

# CONNECTIONS

THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER  
SPONSORED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4

AUGUST 2000

## Maryland's Anacostia Trail Makes the Connection

By Catherine P. Rice, Maryland State Highway Administration

The Anacostia Trail System is a 24-mile network connecting neighborhoods, amenities and transportation hubs along the Anacostia stream valley in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. The trail provides access to four Metro subway and bus stations, more than 25 parks, a university, airport, and a lake. As the first trail project sponsored by a local group under Maryland's Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP), it is an example of a grassroots effort that set the stage for a network serving many transportation and community needs of a large metropolitan region.

### Project Scope

The project was sponsored by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) of Prince George's County, who owned most of the trail right-of-way, and the Anacostia Headwaters Greenway Task Force, a citizen advocacy group. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) agreed to build a portion of the trail as part of extending sewer service, a contribution counted as the project's local match.

When this project was initiated in 1992, twelve segments of trails existed along the headwaters of the Anacostia River. Once the project was completed, it formed a "Y-shaped" system of trails (see map p. 2). Transportation Enhancements (TE) funds were awarded in two phases totaling \$2.4 million. The first phase connected the existing segments to form a 13-mile continuous route. The second phase completed the northeast branch of the "Y" and the WSSC portion completed the northwest branch of the "Y".

### Grassroots Central to Success

The Anacostia Headwaters Greenway Task Force led the charge for this TE project. Three keys steps taken by the Task Force set the stage for rapid project approval when it was ultimately presented to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).



Roller bladers, bicyclists, and pedestrians enjoy the trail's access to Lake Artemesia. (Photo: M. Betts)

(continued on page 2)



THE ANACOSTIA TRAIL IS MORE THAN A RECREATIONAL FACILITY. PEOPLE USE IT TO GO TO SCHOOL AND TO COMMUTE TO JOBS. THIS TRAIL SERVES THE ONLY COUNTY IN MARYLAND WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION IS OF MINORITY ETHNICITY. THE TRAIL IS THUS AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE THAT CONNECTS NUMEROUS PEOPLE TO THE GREATER D.C. COMMUNITY.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARYLAND'S ANACOSTIA TRAIL MAKES THE CONNECTION .....	1
MANY POSSIBILITIES WITH NEW TE ACTIVITIES .....	3



People can use the trail to get to local parks and athletic fields. (Photo: M. Betts)

First, the Task Force formed a partnership with the M-NCPPC. Although the concept for a system of trails had been on the county's master plans since 1975, only short, unpaved sections existed. M-NCPPC agreed to sponsor the project by allowing the use of the right-of-way and taking over long-term maintenance of the trail. Having the right-of-way already under the ownership of a public agency did help speed up the approval process.

Second, the project sponsors gained support for the trail from the political leaders and nearby communities. The mayor of one town became an advocate for the project and helped the Task Force meet with mayors of other adjacent towns. An influential state senator supported the project and helped promote the use of state-controlled transportation funds for this project. The project sponsors also held public meetings, and worked with communities to overcome any objections to the trail.

Third, volunteers from bicycle coalitions spent hours mapping the details of the trail alignment, providing a great deal of support to the M-NCCPC staff. When the time came to submit a proposal, the sponsors were ready with a well-developed project scope and funding plan.

As a result of the Task Force and M-NCPPC's work, and the fact that the project would serve a solid transportation need, the Enhancements funds were awarded within a few months of their request.

### Connecting People to Places

The Anacostia trail is more than a recreational facility. People use it to go to school and to commute to jobs. This trail serves the only county in Maryland where the majority of the population is of minority ethnicity. The trail is thus an important resource that connects numerous people to the greater D.C. community.

The northeast branch of the "Y" serves the University of Maryland, two metro stations, an airport and a golf course. The town of Greenbelt improved connections to this trail branch by identifying local roads as signed, designated bike routes, which people use to get to the Metro or other local places. Region-wide, this branch of the trail is used to visit Lake Artemesia which can only be accessed on foot or by bicycle.

The northwest branch of the "Y" splits along two creeks. One path leads to a large regional park in the adjacent county with its many trails and amenities including a carousel

and an arboretum. Along the other path is an equestrian center, a pool and splashdown park. Access to the third Metro station is provided by on-road connections.

