

The Supporting Statement

Introduction:

This new information collection clearance request is titled “Survey of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs) Regarding Practices for Incorporating Equity and Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Planning and Project Decision-Making.” The information collection will be a survey of all MPOs and State DOTs about the transportation planning and programming activities and policies, in regard to the advancement of equity and meaningful public involvement.

Part A. Justification.

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary:

The proposed survey will establish a baseline for key performance indicators in the U.S. DOT Equity Action Plan and in support of U.S. DOT’s implementation of Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. This executive order establishes a government-wide policy to “pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality,” and provides an expanded definition of “equity” goes beyond definitions in past executive orders. The Executive Order stresses the importance of engagement with members of underserved communities in service of equity goals.

FHWA does not currently have sufficient data to establish the baseline for the U.S. DOT Equity Action Plan. State DOTs and MPOs have not been required by statute or regulation to include this information in their required transportation planning process documents. The proposed information collection is the most effective way to gather this information.

The baseline data from the survey will be used to inform progress on the equity goal established in the U.S. DOT Strategic Plan: “Reduce inequities across our transportation systems and the communities they affect. Support and engage people and communities to promote safe, affordable, accessible, and multimodal access to opportunities and services while reducing transportation-related disparities, adverse community impacts, and health effects,” specifically the *Power of Community* objective.

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

This proposed information collection will be used by the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Office of Planning, Environment and Realty (HEP), the Federal Transit Administration’s Office of Planning and Environment (TPE), and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Policy (OST-P), in conjunction with research conducted by the U.S. DOT John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center), to establish a baseline for the following key performance indicator in the U.S. DOT Strategic Plan: *All 50 State DOTs and top 100 MPOs adopt a quantitative Equity Screening component to their S/TIP development processes by 2030.*

The survey results will also inform the development of future guidance on how to address equity in transportation planning and programming and how to meaningfully involve all members of the public (including underrepresented and underserved groups) in the development, prioritization, and selection of transportation projects. HEP, and TPE will use the survey results to inform technical assistance, training, and research activities designed to support State DOTs and MPOs

in advancing equity goals outlined in the USDOT Equity Action Plan, USDOT Strategic Plan, and Executive Order 13985.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

The survey will be conducted using an online survey platform (Qualtrics or similar) distributed via email to a pre-screened list of contacts (one per each organization). All responses will be electronic, and the survey platform will allow respondents to save their progress, completing a portion of the survey and returning later. The platform will automatically aggregate responses to closed-ended questions, which will reduce the burden on the Federal government.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

FHWA and OST-P have worked with the Volpe Center to research information about how State DOTs and MPOs address equity in the transportation planning process. This research included a review of all State DOT Long Range Statewide Transportation Plans and Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs, as well as a random selection of approximately ten percent of MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs. This research concluded that State DOTs and MPOs are not providing sufficient information in their publicly available (online) planning documents to meet U.S. DOT needs for this baseline effort.

FHWA also consulted with membership organizations which represent nearly all State DOTs and MPOs, and these organizations confirmed that the information sought in the survey is not available from any current source.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

N/A. Small businesses will not be asked to respond to this information collection.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

This request is for a one-time information collection. The survey will ask respondents about the most efficient ways to collect this information in future years and U.S. DOT will seek an additional information collection clearance, if necessary, for collections in future years.

7. Special circumstances:

N/A. There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection request.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

The 60-day Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on this proposed information collection was published on March 17, 2022, on page 15301. There were 4 comments received (see attached).

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

There will be no gifts or payments to respondents to the information collection. Response will be on a voluntary basis only, with no compensation.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

FHWA does not have a statutory basis to provide respondents with an assurance of confidentiality. FHWA does not plan to report the individual responses of any of the responding agencies; only aggregate estimates will be reported.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

N/A. The information collection will not request sensitive or private information.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

FHWA will request responses from up to 457 individuals, representing all State DOTs and MPOs in the United States. This will be a one-time information collection with an estimated individual burden of one hour per respondent. Information will be collected via survey, conducted by the Volpe Center on behalf of FHWA. The total estimated burden in hours is 457 hours. Assuming a mean hourly wage of \$37.74 (from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics' median hourly rates for urban and regional planners](#)) the total estimated cost for the burden hours of this information collection is \$17,247.18.

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

FHWA does not estimate any additional costs to respondents beyond the hours burden.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

The estimated cost to the Federal government for this information collection is \$100,000. This cost is comprised entirely of Federal labor and overhead expenses, including FHWA, OST-P, and FTA staff, and the costs of support from the Volpe Center.

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

N/A. This is a new information collection.

16. Publication of results of data collection:

U.S. DOT does not intend to publish the results of this data collection.

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

N/A. U.S. DOT does not have any objection to publishing the expiration data of the OMB approval.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

N/A. None.

