

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

### PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**Introduction:** This request is for OMB's three-year renewal of a currently approved information collection titled, "Planning and Research Program Administration." This information collection is covered by OMB Control No. 2125-0039 and is scheduled to expire on November 30, 2007.

#### **A. Justification**

##### **1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary:**

Planning and Research Program Administration is covered under 23 CFR Part 420. 23 CFR Part 420 also includes administrative requirements and procedures for funds provided for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to carry out transportation planning and research, development and technology (RD&T) work performed by State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs) with funds provided under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 505 or, at a State DOT's option, other 23 U.S.C. sections as identified in the definition of FHWA planning and research funds in 23 CFR 420.103. The information collection requirements for work performed by MPOs are a joint Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration requirement that is covered under OMB Control Number 2132-0529.

In accordance with government-wide grant management procedures, a grant application must be submitted for these funds. In addition, recipients must submit periodic progress and financial reports. The content and frequency of submission of progress and financial reports specified in 23 CFR Part 420 is as specified in OMB Circular A-102 and the companion common grant management regulations.

This information collection supports the DOT's Strategic Objective of "Organizational Excellence" by providing an ongoing mechanism to review applications and approve Federal grants to States for their transportation planning and research, development and technology work programs.

##### **2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used:**

In lieu of Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance", the FHWA uses a "work program" as the grant application that includes a scope of work and budget for activities to be undertaken with FHWA planning and research funds. The information contained in the work program includes task descriptions, assignments of responsibility for conducting the work effort, and estimated costs for the tasks. This information is necessary to determine how the FHWA planning and research funds will be utilized by the State DOTs and if the proposed work is eligible for Federal participation.

The information also is used by FHWA field staff to evaluate a State DOT's proposed transportation planning and RD&T activities and budget to determine the eligibility for federal participation and to monitor progress. FHWA authorization to proceed with the proposed work constitutes a contractual obligation of the Federal government. In addition, the information is

used by FHWA headquarters staff to monitor transportation planning and RD&T activities nationwide and for evaluating the adequacy of Federal-aid funding.

Information contained in the periodic progress and financial reports is used by FHWA field staffs to monitor and evaluate State DOT performance of authorized work. The work program and periodic progress and financial reports are the FHWA's primary tools for administering FHWA planning and research grants to State DOTs. Information included in the work programs and progress and financial reports required by 23 CFR Part 420 is needed by the FHWA to adequately perform its grant administration duties which include assuring that adequate progress is being made and that ineligible activities are not being performed. Without this information there would be no basis for the approval and subsequent reimbursement of Federal funds.

**3. Extent of automated information collection:**

States currently have the option to submit their work plans and financial reports electronically to the FHWA. The State DOTs and FHWA field staff has the flexibility to determine the extent of detail and format for their submissions. The FHWA does specify that minimum information be included, but not in any uniform format that could be automated.

**4. Efforts to identify duplication:**

Some State DOTs prepare work programs and periodic progress and financial reports for transportation planning and RD&T activities performed with their own funds that include all sources of funds. Similarly, some State DOTs have written RD&T program administration procedures. To the extent that the information required by 23 CFR Part 420 for work performed with FHWA planning and research funds or for documentation of its State DOT RD&T administration procedures is covered in existing State documents, such existing documents may be accepted by the FHWA field offices in lieu of preparation of separate documents.

**5. Efforts to minimize burden on small businesses:**

This information collection does not involve small businesses.

**6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:**

Annual progress and financial reports are the minimum acceptable. Less frequent reporting would not allow reasonable monitoring of compliance with conditions of the grants.

The FHWA planning and research fund program is a continuing program based on FHWA approval of periodic work programs, which may cover more than one State DOT fiscal year. Those State DOTs that submit a biennial work program do not need to prepare a new work program, unless there will be significant changes in proposed work, but still must request authorization of Federal funds for the second year. Because of the uncertainty of work activities and necessary funds, work programs longer than 2 years would probably not result in a significant reduction of burden since they would probably need extensive revision to reflect changing emphases.

**7. Special circumstances:**

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

## **8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:**

The FHWA published a Federal Register notice on June 1, 2007 (Volume 72, page 30,660), which solicited public comments on our intent to seek OMB's renewed approval for this information collection. One comment was received and is listed below.

### **Planning and Research Program Administration**

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on necessity of developing a work program for the State Planning and Research (SPR) funds. KYTC believes that the SPR work program can be an excellent tool for a state DOT to determine what activities should be undertaken and how to allocate funds in order to comply with Federal regulations and reporting requirements. It also serves as a suitable replacement to Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

The proposed data collection does not appear to be necessary for FHWA's performance other than serving as the grant application. There appears to be no measurable output from a FHWA Division office that could be related to performance in this area. The state DOTs are responsible for carrying out the activities in the work program, and the role of FHWA in carrying out the work program is minor.

