



Opposite – Various pieces of art have become popular rest stops along New Mexico’s Historic Route 66, I-40, and El Camino Real (I-25), encouraging travelers to stop and visit the communities along the way. Here, a visitor enjoys Fire and Ice, a flaming steel sculpture in downtown Grants that combines geological points of interest with a timeline of the history of the area.

Above – Transportation enhancement-funded artworks bring beauty and excitement to multi-modal Union Station Gateway Center in Los Angeles, California.

# Transportation: Enhancing Our Quality of Life

## Did you know?

Transportation is enhancing Americans’ quality of life by funneling billions of dollars, through the Transportation Enhancements Program, into projects that focus on preserving and enhancing our communities and the natural environment.

Most Americans are unaware that transportation is behind many of the improvements in everyday life they see in their communities. Since 1992, almost \$5 billion in transportation enhancement funds have been targeted to projects that improve quality of life and benefit the natural and cultural environment.

Hiking and biking paths, sidewalks, museums, tourist welcome centers, preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods, historic markers and signs, environmental conservation projects, and beautiful landscapes and streetscapes are the results of 15,000 transportation enhancements projects under way all over the country.

The benefits go far beyond construction of new projects. Communities with transportation enhancement projects often experience increased tourism, economic growth and development, as well as immeasurable social benefits, such as healthier lifestyles, spaces to visit with neighbors, and renewed civic pride.

At the same time, transportation enhancements have helped to focus funds and attention on limiting impacts to natural resources and providing environmentally friendly transportation alternatives.

## Facts About the Transportation Enhancements Program

Established by Congress in 1991 in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA), the Transportation Enhancements Program has invested almost \$5 billion around the country in facilities for walking and bicycling, historic preservation, scenic beautification, land acquisition, and environmental mitigation. The program was reauthorized in the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), ensuring that through 2003, about \$620 million in annual funds is available to state transportation agencies for these projects.



Photos courtesy of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

Left and right – The James D. Pfluger Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge in Austin, Texas.

Funding is dispersed across the various categories—with the largest portions going to bicycle and pedestrian projects and historic preservation efforts. The list on page 7 illustrates how states are targeting transportation enhancement funds to benefit communities.

### Looking at the Benefits

The transportation sector is using the Transportation Enhancements Program not only to improve transportation systems, but also to improve livability for residents and create enjoyable destinations for tourists. Projects create links with the past, build community identity, promote community revitalization, attract tourism dollars, and provide opportunities for healthy recreation. Through these enhancements, transportation is improving state programs and policies—including increasing the state and local tax base.

The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse maintains a database of over 10,000 projects across the country in which transportation funding has made a difference in communities. Some examples illustrate the variety of ways transportation is benefiting America.<sup>2</sup>

### **In Meridian, Mississippi, transportation enhancements helped transform an old railroad station into a new, multi-modal transportation center: A catalyst to revitalizing the community's commercial core.**

All three sections of Meridian, Mississippi's Union Station have been restored thanks to a \$2.5 million Transportation Enhancements award, coupled with contributions from Amtrak, the DOT, and the City of Meridian.

# Twelve Ways Transportation Is Enhancing Communities

Transportation is enhancing America by targeting funds to a long list of eligible activities across the country, including the following:

## **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

- ▮ New or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, or curb ramps
- ▮ Bike-lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, and bike racks on buses
- ▮ Off-road trails
- ▮ Bike and pedestrian bridges and underpasses

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

- ▮ Bike and pedestrian injury prevention programs
- ▮ Programs to encourage walking and biking

## **Acquisition of Scenic or Historic Easements and Sites**

- ▮ Purchase of scenic land easements, vistas, and landscapes
- ▮ Purchase of historic properties or buildings in historic districts
- ▮ Preservation of farmland

## **Scenic or Historic Highway Programs—including Tourist and Welcome Centers**

- ▮ Construction of turnouts and overlooks
- ▮ Visitor centers and viewing areas
- ▮ Designation signs and markers

## **Landscaping and Scenic Beautification**

- ▮ Street furniture
- ▮ Lighting
- ▮ Public art
- ▮ Landscaping and streetscape improvements

## **Historic Preservation**

- ▮ Preservation of buildings and façades in historic districts
- ▮ Restoration and reuse of historic buildings for transportation-related purposes
- ▮ Access improvements to historic sites and buildings

## **Rehabilitation and Operation of Historic Transportation Buildings, Structures, or Facilities**

- ▮ Restoration of railroad depots, bus stations, and lighthouses
- ▮ Rehabilitation of rail trestles, tunnels, bridges, and canals

## **Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors**

- ▮ Acquisition of railroad rights-of-way
- ▮ Planning, designing, and constructing multi-use trails
- ▮ Developing rails-to-trails projects
- ▮ Purchasing unused railroad property for reuse

