

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

As reported by CDC,¹ infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms can range from mild to severe, and often include a fever and a cough or difficulty breathing. The outbreak first started in China, but cases have been identified in a growing number of other areas, including the United States. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic, meaning the disease had spread worldwide. On March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency related to COVID-19.

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel virus, which means there is still much to learn about the risk factors, signs and symptoms, and how it is spread.² Based on what the CDC currently knows about the virus, it is mostly spread from person-to-person in close contact (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.³ Maintaining good social distance (about 6 feet) is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.⁴ It may also be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.⁵

FRA's Actions Related to COVID-19

Following the President's declaration of a national emergency related to COVID-19, on March 13, 2020, FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory determined that the imminent threat and exposure to COVID-19 posed a risk of serious illness that constitutes an "emergency situation" as related to railroad operations. As a result, Administrator Batory activated FRA's *Emergency Relief Docket* (ERD) (Docket Number FRA-2020-0002), which enabled FRA to begin considering, on an expedited basis, requests for relief from regulatory requirements to address issues caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Through the ERD, FRA has issued temporary, industry-wide relief from certain FRA regulations to help enable railroads to continue to operate for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and at the same time, to ensure the safety of railroad employees. See Docket Number FRA-2020-0002, available on www.regulations.gov. FRA granted temporary, conditional relief from certain required tests and inspections, as well as certain operational relief. FRA conditioned much of the relief granted in the waiver on the existence of workforce shortages or other constraints directly resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency, meaning that individual railroads may utilize the relief only in situations where COVID-19 has caused workforce shortages (*i.e.*, employees are out sick or quarantined) or otherwise prevented railroads from complying with the regulations. Other relief FRA granted is consistent with CDC's recommendations for social distancing and limiting the touching of common surfaces.

Safety Advisory 2020-01

Railroads are a critical infrastructure industry and have a responsibility to ensure the timely movement of essential goods and people. FRA encourages railroads to review the following guidance and information related to the COVID-19 public health emergency:

- The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America—30 Days to Slow the Spread: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf;
- CDC's Coronavirus (COVID-19) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>;
- CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>;
- CDC's Workplace, Home and School Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>;
- OSHA's COVID-19 guidance page: <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus>; and
- Federal Coronavirus website: www.coronavirus.gov.

FRA encourages railroads to take action consistent with the recommendations and guidance cited above to help reduce the risk that railroad employees and contractors contract COVID-19 and then spread it to others. FRA may modify this Safety Advisory or take other appropriate

actions necessary to ensure the highest level of safety on the Nation's railroads.

Issued in Washington, DC.

John Karl Alexy,

Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety and Chief Safety Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Transit Administration**

[FTA Docket No. FTA 2020-0003]

Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve the extension of a currently approved information collection: Metropolitan and Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning.

DATES: Comments must be submitted before June 9, 2020.

ADDRESSES: To ensure that your comments are not entered more than once into the docket, submit comments identified by the docket number by only one of the following methods:

1. *Website:* www.regulations.gov.

Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the U.S. Government electronic docket site. (Note: The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) electronic docket is no longer accepting electronic comments.) All electronic submissions must be made to the U.S. Government electronic docket site at www.regulations.gov. Commenters should follow the directions below for mailed and hand-delivered comments.

2. *Fax:* 202-366-7951.

3. *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

4. *Hand Delivery:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

Instructions: You must include the agency name and docket number for this notice at the beginning of your

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

² The understanding of COVID-19 is constantly evolving; FRA recommends checking the CDC website for the most current information and recommendations.

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

comments. Submit two copies of your comments if you submit them by mail. For confirmation that FTA has received your comments, include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Note that all comments received, including any personal information, will be posted and will be available to internet users, without change, to www.regulations.gov. You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published April 11, 2000, (65 FR 19477), or you may visit www.regulations.gov. Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents and comments received, go to www.regulations.gov at any time. Background documents and comments received may also be viewed at the U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dwayne Weeks, Office of Planning & Environment, (202) 493-0396, or email at Dwayne.Weeks@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the FTA; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the collected information. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection.

Title: Metropolitan and Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning (OMB Number: 2132-0529).

Background: The FTA and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) jointly carry out the federal mandate to improve urban and rural transportation. 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304 and 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 authorize the use of federal funds to assist Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), States, and local public bodies in developing transportation plans and programs to serve the transportation needs of urbanized areas over 50,000 in population and other areas of States outside of urbanized areas. The information collection activities involved in developing the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the

Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are necessary to identify and evaluate the transportation issues and needs in each urbanized area and throughout every State. These products of the transportation planning process are essential elements in the reasonable planning and programming of federally funded transportation investments.

In addition to serving as a management tool for MPOs, the UPWP is used by both FTA and FHWA to monitor the transportation planning activities of MPOs. It also is needed to establish national out year budgets and regional program plans, develop policy on using funds, monitor State and local compliance with technical emphasis areas, respond to Congressional inquiries, prepare Congressional testimony, and ensure efficiency in the use and expenditure of Federal funds by determining that planning proposals are both reasonable and cost-effective. 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C.134 (j) require the development of TIPs for urbanized areas; STIPs are mandated by 49 U.S.C. 5304 and 23 U.S.C. 135(g) for an entire State. After approval by the Governor and MPO, metropolitan TIPs in attainment areas are to be incorporated directly into the STIP. For nonattainment areas, FTA/FHWA must make a conformity finding on the TIPs before including them in the STIP. The complete STIP is then jointly reviewed and approved or disapproved by FTA and FHWA. These conformity findings and approval actions constitute the determination that States are complying with the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304 as a condition of eligibility for federal-aid funding. Without these documents, approvals and findings, FTA and FHWA cannot provide capital and/or operating assistance.

The FTA and FHWA updated their method for estimating the annual burden hours of the transportation planning programs on respondents to reflect the Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning. On July 6, 2012, the President signed into law Public Law 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and on December 4, 2015, signed into law Public Law 114-94, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST). The MAP-21 makes significant changes to the statewide and nonmetropolitan planning process and the metropolitan transportation planning process, and the FAST makes

minor changes to existing provisions. As a result, FHWA and FTA have issued a final rule that makes the regulations consistent with current statutory requirements. The rule is central to the implementation of the overall performance management framework created by MAP-21.

The changes to the FHWA/FTA statewide and nonmetropolitan and metropolitan transportation planning regulations (23 CFR part 450 and 49 CFR part 613) make the regulations consistent with current statutory requirements. Major regulatory revisions include a new mandate for States and MPOs to take a performance-based approach to planning and programming; a new emphasis on the nonmetropolitan transportation planning process, by requiring States to have a higher level of involvement with nonmetropolitan local officials and providing a process for the creation of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs); a structural change to the membership of the larger MPOs; a new framework for voluntary scenario planning; and a process for programmatic mitigation plans. The revised burden hour estimates reflect the annual compliance burden of the requirements in the Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning published on May 27, 2016. Additionally, the estimates were updated to apply revised labor costs for inflation, a new uniform overhead rate used by all Department of Transportation modes, reduce the number of respondents (due to mergers of Metropolitan Planning Organizations), and the addition of the HOPE discretionary grant program.

Respondents: State Departments of Transportation and MPOs.

Estimated Annual Burden on Respondents: 9,206 hours for each of the 456 respondents.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 4,198,379 hours.

Frequency: Annual.

Nadine Pembleton,

Director Office of Management Planning.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[FTA Docket No. FTA 2020-0005]

Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.