

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

**49 U.S.C SECTION 5320 PAUL S. SARBANES
TRANSIT IN PARKS PROGRAM
OMB# 2132 -0574**

ABSTRACT

This supporting statement is associated with a request for a revision of a currently approved information collection. The change in this collection reflects a reduction in burden on the public and federal government due to the 49 U.S.C. Section 5320 Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program being repealed by Congress under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). There are currently only five open grants associated with this information collection. Once the funds are fully expended this information collection will be discontinued.

1. Circumstances that make collection necessary.

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program addressed the challenge of increasing vehicle congestion in and around our national parks and other federal lands. America's national parks, wildlife refuges, and national forests were created to protect unique environmental and cultural treasures, but are now facing traffic, pollution and crowding that diminishes the visitor experience and threatens the environment. To address these concerns, this program provided funding for the planning and capital costs of alternative transportation systems, such as shuttle buses, rail connections and even bicycle trails. The program provided grants to Federal land management agencies, including but not limited to the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and to State, tribal and local governments.

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (Transit in Parks) was originally authorized in 2006 under Section 3021 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA—LU) and codified in 49 U.S.C. 5320. The program was administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in partnership with the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

On October 1, 2013, the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program was repealed by Congress under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). FTA announced the final selection of competitive project awards on **February 18, 2013**. Alternative transportation projects formerly eligible under Transit in Parks are now eligible under the Federal Highway Administration's **Federal Lands Transportation Program** and the **Federal Lands Access Program**.

Originally, the program had two requirements; 1.) the competitive grant application stage and 2.) the grant application development stage. Since being repealed, the competitive grant application stage was eliminated, dramatically reducing the number of respondents previously associated with the collection. However, information must continue to be collected under the program management stage until the period of availability expires; the funds are fully expended; the funds are rescinded by

Congress; or the funds are otherwise reallocated.

Project Management Stage

The reporting requirements under this stage are necessary to ensure the proper and timely expenditure of federal funds within the scope of the approved project. These requirements apply to State, local and tribal entities receiving grants through this program. These reporting requirements are:

- a. Quarterly Federal Financial Reports (FFRs). These quantitative reports provide a financial picture of project activity. The reports include information regarding obligations, payments, receipts, and other pertinent financial data required to ensure proper expenditure of federal funds.
- b. Quarterly Milestone & Progress Reports (MPRs). These reports permit FTA staff to monitor the progress of the project in view of the proposed milestones. The information in this report defines the level of activity for each project element during the reporting period. Delays, problems, and milestone achievements are included. The report allows recipients the ability to highlight any changes to the proposed milestones, any unanticipated changes to the project schedule, and to highlight the impact of the transportation project on the recipient's visitor management goals. The MPR reports greatly reduce the need for on-site visits by staff.

It is estimated that it takes approximately 2 hours to submit each quarterly report. A screenshot of a sample FFR and MPR are included in this information collection request (ICR).

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

The recipients of the Transit in Parks grants were Federal land management agencies. They received federal funding for the planning and capital costs to purchase and build alternative transportation systems, such as shuttle buses, rail connections and even bicycle trails in our Nation's national parks, wildlife refuges, etc. After a grant has been awarded and funding secured, FTA collects information during the Project Management Stage from recipients that are currently managing an active or incomplete project. The narrative information is submitted through an online reporting system called Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). The purpose of the collection of this information is to monitor the implementation of the project. Projects must be monitored to ensure that the work remains within the scope of the competitively selected award, that acceptable progress is being made towards completion in a reasonable timeframe, and that reimbursement requests and the drawdown of funds is in line with the proposed project milestones.

3. Describe whether collection of information involves information technology and any consideration of using information technology to reduce the burden.

FTA's TrAMS system electronically assists State, local and tribal grantees with reporting requirements for federal funds. All (100%) of the grant recipients utilize TrAMS to submit this reporting requirements in the program management stage. TrAMS was created to provide greater efficiency and improved transparency and accountability. FTA deployed TrAMS in February 2016 to provide an efficient, user-friendly, and flexible tool to award and manage grants and cooperative agreements and to strengthen the integrity and consistency of the award and management financial and programmatic information. TrAMS replaced the Transit Electronic Award Management (TEAM) system which had been in operation since 1998.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in item 2.

The reports are project-specific and cannot be obtained from other sources.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The information collected does not involve small businesses.

6. Describe consequences to federal program or policy activities if the information were not collected or collected less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

If the FFR information was not collected during the project management stage, FTA would not be able to track expenditures for approved projects as federally required. Further reduction of reporting information would make it impossible to examine projects to ensure that grant recipients are successful stewards of federal funds and have financial systems in place to monitor their grant expenditures. Timely submission of MPRs ensures projects remain within the scope of the competitively selected award, that acceptable progress is being made towards completion in a reasonable timeframe, and that reimbursement requests and the drawdown of funds is in line with the proposed project milestones.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with 5 CFR 1320.6.