## **Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising**

- ▮ Billboard inventories
- ▮ Removal of illegal and nonconforming billboards

## **Archaeological Planning and Research**

- ▮ Research, preservation planning, and interpretation
- ▮ Developing interpretive signs, exhibits, and guides
- ▮ Conducting inventories and surveys

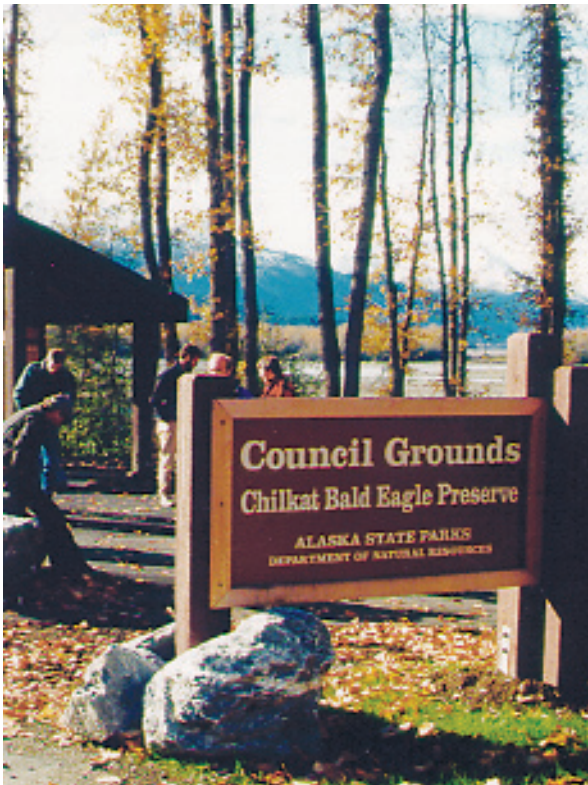
## **Environmental Mitigation of Highway Runoff and Provision of Wildlife Connectivity**

- ▮ Runoff pollution studies
- ▮ Soil erosion control
- ▮ Detention and sediment basins
- ▮ River cleanups
- ▮ Wildlife underpasses and other crossings

## **Establishment of Transportation Museums**

- ▮ Conversion of railroad stations or historic properties to museums with transportation themes





Transportation options have increased to include Amtrak, Greyhound, the local bus system, taxis, and trolleys. The rehabilitated Union Station spurred over \$10 million in private investment in the depot district. This includes new office space, retail shops, a computer-training center, restaurants, a public records storage building, apartments, up-scale condominiums, and a railroad museum. Transportation enhancements have clearly benefited Meridian. The community is thriving socially and economically.

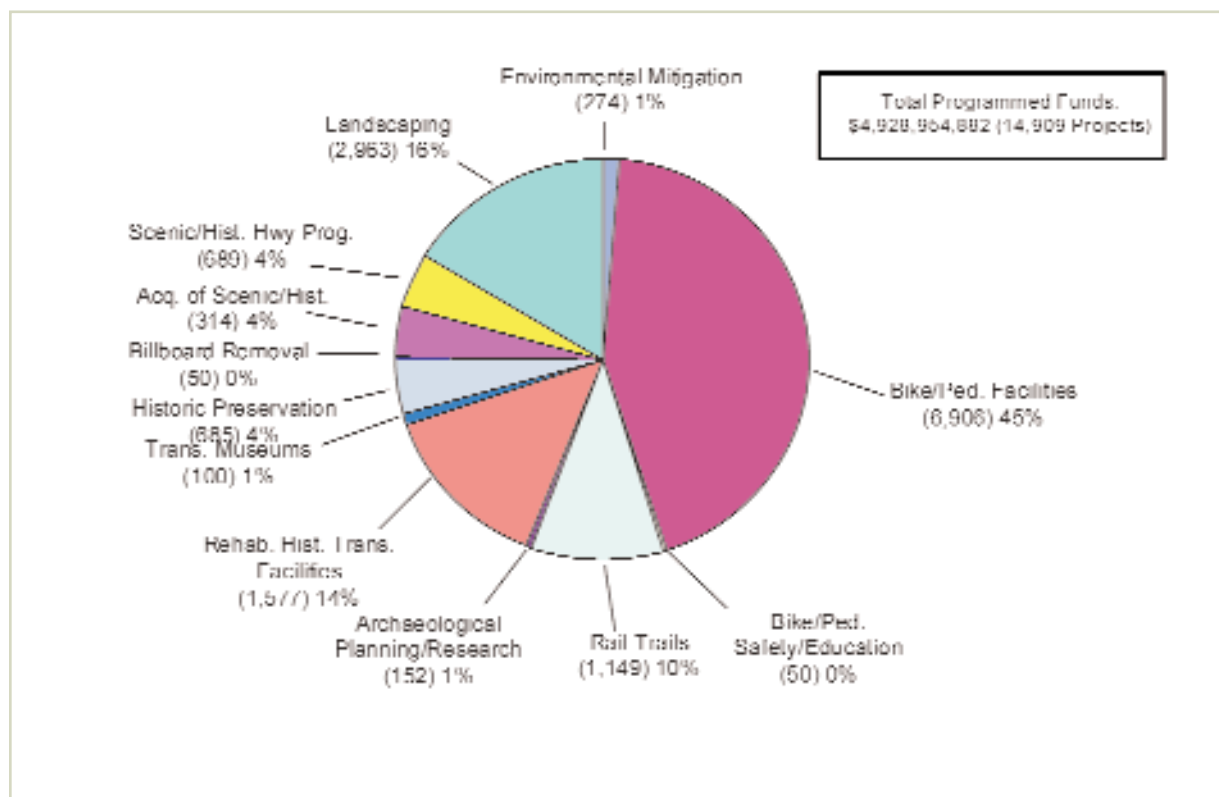
**In southeast Alaska, the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve and Wayside Trail provides visitors a chance to view the world's largest concentration of bald eagles.**