The burdens as outlined in the notice appear to be relatively accurate; however, those burdens could be reduced greatly by streamlining the process and providing better guidance on preparation of the work program to both the state DOTs and FHWA. The regulations give the state DOTs great flexibility in preparing the work program. Lack of understanding of this flexibility can create additional burdens, requirements, or detail in the SPR work program in violation of Federalism principles as well as the Code of Federal Regulations. Clearer guidance is needed to assist both the state DOTs and FHWA Division offices in understanding the flexibility that the regulations provide which in turn would reduce the burden on the state DOTs in preparing the work program. The ability to submit a document electronically, either through a web site or by emailing a document, would be greatly appreciated. There should not be a standard format for submitting or preparing the work program as this would reduce the flexibility for the state DOTs. Electronic submissions would also allow state DOTs or FHWA Division offices to view other state's work programs more easily. As such the state DOTs could possibly identify ways of improving their documents. It would also aid FHWA Division offices in viewing other state's SPR work programs so that they can further understand the flexibility provided to the state DOTs in preparation of their work programs.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet provided several comments on methods to reduce the burden related to preparation and submission of SPR work programs including FHWA providing additional guidance on format and content and allowing electronic submission. The FHWA has historically deferred to its Division Offices and the States jointly determine the format and content of each State's work program so that the work program can be tailored to meet the diverse needs of each State. We believe that any additional guidance would compromise this flexibility and may add to the burden if some States. With respect to electronic submission of

work programs, such submission is acceptable and, in fact, several States have been submitting their work programs and progress reports electronically.

**9. Payment of gifts to respondents:**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

**10. Assurance of confidentiality:**

None of the information is considered confidential; it is all available to the public.

**11. Justification for collection sensitive information:**

None of the information required is of a sensitive or private nature.

**12. Estimate of burden hours for information collected:**

**a) Annual burden to respondents:**

Each State, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are required to provide information. The annual number of burden hours (professional and clerical staff) per respondent for preparation of work programs and progress and financial reports is estimated to be 560 (14 weeks x 40 hours per week). The total annual burden for all respondents is estimated to be 29,120 burden hours (560 burden hours per respondent times 52 respondents).

This annual burden consists of staff time of each respondent for preparation of the work programs, and progress and financial reports. For those respondents that elect to use biennial work programs, the burden for preparation of work programs would be significantly less for the second year. The burden was determined as follows:

Professional staff time for preparation of work programs:

$$320 \text{ hours/respondent} \times 52 \text{ respondents} = 16,640 \text{ hours}$$

Professional staff time for preparation of progress and financial reports:

$$80 \text{ hours/respondent} \times 52 \text{ respondents} = 4,160 \text{ hours}$$

Clerical staff time:

$$160 \text{ hours/respondent} \times 52 \text{ respondents} = \frac{8,320 \text{ hours}}{29,120 \text{ hours}}$$

**b) Annual associated salary cost to respondents:**

The annual associated salary cost to respondents is estimated to be \$1,250,413 based on an average salary of \$38 per hour (approximately \$79,000 per year) for professional staff

and \$18 per hour (approximately \$37,000 year) for clerical staff.

Professional staff cost for preparation of work programs:

16,640 hours x \$38 per hour = \$632,320

Professional staff time for preparation of progress and financial reports:

4,160 hours x \$38 per hour = \$158,080

Clerical staff time:

8,320 hours x \$18 per hour = \$149,760

Subtotal Direct Salaries \$940,160

Overhead/fringe benefits at 33%: \$310,253

Total annual respondent cost: \$1,250,413

**13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:**

There are no other costs to respondents other than those identified under item 12.

**14. Estimate of cost to the Federal Government:**

The cost to the Federal Government consists of the staff time and related expenses for review of the work programs, monitoring of work performed, and general oversight activities. The Government will incur an annual estimated cost of approximately \$476,362, as follows:

Professional staff time for review of work programs:

2 person-years (2 weeks per respondent x 52 respondents) per year times an average salary of \$79,000 = \$158,000

Professional staff time for monitoring of performance:

1 person-year (1 week per respondent x 52 respondents) per year times an average salary of \$79,000 = \$79,000

Professional staff time for oversight:

1½ person-years (1½ weeks per respondent x 52 respondents) per year times an average salary of \$79,000 = \$118,500

Clerical staff time:

1/6 person-year (½ week per respondent x 52 respondents) per year at an average salary of \$37,000 = \$6,167

Federal direct salary cost per year: \$158,000

	79,000
	118,500
	<u>6,167</u>
Total direct salary cost:	\$361,667
Overhead/fringe benefits at 33%:	<u>119,350</u>
Total annual Federal agency cost:	\$481,017

**15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:**

There are no program changes or adjustments.

**16. Publication of results of data collection:**

There are no plans for publishing the information collected under this requirement.

**17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date for OMB approval:**

Approval for not displaying the expiration date is not being requested.

**18. Exceptions to certification statement:**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement for this information collection.