

The construction and operation of the race course will create safety concerns by obstructing access from the I-395 northern terminus to the local street system including Howard Street, Conway Street, and Lee Street. However, an existing connection from I-395 to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will remain open throughout the event. In addition, access to and from I-95 into and out of the city along alternative access routes, including US 1, US 40, Russell Street, and Washington Boulevard will be maintained. The BGP and the city plan to update the 2012 signing plan to inform and guide motorists to, through, and around the impacted downtown area. The statewide transportation operations system, the Coordinated Highways Action Response Team will provide real-time traffic information to motorists through dynamic message signs and highway advisory radio. The MDTA states that the temporary closure of this segment of I-395 to general traffic should have no impact on interstate commerce. The I-95 is the main north-south Interstate route in the region, and will remain open during the time period of the event. There are five additional I-95 interchanges, just to the north or south of I-395, with connections to the local street system including the arterials servicing the city's downtown area. A sign and supplemental traffic control systems plan was developed as part of the 2011 event's Traffic Management Plan (TMP). In addition, I-695 (Baltimore Beltway) will provide motorists traveling through the region the ability to bypass the impact area by circling around the city.

Commercial motor vehicles of the dimensions and configurations described in 23 CFR 658.13 and 658.15 which serve the impacted area, may use the alternate routes listed above. Vehicles servicing the businesses bordering the impacted area will still be able to do so by also using the alternative routes noted above to circulate around the restricted area. In addition, vehicles not serving businesses in the restricted area but, currently using I-395 and the local street system to reach their ultimate destinations, will be able to use the I-95 interchanges north and south of I-395 to access the alternative routes. A map depicting the alternative routes is available electronically at the docket established for this notice at <http://www.regulations.gov>. The MDTA has reviewed these alternative routes and determined the routes to generally be capable of safely accommodating the diverted traffic during the period of

temporary restriction. As mentioned previously, the sign and supplemental traffic control system plan is also being updated as part of the event's TMP. Commercial vehicles as well as general traffic leaving the downtown area will also be able to use the alternative routes to reach I-95 and the rest of the Interstate System. The BGP and the city are working closely with businesses, including the hotels and restaurants located within the impact area, to schedule deliveries prior to the proposed I-395 closure to the extent feasible. The BGP is also working with affected businesses to schedule delivery services during the event period. The original plan proposed a credentialing process for access through designated gates with access to specific loading areas.

This request to temporarily close I-395 was prepared for the MDTA by the BGP and the city. In addition, the city has reached out to the Federal, State, and local agencies to collaborate and coordinate efforts to address the logistical challenges of hosting the BGP. The BGP and the city have worked extensively with the businesses and residential communities in the city that could be affected by the event. These efforts include the formation of Task Forces and event Sub-Committees, to guide the development of plans for event security, transportation management, public safety and more.

The FHWA seeks comments on this request for temporary deletion from the National Network for considerations in accordance with 23 CFR 658.11(d).

**Authority:** 23 U.S.C. 127, 315 and 49 U.S.C. 31111, 31112, and 31114; 23 CFR Part 658.

Issued on: May 3, 2013.

**Victor M. Mendez,**

*Federal Highway Administrator.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

#### **Tier One Environmental Impact Statement for the Rochester, Minnesota to Twin Cities, Minnesota Passenger Rail Corridor**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** FRA is issuing this notice to advise the public that FRA, the Olmsted County (Minnesota) Regional Railroad

Authority (OCRRA), and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will jointly prepare a Tier One Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential passenger rail alternatives for the Rochester, Minnesota to Twin Cities, Minnesota Passenger Rail Corridor (the Corridor) in Olmsted, Dodge, Goodhue, Rice, Dakota, Ramsey, and Hennepin Counties in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The Tier One EIS will analyze environmental impacts for reasonable corridor-level passenger rail route alternatives between Rochester and the Twin Cities. The Tier One EIS will also examine passenger rail service levels, including variations in train frequency, and trip time.

FRA is issuing this Notice to invite interested parties, including the public and resource agencies, to comment about the proposed scope of the EIS; to provide information on the nature of the proposed action, including the purpose and need for the proposed action; and to invite public participation in the Tier One EIS process.

