TE Projects—Gateways to Success

Certain Transportation Enhancements (TE) projects such as paths or bridges provide a physical link between travel destinations. But they can also serve a greater purpose, creating gateways to community projects tied to broad missions such as public education or environmental preservation. For example, a historically accurate covered bridge in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, acts as the main entrance to “Old Salem,” a re-created colonial town and living history museum. The bridge provides both a physical and conceptual link, introducing visitors to local history.

TE projects receive, on average, $340,000 in federal funds, a small amount relative to traditional transportation projects. As gateways, however, TE projects contribute much more than their small cost suggests. Although some TE projects are stand-alone, the gateway projects featured below are all part of larger, multifaceted community initiatives that draw from a host of funding sources. These TE projects help leverage other private or public funds, yielding high levels of investment in small communities. Read on to discover how TE funds helped the city of Redding, California to attract an extraordinary investment of $23.5 million in private funds to the community.

Such TE projects contribute to long term economic growth in communities. Each project featured below is part of a complex of attractions such as trails, exploration parks, and museums, where tourists and visitors explore and learn. With so much to offer, these gateways will keep communities thriving into the future. When a TE award is used to fulfill a community’s greater vision for itself, it doesn’t seem so small after all.

Sacramento River Sundial Bridge – Connecting Habitat

Redding, California, once known as a stopping point along Interstate-5 for travelers on their way to destinations like Mount Lassen or Lake Shasta, is now a destination in its own right. Visitors come to Redding, located on the scenic Sacramento River, to view the new Sundial Bridge, enjoy the activities of the Turtle Bay Exploration Park, and explore the city’s vast network of trails.

Much of Redding’s recent attention is focused on the dramatic pedestrian and bicycle bridge soaring above the Sacramento River. Designed by renowned Spanish architect, Santiago Calatrava, the bridge befits the area’s stunning scenery of volcanic mountains, lush forests, and the powerful waterway. Mr. Calatrava designed the 700-foot bridge to span the river without disturbing it to protect the habitat of the river’s endangered Chinook salmon population. Translucent glass panels used to

Continued on page 2
surface the bridge minimize shadows that could disturb the water’s temperatures during the salmon’s spawning season.

The result is a structure that seems to defy gravity. A steeply angled 20-story pylon on the riverbank supports the bridge with numerous steel cables. The pylon also acts as a giant sundial, glowing bright white in the noonday sun.

Since designing the bridge, Santiago Calatrava garnered much attention with his designs of the stadium complex for the 2004 summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, and the PATH Terminal at the World Trade Center site in New York City. These recent accomplishments add to the interest in Redding’s Sundial Bridge as a structure of architectural significance.

The Sundial Bridge is an important component of Redding’s new Turtle Bay Exploration Park, a sprawling 300-acre campus filled with educational activities focused on the interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature. The bridge links portions of the park on opposite banks of the river and connects to the Sacramento River Trail, a 32-mile network of riverside trails.

Three TE awards received by the city of Redding contributed $1.4 million to the construction costs of the bridge. This was roughly the amount required for a standard design pedestrian bridge. The private McConnell Foundation financed the remaining $23.5 million of the bridge’s total cost.

For further information on the Sundial Pedestrian Bridge contact Terry Hanson, City of Redding, (530) 225-4009 or thanson@ci.redding.ca.us.

Old Salem Pedestrian Overpass — Bridge to History

As one of the most authentic and inviting living history museums in the United States, Old Salem, North Carolina, invites visitors to find themselves in another time and place. This National Landmark Historic District hosts nearly half a million visitors each year who come to view the buildings and gardens of the past and experience the daily life of the region’s earliest settlers, the Moravians.

The Moravian settlers arrived in the wilds of North Carolina in 1753 from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and brought with them their particular style of construction which can be seen in the more than 100 surviving
structures throughout the village. Providing a gateway to the historic village is a historically accurate covered bridge constructed in the style of Moravian craftsmen of the early 19th century.

Using $1.3 million in TE funds, the North Carolina Department of Transportation constructed the Burr-arch truss bridge over a heavily traveled four-lane divided highway, providing safe passage between the historic district and museum sites of Old Salem and a visitor’s orientation center and parking facility. The covered bridge, 120 feet in length, was constructed of reclaimed timbers using techniques employed by the early settlers of the region.

Designing a transportation structure sensitive to the community and environment resulted in a bridge with a feel of history that is an object of art and a significant landmark within the community. The bridge stands as a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of the Old Salem.

The bridge was the recipient of a Federal Highway Administration Excellence in Highway Design Award in 2002 for enhancing safety for pedestrians and reducing the need for automobiles inside the historic district. The bridge also received a 2003 Environmental Excellence Award from the Federal Highway Administration.

