

Activity #7: Vegetation Management

The federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) program funds 10 different types of transportation-related activities. Through the Vegetation management activity, communities improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control along transportation corridors. Since the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program began in 1992, approximately 17 percent of available funds have been programmed for landscaping and other vegetation management projects.

Eligible Projects

Working within Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, each state Department of Transportation (DOT) determines the eligibility of TA projects for funding. Examples of projects that may be considered eligible include improvements along streets, historic highways, trails and interstates, waterfronts, and gateways such as:

- Clearing of low-hanging branches or other vegetation encroaching on a travel corridor;
- Landscaping to improve sightlines or other safety considerations;
- Removal of invasive species;
- Planting grasses or wildflowers to manage erosion along transportation corridors.

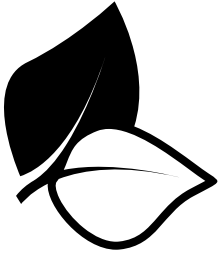
Funds apportioned through MAP-21 (effective October 1, 2012) cannot be used for scenic beautification projects; these projects may still be eligible using funds apportioned in previous years through SAFETEA-LU.

Examples of Successful Projects



A Greener Welcome, Indiana. The 2010 Lilly Global Day of Service focused on the six-mile I-70 corridor running from the airport through downtown Indianapolis. Coordinated by Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIBI), a local nonprofit, worked with the city of Indianapolis, the Indiana Department of Transportation, community leaders, neighborhood groups, and the private sector to coordinate a master planning process for the corridor. Over 8,000 Lilly

employees added 100% native plants, trees and other low-maintenance vegetation, funded by a TE grant. The project removed 18 acres from the Indiana DOT maintenance schedule. Scenic contributions including totem poles and lotus leaf sculptures were funded by other grants and private contributions. Contact: Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc., 317-264-7555.



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Examples of Successful Projects

Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management, Iowa. The IRVM Office is funded by the Iowa DOT's Living Roadway Trust Fund and located at the University of Northern Iowa. Since 1998, the IRVM Program Office has applied for and received federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to purchase native seed for right-of-way plantings. To date, over 12,000 acres of Iowa county roadside rights-of-way have been seeded with prairie grasses and wildflowers. These plantings are well-adapted for use on road-sides: providing low-maintenance weed and erosion control, reducing surface runoff and erosion by improving infiltration, reducing snow drifting and winter glare, ensuring sustainability by increasing species diversity, enhancing wildlife habitat, and preserving Iowa's natural heritage.



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

Federal Guidance

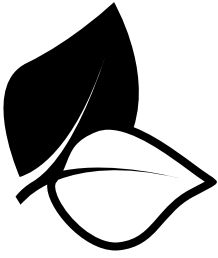
Projects that use TA funds must qualify as one or more of the 10 designated activities and be related to surface transportation in order to meet basic federal eligibility requirements. Under SAFETEA-LU, this category contained a much broader definition of landscaping and allowed for scenic beautification projects as well. These projects are still eligible for funds apportioned under SAFETEA-LU, but are ineligible under MAP-21 (effective October 1, 2012).

Visit <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 state agencies, local governments, foundations, nonprofit organizations or other federal agencies.

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



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Related Resources

- Federal Highway Administration, Department of Vegetation Management: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/vegmgt/
- National Main Street Center: www.mainst.org or 202-588-6219
- International Downtown Alliance: www.ida-downtown.org or 202-393-68013
- American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org or 202-898-2444

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.