**DATES:** OCRRA and MnDOT will host a series of public scoping meetings beginning in Spring 2013. These meetings will occur at various locations within the Corridor and will be advertised through the project Web site, direct mailings, and press releases.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Colleen Vaughn, Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., (Mail Stop 20), Washington, DC 20590, Phone: (202) 493-6096; or Dan Krom, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Passenger Rail Office, 395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 480, St. Paul, MN 55155, Phone: (651) 366-3193. In addition, a project Web site has been established ([www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)), and is available to provide project related information to the general public.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FRA, in cooperation with OCRRA and MnDOT, will prepare a Tier One EIS to evaluate passenger rail service improvements from Rochester, Minnesota to Twin Cities, Minnesota. The agencies will use a tiered process, as provided for in 40 CFR 1508.28 and in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28546) (Environmental Procedures), in the completion of the environmental review. Tiering is a staged environmental review process applied to environmental reviews for

complex projects. The proposed Tier One EIS described in this Notice is a service level analysis that will examine a range of reasonable corridor route alternatives between Rochester, Minnesota and Twin Cities, Minnesota. It is anticipated that the route alternative analysis will involve a screening process to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives for evaluation in the Tier One EIS. The study has recently begun to identify conceptual alternatives for consideration. Alternatives under preliminary consideration will include an alignment of the Trunk Highway 52 corridor from Rochester to the Twin Cities; an alternative running west from Rochester and then north in the vicinity of Trunk Highway 56; and multiple alignments in both the Rochester and the Twin Cities metro areas depending on the termini identified at both ends of the corridor. Alternatives will be analyzed and made available for public comment as they are refined and more precise information can be provided. The No-Action (or No-Build) Alternative will also be considered.

The Tier One EIS will also appropriately address Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (see 36 CFR part 800), Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303) and other applicable Federal and state laws and regulations. The Tier One NEPA document addresses broad overall issues of concern for corridor decisions including, but not limited to:

- Describing the purpose and need for the proposed action.
- Describing the study area appropriate to assess reasonable alternatives.
- Describing the environment potentially affected by the proposed action.
- Developing evaluation criteria to identify route alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action and those that do not.
- Identifying the range of reasonable route alternatives that satisfy the purpose and need for the proposed action.
- Developing the no-build alternative to serve as a baseline for comparison.
- Describing and evaluating the potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies associated with the reasonable route alternatives.
- Identifying component projects for Tier Two NEPA evaluation as described below.

The Tier Two assessment(s) would address component projects of the overall rail corridor alternative selected in the Tier One EIS, and would

incorporate by reference the data and evaluations included in the Tier One EIS. Subsequent Tier Two NEPA evaluations would: Concentrate on the site-specific issues and alternatives relevant to implementing component projects of the selected Tier One alternative; and identify the environmental consequences and measures necessary to mitigate environmental impacts at a site-specific level of detail.

*Project Background and Study Area:* Based upon travel demand and growth between the two regional centers, previous feasibility studies for the proposed Corridor have supported its independent utility to support high speed intercity passenger rail. Currently, between Rochester and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area (Twin Cities), the proposed Corridor has no existing rail infrastructure south of Dakota County. OCRRA would develop new rail infrastructure with an emphasis on existing public and railroad rights-of-way utilized to the maximum extent feasible and practicable. The Corridor would be planned to be consistent with an eventual high speed intercity passenger rail connection between the Twin Cities and Chicago.

The *Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan* outlines steps that should be taken to accomplish the vision of a robust intrastate and interstate intercity passenger rail system. One of the steps includes developing an intrastate intercity passenger rail network connecting the Twin Cities with viable service to major outlying regional centers. The Corridor was identified as a Phase I corridor in the State Rail Plan for high-speed rail development. Significant growth in Rochester and Olmsted County has occurred over the past 50 years—long after the majority of existing rail corridors in the region had been established. The number of jobs currently supported by Rochester employers exceeds the available adult working population in the urban area, making it an economic driver for an area of roughly 2,300 square miles in southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa, and western Wisconsin, and impacting employment as far away as the Twin Cities area. Based in Rochester, Mayo Clinic patients and visitors account for nearly 3 million visits per year, with many arriving via the Twin Cities, and travelling via US 52. Rochester also ranks as the fastest growing metropolitan area in the state, with a low unemployment rate and a relatively high per capita and household income

compared to other regional centers in Minnesota.

US 52 is the main highway that connects Rochester to the Twin Cities. Further to the west, I-35 is the closest interstate highway. A traveler would need to utilize an east-west route, such as US 14, to access I-35 to make the connection to the Twin Cities. A trip by automobile between the Twin Cities and Rochester is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. The proposed Rochester—Twin Cities Passenger Rail service would need to offer intercity travelers a reasonable alternative to automobile travel.

