Dear Colleague,

The swift emergence and urgency of global pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus and its enormous effects on public health and the economy have significantly affected the state's need for the research and expertise of the University of California Institute of Transportation Studies (UC ITS). The pandemic emerged *just after* the conclusion of our research needs outreach and engagement for the Annual UC ITS RFP. The goal of our Statewide Transportation Research Program, funded by Senate Bill 1 (2017), is to match UC expertise and capabilities with the state's transportation knowledge needs.

Given the recency, scope, scale, and urgency of the pandemic, UC ITS seeks information on prospective research activities, qualifications of interested individuals and teams, and immediate data collection needs related to the current public health crisis's direct and indirect impacts on transportation systems in California. UC ITS has developed three mechanisms to engage faculty and researchers through a fast-track process:

1. [Information](#) on prospective COVID-19 response and recovery research activities
2. [Qualifications](#) of those interested in contributing to COVID-19 response and recovery research activities
3. [Immediate-need data collection activities](#) related to the COVID-19 crisis

These are described more fully in turn below. **Responses to #1, #2, and/or #3 above are due on Sunday, April 19th at 11:59 PM PDT.**

See below for more information on [UC ITS' COVID-19 response and recovery research planning process](#) and [the relationship](#) between this fast-track call and our call for proposals for the Statewide Transportation Research Program.

1.   Request for Information (RFI)

UC ITS seeks information from eligible Principal Investigators regarding possible fast-tracked research, syntheses, and/or engagement projects pertaining to transportation and COVID-19 response and recovery in California:

- **Response** to the public health emergency, including mobility needs of essential workers and vital goods, the capacity of both the private and public sectors to meet those needs, and the substitution of technology-enabled access for mobility in response to movement limitations.
- **Recovery** of transportation services and systems when the public health emergency ebbs, including coping with goods and people movement backlogs, and the mobility needs of vulnerable individuals, households, and firms.

Projects should be of the scope and scale that could be delivered within 3 to 6 months of initiation (in June 2020) and be conducted entirely through remote work.

Submissions include:
- proposed PI name, affiliation, and contact information
- a problem statement (up to 250 words)
- a project abstract (up to 750 words)
- anticipated budget range for activity
- proposed team members
- biosketches or CVs for key personnel

Submit prospective project information through Google forms by Sunday, April 19 at 11:59 PM PDT.

Potential PIs can submit information on multiple project ideas.

2. Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

UC ITS seeks qualifications of faculty and researchers to perform work within knowledge domains and methodological techniques that may be applicable to projects organized under the COVID-19 Response and Recovery research plan, including but not limited to: public health, computer science, modeling, epidemiology, management, strategy, economic forecasting, labor and employment, transportation planning, transportation engineering, and operations research. Individuals or teams registering through this call may be contacted to form directed research projects.

Submissions include:
- Name(s), affiliations, and contact information
- biosketches or CVs for individual or team

[Submit individual or team qualifications through Google forms](#) by Sunday, April 19th at 11:59 PM PDT.

3. COVID-19 Data Collection Grant

The UC ITS will make funding available for immediate data collection needs that will either 1) inform broader COVID-19 Response and Recovery research activities, or 2) take advantage of natural experiments that can inform future transportation research on themes which would be relevant to the UC ITS State Transportation Research Program. Possible data collection activities include but are not limited to:

- the archival of transportation systems sensed and reported data that are not typically saved for future use
- remotely-administered surveys of travel behavior, telework, and substitution of technology for trips curtailed by COVID-19-related public orders and personal decisions

Proposed data collection activities shall:

- comply with all current directions regarding in-person interactions from University, local, and state officials
- not interfere with the ability of public agency staff designated as disaster/ emergency services personnel to participate in COVID-19 response activities

