During the 112th Congress, both houses considered legislation to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs. Since the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) expired in 2009, a series of extensions have kept surface transportation programs, including the Transportation Enhancements program, operational. The current extension will expire March 31, 2012.

By a 74-22 vote, the Senate approved its two-year reauthorization bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (S. 1813; MAP-21), on March 14th. The House will now consider that bill.

The House will now consider the Senate bill. Earlier this year, however, the House considered its own reauthorization bill. Representative John Mica (R-FL), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, introduced the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (H.R. 7) on January 31, 2012. The five-year authorization bill included some significant changes to pedestrian and bicycle programs. Transportation Enhancement activities remained eligible under the Surface Transportation Program, but no longer had a 10-percent set-aside of apportioned funds. The bill also removed eligibility from several TE activities:

- acquisition of scenic or historic easements, including battlefields;
- historic preservation;
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation facilities;
- preservation of abandoned railway corridors; and
- the establishment of transportation museums.

Rep. Thomas Petri (R-WI), Timothy Johnson (R-IL), Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) offered an amendment in committee that would have consolidated the Safe Routes to School program (which was eliminated in the bill) with Transportation Enhancements; provided dedicated funding for TE and flexibility for states to determine the source of reserved funds for the programs; and restored the eligibility of rail-trails, acquisition of scenic or historic easements, and rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation facilities. In a 29-27 committee vote on February 2nd, the amendment was defeated.

The House bill was passed by the Transportation and Infrastructure committee on February 3rd, and the amendment filed for consideration on the House floor with co-sponsors expanded to include Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Steven LaTourette (R-OH), and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX). However, a number of issues with the House bill have produced limited support for the bill as it stands, and therefore the House Speaker had not, as of the Senate vote, brought the bill to a floor vote. Instead, he has indicated it is likely the House will consider the Senate bill.
Plains, Georgia, famous as the hometown of President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter, has an improved pedestrian area for residents and thousands of yearly visitors to the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site.

The President and his wife were on hand November 26, 2011, to cut the ribbon on the first TE project in Plains, which is located in southwest Georgia and has fewer than 700 residents. The beautification and landscaping project included new sidewalks and brick pavers adjacent to Logan Park, as well as new pedestrian furniture. Ruth Sanders, project manager, remarked that the downtown area now has a more pedestrian-friendly appeal, complete with bench seating, and now is “a great place to sit and enjoy a peanut butter ice cream cone.”

The project received $250,000 in federal TE funding, and the City of Plains was the project sponsor. As with many TE projects, the downtown Plains project involved many players and a few changes for the project to come to fruition.

“First Lady Rosalynn Carter was very involved in selecting the pedestrian lighting that was installed in the park,” said Ms. Sanders. “Elaine Armster, Special Projects Chief at the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT); the TE Project Manager; the Area Engineer; and everyone at GDOT were great to work with. Early into the project, we had to redesign some of the concept to fit our budget, but everyone was helpful in getting the project on track and under budget. It was a proud moment for Plains to have the project ribbon-cutting on the evening of our Christmas Parade and to have President and Mrs. Carter on hand for the celebration.”

In the 20 years since ISTEA, GDOT has successfully managed over 1,100 TE projects throughout the state. A TE Call for Projects is typically held every three years, and local communities are able to request up to $1,000,000 during this period.

Georga DOT’s entirely web-based TE application process (application, review, and project selection) is innovative and unique among state DOTs. Submitted projects are reviewed by a 30-member TE Advisory Panel comprised of subject matter experts; the State Transportation Board makes final selections and awards.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless, and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia’s economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For more information on the TE program at GDOT, please visit www.dot.ga.gov.

---

Announcing the 2012 TE Professional Seminar

**Celebrating 20 Years of Transportation Enhancements**

**July 23-24, 2012**  
Visit the [Seminar Info Page](#)  
**Detroit, MI**

---

**2121 Ward Court, 5th Floor**  
**Washington, DC 20037**

Toll-free Tel: (888) 388-NTEC  
Email: ntec@enhancements.org  
Website: [www.enhancements.org](http://www.enhancements.org)