New Guide to Enhancing America’s Communities Published

TEC has published an updated guide to Transportation Enhancements (TE) entitled Enhancing America’s Communities: A Guide to Transportation Enhancements. The guide focuses on 15 excellent examples of TE projects from around the nation. Projects range in size from a $21 million award for scenic preservation along the California Coast to a $14,000 award funding archeological research into the early transportation system of Western North Carolina. The case studies cover eleven of the twelve TE categories.

The featured projects show innovative funding solutions, the impact of community participation, placemaking, and perseverance. The case studies create a vivid image of the program that reflects the over 20,000 TE projects on the ground nationwide. These case studies show the value of investing in communities through the TE program.

The guide introduces readers to an overview of TE, the history of the program, funding sources for the program, and the federal eligibility requirements for a

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A trolley still in service for the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum. The Museum used a $475,000 award to help build a new trolley display building to house its collection of over 30 historical trolleys.

The Historic Goddard Bridge in Goddard, Kentucky, is of a style patented in 1820 and one of only 4 covered bridges that remain open to traffic in Kentucky. It is the star attraction at the County Covered Bridge Festival that brings in $50,000 annually.

The Snohomish Riverfront Trail in Snohomish, Washington replaced a trail damaged by a flood in 1995. Six months after the new trail was completed it was again tested by record floods in the fall of 2006. This time the engineered trail triumphed.

The Long Leaf Trace is a 40 mile trail that links Hattiesburg to Prentiss, Mississippi. It follows the abandoned Illinois Central Gulf railroad corridor.

project to receive an award. NTEC updated the guide to reflect changes enacted in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in August 2005.

NTEC knows that Transportation Enhancements are essential to changing and improving communities across the nation in big and small ways. Enhancing America’s Communities emphasizes these community improvements in an engaging style that connects with both the casual reader and TE professional. This guide tells the TE story at three levels: through browsing the photos and titles, through the blurbs and bullets, and through the details in the text.

The projects truly represent a cross-section of the nation. Located in 12 states, the projects represent a diversity of enhancement activities, scale, and urban and rural projects. For example, the Snohomish Riverfront Trail in Washington State creates a community amenity in a sensitive environmental location by means of careful engineering and planning. In addition to creating a new transportation link for the community, the new trail design at the edge of the river was recently tested by record floods only six months after being completed. The trail design was remarkably resilient in resisting damage from the flood.

This guide provides the public with an overview of TE to help individuals connect projects with TE funding and is an excellent resource for public officials to learn about TE funding for their communities. TE project are developed by local municipalities or community groups who partner with local agencies. The more those communities understand TE resources, the more communities benefit.

The guide is available free of charge in both hard copy and as a download from the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. www.enhancements.org.
TEXAS

Texas has suspended its TE program through 2009 and informed more than 300 pending award applicants that TxDOT has no money for the program. According to the Houston Chronicle, the state made the decision last fall after the Texas Department of Transportation learned it would not receive $305 million in federal funding because of Congressional rescissions. To make up the difference, the state decided not to fund the enhancement program, worth $450 million over the current highway act’s five-year lifespan. The Transportation Department had already committed $184 million to previously approved projects but plans to let the federal government keep the remaining $266 million. The Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Ric Williamson has said that the reason for the cut is so that the agency would not have to divert money from its core mission of congestion relief in the face of cuts to federal highway spending.

While all states have been saddled with reductions to their federal highway funding, Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said Texas is the only state in the country that has responded by significantly reducing its Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program. He has asked the National Trust for Historic Preservation members to write to Texas Governor Rick Perry to decry what he describes as a "very bad and ill informed move." Moe also writes "we think it seriously undermines the congressional intent of this program." [The Houston Chronicle, March 4, 2007]

The Texas Bicycle Coalition recently issued a public call to action in response to TxDOT’s decision to cut the state’s Transportation Enhancement funding. On November 20, TxDOT rescinded its call for Transportation Enhancement proposals. State funding for the popular, bike-oriented Safe Routes to School Program has also been rescinded. [The Austin Chronicle, December 29, 2006]

