

rebuild the WTC Hub. Because the WTC Hub project was funded with FEMA grant funds, FTA's Buy America requirements did not apply to the project.

In October 2012, the WTC Hub project was an active construction site, with an estimated project completion date of December 2015. Hurricane Sandy caused extensive damage to the construction site, resulting in more than \$214 million in damage to the construction site. FTA awarded PANYNJ two grants—NY-44-X005 for \$54.24 million and NY-44-X014 for \$159.72 million—in Hurricane Sandy recovery funds to be used for recovery and emergency repair work for the WTC Hub project. Because the repair work was for an ongoing construction project, PANYNJ was required to use existing contracts that were originally procured in accordance with the requirements for the FEMA-funded WTC Hub project. To apply FTA's Buy America requirements to replace or repair equipment installed on an ongoing construction project would result in significant delay to completion of the project, impact contracts awarded under the FEMA funds, and potentially impact previously provided warranties. Moreover, a public interest waiver would maintain overall consistency of administration, oversight and implementation of both the ongoing WTC Hub project and the WTC Hurricane Sandy recovery work.

On November 4, 2016, and in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(3)(A), FTA published a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing PANYNJ's Buy America waiver request (81 FR 76999) seeking public comment. The comment period closed on November 14, 2016, and FTA received one comment. The comment was provided by a private citizen who supports granting the waiver. The commenter noted that the WTC Hub is a critical connection for Lower Manhattan employers and New Jersey employees. The commenter also noted while projects that abide to the Buy America requirements promote domestic industry and the livelihoods or hard-working Americans, that occurrences like Hurricane Sandy demonstrate the need for flexibility to waive Buy America under certain circumstances.

Accordingly, because the original project was funded by FEMA and therefore, not subject to FTA's Buy America regulations, and the lack of any comments opposing the waiver, FTA is granting a general public interest waiver of FTA's Buy America requirements for the two grants, NY-44-X005 for \$54.24 million and NY-44-X014 for \$159.72

million—awarded to PANYNJ. This public interest waiver is limited to the Hurricane Sandy recovery projects at the WTC Hub only, and does not apply to separately funded resiliency projects.

Ellen Partridge,
Chief Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2016-29686 Filed 12-9-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[Docket No. FTA-2016-0037]

Notice of Buy America Waiver for Ultrastraight Rail

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Buy America waiver.

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) received a request from the Central Puget Sound Transit Authority (Sound Transit) for a Buy America non-availability waiver for the procurement of ultrastraight rail. Sound Transit seeks to procure approximately 15,100 feet ultrastraight rail for a portion of its Northgate Link light rail extension to avoid exceedance of contractually-mandated vibration thresholds. The FTA hereby waives its Buy America requirements, finding that the materials for which the waiver is requested are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities and of satisfactory quality. This waiver is limited to a single procurement by Sound Transit.

DATES: The waiver is effective immediately.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cecelia Comito, Assistant Chief Counsel, at (202) 366-2217 or cecilia.comito@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this notice is to announce that FTA has granted a Buy America non-availability waiver for Sound Transit for the procurement of approximately 15,100 feet of ultrastraight rail pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(2)(B) and 49 CFR 661.7(c).

With certain exceptions, FTA's Buy America requirements prevent FTA from obligating an amount that may be appropriated to carry out its program for a project unless "the steel, iron, and manufactured goods used in the project are produced in the United States." 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(1). A manufactured product is considered produced in the United States if: (1) All of the manufacturing processes for the product

take place in the United States; and (2) all of the components of the product are of U.S. origin. A component is considered of U.S. origin if it is manufactured in the United States, regardless of the origin of its subcomponents. 49 CFR 661.5(d). If, however, FTA determines that "the steel, iron, and goods produced in the United States are not produced in a sufficient and reasonably available amount or are not of a satisfactory quality," then FTA may issue a non-availability waiver. 49 U.S.C. 5323(j)(2)(B); 49 CFR 661.7(c). "It will be presumed that the conditions exist to grant this non-availability waiver if no responsive and responsible bid is received offering an item produced in the United States." 49 CFR 661.7(c)(1).

