

The Supporting Statement (PART B)

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 B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

The following five questions must be answered only if Item 17 on Form OMB 83-I is "Yes." If the information collection involves statistical methods, the OST will request a review and concurrence from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) before sending it to OMB.

1. Describe potential respondent universe and any sampling selection method to be used.

This survey is a census of State DOTs (N=52) and MPOs (N=405), such that all members of the population will be surveyed. FHWA is identifying the appropriate contacts for each State DOT and MPO.

2. Describe procedures for collecting information, including statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, estimation procedures, degree of accuracy needed, and less than annual periodic data cycles.

The FHWA Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty is working with FHWA Division Offices to identify appropriate contacts for each of the State DOTs and MPOs. Prior to data collection, FHWA will send a notification to each of the identified contacts asking them to confirm that they are the appropriate contact, and if not, to provide an alternate contact who is able to provide the requested information.

Upon approval by OMB, the survey link will be sent to the identified contacts, which comprise the total population of State DOTs and MPOs. This survey effort does not involve sampling. In addition to the online survey link, respondents will be sent a PDF of the survey, so that they can review the questions in advance and gather the information, before going online to complete the survey.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rate.

FHWA will undertake several efforts to maximize response.

- **Identification of appropriate contacts:** As detailed above, FHWA is identifying the appropriate contact in advance of the survey and will send each contact a "pre-notification" email to confirm they are the appropriate contact and to provide them advance notice of the survey. By sending the survey to the appropriate contact, FHWA will be contributing to a higher response, as the contact will be the person best suited to responding and should be engaged by the topic. Throughout the survey process, FHWA will replace contacts, as needed, to ensure there is an appropriate contact for each agency.
- **Use of Pre-test to improve survey design.** The survey instrument was pre-tested among six agencies to ensure respondent understanding of the survey questions and to solicit feedback on how the survey could be improved. Based on feedback received from

pre-testers, FHWA altered the wording on several questions, added definitions of key terms both in the introduction to the survey and repeated again next to specific questions, removed one question, added response options to multiple-choice questions, and simplified the design of the survey to minimize respondent burden. The improvements to the survey instrument are anticipated to contribute to a higher response rate.

- **Coordination of survey-related communications with relevant organizations:** FHWA is working with organizations such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) to “spread the word” about the survey and to encourage response. These organizations will include notifications about the survey in their newsletters, email blasts, etc., encouraging their members to respond.
- **Rigorous notification and follow-up procedures:** A pre-notification email will be sent to all contacts, confirming they are the appropriate contact, conveying the importance of the survey, and encouraging response to the upcoming survey. Likewise, a minimum of three rounds of email reminders will be sent to contacts who do not respond to encourage their response. If needed, at least one round of telephone calls will be used to boost response. In addition, the team will track response by key characteristics of the respondent universe (e.g., region and MPO population size), so that if response is lagging among specific subgroups (e.g., in the East or among smaller MPOs), follow-up efforts may be targeted to encourage response among those groups. As needed, the FHWA Division Office Division Administrators (DAs) and member organizations (AASHTO, AMPO, and NARC) will be asked to reach out to specific respondents to encourage their response.

With these efforts, a minimum response rate of 70% is anticipated.

4. Describe tests of procedures or methods.

The analysis will include reporting aggregate frequencies; statistical tests will not be necessary. While some additional crosstabulation analysis may be performed, this analysis would be for internal purposes only and would not be reported.

5. Provide name and telephone number of individuals who were consulted on statistical aspects of the IC and who will actually collect and/or analyze the information.

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