“I see this as threatening the Heritage Trails Program across the state. It’s a tremendous blow to tourism in Texas” said Dr. Robert Wetteleman in response to TxDOT canceling the TE program in the state. Dr. Wetteleman is director of McMurtry University’s Public History program and president of the Forts Trail Board of Directors. The cancellation of funding is having immediate impacts on at least three Forts Trail cities, with the greatest impact being the loss of a $4 million award for a visitor center to house historical artifacts found at Fort Chadbourne south of Abilene on U.S. 277. [Abilene Reporter-News, December 5, 2006]

BILLINGS, MONTANA

Two bicycle and walking trails were dedicated as part of the emerging Heritage Trail that will eventually run through the city of Billings. A half-mile section of the Stewart Park Trail and a quarter-mile section of the Big Ditch Trail were dedicated with ribbon-cuttings at the sandstone monuments that marked the new section of each trail. The trail additions allow schoolchildren a safe route to travel to nearby Arrowhead School through an underpass beneath a busy road. Together, the trails received over $900,000 in TE awards. [Billings Gazette, December 6, 2006]

BUTTERMILK FALLS, PENNSYLVANIA

A new, multi-use trail was completed and opened on a former railroad in Pennsylvania’s Armstrong County. Following the Cowanshannock Creek, the 1.3-mile Cowanshannock Trail runs from Rayburn to Buttermilk Falls along the former Pennsylvania Railroad bed. The trail connects to the longer Armstrong Trail and provides access to the Allegheny River. This new trail connection between Erie and Washington D.C. is expected to attract many visitors to the region. The Pennsylvania Railroad company used this corridor to transport coal mined by the Kittanning Iron and Steel Manufacturing company. European laborers who came to work for these companies populated the village of Buttermilk. Signs from the railroad are still visible along the trail, which received $319,000 through TE funds. [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, December 19, 2006]

PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA

Over a decade of hard work paid off with the opening of the Princeton Railroad Museum. The museum commemorates the history of the Virginia Railway/Norfolk & Western Railroad/Norfolk Southern Corporation’s relation to Princeton, which began in 1908. The grand opening ceremony was part of the first-ever Princeton AutumnFest, and featured U.S. Representative Nick J. Rahall as well as Princeton Mayor Dewey Russell, both of whom were involved with efforts towards constructing the museum. The project received over $225,000 in TE funding. [Bluefield Daily Telegraph, December 29, 2006]

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Twin pedestrian bridges officially opened in Cleveland, with a ceremony that included a free-flying Peregrine falcon soaring from its handler’s gloved hand toward the 65-foot-high towers of one of the trails. The two bridges were created to carry hikers and cyclists on the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail safely over two busy highways. The bridges are 580-foot-long cable-stayed tubular steel structures, and were paid for with $1,600,000 of TE funds coupled with money from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails program and Cleveland Metroparks. Hiking club members, cycling associations, and members of a mother’s club that push their strollers on the trail were invited to the opening ceremony, along with contractors, local mayors, and other dignitaries. [Sun News, November 9, 2006]

SONOITA, ARIZONA

The Southeast Arizona Land Trust helped preserve 75 acres of historic ranch land through a conservation easement. The land is part of the Barchas family’s High Haven Ranch, a working cattle ranch for more than fifty years. The property lies within a vulnerable watershed area for a creek that supports aquatic life habitat that allows for rare fish to survive. The land also provides space for wildlife movement between the creek and a nearby national forest. The effort to preserve the land took ten years to complete, and involved $552,000 in TE funds. [Nogales International, November 20, 2006]
The Southern Canandaigua Lake Scenic Overlook, or as it is known locally the South Bristol Overlook, uses a TE award to make the view over Canandaigua Lake more accessible to the public. It is a natural stopping point for the many tourists in the region to pause and take in the view. It provides a window into the community and the history of region. Additionally, it makes what was an unimproved pull off into a place worthy of the view from it.

The Need for a Scenic Overlook

In South Bristol it was customary to see vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians using the shoulder along county road 12 to take in the breathtaking view of Canandaigua Lake and the surrounding hills. While the narrow shoulder presented a place to enjoy the view, the use of the shoulder as an unpaved overlook presented a safety hazard to both the viewers and to the average of 1,600 vehicles that use the road every day. When the town of South Bristol received a call for TE project submissions from New York State’s Department of Transportation in 2002, the town took notice.