Before the Transportation Enhancements Program-funded wayside, trail, and interpretive facilities were built, visitors parked and walk along the highway adjacent to the preserve. The Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve consists of two pavilions, unobtrusive parking areas, and more than 30 interpretive displays and spotting scopes. The transportation enhancement project has enhanced Southeast Alaskan tourism, ecological education, and economic development. The preserve is a regular stop for three tour companies averaging 500 to 1,000 visitors each week during the summer season. It is the site of the annual bald eagle festival held during the peak eagle viewing period of Thanksgiving to early December, and educational opportunities hosted by state park rangers. The nearby village of Klukwan incorporates the Chilkat reserve's two-mile trail in its annual '100-mile walk' focusing on health

Left and right – Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve consists of two pavilions, unobtrusive parking areas, and more than 30 interpretive displays, and spotting scopes.

It is one of five transportation enhancement projects recognized by AASHTO and the TEA Challenge.

**Percentage of Federal Funds by TEA  
FY 1992–2001**



Source: Federal Highway Administration

awareness. The Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Wayside and Trail is one of five transportation enhancement projects recognized by AASHTO and the TEA Challenge.

### **In Montpelier, Idaho, Transportation Enhancements Program money helped bring to life the National Oregon/California Trail Center.**

To recognize the hundreds of thousands of people who traveled west in search of a new life during the mid-1800s, Montpelier, Idaho—known as Clover Creek Encampment to pioneers traveling the Oregon and California Trails—continues to be a stopping point for travelers heading west. The National Oregon/California Trail Center is located off Highway 89 (the road connecting all the national parks in the western United States), near Highway 30, and the Bear Lake-Caribou Scenic Byway. The center guides visitors through the trail's history with the help of costumed actors, exhibits, a theater, an art gallery, and gift store. The local Rails and Trails Museum is also housed at the center. Schools from three states bring their students to the center when studying the relationship of the Oregon/California Trail to their local history. The success of the trail center and its proximity to a current and historic transportation



Photo courtesy of the New Mexico Arts, Art in Public Places Program, Cultural Corridors Project

corridor encouraged the construction of a new hotel, and the renaming of another hotel to the Clover Creek Inn. As more travelers continue to stop at the National Oregon/California Trail Center, it becomes clear that Montpelier and its visitors will benefit from this project for years to come.

### **In New Mexico, the Arts, Art in Public Places Program Cultural Corridors Program enhances communities along historic Route 66.**

New Mexico's Arts, Art in Public Places Program Cultural Corridors Project uses Transportation Enhancements Program funds and a match of state and local funds to enhance and celebrate the communities along historic Route 66, "The Mother Road" (I-40), and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (I-25). Instead of typical landscaping, artists have built 10 unique public sculptures along these popular travel routes. The artwork reflects local culture, history, and other American icons. The various pieces encourage travelers to stop and visit the communities along the way. In one community, a bike path was built to connect the artwork with the city of Gallup's Sculpture Park. One of the most recent projects, Las Palomas Plaza in Truth or Consequence, New Mexico, was dedicated in 2001. This popular roadside project successfully recognizes the region's cultural history through art while increasing economic opportunities to the surrounding communities.

Above – Artist Tom Coffin created *Roadside Attraction* on the west end of Tucumcari as a homage to the American adventure along Historic Route 66. The monolithic pyramid incorporates road motifs as well as monstrous tail-lights which glow red at night.





Left – Sculptures commemorating El Camino Real, the Royal Road and Tomé Hill.

