Application and Selection Process

The TIFIA JPO will accept, at any time, letters of interest from potential applicants. Subsequently, for projects that meet all threshold requirements, the TIFIA JPO will invite the project sponsor to apply. Using this application process, potential applicants can match their TIFIA submissions with their project development timetable. Potential TIFIA applicants must follow the process outlined below to be considered for credit assistance:

1. *Letter of Interest.* A potential applicant for TIFIA credit assistance must first submit a detailed letter of interest to the TIFIA JPO. This letter should include a brief project description (including the project's purpose, design features, and estimated capital cost), information about the proposed financing for the project (including a preliminary summary of sources and uses of funds and the type and amount of credit assistance requested), a description of the proposed project participants, and an assessment of the benefit the project sponsor seeks to achieve through use of a TIFIA credit instrument. The letter also should summarize the status of the project's environmental review (*i.e.*, whether the project has received a Categorical Exclusion, Finding of No Significant Impact, or Record of Decision, or, at a minimum, whether a draft Environmental Impact Statement has been circulated). The letter of interest should not exceed ten pages. The TIFIA JPO will lead a review of this preliminary submission to ensure that the project meets the basic program requirements. The TIFIA JPO will then designate an evaluation team for the project (drawing from the U.S. DOT's various offices and operating administrations, as necessary). The U.S. DOT evaluation team will contact the project sponsor within approximately two to four weeks to review the readiness of the project.

2. *Application.* The project sponsor may not submit an application until it has received preliminary confirmation of eligibility from the TIFIA JPO. The project sponsor may then submit its formal application including all required materials (generally described in 49 CFR 80.7 and detailed in the TIFIA application form) to the TIFIA JPO. The TIFIA JPO and the U.S. DOT evaluation teams will not review incomplete applications or applications for projects that do not fully satisfy the TIFIA program requirements.

The most current version of the application form can be obtained from the TIFIA Web site.

3. *Sponsor Presentation.* Each applicant that passes an initial screening of the submitted application for compliance with the TIFIA program requirements will be invited to make a project presentation to the TIFIA JPO and the U.S. DOT evaluation team. The TIFIA JPO will discuss the structure and content of the presentation with the applicant at the time of the invitation.

4. *Project Selection.* Based upon the application, the project presentation and any supplemental submission of information, the TIFIA JPO and the U.S. DOT evaluation teams will score each project according to specific weights assigned to each of the eight statutory selection criteria described in 23 U.S.C. 182(b) and 49 CFR 80.15 as follows: National or regional significance, 20 percent; private participation, 20 percent; environmental benefits, 20 percent; creditworthiness, 12.5 percent; project acceleration, 12.5 percent; use of new technologies, 5 percent; consumption of budget authority, 5 percent; and reduced Federal grant assistance, 5 percent.

The U.S. DOT will not select any project before an environmental Record of Decision (if required, or the equivalent final agency decision) has been issued for that project.

5. *Fees.* Unless otherwise notified in a subsequent NOFA published in the **Federal Register**, the TIFIA JPO will require each applicant to pay a non-refundable application fee of $30,000. This fee is based upon historical costs associated with the U.S. DOT's evaluation of TIFIA applications. Checks should be made payable to the Federal Highway Administration. The project sponsor must submit this payment with the application. No fee is required for a letter of interest. Applicants may not include application fees or any other expenses associated with the application process (such as charges associated with obtaining the required preliminary rating opinion letter) among eligible project costs for the purpose of calculating the maximum 33 percent credit assistance.

In addition, consistent with 23 U.S.C. 183(b)(7), 183(e)(2), 184(b)(9) and with 49 CFR 80.17, the TIFIA JPO will charge each borrower a credit processing fee equal to a portion of the costs incurred by the TIFIA JPO in negotiating the credit agreement. Each project term sheet will require the borrower to pay at closing, or, in the event no credit agreement is consummated, upon invoicing by the TIFIA JPO, an amount equal to the actual costs incurred by the TIFIA JPO in procuring the assistance of financial advisors and outside legal counsel through execution of the credit agreement(s) and satisfaction of all funding requirements of those agreements. The TIFIA JPO anticipates this fee will typically range from $100,000 to $300,000, depending on the complexity of the financial structure and the length of negotiations. The borrower may not include the credit processing fee among eligible project costs for the purpose of calculating the maximum 33 percent credit assistance.

The TIFIA JPO will continue to charge borrowers a fee of not less than $10,000 per year, which may be adjusted annually, for loan servicing activities associated with each executed TIFIA credit instrument. The borrower may not include the loan servicing fee among eligible project costs for the purpose of calculating the maximum 33 percent credit assistance.

(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 181–189; 49 CFR 1.48(nn)).

Issued on: April 2, 2003.

Mary E. Peters,

Federal Highway Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03–9500 Filed 4–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Applications for TIFIA Credit Assistance

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds inviting applications for credit assistance for major surface transportation projects.

