document technical and institutional issues that impact the project, including issues regarding the architecture and standards of the system, especially within the context of the National ITS Architecture and National Weather Service architecture.

## 4. System Evaluation and Final Documentation

Coordinate activities with the independent evaluator to conduct a thorough system evaluation. Synthesize the technical and institutional issues documented in earlier tasks. Submit a final report to the FHWA that describes the project and its findings, including, but not limited to the benefits, and technical and institutional issues.

## VI. Administration

### Schedule

Total project time is expected to be 30 months. A start date of October, 1997, should be assumed for the purpose of responding to this invitation.

### Funding

The amount of Federal funding for this project is \$1,300,000. Total Federal ITS funding is not to exceed 80 percent of the total cost of the project. The remaining 20 percent would be provided by a combination of non-ITS Federal-aid, State, local, and private funding. The project will be independently evaluated under separate funding. The USDOT will fund this project through a Cooperative Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration and a State DOT.

### Points of Contact

For technical concerns, the primary point of contact is the Agreement Officer's Technical Representatives (AOTR), Mr. Paul Pisano. A field technical representative from the FHWA Division Office will be identified subsequent to award. For all other concerns the point of contact is the Agreement Officer (AO), the FHWA Division Office representative who enters into the cooperative agreement. The AO will be named after a team is selected.

### Acceptance of Work

All work submitted will be subject to the review and acceptance of the AOTR.

### Disputes

Any disputes or claims shall be submitted to the AO. The recipient may appeal the decision of the AO to the Director of the Office of Safety and Traffic Operations Research and Development for further review. However, the decision of the Director shall be final and not subject to further review.

### Governing Regulations

The parties to this cooperative agreement acknowledge that all work shall be governed by 49 CFR Part 19, and other applicable regulations.

## VII. Instructions to Applicants

Interested parties are invited to submit a proposal containing sufficient information to enable an evaluation of the proposal based on the evaluation criteria provided under section VIII of this preamble. A proposal shall not exceed 50 pages in length including title, index, tables, maps, appendices, abstracts, and other supporting materials. A page is defined as one side of an 8½ by 11 inch paper, with a type font no smaller than 12 point. Proposals greater than 50 pages will not be accepted. Ten copies plus an unbound reproducible copy of the proposal shall be submitted. The cover sheet or front

page of the proposal shall include the name, address, and phone number of an individual to whom correspondence and questions about the application may be directed. Proposals shall include a Technical Plan and a Financial Plan that describe how the proposed objectives will be met within the specified timeframe and budget. The plans should be structured such that they contain the following information:

### Technical Plan

#### 1. Inter-agency, Inter-jurisdictional and Public/Private Partnership Arrangements

Proposals should describe the partnership arrangements, which includes providing the information described in the section entitled Partnerships above.

#### 2. Technical Approach

Proposals should include a system design concept describing the extent of the system integration (e.g., data inputs, "nowcasting," forecasting and other data processing) and the information packaging (i.e., expanded or improved weather and road condition information for various operators and users) for the integrated weather information system that is to be developed and evaluated under this project. Proposals should provide a concise description of the State or region where this project will take place, including a description of current systems in place that are to be part of the integrated weather information system, as well as the physical location covered by the integrated system. This should include the extent of deployment on the transportation network, as well as the services to be provided on that network. System integration is not restricted to rural systems, and may include integrating rural and urban components. This system design concept should be specific to the extent that it can be evaluated as part of the selection process, recognizing that it will be further refined in the beginning of the project. Proposals should describe the technical approach by which the system design concept will be refined, developed, operationally tested, evaluated and documented. It should set forth a schedule of the work to be performed, document assumptions and technical uncertainties, and propose specific approaches for the resolution of any uncertainties.

#### 3. Management and Staffing Plan

The Technical Plan should include a management and staffing plan that provides the names of all personnel and

the positions they will occupy as related to this project. The estimated professional and technical staffing shall be provided in staff-months and staff-hours. The management and staffing plan should demonstrate that the project manager is capable, available, and able to commit to a level of involvement that ensures project success. Biographical summaries of key personnel shall also be included.

#### 4. Project Evaluation

Proposals should include a detailed discussion that demonstrates an understanding of the importance of ensuring that the proposed system provides the capabilities and data access needed to measure the anticipated outputs and outcomes. Proposals should describe low-risk methods to work with the independent evaluator to ensure that benefits are measurable. A demonstrated understanding of the role of the evaluation should be evident in the organizational and management approach of the proposal. Proposals should include a description of the methods and capabilities included in the design of the system that will allow for the measurement of anticipated outputs and outcomes by the independent evaluator. Development of the evaluation plan, and the actual data collection for evaluation will be the responsibility of the independent evaluator in coordination with the project team.

#### 5. National ITS System Architecture

Proposals should provide a statement of intent to implement a system that is consistent with the National ITS Architecture, including any national ITS standards, protocols, or standards requirements as these emerge from the National ITS Architecture Development Program. Copies of the Architecture Definition Documents, the Draft Standards Requirements Document, and the Standards Development Program from the Architecture Development Program are available from ITS America, 400 Virginia Avenue, SW., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20024, telephone (202) 484-4847. Electronic copies are available on the ITS America Internet Home Page, <http://www.itsa.org>. These documents provide insight into the definition of the National Architecture, and the emerging approaches being taken towards standardizing interfaces that would support the integration of transportation management components.

