

Federal Transportation Funds Benefit Recreation

**Christopher Douwes, Federal
Highway Administration**



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

Who is FHWA?

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), part of the US Department of Transportation, provides expertise, resources, and information to improve the nation's highway system and its intermodal connections.
- The [Federal-Aid Highway Program](#) provides financial assistance to the States to construct and improve the National Highway System, other roads, bridges, and trails.
- The [Federal Lands Highway Program](#) provides access to and within national forests and parks, Indian reservations, and other public lands by preparing plans, letting contracts, supervising construction, and inspecting bridges.
- FHWA conducts and manages a comprehensive research, development, and technology program.

FHWA Funds for Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects and Trails

- Pedestrian and bicycle projects are eligible for every major Federal-aid funding category.
- The Federal Surface Transportation Program is the largest single funding source for shared use paths, trails, and related projects in the United States:
 - About \$550 million/year obligated for pedestrian and bicycle related facilities and programs. (FY 2009: \$1.189 billion)
 - About \$250 to \$300 million/year for obligated for trails, including \$70 million/year for recreational trails. (FY 2009 probably over \$400 million)
- Pedestrian Safety is one of FHWA's priority areas.

Key Programs for Trail Projects

- Federal Lands Highway Program
- Surface Transportation Program
- **Transportation Enhancement Activities**
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
- National Scenic Byways Program
- **Recreational Trails Program**
- Safe Routes to School Program
- **TE and RTP can support Youth Corps**

Federal Lands Highway Program

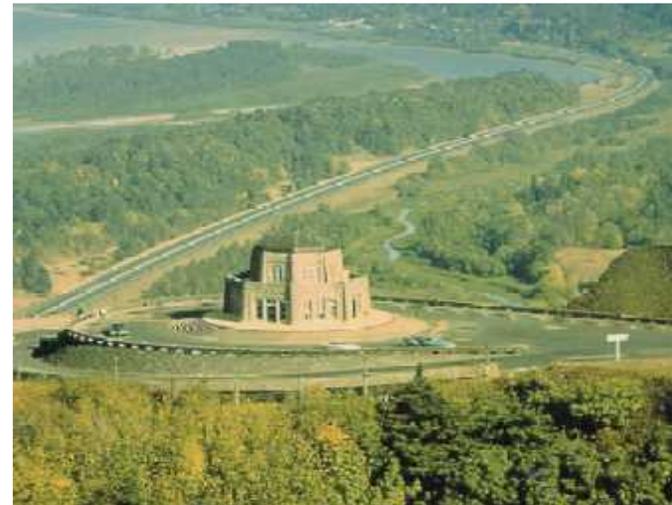
- Provides access to and within Federal lands.
- Project decisions made by the Federal land management agencies in coordination with local governments.
- Trails are eligible for funding; agencies have put higher priority on highway access and safety projects.
- Emphasis on pedestrian safety.
- See <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

Federal-Aid Highway Program Funds for Trails

- Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Safe Routes to School (SRTS).
- Broad range of eligible projects: from highway construction to pedestrian and bicycle projects and transportation trails.
- [SRTS](#) projects are eligible within about 2 miles of elementary and middle schools, and may include trails.
- [CMAQ](#) projects must benefit air quality; may be used as STP in States with no nonattainment areas.

National Scenic Byways Program

- Designates All American Roads and National Scenic Byways: *America's BywaysTM*
- Discretionary program rises from \$26.5 m in FY 2005 to \$43.5 m in FY 2009.
- Funds for designated byways.
- Program info, see www.bywaysonline.org
- Traveler info, see www.byways.org

