

Issued in Washington, DC, on July 15, 2003.

**Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,**

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.*

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**BILLING CODE 4910-06-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

#### Notice of Application for Approval of Discontinuance or Modification of a Railroad Signal System or Relief From the Requirements of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 236

Pursuant to title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 235 and 49 U.S.C. 20502(a), the following railroad has petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) seeking approval for the discontinuance or modification of the signal system or relief from the requirements of 49 CFR part 236 as detailed below.

#### Docket Number FRA-2003-14799

*Applicant:* CSX Transportation, Mr. N. Michael Choat, Assistant Chief Engineer of Signal Maintenance, 4901 Belfort Road, Suite 130 (J370), Jacksonville, Florida 32256.

CSX Transportation (CSXT) seeks approval to extend the temporary discontinuance of the traffic control system (TCS), on portions of the Florence Service Lane, Aberdeen Subdivision, between milepost S164.8 and milepost S241.6, for approximately one year. The request is associated with the December 6, 2002-catastrophic event in which CSXT experienced a severe ice storm over portions of the Aberdeen Subdivision. Major damage to the signal pole line resulted in the removal of the TCS from service as authorized by 49 CFR, Section 235.7(a)(4), and implementation of Direct Traffic Control (DTC), under the direction of the train dispatcher.

The reason given for the proposed changes is to allow CSXT time to file a block signal application with the Federal Railroad Administration for the proposed permanent discontinuance and removal of the existing TCS between milepost S164.8 and milepost S241.6, and installation of DTC authority for movement supplemented with CSXT's Communications Based Train Management System (CTBM). The petition process and the implementation of CBTM would be completed within the one-year time frame.

Any interested party desiring to protest the granting of an application shall set forth specifically the grounds

upon which the protest is made, and include a concise statement of the interest of the party in the proceeding. Additionally, one copy of the protest shall be furnished to the applicant at the address listed above.

All communications concerning this proceeding should be identified by the docket number and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by the FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) at the above facility. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA wishes to inform all potential commenters that anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the Federal Register published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FRA expects to be able to determine these matters without an oral hearing. However, if a specific request for an oral hearing is accompanied by a showing that the party is unable to adequately present his or her position by written statements, an application may be set for public hearing.

Issued in Washington, DC on July 21, 2003.

**Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,**

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Transit Administration

#### Environmental Impact Statement for the Spokane Regional Light Rail (South Valley Corridor) Project in Spokane, Washington Metropolitan Area

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

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement that includes two new alternatives.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for transit improvements in Spokane County, between downtown Spokane and Liberty Lake. The EIS will be prepared to satisfy both NEPA and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This project was originally scoped as an Environmental Assessment (EA), but transitioned to an Environmental Impact Statement as a result of a second scoping meeting held on June 4, 2002. Because of the recent demonstrated need to study two additional lower cost build alternatives, an additional scoping meeting will be required.

The purpose of this Notice of Intent is to notify interested parties of the intent to prepare an EIS with two additional build alternatives and to invite participation in the study. The project proposes to implement a major high capacity transit improvement in the Spokane Metropolitan area that maintains livability, manages growth and provides a balanced transportation system. The Proposed Action is intended to contribute to implementation of a series of state, regional, and local planning policies that address air quality, sprawl, and growth. In addition to the original alternatives, two new alternatives (described below) will be evaluated in the EIS.

**DATES:** The public is welcome to make comments on the scope of the proposed project. Written comments should be sent to the Spokane Transit Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the local newspaper or September 18, 2003, whichever is later. A packet on the proposed project, project alternatives, and the scoping process may be obtained from the Spokane Transit Authority. The information may also be obtained by sending an electronic request through the "Contact Us" section of the project Web site, [www.spokanelightrail.com](http://www.spokanelightrail.com). A *Public Open House/Scoping Meeting* will be held on Thursday, September 4, 2003 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. PDT, at the Kress Gallery on the third floor of the Riverpark Square Mall, located at 808 West Main Avenue, Spokane, WA 99206. An *Agency Scoping Meeting* will be held at 1:30 p.m. PDT on Thursday, September 4, 2003, at the Spokane

Transit Authority (STA) Board Room, 1230 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA 99201. Both meeting locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual with a disability who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, should contact GERALYN GARBERG at (509) 325-6000, ext. 196 or e-mail [ggarberg@spokanetransit.com](mailto:ggarberg@spokanetransit.com), at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting in order for STA to make necessary arrangements.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Spokane Transit Authority Agency Coordination contact is Lesley Sutton, Project Executive Assistant at (509) 325-6056 or e-mail:

[lsutton@spokanetransit.com](mailto:lsutton@spokanetransit.com). The STA Public Information contact is Molly Myers, Project Communications Manager at (509) 325-6090 or e-mail [mmyers@spokanetransit.com](mailto:mmyers@spokanetransit.com). The STA TDD number is (509) 456-4327. Written comments should be sent to: Spokane "South Valley Corridor" Project Manager, Spokane Transit Authority, 1230 West Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99201.

