

TE Corner



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THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER

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City of Salem Buys Bargain Bridge, Converts Structure into Critical Trail Link

Photo Credits: (Left) Virginia Green and (Right) Pat & Chuck Fisher



Before and After: The city of Salem used Transportation Enhancements funds to convert the historic Union Street Bridge into a multi-use path. In April, hundreds of residents participated in the inaugural walk across the bridge.

A dollar can still go a long way. Just ask the city of Salem in Oregon.

The city converted the Union Street Railroad Bridge and its associated timber trestle – which Salem bought from Union Pacific for \$1 – into a bicycle and pedestrian bridge.

The bridge was built across the Willamette River in 1912-13 to connect Salem to the western Willamette Valley. The steel structure spans 722 feet; the timber trestle extends for another 850 feet. At the time of construction, the Willamette River played a critical role in moving goods and people, and the bridge represented a solution to the intersection of rail and river transportation routes. The bridge

design accommodated both water and surface transportation with a lift section in the middle of the bridge that could be raised. The last train crossed the bridge in the early 1990s.

Now the converted structure is a critical half-mile link that connects community, regional, and state bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems. The project improves safety and access, encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation, and promotes healthy forms of exercise. The bridge is book-ended by two large urban parks, Wallace Marine and Riverfront.

In 2003, Category 8 TE funds were awarded, to construct a multi-use pathway on what was then a

soon-to-be-abandoned railroad bridge. The federal TE award of \$2,016,000 was combined with a local match of \$1,383,108.

In 2004, the city of Salem purchased the bridge and its trestle, and began planning the conversion. Construction began in 2008, which included repairing the timber trestle, adding the concrete path, painting the lower portion of the bridge, and installing hand rails and lighting.

The end result was cause for celebration, and the bridge's Grand Opening drew a throng of people – elected officials and Salem residents, from toddlers and teens to retirees – for presentations, the ribbon-cutting, and a parade that led the inaugural trip across the bridge.

Projects Identified for Recovery Act TE Funds



The February economic stimulus bill, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), included approximately \$800 million for states to use on Transportation Enhancement projects. This amount is roughly equivalent to

what Congress allocates for one year for TE projects under the current transportation bill.

The TE program is the single largest source of federal funding for rail-trails but also funds other types of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and projects like protecting scenic vistas, repairing historic transportation structures, and pedestrian and bicycle safety programs.

Unlike TE funds authorized through transportation bills that require at least a 20% local match, these stimulus funds can be used for up to 100% of the cost of a TE project. To help stimulate the economy, states are to give priority to projects in economically distressed communities that can be completed within 3 years. In fact, states only have one year to identify projects and start spending the money. In March 2010, any of these funds that are not obligated to a specific project will be withdrawn and redistributed to other states that have spent all of their funds.

Already several states around the country have identified TE projects for stimulus funds, including:

East Hartford/Manchester, Connecticut

I-84/I-384 Multi-use Trail

ARRA Funds: \$2,000,000

This project will perform necessary repair work on a well utilized multi-use trail, like removing deteriorated asphalt, patching and sealing cracks, and resurfacing approximately 8,000 feet.

Leon County, Florida

Lake Jackson Wildlife Crossing

ARRA Funds: \$3,402,062

This project will construct a permanent, safe path for turtles and other wildlife attempting to cross U.S. Highway 27. Now the highway, which runs across the northwest portion of Lake Jackson, is a virtually impassable barrier for wildlife trying to cross from one side of the lake to the other – resulting in high levels of attempted crossings and wildlife road mortality.

Vestal, New York

Vestal Rail Trail

ARRA Funds: \$1,636,690

This project will extend the multi-use rail trail by nearly a mile, including the construction of a bridge over Choconut Creek. (In April, Gov. David Paterson announced that TE funds will be awarded for this project.)

To learn more about how states are using stimulus funds for TE projects visit <http://www.enhancements.org/recovery.asp> or call the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse at (888) 388-NTEC.

Spending Report Now Available!



Transportation Enhancements: Summary of Nationwide Spending as of FY 2008 provides an overview of how states spent TE funds from fiscal year (FY) 1992 through the end of FY 2008, and looks at

the distribution of these funds across the 12 eligible TE activities.

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