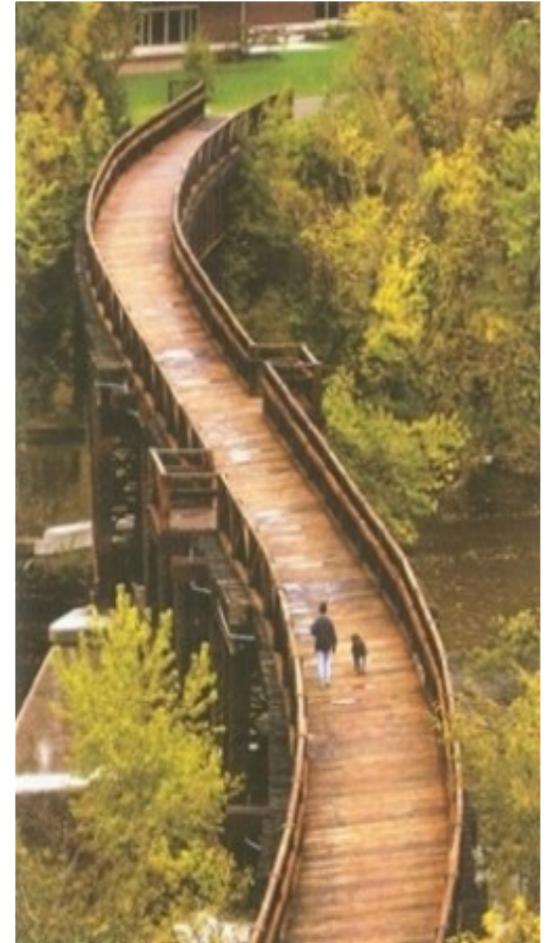


Eligible Scenic Byways Projects

- Plan, design, develop State byway program.
- Corridor management plans.
- Safety improvements to byways.
- Enhance recreation access.
- Protect scenic, historic, recreation, cultural, natural, archaeological resources adjacent to a scenic byway.
- Develop and provide tourist information.
- Develop and implement a marketing program.

Transportation Enhancement Activities

- Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through [12 eligible TE activities](#) related to surface transportation.
- Funding: 10% of STP (including Equity Bonus thru STP): more than \$800 million per year (2005-2009).



Transportation Enhancement Activities

TE projects must *relate to surface transportation* and be eligible under one or more of 12 Eligible Categories:

- 1) Pedestrian and bicycle facilities**
- 2) Pedestrian and bicycle safety and education**
- 3) Scenic or historic easements and sites**
- 4) Scenic or historic highway programs**
- 5) Landscaping and scenic beautification**
- 6) Historic preservation**
- 7) Historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities**
- 8) Rail-trail conversions**
- 9) Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising**
- 10) Archaeological planning and research**
- 11) Mitigate highway water pollution and wildlife mortality**
- 12) Transportation museums**

Transportation Enhancement Activities

- Administered by State DOTs. Each State has its own project application and selection process.
- States requirements may be stricter than the Federal requirements.
- States are encouraged to use [Youth Corps](#).
- Program info: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te.
- The **National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC)** has project examples and State contacts: www.enhancements.org.

How does TE project funding work?

- Project sponsors apply to their State DOT.
- Project sizes vary in each State: some have minimum and/or maximum amounts.
- Reimbursable cost share program (not up-front except for case-by-case working capital basis):
 - 23 U.S.C. 132 allows up-front transfers to Federal agencies.
 - 23 U.S.C. 133(e)(3) has an advance payment option.
- In general: 80% Federal share / sliding scale, with some flexibility (23 U.S.C. 133(e)(5)(C)).

TE Project Examples

Rail-trails: Osage Prairie Trail,
Tulsa OK



Canal Parks: Canal Boats in the
Turning Basin, Richmond VA



Riverwalks: Tennessee
Riverwalk, Chattanooga TN



TE Project Examples

Rail-trails *and* canal trails:
Farmington Canal Linear Park,
Cheshire CT.
(Cheshire Historical Society)



Trails and Wildlife Corridors:
Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife
Corridor, Mountain View, CA

See more examples at
www.enhancements.org.



Some TE Issues

- **TE projects must *relate to surface transportation*.**
- General park projects (parkland acquisition, sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, general park amenities, etc.) are **not eligible**.
- TE projects must meet [accessibility requirements](#).
- **Project sponsors must include various interest groups in the planning and project development process:** equestrians and other trail users, historic preservation advocates, etc.
- Nothing in Federal law or regulation requires trails to be paved.
- Nothing in Federal law or regulation prohibits [equestrian](#) use.
- FHWA developed a [Framework for Considering Motorized Use on Nonmotorized Trails](#).
- USDOT encourages States to use [Youth Corps](#) on TE projects, but few States use them.

Using Federal Funds

- If you use Federal funds, there are Federal requirements.
- Highway requirements: Competitive bidding, prevailing rate of wage, engineered designs, safety.
- Environmental: NEPA; archaeological, cultural, and historic; nondiscrimination; endangered species; public involvement; watersheds and wetlands, etc.
- Planning requirements: Statewide and metropolitan transportation improvement programs.

Recreational Trails Program

- Funds to develop and maintain recreational trails for **all** trail uses.
 - Only FHWA program to support routine maintenance
- Rose from \$60 m in FY 2005 to \$85 m in FY 2009.
- Funds distributed by formula to States: see www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/recfunds.htm.
- Represents a portion of the Federal motor fuel excise tax paid by OHV users.
- States solicit and select projects for funding.
- States are encouraged to use [Youth Corps](#).
- See www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails.

