

Activity #5: Outdoor Advertising Management

The federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) program funds 10 different types of transportation-related activities. The Control and removal of outdoor advertising activity allows communities to preserve the scenic character of their roads by tracking and removing illegal billboards. Since the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program began in 1992, less than 1 percent of TE/TA funds have been programmed for Control and removal of outdoor advertising projects.

Eligible Projects

Working within Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, each state Department of Transportation (DOT) and Transportation Management Areas (TMA) determines the eligibility of TA projects for funding. Examples of projects that may be considered eligible include:

- Billboard inventories, including those done with GIS/GPS;
- Removal of illegal and non-conforming billboards.

Non-conforming signs are those signs that were lawfully erected but do not now comply with the Highway Beautification Act of 1965.

Examples of Successful Projects

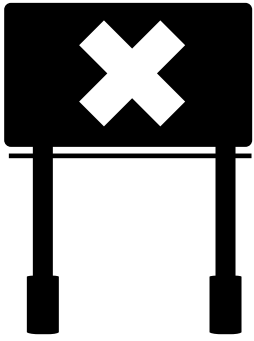


Gold Belt Scenic Byway Sign Resolution, Colorado. Gold Belt Scenic Byway Sign Resolution, Colorado. A task force was formed to address billboard blight along the scenic byway located on US 50 near Canyon City. After two years of hard work, \$352,000 in TE funds and a \$88,000 local match, more than 20 billboards were removed. The community and visitors have benefited from the project. Businesses have not reported any lost profits while visitors agree that

the Gold Belt Scenic Byway is a more enjoyable and eye-pleasing journey since the removal project was completed. Contact: Ronald Scott, Colorado DOT, 303-757-9840.

Billboard Control and Removal Program, Oklahoma. Billboard Control and Removal Program, Oklahoma. Oklahoma committed \$1 million in TE funds to assist in the regulation and enforcement of the Highway Beautification Act, a law intended to preserve the scenic character of federal-aid highways. The primary goal of the program was to create an inventory of billboards throughout the state that could be used to track illegal billboards. The program has resulted in the removal of several thousand illegal signs, thereby improving the scenic enjoyment of the traveling public. Contact: TE manager, Oklahoma DOT, 405-521-2454.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/project_examples for additional project examples.



Federal Guidance

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Projects that use TA funds must qualify as one or more of the 10 designated activities and be related to surface transportation in order to meet basic federal eligibility requirements. Since this activity may involve the acquisition of real property, federal guidelines must be followed in addition to any state regulations. All property acquisitions involving the use of federal financial assistance must comply with The Uniform Act. Title III of the Uniform Act applies to the acquisition and removal of nonconforming signs. It requires that to the greatest extent practicable under state law, property acquired in connection with a federally-funded project must be appraised and the owner must be made an offer not less than the appraised value. Thus, in most cases, sign and site owners are entitled to just compensation for their property. In addition, the FHWA TE guidance under SAFETEA-LU stipulates that effective controls must be in place to prohibit new signs from being erected where those removed with federal-aid were located.

Visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/TE for a full copy of the FHWA TE Guidance under SAFETEA-LU and <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm> for a full copy of the FHWA TA Guidance.

Project Funding

Most states require TA project sponsors to provide at least 20 percent of project costs, also referred to as matching funds. In many states, the value of donated property, materials and services, the labor of state and local government employees, and the costs of preliminary engineering may count towards the matching requirement. Federal, non-DOT funds can often be used as matching funds. Check with your state TA manager whether these innovative financing options are available in your state. Additional funds for this activity may come from local and state governments or other federal sources.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/funding_sources for more suggestions on potential funding sources.

Related Resources

- Scenic America: www.scenic.org or 202-638-0550
- FHWA Outdoor Advertising Control History and Overview: www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/out_ad.htm
- National Alliance of Highway Beautification Agencies: www.nahba.org

To Get Started

Inquiries about the TA application process should be directed to the TA manager at your state DOT. Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/contacts for TA manager contact information.