

# 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 trails, and trail-related projects in the United States:
  - \$400 - \$600 million/year for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and programs. FY 2009: \$1.189 billion, FY 2010: \$1.0 billion.
  - About \$250 to \$300 million/year for obligated for trails, including \$70 million/year for recreational trails. (FY 2009 and FY 2010 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 Byways*<sup>TM</sup>
- Discretionary program rises from \$26.5 m in FY 2005 to \$43.5 m in FY 2009 and 2010.
- Funds for designated byways.
- Program info, see [www.bywaysonline.org](http://www.bywaysonline.org)
- Traveler info, see [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)

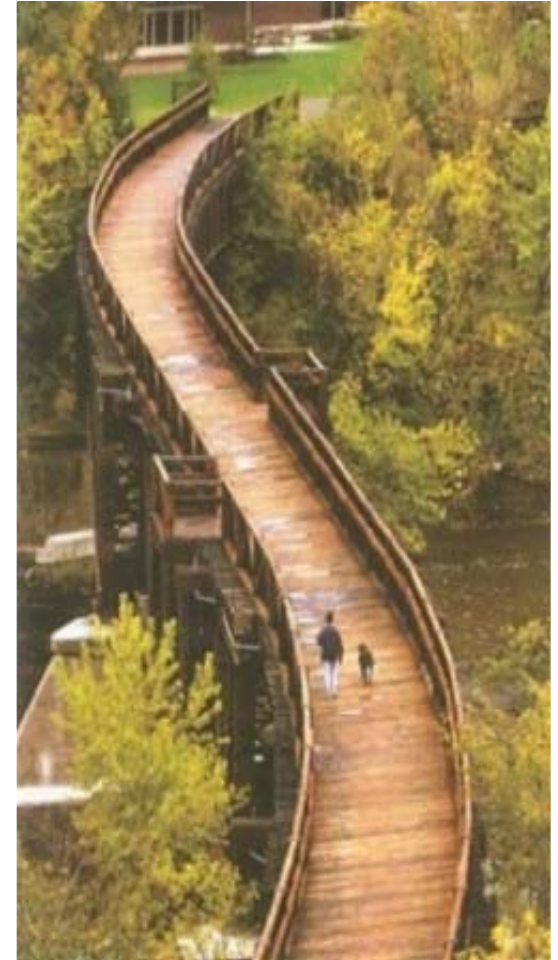


# Eligible Scenic Byways Projects

- 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 (2005-2010).



# 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](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te).
- The **National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC)** has project examples and State contacts: [www.enhancements.org](http://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



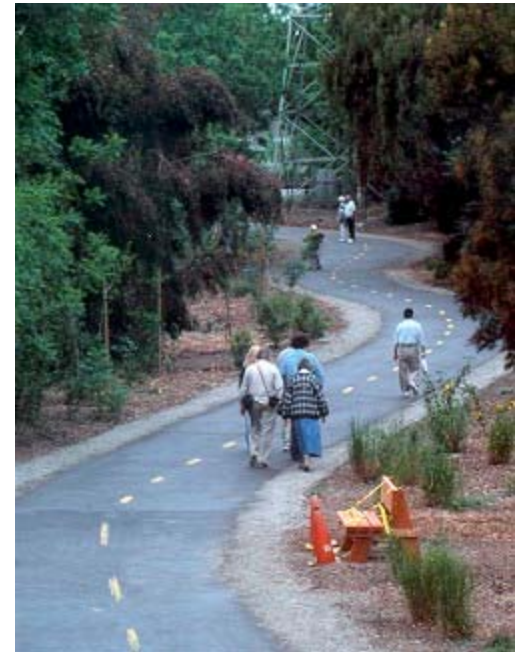
# TE Project Examples

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](http://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
- From \$60 m in FY 2005 to \$85 m in FY 2009 & 2010.
- Funds distributed by formula to States: see [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/recfunds.htm](http://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](http://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](http://www.NTTP.net).
- Federal Interagency trail training course.
- National Trails Day – first Saturday of June: see [www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd/index.html](http://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](http://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](http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/outdoor-rec-rpt.htm) and [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/](http://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/rtphome.html](http://www.funoutdoors.info/rtphome.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/](http://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](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm) or [www.enhancements.org](http://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](http://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 to December 2010. The USDOT is considering input for its longer-term authorization proposal.

- National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission: [www.transportationfortomorrow.org/](http://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](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/authideas09.htm)
- TE: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/authideas09.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/authideas09.htm)

# For more information:

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



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