Individual UC ITS branches at Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, and UCLA will make data collection activity grants in April 2020. Eligible expenses may include up to $15,000 in GSR or staff researcher time billed in April, May, June, and July up to $15,000 for remote survey services including panel acquisition, and up to $2,500 for the purchase of cloud-based data archival resources.
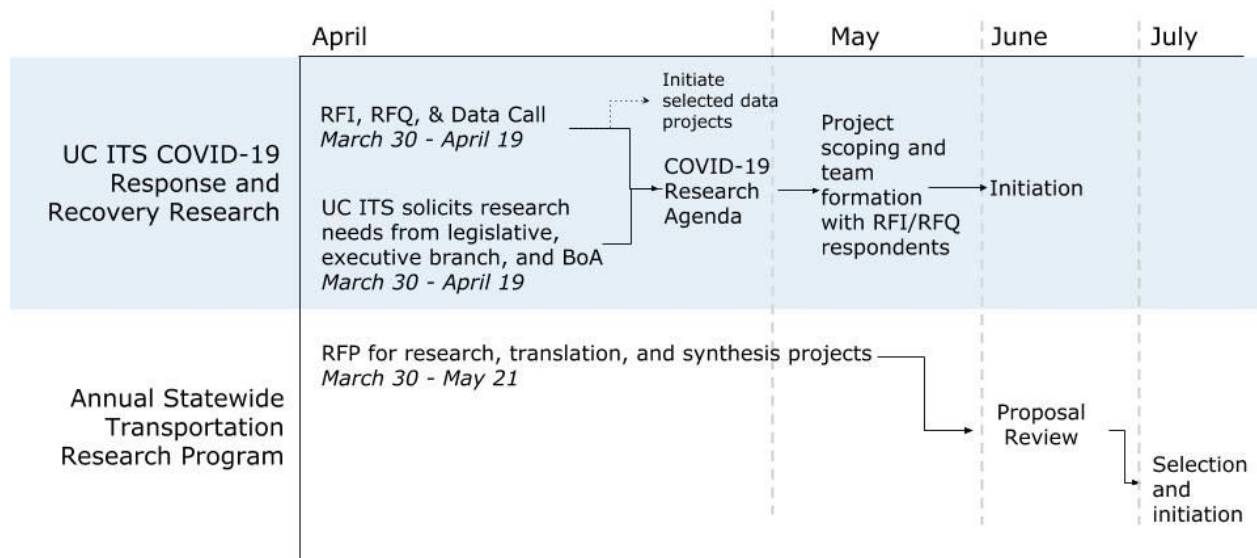
Data produced under these grants shall be stripped of personally-identifiable or confidential information and, by July 2020, shared broadly within the UC ITS system using [Dryad](#) to inform response and recovery research.

To apply for COVID-19 Data Collection Grant:

- **[Submit data collection proposals through Google forms](#)** by Sunday, April 19th at 11:59 PM PDT.

UC ITS COVID-19 Response and Recovery Research Planning Timeline

This solicitation of possible project information and individual and team qualifications is the bottom-up component of the UC ITS COVID-19 Response and Recovery research planning process. Responses to this solicitation are due <u>Sunday, April 19, 2020 at 11:59 PM PDT</u>.

During March and April, UC ITS leadership will also be working with the state's transportation leaders in the legislative and executive branch, as well as the UC ITS Board of Advisors to further identify their needs for UC ITS research and analysis.

In late April, the UC ITS leadership will consider the needs of the state in conjunction with the proposals and capabilities of UC ITS researchers submitted through this RFI/RFQ in developing a COVID-19 Response and Recovery research agenda.

During May, we will reach out to prospective principal investigators to further scope the development of project ideas submitted in response to the RFI and were later identified as priority during the research planning phase. We will use the qualified researcher pool assembled from the RFQ to assist these principal investigators in completing their teams, if necessary. We may also assemble teams of qualified researchers to address problems identified during research planning but not proposed by principal investigators in the request for information.

In June, we will initiate and fund projects as rapid-response or directed research. Given the tight timeline of this process, the proposals will not be externally peer reviewed.

Relation to broader UC ITS Statewide Transportation Research Program research program

We have always worked closely with the state's transportation leadership, through our Board of Advisors, to develop priorities for our Statewide Transportation Research Program, funded by Senate Bill 1 (2017) and the Public Transportation Account. The 2020-21 priorities are expressed in our annual RFP and encompass a full range of transportation issues and topics beyond the immediate research needs in the COVID-19 RFI/RFQ described above. Proposals submitted through this annual RFP process will be sent for peer review.

After the COVID-19 research planning process concludes in May, each Director at ITS Berkeley, ITS Davis, ITS Irvine, and UCLA ITS will determine the proportion of campus funds available for COVID-19 and the broader research program.

We thank you in advance for your understanding and intellectual contributions during this trying time.

Sincerely,

Alex Bayen,
Director, ITS-Berkeley

Stephen Ritchie
Director, ITS-Irvine

Susan Handy
Acting Director, ITS-Davis

Brian D. Taylor
Director, UCLA ITS