Sound Transit's Northgate Link extension is a \$1.9 billion rail project that consists of 4.3 miles and 3 new stations, and runs through residential and employment areas, including the University of Washington. Approximately 15,100 feet of that extension will run under the University of Washington's Health Sciences and Physics-Astronomy buildings, which house precision-measurement laboratories and experiments conducted by Nobel Prize winning faculty. The project's potential impact on the University's buildings was considered as part of the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In 2006, FTA issued a final Record of Decision (ROD) for the project, and required implementation of mitigation measures, including a measure that would minimize vibration under the University buildings. Sound Transit then executed a 2007 agreement with the University of Washington in which Sound Transit agreed to not exceed specified vibration thresholds, which could be met through use of ultrastraight rail, with parameters for that ultrastraight rail based on American Railway Engineers Maintenance-of-Way Association ("AREMA") standards.

Sound Transit contacted domestic rail manufacturers regarding their ability to produce ultrastraight rail within the agreed upon AREMA specifications for the rail. Two leading manufacturers, Steel Dynamics, Inc. (SDI) and EVRAZ North America (EVRAZ), stated unequivocally that they are unable to fabricate rail that meets the specification. Sound Transit subsequently explored using domestically-sourced, milled rail. However, testing of the as-installed milled rail found that the rail failed to meet the applicable vibration thresholds. Due to its unsuccessful

efforts to procure domestically-sourced ultrastraight rail within the vibration thresholds, Sound Transit seeks a non-availability waiver of the Buy America requirements for domestically-sourced steel. FTA published a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the Buy America waiver request (Docket No. FTA-2016-0037) and sought comments from all interested parties, including potential vendors and suppliers. The comment period closed on November 8, 2016, and no comments were received.

Therefore, based on the information supplied in support of Sound Transit's request for a Buy America waiver and the lack of any comments, FTA hereby waives its Buy America requirements for the procurement of ultrastraight rail on the grounds that the manufactured product is not available in the U.S. This waiver is limited to a single procurement by Sound Transit for the procurement of approximately 15,100 feet of ultrastraight rail.

Ellen Partridge,
Chief Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2016-29684 Filed 12-9-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0571]

Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review: (Customer Satisfaction Surveys)

AGENCY: National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each revised collection allow 30 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on the collection of perceptions of the quality of service afforded by the National Cemetery Administration as judged by next of kin of those interred, or funeral directors who facilitate these interments.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before January 11, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information through Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at www.Regulations.gov or to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attn: VA Desk Officer; 725 17th St. NW., Washington, DC 20503 or sent through electronic mail to oira_submission@omb.eop.gov. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0571" in any correspondence. During the comment period, comments may be viewed online through the FDMS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia Harvey-Pryor, Enterprise Records Service (005R1B), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461-5870 or email cynthia.harvey-pryor@va.gov. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0571."

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3501-21), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, NCA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of NCA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of NCA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0571.

Type of Review: Revision of an approved collection.

Abstract: Improving Customer Service through Effective Performance Management, NCA will conduct surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with existing services among their customers. The surveys will solicit voluntary opinions and are not intended to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a VA program or benefit. Baseline data obtained through these information collections are used to validate customer service standards. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of

information was published at 81 FR 66136 on September 26, 2016.

Affected Public: Individuals or households interring Veterans or eligible dependents, and funeral directors facilitating such interments.

Estimated Annual Burden Hours, Burden per Respondents, and Number of Respondents:

I. National Cemetery Administration Mail Surveys

a. *Next of Kin National Customer Satisfaction Survey* (Mail to 15,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey) = 7,500 hours.

b. *Funeral Directors National Customer Satisfaction Survey* (Mail to 4,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey) = 2,000 hours.

c. *Veterans-At-Large National Customer Satisfaction Survey* (Mail to 5,000 respondents/30 minutes per survey) = 2,500 hours.

IV. Program/Specialized Service Survey

National Cemetery Administration Headstone and Marker/PMC Survey (Mail to 6,000 surveys/15 minutes per each) = 1,000.

Frequency of Response: Annually.

By direction of the Secretary.

Cynthia Harvey-Pryor,

Program Specialist, Office of Privacy and Records Management, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2016-29665 Filed 12-9-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0554]

Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review: (VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program)

AGENCY: Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521), this notice announces that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs, will submit the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before January 11, 2017.