

people and goods. The purpose is to do so in a manner that respects and provides for the competing needs: preserving scenic and natural beauty, historic and rural character of the area, the current quality of life for both residents and users, and the integrity of the natural environment.

This segment of SR 104 includes five areas along the corridor where the projected 20 year traffic growth will cause level of service 'F', or system breakdown due to high congestion. There are also three areas, generally one mile or longer, that currently have a five-year history of higher than average accident occurrences (HAC).

There are also six locations where existing roadway geometrics, traffic volumes, and other factors indicate a high potential for vehicles to run off the roadway (Risk).

Solutions are needed to reduce the rate and severity of accidents and to provide for the projected traffic demand. While alternatives have not yet been identified, a series of reasonable alternatives that could meet the purpose and need, as generated by the corridor stakeholders and adopted by the study Steering Committee will be considered in the EIS. The list of possible alternative solutions to be addressed in the EIS will be developed after evaluation/consideration of scoping comments.

### Scoping

Announcements describing the proposed study/actions and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. Three meetings will be held to identify the scope of issues to be addressed, the significant issues, and the possible improvement alternatives. The first two meetings will be conducted on *September 22, 1999*, at, the *Kingston Community Center* in Kingston, Washington. The first meeting from 3 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. will be conducted to focus on input from governmental agencies and tribes. The second, from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., will be conducted primarily for the public. The third meeting, also for the public, will be held on *September 23, 1999* at the *Port Ludlow Fire Hall*, from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Written scoping comments may be submitted to the FHWA or WSDOT at the address provided above.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues are identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties.

Comments or questions concerning this action and the EIS should also be directed to the FHWA or WSDOT at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

**James A. Leonard, P.E.,**

*Transportation and Environmental Engineer,  
Federal Highway Administration—  
Washington Division.*

[FR Doc. 99-22985 Filed 9-2-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

#### **Request for Statements of Interest: Availability for Demonstration of a High Speed Non-Electric (Fossil Fuel) Passenger Locomotive**

**AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Request for expressions of interest.

**SUMMARY:** FRA announces the availability of a prototype high speed non-electric (fossil fuel) passenger locomotive for demonstration on designated intercity high-speed rail passenger corridors. FRA seeks statements of interest from States or consortia of States interested in participating with FRA, the manufacturer of this locomotive, and Amtrak in such demonstrations.

#### **Eligible Participants**

All States or consortia of States shall be eligible. States with high-speed rail corridors designated by the Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 104(d) shall receive priority for the demonstration. It is expected that Federal financial assistance, if any, under this announcement will be provided only through a cooperative agreement.

#### **Submission of Expressions of Interest**

Five (5) copies of each Expression of Interest should be submitted by November 19, 1999 to the following address: Associate Administrator for Railroad Development, Federal Railroad Administration, Mail Stop 20, 1120 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20590.

### Points of Contact

Technical questions regarding this request may be directed to: Robert J. McCown, Director, Technology Development Programs, Federal Railroad Administration, Mail Stop 20, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20590, TEL 202-493-6350, FAX 202-493-6333.

Administrative questions regarding this request may be directed to: Robert L. Carpenter, Office of Acquisition & Grants Services, Federal Railroad Administration, Mail Stop 50, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20590, TEL 202-493-6153, FAX 202-493-6171.

### Background

FRA's Next Generation High-Speed Rail program has been established to facilitate the deployment of technologies where improved performance or reduced cost could enhance the viability of high-speed passenger rail service, based on incremental improvements to existing rail infrastructure. The present focus of the program is in four primary areas: non-electric locomotives, grade crossing risk mitigation, track and structures, and advanced train control systems.

The successful development and demonstration of lightweight, high power, non-electric locomotives is critical to the introduction of passenger service in the United States at speeds above 90 mph. The cost of electrification may not yet be justifiable in some corridors. Further, locomotives based primarily on designs appropriate for freight applications are not practical for speeds above 100 mph, due to poor acceleration capability and weight, particularly unsprung mass, which is incompatible with sustained use on typical track structures, because of the large forces generated at high speeds. For territories where operations are shared with freight, high powered locomotives, with high rates of acceleration, are essential to the introduction of high-speed passenger operations.

FRA, in partnership with Bombardier Transit Corporation, is producing a prototype high-speed non-electric locomotive capable of 125 mph sustained operations, with the goal of ultimately being capable of 150 mph operations, with acceleration characteristics approaching or equal to current high-speed electric locomotives used on the Northeast Corridor. In future phases of the project, the locomotive may also be capable of demonstrating enhanced performance using the energy storage element of the

flywheel developed as part of FRA's Advanced Locomotive Propulsion System (ALPS) project.