RTP Eligible Projects

- Maintain and restore existing trails (and bridges).
- Develop and rehabilitate trailside and trailhead facilities.
- Purchase and lease trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Construct new trails (limits on Federal lands).
- Acquire easements or property for trails (willing seller only: **Condemnation is prohibited**).
- Trail assessments for accessibility and maintenance.
- Trail safety and environmental protection education.
- State administrative costs.

RTP Partnerships

- Each State has a State Trail Committee to assist with the program.
- Committees represent both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail users.
- The committees help trail groups cooperate and communicate with each other.
- Partnerships lead to better projects, and better maintained trails.

RTP Partnerships



Through the RTP, FHWA works with:

- Federal Interagency Council on Trails.
- National Trails Training Partnership to develop trail training: www.NTTP.net.
- Federal Interagency trail training course.
- National Trails Day – first Saturday of June: see www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd/index.html.
- [National Scenic and Historic Trails](#).
- US Forest Service Technology and Development Centers to provide trail publications to the public: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs/index.htm.

RTP Partnerships



- National conferences for trail organizations.
- US Access Board, US Forest Service, and others to develop trail accessibility guidelines: see www.access-board.gov/outdoor/outdoor-rec-rpt.htm and www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/.
- OHV, Mountain Bike, and Equestrian groups to develop trail design and management manuals.
- [Snowmobile](#) and [OHV](#) safety and [ethics](#) information.
- Coalition for Recreational Trails for the RTP Database: www.funoutdoors.info/rtp/home.html.

RTP Project Examples

High Bridge Park, New York City: Inner-city kids benefit the most from this urban mountain bike trail.



Boundary Canal Trail, Palm Bay FL, part of the South Brevard Linear Trail plan, a 22-mile multi-use path through the southeastern end of the county.



RTP Project Examples

Urban Off Highway Vehicle

Park: River Valley OHV Park,
Council Bluffs IA, across the
Missouri River from Omaha NE,
off US 275.



Busy parking lot!

River Valley Trail Riders

Council Bluffs IA.

www.rivervalleytrailriders.com/



RTP Project Examples

Oregon integrates recreational trails and transportation facilities: Portland Esplanade



Trails connect parks and recreation in urban cores: MKT Trail, Columbia MO



Who can sponsor a project?

- Federal agencies (restrictions in a few States)
- Tribal government agencies
- State agencies
- Local agencies: county, city, town, township, borough, school, water/sewer district, etc.
- Nonprofit organizations (many States)
- For profit organizations (a few States)
- Project sponsors are encouraged to use qualified youth conservation or service corps.

How does project funding work?

- Project sponsors apply to their State.
- Project sizes vary in each State: some have minimum and/or maximum amounts.
- Reimbursable cost share program (not up-front except for case-by-case working capital basis). **23 U.S.C. 132** allows up-front transfers to Federal agencies.
- In general: 80% Federal share / sliding scale.
 - Flexibilities for Federal agency project sponsors.
 - RTP may match / be matched by other Federal funds.

How do I get funds for my project?

- Contact your State RTP or TE Administrator: see www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm or www.enhancements.org.
- Develop a workable, realistic project.
- Get public support.
- Develop funding sources and donations.
- Consider youth corps involvement.
- [Youth Corps](http://www.corpsnetwork.org): Seek project sponsors. See www.corpsnetwork.org / Policy / Transportation.
- Develop a good design: consider the trail setting, community benefits, user needs, and accessibility.

How do I get funds for my project?

- **Consider potential problems:**
 - Environmental impacts: wetlands, endangered species, archaeological impacts, etc.
 - Permits
 - Public opposition: liability, property rights, safety, environmental impact.
- Complete the project application **completely**.
- If approved, **get to work!**
- Submit an invoice if you want to get paid!

Federal Highway Program Update

The Federal Surface Transportation Program has been extended in FY 2010. FHWA is considering input for its longer-term authorization proposal.

- National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission: www.transportationfortomorrow.org/.
- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee: <http://transportation.house.gov>.
- State DOTs; Highway Users; Transit; Rail
- Federal Land Management Agencies
- Other Interests: air quality, bicyclists, climate change, ecosystems, environment, freight, trails, wetlands, wildlife...
- RTP: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/authideas09.htm
- TE: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/authideas09.htm

For more information:

- State RTP Administrator contacts: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm.
- State TE Manager contacts: www.enhancements.org.
- National RTP and TE oversight:
Christopher Douwes
Trails and Enhancements Program Manager
christopher.douwes@dot.gov
202-366-5013; fax 202-366-3409



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