At the heart of the "Y" where the two branches come together is the fourth Metro station, which is adjacent to the trail. In order to meet one



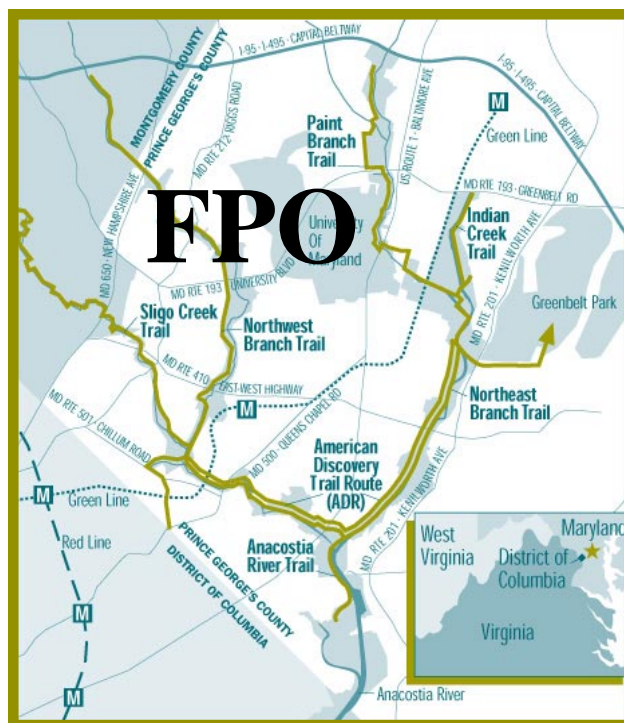
Trail commuters fill the bike racks at the West Hyattsville Metro station (Photo: MSHA)

original goal of the project, connecting the trail to Metro stations, a special effort was made to remove fences and other obstacles that blocked the potential path between the station and the trail. This station is in the heart of a community that relies heavily on public transportation.

### Trail of Today and Tomorrow

The Anacostia Trail is part of a region-wide trail system with potential for important transportation connections in the future. The trail will be extended to the south to connect with a fifth Metro station, and will ultimately connect to a trail that leads to Union Station, Washington's bus and rail transportation hub. The city of Silver Spring, MD, already plans to include connections to the trail in its revitalization plan. The Anacostia Trail may also one day connect with the WB&A Trail, which takes people all the way from Washington, D.C. to Annapolis, MD.

These future connections and the trail system as it exists today would not have been possible without the dedicated work of the Task Force, M-NCPPC, and WSSC. This partnership resulted in a trail system that is a national example of the possibilities enabled by TE.



(Map—MNCPPC)

# Many Possibilities with New TE Activities

By Erica L. Miller, National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

**W**ith the passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), two new activities and two modified activities became eligible for Transportation Enhancements (TE) funds. These activities are: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Education, the Establishment of Transportation Museums, Scenic or Historic Highways Program—Visitor or Welcome Centers, and Environmental Mitigation of Runoff Pollution—Provision of Wildlife Connectivity/Reduction of Vehicular Mortality. The featured projects below illustrate examples of these activities and their common goal of enhancing the transportation experience.

## **Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Education**

Innovative examples of this activity can be found in California and Oregon. The CalTrans Bicycle/Pedestrian Design Education Program, a 3-year project, is to receive \$531,000 in TE funds. The program will train CalTrans designers, safety investigators, and local agency permit-reviewers in Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Design so that CalTrans employees will have the confidence and skills to develop safe, multi-modal transportation infrastructure. By training design professionals to incorporate safety into their designs, the general public will ultimately benefit from this TE project by having safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The second example can be found just north of the California border, in Oregon. Here a “Bicycle Awareness Campaign” was launched with the help of \$272,000 in TE funds and a \$195,000 local match. This Campaign is intended to improve knowledge of motorists’ and bicyclists’ rights and responsibilities, increase acceptance of bicyclists as legitimate users of roads, and improve both motorists’ and bicyclists’ understanding of the rules of the road and their responsibilities to ride and drive safely. The Campaign includes six public service announcements that will be televised over 600 times for approximately 10 months, and a Web page to reinforce the safety awareness message. The project’s target population is anyone over the age of 18 who regularly uses a car or bike for transportation. The Oregon Campaign began in July 2000; their Web page can be accessed at: [www.kgw.com](http://www.kgw.com). Education initiatives such as this will ultimately increase community safety.

