



TRANSPORTATION
ENHANCEMENTS

FACT
SHEET

ACTIVITY

Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising

The federal Transportation Enhancements (TE) program funds 12 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 TE program began in 1992, less than 1 percent of TE 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) determines the eligibility of TE 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;
- Removal of other off-premise advertising signs on the federal-aid system, if permitted or mandated by state law.

Billboards are defined as off-premise signs that advertise goods and services not found at the site of the signs. 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. 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.

Olympic Boulevard Sign Removal, California. The city of Santa Monica in southern California utilized \$60,000 in TE funds and a \$15,000 local match to remove non-conforming outdoor advertising billboards along Olympic Boulevard on the eastern city limits. Contact: Howard Reynolds, California DOT, 916-654-2477.



A non-conforming billboard in Colorado

Visit www.enhancements.org/examples.asp for additional project examples.

Federal Guidance



Projects that use TE funds must qualify as one or more of the 12 designated activities and relate 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.” (See www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/ua.htm).

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 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 Guidance.

Financing TE Projects



Most states require TE 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 TE manager whether these “innovative financing options” are available in your state. Additional funds for this activity may come from a variety of sources such as local and state governments or other federal programs. Visit www.enhancements.org/fundingsources.asp for links to specific grant programs.

Related Resources



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

To Get Started



Inquiries about the TE application process should be directed to the TE manger at your state DOT. Visit www.enhancements.org/contacts.asp for TE manager contact information.