

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Research and Technology Portfolio Website

Supporting Statement

Introduction:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is requesting clearance for a new information collection (IC) to gather public, industry, and expert input on its research, development and technology (RD&T) program.

The **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Research and Technology Portfolio Website** will communicate FHWA's assessment of the Nation's highway challenges, identify FHWA's RD&T research areas, objectives and strategies, and highlight notable activities, initiatives or projects that illustrate FHWA's RD&T approach. The website will include an electronic mechanism for stakeholders to provide feedback on the overall RD&T Portfolio, FHWA's approach to addressing national transportation challenges, and potential opportunities for FHWA to collaborate with stakeholders to address them.

Part A. Justification.

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

Title 23, United States Code, Section 502(a)(6) requires that Federal surface transportation research and development activities address the needs of stakeholders, including "States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, the private sector, researchers, research sponsors, and other affected parties, including public interest groups." FHWA intends to use the **FHWA Research and Technology Portfolio Website** to help ensure that its RD&T program is addressing the needs of all stakeholders.

The FHWA Research and Technology Portfolio Website stakeholder feedback IC directly supports the Department of Transportation (DOT) Strategic Goal of **Organizational Excellence** by helping to improve FHWA's management of research and technology funds, and by ensuring that FHWA is addressing the highest priorities of its stakeholders. However, the Portfolio covers the full breadth of highways RD&T, which in turn supports all six DOT strategic goals: Safety, State of Good Repair, Economic Competitiveness, Livable Communities, Environmental Sustainability, and Organizational Excellence.

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

Stakeholder feedback on FHWA's RD&T Portfolio will be collected on a continuous basis via a web form, which will be integrated into the FHWA Research and Technology Portfolio Website. Links to the feedback form will be included throughout the Portfolio website, encouraging visitors to contribute. The feedback form mechanism will ask users to answer four questions, listed below, and will require users to provide business contact information (i.e., name, organization, business email address). Responses will be in short answer format, on a purely voluntary basis.

Responses to the feedback questions will be automatically collected by the website system and stored in Microsoft SharePoint lists for later review and analysis. The website administrator and her designated representatives will have access to the stored responses.

On a quarterly or bi-annual basis, FHWA will review the responses received and distribute them to the relevant research and technology program office contacts. General responses will be forwarded to the FHWA Office of Research, Development and Technology. When appropriate, FHWA program office research managers and the FHWA Office of Research, Development and Technology will respond to contributors using the business contact information provided.

Responses will be used to inform the RD&T activities of each individual FHWA office or program, as well as the FHWA corporate approach to RD&T.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

This IC will rely solely on voluntary stakeholder feedback via an electronic submission form. 100% of the IC will be conducted through the electronic form. All responses will be stored in an electronic database. The use of an electronic form for gathering information will minimize the burden on both the public and the government by completely eliminating the need for any paper forms or filing procedures.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

FHWA currently engages RD&T stakeholders through various formal processes, including the FHWA Research and Technology Coordinating (Advisory) Committee (RTCC), AASHTO Research Advisory Council (RAC), and informal means, such as attendance at national conferences. However, these venues may not reach the full breadth of RD&T stakeholders, and they are often managed by individual program offices, focusing on a specific aspect of RD&T, as opposed to the overall RD&T Portfolio. The **FHWA Research and Technology Portfolio Website** will be the first publically-available source describing the full scope and breadth of FHWA's RD&T program, spanning all offices and programs. It will enhance the agency's ability to communicate its RD&T Portfolio through existing processes, and will provide a new opportunity for the public to comment on the agency's overall approach to RD&T.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

Yes. The IC is completely voluntary for all respondents, including small businesses. It is FHWA's belief that the proposed collection represents the least burdensome mechanism for collecting feedback on the RD&T program for all stakeholders.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

FHWA requires regular feedback on the RD&T program in order to stay abreast of changing attitudes and priorities of its stakeholders. The proposed IC is an annual collection. If information were to be collected on a less frequent basis, the stakeholder feedback would not be able to inform the annual budgeting process for RD&T projects and initiatives within the agency in an efficient manner.

7. Special circumstances:

FHWA is not requesting any special circumstances.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The FHWA published a 60-day Federal Register notice regarding the renewal of this information collection on November 25, 2020, issue 85/75400. No comments were received.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

FHWA does not intend to disclose responses to the public, but will make no assurance of confidentiality.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

Sensitive information will not be collected.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

FHWA estimates a total of 1,000 annual respondents. The time burden for each response is estimated at 10 minutes per respondent, per year, for a total of approximately 167 hours per year.

FHWA assumes that the majority of respondents will be professionals in the fields of highway engineering and planning. Therefore, FHWA estimates that the total burden hours to represent an equivalent cost of \$6,342.66 per year. This is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2012 estimate of mean hourly wage for the Architecture and Engineering occupational group (\$37.98/hour).

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

\$0/year

FHWA estimates that this IC will not result in any annual costs to respondents as it solicits only their professional opinions, is completely voluntary, and will be conducted online using standard web technologies.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

FHWA estimates that this IC will cost the Federal government approximately \$100,000 annually. The primary expenses will be for labor hours needed to read, categorize, and respond to each item of feedback. Additionally, the government will incur overhead costs to maintain the FHWA R&T Portfolio Website, and the Microsoft SharePoint site used to store responses.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

There are no changes.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

FHWA will not publish the results of the data collection. Our intention is to provide the IC results to appropriate FHWA Offices and only in summary, aggregated form.

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

There is no request to not display the expiration date of the OMB approval for this information collection requirement.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

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