The information collected is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views.

A 60-day Federal Register notice was published on January 22, 2018 Vol. 83, No. 14 (page 3050) soliciting comments prior to submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). One comment was received from this notice; however, it was posted three days after the comment period expired and the comment was outside the scope of the Paperwork Reduction Act and made no reference to the Transit in Parks Grant Program or any reference to the Federal Transit Administration. A 30-day Federal Register notice was published on May 8, 2018 Vol. 83, No. 89 (page 20910 and 20911).

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift is made to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided respondents.

There is no assurance of confidentiality regarding submissions.

11. Additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

None of the information is of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of the hour burden of the collection of information and annualized cost to respondents.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 5

Estimated Annual Number of Responses: 25

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 50 hours

Estimated Total Cost to Respondents: \$1,941.50

Frequency: Annually

The estimated hourly and cost burden of the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Grant Program during the Project Management stage is presented below. The estimate is based on the review of the grantees internal documents in preparation of each of the required reports that are submitted into TrAMS by the grant recipient. FTA estimates that only (1) Business Operations Personnel/Cost Estimator will be involved in the preparation of the request. Although there is no new funding available for this program, there are currently a total of five (5) open grants that require reporting information under the project management stage. All respondents must submit the Federal Financial Report (FFR) on a quarterly basis (5x4 = 20). All (5) respondents must also submit a Milestone Progress Report on an annual basis (5x1 = 5). Therefore, there are a total of 25 reports/responses reports submitted on an annual basis. If each report takes approximately 2 hours to complete, the total annual burden hours is 50 hours (25 x 2).

Report Requirements	# Total Respondents	#Total Submissions/Reports Annually	Burden hours per submission
Federal Financial Reports (FFR) Submitted Quarterly	5	20	2
Milestones/Progress Reports (MPR) Submitted Annually	5	5	2

b. Cost to Respondents:

FTA estimates that the average salary of the respondent, typically a Business and Financial Operations Personnel/Cost Estimator (occupation code 13-1051 <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes131051.htm>) has a median hourly wage of \$38.83 (hourly salary weighted with a 28% benefits adjustment) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is estimated to take each respondent approximately (2) hours to prepare and submit the FFRs

and/or MPRs at an average salary of \$38.83 per hour. There is a total of 25 reports annually; it takes therefore, the cost is estimated to be \$1,941.50 ($[\$38.83 \times 2] \times 25$).

13. Estimate of total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information (not including the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

The information requested is collected and reviewed in the course of normal business practices; therefore, no additional costs are associated beyond that shown in items 12 and 14.

14. Estimates of the annualized cost to the federal government.

The average FTA employee reviewing program management reports (FFRs and MPRs) submitted into TrAMS by recipients is a GS-12 step 5 (average salary, \$44.28 per hour (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2018/general-schedule/>)). It takes approximately 2 hours per report for review. There are 84 reports per year. Thus, the total annual hours spent reviewing reports is 168 hours (84 x 2). The total cost to the federal government is \$7,103.04 (\$42.28 per hour x 168 hours).

Project Management Stage			
Quarterly Federal Financial Report	20	\$44.28	\$885.60
Quarterly Progress & Milestone Report (Narrative)	5	\$44.28	\$221.40
TOTAL			\$1,107

It is estimated that the annual cost to the federal government is \$1,107.

15. Explain reasons for changes in burden, including the need for any increases.

This information collection reflects a change in burden. There is a burden decrease because the Transit in Parks Program was repealed by Congress under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Thus, the application stage and all information collected as part of this process in the program has been eliminated. This resulted in a significant decrease because the large pool of grantees submitting the comprehensive applications is no longer applicable. Thus, the Federal Government no longer needs to conduct detailed reviews of each of the applications for selection of funding. There are currently only five open grants requiring reporting under the Transit in Parks Program, as these projects still have federal funding associated with them. Once the funds are fully expended this information collection will be discontinued. Alternative transportation projects formerly eligible under Transit in Parks are now eligible under the Federal Highway Administration's **Federal Lands Transportation Program** and the **Federal Lands Access Program**.

16. Plans for tabulation and publication for collections of information whose results will be published.

FTA does not plan to publish the results of the information collected for statistical use.

17. If seeking approval not to display the expiration date of OMB approval, explain the reasons.

FTA is not seeking approval not to display the expiration date of OMB approval.

18. Explain any exceptions to the certification statement identified in item 19 of Form 83-I.

No exceptions are stated.