

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed highway capacity improvement project in Dubuque County, Iowa and Jo Daviess County, Illinois.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rebecca Hiatt, Environmental Coordinator, Federal Highway Administration, 105 Sixth Street, Ames, Iowa 50010-6337, Telephone (515) 233-7300. Roger Larsen, Project Manager, Iowa Department of Transportation, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010, Telephone (515) 239-1791.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Transportation, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to improve the capacity of U.S. Route 20 (U.S. 20) in Dubuque County, Iowa and Jo Daviess County, Illinois. The proposed improvement would involve upgrading or re-routing existing U.S. 20 between Iowa and Illinois for a distance up to seven miles.

Improvements to U.S. 20 are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand and safety considerations. This proposal will also include a connection of U.S. 20 across the Mississippi River. Alternatives under consideration include: (1) taking no action; (2) using alternative travel improvements; (3) widening the existing two-lane highway to four lanes; and (4) constructing a four-lane highway on a new location. Variations of facility type, grade, and alignment will be incorporated into and studied with various build alternatives.

An informal scoping process will be initiated as part of this project. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A series of public meetings will be held in Dubuque and East Dubuque. In addition, a public hearing will be held upon completion of the draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing. No formal scoping meeting is planned at this time.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this

proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or Iowa DOT at the addresses provided above.

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

Issued on: November 24, 1998.

Bruce E. Mazke,

Assistant Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Ames, Iowa.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Federal Highway Administration

[FRA Docket No. FRA-1998-4759]

Financial Assistance To Eliminate Highway-Railroad Grade Crossing Hazards on Designated High-Speed Rail Corridors

AGENCIES: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of designation of high-speed corridors; solicitation of applications for: (1) the designation of additional high-speed corridors, and (2) for Fiscal Year (FY) 1999 funding assistance.

SUMMARY: Section 1103(c) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Pub. L. 105-178, 112 Stat. 107) modifies the program established in 23 U.S.C. 104(d)(2) to eliminate highway-railroad grade crossing hazards in designated high-speed rail corridors. The program funding out of the Highway Trust Fund would be increased from \$5 million a year to \$5.25 million a year for FYs 1998-2003; eligible corridors are increased from 5 to 11 with the addition of the Gulf Coast, Keystone and Empire State Corridors and the addition of up to 3 corridors to be selected by the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary); not less than \$250,000 of available funding is for the Minneapolis/St. Paul-Chicago segment of the Midwest Corridor; and a general fund authorization of \$15 million per year for FYs 1999-2003 is provided for the same purpose, namely elimination of highway-railroad grade crossing hazards in designated high-speed rail corridors. (Funding of the general fund authorization is subject to the

appropriations process; no such appropriations have been made for FY 1999.)

In this notice, the FRA is soliciting applications from States for designation of up to three new corridors, and applications from States for FY 1999 funding under this program in all designated corridors. The FRA is actively coordinating with the FHWA, which is also substantively involved in this program and in all decisions pertaining to it.

DATES: Signed, written comments on this notice must be received by the FRA on or before February 9, 1999. Completed applications for additional corridor designations must be received by the FRA on or before March 11, 1999. Completed applications for FY 1999 funding assistance must be received by the FRA on or before March 11, 1999 or, for any additional designated corridors, within two months following publication of the designation in the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES: The public is invited to submit written comments on this notice. Written comments should refer to the docket number appearing at the top of this notice and be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address. Docket hours at the Nassif Building are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

Applications for corridor designation and applications for FY 1999 funding assistance should be submitted to: The Honorable Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, ATTN: Section 104(d)(2) Program, RDV-11, Mail Stop 20, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For FRA: Mr. John F. Cikota, Senior Transportation Analyst, Program Development Division, Office of Railroad Development (telephone: 202-493-6364; E-mail address: John.Cikota@fra.dot.gov), or Gareth Rosenau, Attorney, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW., Mailstop 10, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone 202-493-6054; E-mail address: Gareth.Rosenau@fra.dot.gov). For FHWA: Mr. Lee Chimini, Intermodal Transportation Engineer, Intermodal and Statewide Programs Division, Office of Environment and

Planning (telephone: 202-366-4068; E-mail address: Leroy.Chimini@fhwa.dot.gov) or Mr. Joseph Solomey, Attorney, Office of Chief Counsel, FHWA (telephone: 202-366-1374; E-mail address: Joseph.Solomey@fhwa.dot.gov), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

Internet users can access all comments received by the U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL-401, by using the universal resource locator (URL): <http://dms.dot.gov>. It is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Please follow the instructions online for more information and help.