A nonprofit group, Old Salem, Inc., manages the historic district and sponsored the bridge construction in conjunction with the City of Winston-Salem and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. For further information contact John Larson, Old Salem, Inc., (336) 721-7332.

The Salt River (Rio Salado) once flowed unimpeded through the Sun Valley of Arizona in the vicinity of what is now Phoenix. The Hohokam, a farming people who lived in southern and central Arizona from 1 A.D. to 1450, established an extensive canal network branching from the river and transformed the valley into lush green farmland with thriving villages. The river remained a vital natural resource until shortly after the turn of the 20th century.

In the early 1900s, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation placed dams along the Salt River to create a series of lakes to provide a reliable water supply for the valley. The dams left behind a dry, barren riverbed that became lined with landfills, sand and gravel pits, and industrial areas interspersed with a few older neighborhoods.

The City of Phoenix, together with a host of partners including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, and a citizen’s advisory group joined together with a common goal to transform the landscape and restore the native wetland and riparian habitats that were historically associated with the flowing Salt River.

Native vegetation is a large component of the restoration of the desert habitat with trees grown from seeds gathered from the river bottom. Large areas of cottonwood and willows are planned for the river terraces. Mesquite bosques, historically the most abundant riparian type in the southwest and now considered one of the rarest plant communities in the United States, will be another important component of the restoration efforts.

A ten-mile system of paved trails is planned to provide a way for visitors to learn about the native habitat of the Salt River. There are also plans for a visitor center and staging areas including parking lots, shade structures/overlooks, information kiosks, and outdoor classrooms.

A symbol of progress in the restoration efforts is a recently dedicated TE project, the Rio Salado Central Avenue Gateway. The Central Avenue Gateway is a visitor welcoming area in the heart of the habitat’s living classroom. The Gateway consists of a bicycle and pedestrian plaza landscaped with native vegetation. The plaza provides a large shade structure that opens out toward the river. A local artist created decorative tiles using objects donated by the community to adorn the plaza. The $500,000 TE award contributed towards the Gateway’s total cost of $898,000.

The Gateway is linked to downtown Phoenix with a second TE project that includes 4.5 miles of bike lanes along Central Avenue. The bike lanes also received $500,000 in TE funding. For further information contact Karen Williams, City of Phoenix, Rio Salado Project Coordinator at (602) 262-4717 or kwillia2@ci.phoenix.az.us.

(Photo by Bob Rink, city of Phoenix)
Cambridge University Press published “Ecological Networks and Greenways—Concept, Design, Implementation” (2004), edited by Rob Jongman and Gloria Pungetti. This 340-page book contains sixteen chapters on various aspects of greenway development, implementation, and impact. In all, the book has thirty-three contributors from eight different countries, creating an international perspective on the issue. From the book jacket: “The establishment of ecological networks in Europe and greenways in America has required some of the most advanced applications of the principles of landscape ecology to land-use planning. This book provides a thorough overview of the recent developments in this emerging field, combining the theoretical concepts of landscape ecology with the actual practice of landscape planning and management.” The book can be ordered from www.cambridge.org.

The Maryland State Highway Administration developed an interactive online training program on Section 4(f) requirements. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 is intended to preserve the beauty and integrity of publicly owned parks and recreation areas, waterfowl and wildlife refuges, and historic sites considered to have national, state or local significance. The training program is free and accessible at www.section4f.com.


The Urban Institute released a report entitled “The Public Value of Urban Parks” (2004). The report expresses a new view of parks that goes beyond the traditional value of parks as places of recreation and visual assets to communities. It focuses instead on how policymakers, practitioners and the public can begin to think about parks as valuable contributors to larger urban policy objectives, such as job opportunities, youth development, public health and community building. Visit www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=311011 to download the report.


The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation released a report entitled “Economic Impact of Investing in Bicycle Facilities: A Case Study” (2004). The study, conducted by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education, analyzed the economic impacts of bicycling in the northern Outer Banks region. Researchers found that bicycling activity provides an estimated $60 million annually to the area, and bicycle facilities are an important factor for many tourists in deciding to visit the region. Visit www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle to download the report.

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) published a circular on context-sensitive design. The circular highlights several transportation projects presented in January 2003 at the 82nd annual TRB meeting. The featured projects showcase principles of context-sensitive design, such as public involvement, interagency cooperation and examination of alternatives. Visit http://trb.org/publications/circulars/ec067.pdf to view the circular.

National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse announces the availability of revised editions of the popular TE Fact Sheets. These 2-page resources have been updated for each of the twelve TE project categories and include new information on financing sources for each project type as well as resources that may be useful when pursuing a particular type of TE project. Check www.enhancements.org to download.