Right – A multicultural past is celebrated in this sculpture in the plaza at Socorro, New Mexico.



### **The New Mexico Archaeological Records Management Section Project aids in transportation planning.**

Several agencies in New Mexico devised the Archaeological Records Management Section project to develop a statewide geographically referenced database of archaeological sites and survey boundaries. This database aids in transportation planning and archaeological research efforts allowing cultural and historical resources to be taken into consideration at the beginning of a transportation initiative. A Transportation Enhancements Program award for archaeological planning and research was used toward the costs of project planning, data collection, programming, and staffing. It also allowed for the acquisition and integration of hardware and software. This transportation enhancement project has helped reduce the cost of cultural and historical inventory and mitigation involved with projects among government entities and private businesses.

### **In Minnesota, Transportation Enhancements Program funds have been used to restore the Stone Arch Bridge.**

Over \$2 million in Transportation Enhancements Program funds have been used to restore the Stone Arch Bridge, a former railroad bridge crossing the only waterfall, Saint Anthony Falls, on the Mississippi River. The nationally registered historic bridge dates back to 1883 and is now used



Photo courtesy of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

by pedestrians, bicyclists, and a short-line trolley. The Stone Arch Bridge is used daily by commuters and recreation seekers in Minneapolis, nearby suburbs, and the University of Minnesota. The bridge provides access to the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail, a two-mile trail with an extensive array of interpretive and directional signs noting the early days of the city and the historic flour mill district. It is also one of many sites along the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. The restoration would not have been possible had it not been for the partnership between the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the local Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

### **In Pennsylvania, residents enjoy exercising and meeting friends along the 21-mile historic Heritage Rail Trail.**

In York County, Pennsylvania, residents exercise and meet with friends along the 21-mile historic Heritage Rail Trail. Transportation Enhancement Program funds helped build this trail that runs adjacent to existing railroad tracks through 11 municipalities, over bridges, and through the Howard Tunnel—the oldest continuously used railroad tunnel in the United States. A dinner train travels the tracks three times a week. The trail has inspired families and senior citizens to develop regular exercise programs; thus improving their health and creating a sense of community among all trail users. Walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons are also popular events along the

Above – Special events are held along the historic Heritage Rail Trail in York County Pennsylvania. The project has also helped create economic growth in the area.





Photo by Dan Burden, [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)

Above – Rhode Island’s Injury Prevention Program is designed to teach young children and their parents about safety and bicycle and pedestrian laws. Bicycle and pedestrian safety programs are one of the newer Transportation Enhancements Program funding categories.

trail. As a result of its popularity, at least six new businesses—including bed and breakfasts and bike shops—have opened since the trail was completed in 1999. Existing businesses report increased sales, extended hours, and the hiring of new staff. The Heritage Rail Trail is a great example of how a transportation enhancement project can enhance a community socially and economically.

### **In Rhode Island, the Department of Health teaches bicycle and pedestrian safety through the Injury Prevention Program.**

The Rhode Island Department of Health received a Transportation Enhancements Program award for a three-year bicycle and pedestrian safety program—one of the newer Transportation Enhancements Program funding categories. The Injury Prevention Program is designed to teach young children and their parents about safety and bicycle and pedestrian laws. The award is being used to purchase and develop bicycle and pedestrian safety literature and materials for distribution at area schools, police departments, community groups, day care centers, and social service organizations. Funds are also being used to purchase bike safety t-shirts and bike helmets distributed at bike rodeos and the statewide bike safety event held in conjunction with the Governor’s Office, DOT, and Department of Environmental Management. The Rhode Island Department of Health estimates that over 80 percent of Rhode Island cities and towns are participating in this program.

### **In Virginia, Richmond’s Canal Walk is enhanced and restored.**

The Richmond Canal Walk is a 1.25-mile walk through the historic downtown area via the Kanawah and Haxall canals and the James River. A multi-phase \$1.7 million Transportation Enhancements Program award was used towards the cost of canal floor restoration, walls, edges, and a 950-foot section of the walkway. The Canal Walk travels past a former Confederate armory, the Richmond Civil War Visitor’s Center, and Triple Cross—the intersection of three elevated railroad lines. Canal boats, festivals, concerts, the nearby Tourning Basin, Brown’s Island, and other public events on the canal have made the Canal Walk popular with the community and tourists. Plans for mixed-use development, including residences, office and retail space, and restaurants, surrounding the canal are underway. It is expected that the Canal Walk will bring an additional 6,000 jobs and \$60 million in tourism revenue to Richmond by 2010. The city of Richmond and the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation (RRDC) combined the transportation enhancement project with the installation of a new sewer system running under the canals. The Canal Walk and combined sewer project received the nationally recognized American Council of Consulting Engineers 2001 Honor Award for their innovative canal and sewer project design.