*Project Purpose and Need:* The purpose of the project is to provide a reliable and safe passenger rail transportation alternative that will meet forecasted population and economic growth mobility demands in the Southeast Minnesota corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities area. The system is to connect the Twin Cities and Rochester providing convenient and cost effective transportation. The project is being developed to:

- Provide intercity passenger rail service linking the regional economic center of Rochester and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area economic hub
- Provide options for the growing population and accessibility to population centers
- Improve safety, convenience and time of travel
- Complement the plans of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

The need for expanded transportation options in this corridor is based on the following elements:

- Increase in population and employment in Rochester, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and Southeast Minnesota
- Future travel demand
- Limited direct connection opportunities for the Corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities

The development of world-class and internally recognized medical facilities in Rochester, along with its agribusiness and high-tech industrial base, makes the city a significant economic engine in the north central United States. The Twin Cities, also a base of high-tech industry, and the main transportation hub in the north central states, marks the importance of economic intercourse between these cities. Transportation connecting these cities is primarily based on the private automobile with limited commercial transportation

options. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester draws patients and their companions from around the nation and the world, and constitutes a primary need for transportation options not based on the private automobile. There is a growing need for travel, connectivity, and transportation capacity between Rochester and the Twin Cities from current and future economic growth.

**Scoping Process:** To ensure issues related to this proposal are addressed and any significant impacts identified, comments and suggestions regarding the scope of the Tier One EIS are invited from all interested parties. Comments and suggestions concerning the proposed action and the Tier One EIS should be directed to MnDOT at the addresses above. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to the appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, Native American tribes and to private organizations who might have previously expressed or who are known to have an interest in this proposal. Federal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to potential environmental issues will be invited to act as a Cooperating Agency in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6.

MnDOT will lead the outreach activities, including public meetings, newsletters, advisory group meetings, a project Web site ([www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)), public open houses, stakeholder group meetings, and other methods to solicit and incorporate public input throughout the Tier One EIS process. Opportunities for public participation will be announced through the Web site, mailings, notices, advertisements, and press releases.

Issued in Washington, DC, on: May 7, 2013.

**Corey Hill,**

*Director, Passenger and Freight Programs, Federal Railroad Administration.*

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## FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

### FTA Supplemental Fiscal Year 2013 Apportionments, Allocations, and Program Information

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

**ACTION:** Notice; Request for Comments on State Safety Oversight Apportionment.

**SUMMARY:** On October 16, 2012 the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published in the **Federal Register** a Notice of FTA Transit Program Changes,

Authorized Funding Levels, Implementation of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Apportionments, Allocations and Interim Guidance. The initial Notice apportioned and allocated funding pursuant to the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013 (CR) that provided funds through March 27, 2013. This subsequent FY 2013 Apportionment Notice apportions the full FY 2013 funding available pursuant to the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (FY 2013 Appropriations) and sequestration of funds triggered by the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 2011. This notice also provides and seeks comment on an illustrative apportionment for the State Safety Oversight (SSO) grant program and provides information on FTA's discretionary programs and forthcoming program guidance.

**DATES:** Comments on the SSO Grant Program must be received by June 12, 2013. Late-filed comments will be considered to the extent practicable.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information about this notice contact Jamie Pfister, Director, Office of Transit Programs, at (202) 366-2053 or email, [Jamie.Pfister@dot.gov](mailto:Jamie.Pfister@dot.gov). Please contact the appropriate FTA regional office for any specific requests for information or technical assistance. A list of FTA regional offices and contact information is available on the FTA Web site under the heading "Regional Offices" at <http://www.fta.dot.gov>.

For SSO Grant Program information, please contact Rick Gerhart, Acting Director, Office of Safety, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE., Washington, DC 20590, phone (202) 366-8970, or email, [Richard.Gerhart@dot.gov](mailto:Richard.Gerhart@dot.gov).

**ADDRESSES:** Comments are limited to the SSO Grant Program and should be submitted by one of the methods, identifying your submissions by docket number FTA-2013-0022:

1. *Web site:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the U.S. Government electronic docket site.
2. *Fax:* (202) 493-2251.
3. *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
4. *Hand Delivery:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001

between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**Instructions:** All submissions must make reference to the "Federal Transit Administration" and include docket number FTA-2013-0022. Due to the security procedures in effect since October 2011, mail received through the U.S. Postal Service may be subject to delays. Parties making submissions responsive to this notice should consider using an express mail firm to ensure the prompt filing of any submissions not filed electronically or by hand. Note that all submissions received, including any personal information therein, will be posted without change or alteration to <http://www.regulations.gov>. For more information, you may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477), or you may visit <http://www.regulations.gov>.

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#### A. Overview

On October 1, 2012, MAP-21 (Pub. L. 112-141) authorized FTA's Public Transportation Assistance Programs for FYs 2013-2014. On October 16, 2012, FTA published an apportionments notice that apportioned the FY 2013 formula funds in an amount of approximately one-half of the FY 2012 funding level among potential program recipients pursuant to both the authorization statute and the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013 (Pub. L. 112-175). (See 77 FR 63670). A copy