An electronic copy of this document may be downloaded using a modem and suitable communication software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512-1661. Internet users may reach the **Federal Register's** home page at: <http://www.nara.gov/fedreg> and the Government Printing Office's database at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to provide general information about the 23 U.S.C. 104(d)(2) program to eliminate highway-railroad grade crossing hazards in designated high-speed rail corridors (Section 104(d)(2) Program), and the FRA's plans for implementing the program. The notice identifies the five corridors which have previously been designated by DOT and the three corridors designated in TEA-21, and invites any State, either singly or in conjunction with other States, to submit an application for the designation of one of up to three new corridors. In addition, the notice invites State governments housing a high-speed rail corridor identified in this notice, or a high-speed corridor designated subsequent to the issuance of this notice, to make applications for FY 1999 funding. The FRA and the FHWA will review the applications for corridor designation and funding, and will make joint decisions regarding such applications. The public is invited to submit comments on this notice.

Section 104(d)(2) Program

The section 104(d)(2) Program provides Federal funding to eliminate highway-railroad grade crossing hazards in designated high-speed rail corridors. Section 1103(c) of TEA-21 modifies the program by setting aside from the

Highway Trust Fund \$5.25 million per year for FYs 1998-2003; increasing the eligible corridors from 5 to 11 with the addition of the Gulf Coast, Keystone, and Empire State corridors and the addition of up to 3 new corridors to be selected by the Secretary; specifying that not less than \$250,000 of available annual funding is for the Minneapolis/St. Paul-Chicago segment of the Midwest Corridor; and providing a general fund authorization of \$15 million per year for FYs 1999-2003. Funding of this general fund authorization is subject to the appropriations process; no such appropriations have been made for FY 1999.

Rules for Application Submissions

Applications for the designation of new high-speed rail corridors under the Section 104(d)(2) Program, and applications for FY 1999 funding under the program shall be submitted to the address cited in this notice, and electronically in either WordPerfect or MS Word format. Electronic versions are to be submitted either on 3½ inch floppy disks to the address above, or by electronic mail to John.Cikota@fra.dot.gov. Applications shall be submitted by the dates indicated in this notice, and shall comply with the requirements specified in this notice.

Amount of Funding

To fund the section 104(d)(2) Program, TEA-21 authorized for allocation \$5.25 million annually from the Highway Trust Fund. This allocation is subject to a reduction by operation of Section 1102(f) of TEA-21. For FY 1998, the reduction amounted to 10.9 percent of the authorized funding; FY 1999 funding will be reduced by approximately 12 percent. Taking into account available carryover and the section 1102(f) reductions, which are being calculated as this notice goes to press, the FRA and the FHWA project that a total of approximately \$6½ to \$7 million will be made available for States' use during FY 1999. Of that amount, section 1103(c) of TEA-21 requires that at least \$500,000 be allocated to the segment of the Chicago Hub Corridor linking Chicago, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities (\$250,000 in each of FYs 1998 and 1999).

The FRA anticipates that these funds will be allocated as early as possible, based on a review of applications submitted under this notice.

Designation of Eight of the Eleven High-Speed Rail Corridors

As previously noted, the Secretary is authorized to designate eleven high-speed rail corridors under the Section 104(d)(2) Program. To date the DOT has designated the following five corridors:

- (1) California Corridor (San Francisco Bay Area to Los Angeles and San Diego);
- (2) Pacific Northwest Corridor (Eugene, OR via Portland, OR and Seattle, WA to Vancouver, BC);
- (3) Chicago Hub Corridor, extending from Chicago to St. Louis, Detroit, and Milwaukee;
- (4) Florida Corridor (Miami—Orlando—Tampa); and
- (5) Southeast Corridor (Washington, DC—Richmond, VA (with an extension to Newport News, VA)—Raleigh, NC—Greensboro, NC—Charlotte, NC).

By this notice, the FRA is recognizing the following additional corridor designations made in section 104(d)(2):

- (6) Gulf Coast Corridor, designated as extending easterly and westerly from New Orleans, LA, on routes to be determined by the Secretary in consultation with the participating States;
- (7) Keystone Corridor, between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PA, via Paoli and Lancaster, PA, over the route of the former Pennsylvania Railroad; and
- (8) Empire State Corridor, between New York City, Albany, and Buffalo, NY, over the route of the former New York Central Railroad.

In addition, the Chicago Hub Corridor (Corridor number (3) above) is expanded to include the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, as set forth in section 104(d)(2).