SUMMARY: Elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a notice announcing the availability of Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) assistance and inviting applicants to submit applications for credit assistance for major surface transportation projects. The TIFIA authorizes the Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide credit assistance in the form of secured (direct) loans, lines of credit, and loan guarantees to public and private sponsors of eligible surface transportation projects. Highway, passenger rail, transit, and ''intermodal'' projects (including intelligent transportation systems) may receive credit assistance under the TIFIA. Interested persons should review the FHWA Notice in today's **Federal Register** for further information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Joanne McGowan, Office of Passenger and Freight Services, Freight Program Division, (202) 493–6390, or Mr. Joseph Pomponio, Office of the Chief Counsel, (202) 493–6051.

(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 181–189; 49 CFR 1.49).

Issued on: April 4, 2003.

Allan Rutter,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03–9501 Filed 4–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Erie Canal Harbor Project (Formerly the Inner Harbor Development Project)

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) intend to prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Erie Canal Harbor Project (formerly referred to as the Inner Harbor Development Project), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The original Notice of Intent to prepare a DEIS for the Project was issued on November 10, 1997; the final EIS (FEIS) was issued in February 1999; and FTA issued the Record of Decision (ROD) on June 22, 1999. The project is being administered by the New York State Urban Development Corporation doing business as the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC).

The participation of the general public, interested parties, and agencies is encouraged and will be solicited. A Public Scoping Meeting will be held to discuss the information to be included in the SDEIS, as outlined below.

DATES: *Comment Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered should be sent to Mr. Thomas Blanchard, Director of Planning and Development, Empire State Development—Western New York by May 28, 2003. *Scoping Meeting:* A public scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 2003, at 6 p.m. at the address identified below.

ADDRESSES: *Written comments* on the project scope should be sent to Mr. Blanchard at 420 Main Street, Suite 717, Buffalo, New York 14202. The scoping meeting will be held at the Buffalo Historical Society Auditorium, 25 Nottingham Court, Buffalo, NY 14216.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Danzig, Community Planner, FTA Region II. Telephone (212) 668–2180.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Project's 1999 Final EIS evaluated a Proposed Action involving the reconfiguration of a portion of the Buffalo River bulkhead and redevelopment of a site within the City's Waterfront Development Project Urban Renewal Area into a new harbor with intermodal transportation components at the foot of Main Street. In addition, the Proposed Action involves the construction of a series of landside improvements to facilitate and enhance public access to the waterfront, connect existing pedestrian and bicycle path systems, and provide opportunities for private development.

In this SDEIS, ESDC will evaluate alternatives for revisions to a portion of the Proposed Action to better interpret archaeological resources encountered on the Project site related to the site's location at the historic terminus of the Erie Canal at the Commercial Slip. Planned construction at the western portion of the Project site as included in the Proposed Action, entailing completion of the naval basin and relocation of the three naval vessels, are currently under construction and anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2003.

Alternatives for revisions to the Proposed Action will be formulated in conjunction with a series of public design workshops and meetings with heritage interpretation groups to be held in the summer of 2003. Although still to be formulated, the alternatives will include consideration of realignment or reconfiguration of the Hamburg Drain to allow for a rewatering of the Commercial Slip along its historic right-of-way; methods to interpret the former location of the Central Wharf; reuse or interpretation of former streets that crossed the Project site; revised methods of using building foundations of former structures on the site as interpretive elements; and redesign and/or reprogramming of the Naval and Military Park's museum building and associated refinements to the configuration of future development parcels associated with these other site elements. All alternatives to be considered will meet the intermodal objectives and include programmatic components of the Proposed Action in the Project's 1999 Final EIS.

The SDEIS will present the benefits and costs, environmental impacts, and proposed mitigation measures associated with the alternatives for revisions to the Proposed Action. Following completion and public review of the SDEIS, anticipated in early 2004, a Final EIS would be prepared.

Issued on: April 11, 2003.

Letitia Thompson,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03–9499 Filed 4–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Applications for TIFIA Credit Assistance

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds inviting applications for credit assistance for major surface transportation projects.

SUMMARY: Elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a notice announcing the availability of Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) assistance and inviting applicants to submit applications for credit assistance for major surface transportation projects. The TIFIA authorizes the Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide credit assistance in the form of secured (direct) loans, lines of credit, and loan guarantees to public and private sponsors of eligible surface transportation projects. Highway, passenger rail, transit, and ''intermodal'' projects (including intelligent transportation systems) may receive credit assistance under the TIFIA. Interested persons should review the FHWA Notice in today's **Federal Register** for further information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Paul Marx, Office of Policy Development, (202) 366–1675, or Ms. Paula Schwach, Office of the Chief Counsel, (816) 329–3935.

(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 181–189; 49 CFR 1.51).

Issued on April 10, 2003.

Jennifer L. Dorn,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 03–9502 Filed 4–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–M