The application used the TE award to pay for the design and engineering needs of the project while South Bristol provided labor and material as an in-kind match. South Bristol received a TE award of $80,165 that covered about half of the total project costs. The project’s scope called for more than doubling the pull off area from the unpaved 120 foot by 50 foot wide spot in the road to a 210 foot by 60 foot parking area with a 20 foot wide observation deck containing picnic tables, benches, and local information for visitors.

Planned by the Town Highway Department

The South Bristol Highway Department and superintendent did the majority of the design and construction for the overlook, and continues to be responsible for ongoing maintenance. A Rochester firm performed the engineering work. Local businesses and individuals researched the history of the site and the view, installed signs, and did landscaping. When completed the total project cost came to $159,625.

The scenic overlook took approximately two years to complete and was dedicated in June 2005. The opening of the overlook has translated to improved safety for visitors. Instead of stopping on the shoulder motorists can now pull into the improved overlook. The South Bristol Overlook is now also a tourist destination that is featured prominently in the Ontario County Tourism Board’s brochure. Visitors to the region can now enjoy the fall colors in safety from the overlook.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATHLEEN DUEL
IN FY 2006, THREE APPROPRIATIONS ACTS REQUIRED STATES TO RESCIND FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROGRAM FUNDS. FHWA NOTIFIED THE STATES OF THESE RESCISSIONS THROUGH NOTICES N 4510.578, N 4510.588, AND N 4510.606 (www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices.htm). The Congress directed FHWA to provide each state flexibility to choose how to rescind funds. The chart to the left compiles the states’ rescissions for all Federal-aid funds in FY 2006, and shows how much and what percent came from TE. This chart summarizes the responses for all three rescission notices in FY 2006, regardless of the fiscal year from which the funds were rescinded.

FHWA issued the FY 2007 rescission notice on March 19, 2007 (www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices/n4510643.htm). The Congress again directed FHWA to provide each state flexibility to choose how to rescind funds. The chart to the left compiles the states’ rescissions for all Federal-aid funds in FY 2007, and shows how much and what percent came from TE.

### CONFERENCE SCHEDULE • SAVE THE DATE

**APRIL**
- **AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE**
  - www.planning.org/2007conference

**MAY**
- **NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS CONFERENCE**
  - May 20–23, 2007 • Baltimore, Maryland
  - www.bywaysonline.org

**JUNE**
- **NATIONAL TRAILS DAY**
  - June 2, 2007
  - www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd/index.html
- **VELO CITY INTL BICYCLE CONFERENCE**
  - June 12–15, 2007 • Munich, Germany

**AUGUST**
- **TRAILLINK 2007**
  - August 8–10, 2007 • Portland, Oregon
  - www.railstotrails.org

**OCTOBER**
- **ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
  - October 1–5, 2007 • Little Rock, Arkansas
  - www.ampo.org
- **NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE**
  - October 2–6, 2007 • St. Paul, Minnesota
  - www.nthpconference.org
The Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP) has released two reports on federal transportation law. The first report, entitled *The Guidebook — A Guide to Transportation Opportunities in Your Community* provides information on how federal law can be used to support local and statewide efforts in transportation and livable communities. The second report, entitled *Using the Federal Transportation Law to Meeting the Mobility Needs of your Community: Report on Workshop Discussions, Findings, and Next Steps* describes key findings from the various workshops that STPP and its partners held between January 2006 and June 2006. To read both of these reports, please visit STPP’s website at www.transact.org/.

The Access Board developed a four-part series, *Accessible Sidewalks*, that illustrates access issues and considerations. The DVD contains: Part I: Design Issues for Pedestrians Who Use Wheelchairs (10 min.), Part II: Design Issues for Pedestrians with Ambulatory Impairments (8 min.), Part III: Design Issues for Pedestrians with Low Vision (11 min.), and Part IV: Design Issues for Pedestrians Who Are Blind (11 min.). To order a copy, send a request for the *Accessible Sidewalks* DVD to pubs@access-board.gov or call (202) 272-0011.

The U.S. Green Building Council, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the Natural Resources Defense Council — three organizations that represent design professionals, builders, planners, developers, and the environmental community — have come together to develop **LEED for Neighborhood Development**, a rating system that will integrate the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into the first national standard for neighborhood design. See www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148.