Applications From States for Designation of Up To Three New Corridors

Any State, either singly or in conjunction with other States, may request the FRA to designate a corridor under section 104(d)(2). As previously noted, applications for designation must be received by the FRA by March 11, 1999.

Section 104(d)(2) requires that corridors selected include rail lines where railroad speeds of 90 miles or more per hour are occurring or can reasonably be expected to occur in the future, and that the Secretary consider the following:

- (1) The projected ridership associated with the proposed corridor;
- (2) The percentage of the corridor over which trains will be able to operate at maximum cruise speed, taking into account such factors as topography and other traffic on the line;

(3) The projected benefits to nonriders, such as congestion relief on other modes of transportation servicing the corridor (including congestion in heavily traveled air passenger corridors);

(4) The amount of State and local financial support that can reasonably be anticipated for the improvement of the line and related facilities; and

(5) The cooperation of the owner of the right-of-way that can reasonably be expected in the operation of the high-speed rail passenger service in the corridor.

Applications from States for designation of high-speed rail corridors shall include all information which is required for the Secretary to make a determination with reference to the statutory considerations for corridor selection. Applications shall also include information demonstrating compliance with the speed requirement set forth above.

Applications for FY 1999 Funding Under the Section 104(d)(2) Program

Eligible Applicants. Only State governments housing a designated high-speed rail corridor are eligible to file applications for FY 1999 funding. Applications must be received by the FRA by March 11, 1999 with respect to the eight designated corridors identified in this notice, or within two months following the date of publication of the designation in the **Federal Register**.

Eligible Crossings. All highway/rail grade crossings, whether public or private, on designated high-speed corridors are eligible for funding.

Eligible Improvements and Allowable Costs. Work eligible for funding includes any of the following to reduce the hazards of highway-rail grade crossings in the designated corridors: (1) Installation or improvement of warning devices; (2) improvement of track circuitry which activates warning devices; (3) other crossing improvements, such as improved crossing surfaces, improved sight distances, and crossing illumination; (4) closure of crossings with or without attendant highway relocations; (5) grade separation construction or reconstruction; (6) combining crossing warning systems with advanced train control and/or intelligent highway traffic control systems; (7) conducting analyses to identify specific rail routes, inventorying grade crossings, and developing crossing improvement plans; (8) project development and engineering; (9) evaluating the safety effects, benefits, and costs of activities funded under this program; and (10) any combination of the above.

Matching. The Federal share of the costs of improvements funded under section 104(d)(2) may be up to 100 percent of the costs of engineering and construction. However, in allocating funds, consideration will be given to the extent to which other funds are being committed to corridor improvements in conjunction with the section 104(d)(2) funds.

Contents of applications.

Applications for FY 1999 funding shall contain all the following items:

(1) Identifying Data.

(a) The name of the corridor for which funding is sought.

(b) The name, address, responsible party, telephone, fax number, and e-mail address of the State agency submitting the application.

(c) The railroad route and relevant milepost locations on which the crossings to be improved or eliminated are located.

(2) **Work Description.** A description of the proposed work, and related information, in sufficient detail to provide the staff of the FRA, working with the FHWA, with a basis for approving an allocation of Section 104(d)(2) Program funding.

(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 U.S.C. 20103; section 1103(c), Pub. L. 105-178, 112 Stat. 107, 122 (1998).)

Issued in Washington, DC on December 3, 1998.

Jolene M. Molitoris,

Federal Railroad Administrator.

Anthony R. Kane,

Executive Director, Federal Highway Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-98-4861]

Decision That Certain Nonconforming Motor Vehicles are Eligible for Importation

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of decision by NHTSA that certain nonconforming motor vehicles are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This notice announces decisions by NHTSA that certain motor vehicles not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because they are substantially similar to vehicles originally

manufactured for importation into and/or sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturers as complying with the safety standards, and they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATE: These decisions are effective as of December 11, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

George Entwistle, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-5306).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. § 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR Part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

NHTSA received petitions from registered importers to decide whether the vehicles listed in Annex A to this notice are eligible for importation into the United States. To afford an opportunity for public comment, NHTSA published notice of these petitions as specified in Annex A. The reader is referred to those notices for a thorough description of the petitions. No comments were received in response to these notices. Based on its review of the information submitted by the petitioners, NHTSA has decided to grant the petitions.

Vehicle Eligibility Number for Subject Vehicles

The importer of a vehicle admissible under any final decision must indicate on the form HS-7 accompanying entry