#### Financial Plan

The proposal shall provide a description of the total cost of achieving

the objectives of the project, and the partnership's plans for raising the matching funds required by this solicitation. The proposal shall provide a statement of commitment from the proposed project partners that required funding levels will be available. All financial commitments, from both the public and private sectors, should be documented in signed MOUs and included in the proposal. The FHWA prefers that project costs be submitted using Standard Form 1411 and FHWA Form 1411-1 (Proposed); however, other formats may be used.

The cost share must be from non-federally derived funding sources and must consist of either cash, substantial equipment contributions that are wholly utilized as an integral part of the project, or personnel services dedicated full-time to the project for a substantial period, as long as such personnel are not otherwise supported with Federal funds. The non-federally derived funding may come from State, local government, or private sector partners. In an ITS partnership, as with other DOT cost-share contracts, it is inappropriate for a fee to be included in the proposed budget as part of a partner's contribution to the project. This does not prohibit appropriate fee payments to vendors or others who may provide goods or services to the partnership. It also does not prohibit business relationships with the private sector which result in revenues from the sale or provision of ITS products and services.

The USDOT, the Comptroller General of the U.S., and, if appropriate, the States have the right to access all documents pertaining to the use of Federal ITS funds and non-Federal contributions. Non-Federal partners must submit sufficient documentation during final negotiations and on a regular basis during the life of the project to substantiate these costs. Such items as direct labor, fringe benefits, material costs, consultant costs, subcontractor costs, and travel costs should be included in that documentation.

#### VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Applicants must submit an acceptable Technical Plan and Financial Plan that provide sound evidence that the proposed partnership can successfully meet the objectives of the project. The following criteria will be used in selecting the site.

##### 1. Technical Approach

Proposals will be evaluated on the technical approach to the project, particularly the system design concept,

and the extent to which the objectives of the project can be met through the proposed approach. Some of the specific items that will be included in the review of the technical approach include:

- (a) The extent of the rural transportation system affected by the project (e.g., how much area will be covered and to what level);
- (b) The number and types of services to be provided by the project;
- (c) The system design concept's consistency with the National ITS Program Plan and the ARTS Strategic Plan;
- (d) The system design concept's compliance with the National ITS Architecture and standards development, including the NTCIP Environmental Sensor Station (ESS) standard currently being developed;
- (e) The proposed methodology to refine, develop, operationally test, evaluate (including the methodology by which the project team will coordinate with the independent evaluator), and document the system; and
- (f) The innovativeness of the approach.

2. Management and Staffing Plan  
Proposals will be evaluated based on the completeness and thoroughness of the management and staffing plan, including organization of the team, staffing allocation, and work schedule. Some of the specific items that will be included in the review of the technical approach include:

- (a) The experience and background of the team, particularly the project manager;
- (b) The level of commitment of the project manager; and
- (c) The quality of the partnership arrangements, including a strong level of commitment between a range of partners, level of demonstrated cooperation, information sharing and working relationships, and level of participation of minority business enterprise firms, women business enterprise firms, disadvantaged business enterprise firms, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and other minority colleges.

##### 3. Financial Plan

Proposals will be evaluated based on the total projected cost of the project, as well as the individual staffing costs. The level of cost-sharing will be taken into account. Funds can be used to purchase and install new equipment, including field sensor stations, though it is recognized that such allocations will impact the extent to which the objectives can be met.

**Basis of Applicant Selection**

Selecting an offer for this project will take into account the relative importance of the evaluation criteria, as follows:

1. The Technical Approach will be most important;
2. The Management and Staffing Plan, and the Financial Plan are of equal importance.

**Authority:** Secs. 6051–6059, Pub. L. 102–240, 105 Stat. 1914, 2189; 23 U.S.C. 307 note; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: June 6, 1997.

**Jane Garvey,**

*Acting Federal Highway Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 97–15487 Filed 6–12–97; 8:45 am]

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**UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY****Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations**

Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978 (43 F.R. 13359, March 29, 1978), and Delegation Order No. 85–5 of June 27, 1985 (50 F.R. 27393, July 2, 1985), I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibit, “Revealing an Ancient Message: A Synagogue Mosaic from Sepphoris” (See list <sup>1</sup>), imported from abroad for the

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this list may be obtained by contacting Ms. Neila Sheahan, Assistant General Counsel, at 202/619–5030, and the address is Room 700, U.S. Information Agency, 301 Fourth Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547–0001.

temporary exhibition without profit within the United States are of cultural significance. These objects are imported pursuant to a loan agreement with the foreign lenders. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the listed exhibit objects at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, California from on or about May 17, 1997 to on or about August 10, 1997, and at the Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 27, 1997 to on or about January 4, 1998, is in the national interest. Public Notice of these determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: June 9, 1997.

**Les Jin,**

*General Counsel.*

[FR Doc. 97–15583 Filed 6–12–97; 8:45 am]

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