## **Establishment of Transportation Museums**

In some cases, facilitating education and enhancing the transportation experience requires a structure. The town of Irvington, VA, part of the Tidewater Region, is preserving the area’s steamboat history through the creation of a “Steamboat Era Museum” with the help of \$220,000 in TE funds and a \$130,000 local match. Construction is to begin



The Irvington Steamboat Museum (Courtesy of VDOT)

in October 2000 with the opening date scheduled for August 2001. The museum will collect and preserve artifacts and photographs and explain the steamboat’s affect on the Tidewater Region. The building will mirror the architecture of the era and will be located within a designated historic area; this area is expected to provide great tourism opportunities for the museum and consequently, benefits for the whole region.

## **Scenic or Historic Highways Programs—Tourist and Welcome Centers**

A tourist and welcome center is another venue for providing information, as Wilson, KS illustrates through the creation of such a center in the Midland Hotel. Established in 1898, just north of the Union Pacific Railroad, this landmark has served travelers of the Union Pacific Railroad, old Highway 40, the Golden Belt Highway, and I-70. Plans for the hotel consist of restoration of the physical structure, and ADA adjustments with an estimated project cost of \$1,024,000. The lobby of the building will be maintained as a visitor’s center and the rest of the hotel will be a bed

*(continued on page 4)*



The Midland Hotel (Photo: KDOT)

**TOLL-FREE TEL: (888) 388-NTEC**  
**IN DC AREA: (202) 463-0641**  
**FAX: (202) 466-3742**  
**EMAIL: NTEC@TRANSACT.ORG**  
**WEB SITE: WWW.ENHANCEMENTS.ORG**

## ...New TE Activities

*(continued from page 3)*

and breakfast. A non-profit organization, the Midland Foundation, owns the building and will operate the hotel and the visitor's center. Proceeds from the hotel will be used for maintenance and operations of the building. Bidding for the project begins this winter. The restored Midland Hotel will once again provide direction and rest for the weary traveler when it is reopened in November 2001.

### **Environmental Mitigation—Wildlife Connectivity/Mortality Reduction**

While TE funds can be used to make the transportation experience enjoyable for humans, TE funds are also available to help minimize the affect of transportation on wildlife and the environment. Two TE projects helping to protect wildlife are

the White Squirrel Sanctuary project in Kenton, TN and the Elk/Vehicle Collision Reduction project in Sequim, WA. In Kenton, reportedly one of four cities in the U.S. that has a white squirrel

©1997 by Craig S. Thom



population, a highway divides the white squirrels' territory and significantly contributes to their mortality. Kenton is re-establishing their habitat, developing a trail for their observation and planting berry-producing trees with a TE award of \$110,000. Likewise, Sequim aims to reduce elk/vehicle accidents on the SR-101 Sequim Bypass. With \$75,000 in TE funds and a \$15,000 match, elk-crossing signs have been equipped with remote-controlled flashing lights and 8 members of the elk herd have been fitted with radio collars. The collars will activate the flashing lights when the elk are within ¼ mile of the signs. Thus, the Sanctuary and

Collision Reduction projects will prevent traffic-related mortality, maintain connectivity and create a safer atmosphere for these animals.

These examples demonstrate the variety of projects possible in the new TE activities and activity modifications. Not only are such projects a possibility, they are also becoming a reality. As of the end of Fiscal Year 1999, over 100 projects in these four activities have been funded across the country for a total of \$34.5 million. Through the new TE activities, Americans are given the opportunity to create safer communities, learn history that was instrumental in our country's growth and protect not only the relics of that history but also ourselves and the natural environment around us. To learn more about these projects, refer to the contact information below.

**CALIFORNIA:** MARSHA MASON,  
TEA BRANCH CHIEF 916-654-5275

**OREGON:** PAT ROGERS, ENHANCEMENTS  
PROGRAM MANAGER 503-986-3528

**VIRGINIA:** WADE CHENAULT,  
ENHANCEMENTS PROGRAM ASSOCIATE  
804-786-2264

**KANSAS:** GRETCHEN GLEUE, TE  
PROJECT COORDINATOR 785-0296-0280

**TENNESSEE:** MARILYN HOLLAND,  
ENHANCEMENTS COORDINATOR  
615-741-9673

**WASHINGTON:** STEPHANIE TAX,  
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM MANAGER  
360-705-7389

**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.

Editor: Megan Betts  
Contributing Writers: Catherine Rice, Erica Miller  
Graphic Designer: Barbara Richey

Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this newsletter reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FHWA and USDOT.