CALL FOR PROJECTS
Submit your Transportation Enhancements project for inclusion in a new, updated version of NTEC’s popular publication “Communities Benefit!” This full-color publication will be distributed to thousands of communities across the country. It will include a series of case studies that demonstrate the benefits TE projects provide to local communities. Benefits may be social, economic, environmental, transportation-related or health-related, and will preferably be quantified. Contact NTEC or visit www.enhancements.org/benefits.asp to submit project information by November 1st, 2004.
Portland, Oregon
Pedestrians and bicyclists can now safely cross I-205 in downtown Portland, Ore., thanks to a $1.1 million Transportation Enhancements award. The award funded the construction of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the intersection of I-205 and Powell Boulevard, one of the most dangerous intersections in Portland. The Oregon DOT used funds from the state’s “Small Scale Urban Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Program” as the local match for the project. [The Oregonian, 6/3/04]

Santa Cruz, California
Drivers along Highway 1 near Santa Cruz, Calif., can enjoy scenic views of undeveloped coastal woodlands thanks to $5.7 million in Transportation Enhancements funds. Purchase of the 289-acre scenic land area, known as the Buena Vista property, was brokered by the Trust for Public Land and the California Wildlife Conservation Board. The property adds to the California Department of Fish and Game’s Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander State Ecological Reserve. [Santa Cruz Sentinel, 6/12/04]

Easthampton, Massachusetts
Residents of Easthampton, Mass., celebrated the opening of the brand-new Manhan Rail-Trail, financed with approximately $3 million in Transportation Enhancements funds. The 4.5 mile stretch of trail winds past historic buildings and scenic areas such as the Nashawannuck Pond and Mount Tom. The trail is the first link in a plan for a regional trail network. [The Republican, 6/20/04]

Paris, Kentucky
The historic Duncan Tavern recently reopened after four years of renovation. The elegant structure began serving travelers as early as 1788 and has been a center of community in Paris, Ken., since that time. The Kentucky chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution used three Transportation Enhancements awards totaling $425,000 to renovate the aging building. [Lexington Herald-Leader, 6/12/04]

San Bernardino, California
After many years of renovation, the historic Santa Fe Depot opened its doors this summer. Originally constructed in 1916 by the Santa Fe Railroad to serve as a gateway to southern California, the grand “Mission Revival” style depot fell into disrepair with the decline of the railroad industry. The city of San Bernardino and the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) worked together to restore the depot with the help of $8.1 million in Transportation Enhancements funds. Today, it serves Metrolink, a commuter rail service, and houses the offices of SANBAG, Amtrak and Metrolink. [Press-Enterprise, 6/10/04]

On July 22 Congress passed an extension that would fund the federal-aid highway program through September 24th, 2004. Prior to adjourning for the August recess, Senate conferees made an offer to reauthorize the six-year surface transportation legislation at a level of $301 billion, including $289 in guaranteed funding and $12 billion in unused contract authority from prior bills. The House delegation made a counter-proposal of $299 billion, including $284 billion in guaranteed funding and $15 billion in unused contract authority. Conferees will continue to deliberate after the recess.

Advocacy organizations continue to push for increased funding for bike and pedestrian projects in the new transportation bill. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy recently launched a campaign entitled “Our 2 Cents: Six Programs That Fit the Bill.” The campaign highlights bicycle and pedestrian elements of the House and Senate bills which, when combined, amount to $5.8 billion, or two percent of the overall proposed spending. The programs highlighted include: Transportation Enhancements for $2.6 billion, the Recreational Trails Program for $503 million, the Safe Routes to School program for $1 billion, the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program for $145 million, the Fair Share for Safety program at $850 million, and bicycle and pedestrian-related High Priority projects for $719 million.
OCTOBER
WALK-TO-SCHOOL DAY
October 6, 2004 • Nationwide
www.walktoschool-usa.org

NATIONAL TRAILS SYMPOSIUM
October 21–24, 2004 • Austin, Texas
www.americantrails.org

NATIONAL LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE
October 28 – 31, 2004 • Providence, Rhode Island
www.lta.org

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO
October 29 – November 2, 2004 • Salt Lake City, Utah
www.asla.org

NOVEMBER
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES CONGRESS & EXPO
November 30 – December 4, 2004 • Indianapolis, Indiana
www.nlc.org

COMING IN 2005
TRAILLINK 2005
July 27 – 30, 2005 • Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota
www.railtrails.org

FAREWELL TO NTEC MANAGER

After 3 years of dedicated service to NTEC, Elizabeth Parr has moved on to a new career in real estate development. Her duties are now shared by NTEC co-coordinators Ryan Greene-Roesel and Susanne Fogt. Susanne comes to NTEC from the Sustainable Enterprise Program of the World Resources Institute. Welcome Susanne!

Connections is a quarterly publication of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. Submission of articles as well as letters and other comments are welcome.

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