The development of the locomotive has advanced to the point where FRA and Bombardier Transit Corporation anticipate that the first prototype will enter into testing during the summer of 2000. Initially, the prototype will be tested at the Transportation Technology Center, in Pueblo, Colorado and other locations, to validate its readiness for passenger operations on the general rail system of the U.S. That initial testing will be followed by more extensive demonstrations of the technology over a wide range of operating conditions in which high-speed non-electric locomotives might operate. FRA is seeking statements of interest at this time to provide all potential hosts of the proposed demonstration adequate time to plan and marshal the necessary resources for a successful demonstration.

#### **Purpose and Project Description**

The purpose of the subject demonstration is to gain information on the performance of the prototype locomotive operating under a wide range of conditions similar to those in which production versions of high-speed non-electric locomotives might operate in the future. Two distinct types of demonstrations will be conducted:

##### *Concept Demonstration*

The concept demonstration will involve demonstration of the prototype locomotive in several of the designated high-speed rail corridors for periods of three to fourteen days to obtain train performance data over a wide range of operating conditions. This type of demonstration will also gauge the reaction of and solicit input from various potential users of the equipment, including operators, host railroads, and the general public on design and performance aspects of the prototype. It is anticipated that the demonstrations will involve static display, as well as a limited number of train movements over segments of designated corridors at speeds up to the maximum allowable speed for the current track class and local conditions for those segments. FRA and Bombardier Transit Corporation anticipate that the concept demonstration will begin in the late summer of 2000.

##### *Service Demonstration*

The service demonstration will involve demonstration of the prototype locomotive in revenue service for an extended period of time (three to six

months) in one or possibly two designated corridors to obtain longer term performance data concerning durability, reliability, and maintainability. This demonstration will also be used to more fully explore the capabilities of the prototype, including its ability to operate in conjunction with modern passenger rail equipment in use in North America. This part of the demonstration program will involve revenue service operation of the locomotive and appropriate passenger cars on a regular schedule by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). The service demonstration will begin after completion of the initial concept demonstration and after any necessary servicing to and adjustments of the prototype have been completed. After the completion of the service demonstration, the locomotive may perform additional concept demonstrations in selected corridors before being used to test a high-speed lightweight generator system being developed by the ALPS project team. At the completion of this testing it is possible that the locomotive may again be available for additional revenue service demonstration.

#### **Furnished Equipment**

FRA and Bombardier Transit Corporation will make available one prototype high-speed non-electric locomotive for this demonstration that meets all applicable FRA safety standards for operation at speeds of up to 125mph. Depending upon final configuration, the train may be suitable for revenue service operation at speeds up to 150mph. FRA also anticipates furnishing technical guidance and assistance as appropriate throughout the project.

Bombardier Transit Corporation will make available for the concept and service demonstrations, three tilting coaches (one first class and two business class) with a total seating capacity of approximately 175, which are similar to those that will be entering Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Acela Express service in late 1999 and 2000. Two of these coaches will be modified to permit service to low platforms.

#### **Role of the Selected States and Other Parties**

The selected State or consortia of States will be responsible for all planning, coordination and management of the concept demonstration while the locomotive is located on the designated corridor. During the concept demonstration, the selected State(s) will be responsible for funding the operating

expenses associated with the operation on the corridor, including, but not necessarily limited to: payments for track access, train and engine crew costs, fuel and other servicing requirements, station costs, and security. FRA estimates that costs to be borne by a selected State for a typical concept demonstration would be between \$8,000 and \$14,000 per day of operation. The Federal financial commitment, if any, to a selected State will be made through a cooperative agreement between that State or consortium of States and FRA.

During the service demonstration, the selected State(s) will make any necessary arrangements with Amtrak (or others, if required) to permit an extended revenue service demonstration of the prototype, including covering net operating costs incurred by Amtrak (or others, if required) during the service demonstration.

Subject to funds availability, FRA and its partners in the locomotive development will arrange for the support of costs associated with operations outside the geographic area of the selected State(s) (e.g. cost to move the locomotive from one demonstration site to another), as well as extraordinary maintenance costs, and may provide additional assistance as needed to the extent that the demonstration entails costs beyond normal train operation. Applicants should indicate whether they are in a position to contribute any funds toward these costs. Bombardier Transit Corporation will provide qualified personnel who will assist in maintenance and servicing of the equipment during the demonstration to the extent that these tasks are specific to this equipment.

After completion of the service demonstration, the State or consortium of States will prepare a report in cooperation with Amtrak, Bombardier Transit Corporation, and FRA detailing the performance, suitability, customer acceptance, and operating economics of the train during the service demonstration.

Amtrak will operate the train during the demonstration and between demonstration locations, interfacing with host railroads, providing necessary train and engine crews, any inspections required by statute or regulation, and will assist Bombardier Transit Corporation in the regular servicing of the equipment.