The Federal agency contact is John Witmer, Federal Transit Administration, 915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142, Jackson Federal Building, Seattle, WA 98174. Phone (206) 220-7964.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**1. Notice of Intent**

This Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS is being published to notify interested parties. The Spokane "South Valley Corridor" Project is examining two new high-capacity transit build alternatives in the south valley portion of the Spokane metropolitan area. Because the study is a transit alternatives study, FTA regulations and guidance will be used for the analysis and preparation of the South Valley Corridor Project EIS.

**2. Study Area**

The South Valley Corridor includes an area roughly parallel to I-90 running east through downtown Spokane, southeast Spokane, the City of Spokane Valley, unincorporated urban Spokane County, and into the City of Liberty Lake. The proposed alternatives primarily utilize existing right-of-ways along operational and former railroad corridors and roadways.

**3. Alternatives**

The three original alternatives are as follows: (#1) The No-Build Alternative will provide the basis for comparison of the build alternatives. The No-Build Alternative includes the existing transportation system plus projects

listed in the Spokane Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). (#2) The Separate Rail Alignment Alternative includes a light rail transit line running from downtown Spokane to Liberty Lake on an exclusive alignment. (#3) The Shared Rail Alignment includes a light rail line from downtown Spokane to Liberty Lake sharing existing rail lines with the Union Pacific Railroad along portions of the alignment. This alternative would use operating time restrictions to separate light rail traffic from heavy rail traffic. Between the two termini there would be intermediate stations and associated local parking. Both the separate rail alignment and shared rail alignment Build Alternatives may use either electrified or diesel multiple unit (DMU) vehicle technology. These alternatives will also incorporate in-street operations along Riverside Avenue, between Post Street and Division Street. The rail options will utilize the former Milwaukee Road rail corridor, east of University Road.

The two new alternatives are as follows: (#4) The Rail Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) Rail alternative is similar to the Shared Rail Alignment alternative except the rail portion of the alignment has an eastern terminus at University City. The rail segment assumes the use of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) vehicles and a possible interface with a separate project that includes a Downtown Spokane streetcar system. The rest of the east-west corridor from University City to Liberty Lake will be served by a low-cost transit segment that will utilize Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) strategies and rubber-tired BRT vehicles on existing roadways. The second new alternative (#5) serves the entire corridor with low-cost Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) strategies using rubber-tired BRT vehicles on existing roadways.

**4. Probable Effects**

FTA and Spokane Transit Authority will evaluate the environmental, social and economic impacts of the alternatives and measures to mitigate any adverse impacts.

Issued on July 16, 2003.

**Linda M. Gehrke,**

*Acting Regional Administrator, FTA Region 10.*

[FR Doc. 03-19153 Filed 7-25-03; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

[Docket No. NHTSA-2003-15428]

**Extension of Comment Period on Whether Nonconforming 2003-2004 Micro Car Company Smart Passion (Glass Top and Convertible) Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation**

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** On June 20, 2003, NHTSA published notice (at 68 FR 37040) that it had received a petition to decide that nonconforming 2003-2004 Micro Car Company Smart Passion (glass top and convertible) passenger cars are eligible for importation into the United States. The notice solicited public comments on the petition and stated that the closing date for comments is July 21, 2003.

This is to notify the public that NHTSA is extending the comment period until July 31, 2003. This extension is based on a request from Mercedes-Benz USA L.L.C. (Mercedes-Benz). In requesting the extension, Mercedes-Benz stated that "upon reviewing the record to determine if sufficient engineering data had been submitted to enable NHTSA to make a determination whether the proposed vehicle is eligible for importation, [it] found no such data." As a consequence, the company stated that it needs "additional time to prepare the analytical data [it believes] is necessary for the agency to make an informed and rational decision regarding the petition." Mercedes-Benz requested that the deadline be extended from July 21, 2003 until July 31, 2003.

**DATES:** Comments on the import eligibility petition must be submitted on or before July 31, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments are to be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. [Docket hours are from 9 am to 5 pm]. Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the document (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-787) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.