#### **Statements of Interest**

States interested in hosting either a concept or service demonstration must submit statements of interest to the address identified above no later than

November 19, 1999. Statements of interest shall be no more than ten pages in length. Each statement of interest shall, at a minimum, indicate whether the applicant houses a designated high-speed corridor; identify whether the applicant proposes to host a concept demonstration, service demonstration or both; provide a detailed description of the proposed demonstration(s), including the route and schedule of any demonstrations; describe how the demonstration will develop information that supports FRA's overall program goal of facilitating the introduction of high-speed rail service in corridors outside the Northeast Corridor; provide a detailed list of any resources required and outstanding issues that must be resolved before undertaking the demonstration; provide a statement from a responsible official of the host railroad concerning the anticipated availability of the rail line proposed for the demonstration during the demonstration period outlined above; and, identify the intended source(s) and commitment status of the selected State(s)'s proposed funding.

#### Evaluation and Selection

In cooperation with its partners, FRA will evaluate the statements of interest using the following criteria:

1. The overall scientific and/or technical merits of the proposal.
2. The degree to which the proposed demonstration will advance the feasibility of U.S. high-speed rail operations by providing public exposure of HSR technology and operational information on the performance and public acceptance of the demonstration train.
3. The qualifications and demonstrated experience of the proposing organization to support the proposed demonstration(s).
4. The reasonableness and realism of the proposed costs.
5. The degree to which Federal funds are leveraged by private, non-Federal, and/or Federal funds available from sources other than FRA programs, including the degree to which funds are offered to offset FRA's costs of moving the locomotive between demonstration corridors.
6. The availability of funds.

It is expected that this review process will be completed within 90 days of the closing date of this announcement. At that time FRA may, at its option, request more detailed proposals from some or all of the applicants, or move forward in negotiating appropriate agreements with the selected applicants, based solely upon the statements of interest.

Dated: August 27, 1999.

**Jolene M. Molitoris,**

*Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 99-23004 Filed 9-2-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### Environmental Impact Statement on the Hartford to New Britain Busway Project, Hartford County, Connecticut

**AGENCY:** Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on the proposed construction of a busway along an existing rail right-of-way corridor, known as the Hartford West Corridor, between Union Station in Hartford, CT and downtown New Britain, CT.

The EIS will evaluate a no-build alternative and a busway alternative, options recommended in a Major Investment Study (MIS) completed by the CTDOT and participating agencies for the Hartford West Corridor. Further scoping will be accomplished through public meetings and hearings, neighborhood meetings, cable news segments, a newsletter, and correspondence with interested persons, organizations, the general public, federal, state and local agencies.

**DATES:** *Comment Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered should be sent to the FTA or CTDOT by October 18, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** *Written comments* on the project scope should be sent to Mr. Edgar T. Hurle, Connecticut Department of Transportation, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546, Newington, CT, 06131-7546, Telephone (860) 594-2920 or Mr. Richard H. Doyle, Federal Transit Administration, 55 Broadway, Cambridge, MA, 02142, Telephone (617) 494-2055.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Mary Beth Mello, Deputy Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration Region I, (617) 494-2055.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### I. Description of Study Area and Project Need

The proposed project corridor, known as the Hartford West corridor, extends from Union Station in Hartford, Connecticut along an existing rail-right-of-way to downtown New Britain, Connecticut. The proposed busway would extend nine miles and include twelve station locations.

The heavily urbanized Hartford West corridor is anchored by the City of Hartford and the City of New Britain. The corridor has been broadly defined to include not only I-84 but also the surrounding neighborhoods, parallel arterial roadways, and two rail lines, the Bristol-Hartford line and the New Haven-Hartford line. The corridor encompasses portions of five communities: Hartford, West Hartford, Farmington, Newington and New Britain.

To address the transportation needs in the Hartford West Corridor and evaluate the effectiveness of various transportation system improvement alternatives, the CTDOT, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) undertook a Major Investment Study (MIS) for the area. During the MIS phase, the three agencies conducted an extensive public outreach effort and evaluated a full range of alternatives including, but not limited to, transit fixed guideway (light rail, commuter rail, and busway), a high occupancy vehicle lane, expressway reconstruction and operational lanes, expressway widening, transportation system management improvements and a no-build option. Based on input from the public, state and local agencies, the CTDOT identified the goals of improved mode choice, congestion reduction, improved public health and safety, community livability and quality of life, and economic expansion to guide the MIS effort.

Early in the process, the addition of travel lanes on I-84 was dropped as an alternative due to significant local opposition and cost. The remaining build alternatives included light rail service in the I-84 median; an exclusive busway in the I-84 median; a high occupancy lane added to I-84; light-rail service on Farmington Avenue (one of the arterial highways); and either light rail service or exclusive bus service in the unused half of the Amtrak inland route main line from Union Station in Hartford to New Britain. The MIS analysis indicated that a busway in the Amtrak corridor was the optimal choice. The flexibility of the busway service is