

April 29, 2005

**FROM:** James A. Moore, P.E.  
Assistant Director of Project Development

**SUBJECT:** **TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT FUNDS  
2005-2006 PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

**TO:** Regional Planning Directors  
District Engineers

This memorandum describes the 2005-2006 project selection process for the use of Transportation Enhancement funds and supplies some information relative to eligible projects.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 provided funds for "Transportation Enhancement Activities". Ten percent (10%) of the State's Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds must be set aside for enhancement activities. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) continued the Transportation Enhancement Program and expanded the eligible use of funds at a slightly higher funding level. We assume the next allocations of federal transportation funds for the period covering 2005 through 2009 will continue the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program. The federal share for this program is a maximum eighty percent (80%) of the total cost. The applicant is responsible for supplying the twenty percent (20%) local match. This match, with few exceptions, must be a hard match i.e. the applicant must supply the match in dollars. The Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program in New Hampshire amounts to about \$3.7 million federal dollars per year.

## **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

The following projects are eligible for funding under this program:

- Facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians,
- Safety and educational activities for bicyclists and pedestrians,
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites,
- Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities),
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification,
- Historic preservation,

- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals),
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails),
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising,
- Archaeological planning and research,
- Environmental mitigation to address and reduce both water pollution due to highway runoff and vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity,
- Establishment of transportation museums

Attached for your use are guiding questions for eligibility and viability as well as specific principles and questions for each of the 12 eligible categories. This information can also be found at the following web site: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/overview.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/overview.htm)

Based on previous experience, the following should be evaluated when considering the eligibility of projects:

1. The project must relate to the transportation system e.g. the movement of people and goods by various modes of travel, the preservation of the historic values in transportation, protection of the transportation system, etc.
2. In most cases, maintenance projects may not be considered as transportation enhancements. For example, if a town had installed a sidewalk many years ago but it has fallen into disrepair due to neglect, the reconstruction of that sidewalk may be considered as maintenance and not eligible for funding.
3. When reviewing applications for bicycle paths/lanes the regional planning commission should look to see how this fits within the transportation network. Is it part of an overall community plan? Is it purely for recreational purposes or does it also provide an opportunity to remove single occupant vehicles from the road? In the past, during the project selection process, several bicycle path/lane projects were recommended and accepted by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). These projects were part of overall bicycle plans for the communities and would afford an opportunity for commuters to use an alternate mode of transportation. On the other hand, several applications were not selected because they involved the construction of bicycle paths/lanes totally within parks or recreation areas and could not be considered as transportation enhancements. Recreational trails are not eligible for funding under this program.
4. Historic preservation projects have caused the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee some concern in the past project selection rounds. This concern has been basically in the area of the connection of the project with the transportation system. In general, if the project involves the rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities, then the final product should still be associated with the transportation system.

In cases of historic preservation, the facility must have had strong ties to the transportation system at a point in its history.

5. Work completed on any project prior to the application being selected and approved cannot be paid for using Transportation Enhancement funds.
6. Applicants should evaluate the potential impact of the project on the Environmental and Historic resources. Impacts to such things as wetlands, water quality, endangered species, floodplains, historic buildings, stonewalls and archeological sites will need to be evaluated and documented prior to the project being constructed. Mitigating and avoiding these impacts could require significant modifications to the proposed design in order to receive the necessary resource agency permits to move forward and get authorization for construction funding.

## APPLICATION

A copy of the application for Transportation Enhancement funds is attached. The total application should be no more than **5-6 pages**. The applicant may attach additional back-up information in the form of an appendix if so desired. The following are guidelines for the completion of this form by the applicants and the following numbers correspond to the numbers on the application:

1. Applicant Name and Address: The applicant's complete name (or name of organization) and address must be included.
2. Name, Address, and Telephone Number of Contact Person: The complete name and address for the contact person is very important. When giving the telephone number please indicate what hours during the day the contact person may be reached.
3. Sponsoring Regional Planning Commission: Identify the regional planning commission within whose jurisdiction this project is located. The regional planning commission will attach its comments on the project when submitting the application to the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee.
4. Project Description: It is important to present as much detail on the project as possible within the 5-6 page limitation. Describe the project limits, its location, the purpose of and need for the project as it relates to transportation enhancement, and provide plans or sketches, if possible. A map showing the location of the project should be included with the application. This will facilitate field review of the project. Projects must be ADA compliant to be eligible for funding.
5. Municipal Management of Projects: Communities are strongly encouraged to manage their projects. Projects that are managed by the municipality allow for decision making and communication at the local level, and may occur in a more expeditious manner as the municipality can control the schedule of Project Development. Please review the "Manual for Development of CMAQ/TE Projects" available for reference at [www.te-cmaq.com](http://www.te-cmaq.com) and

the “Citizens Guide to Transportation series: Transportation Enhancement” at <http://webster.state.nh.us/dot/public/reports.htm>

6. Project Status: Describe any work that has been completed on the project as of the application date. None of this work is eligible for funding. Include information about the relationship of this project to any existing transportation plan(s), if applicable (e.g. if an application is for a bicycle path/lane does it relate to a community wide bicycle plan?). Documents illustrating public support for the project should be included with the application.
7. Project Cost Estimates:
  - a. Planning/Design/Engineering: Since all projects that are finally selected will be treated as any other federal aid highway project, it is necessary to estimate all costs for studies and preliminary planning activities as well as the cost of designing the project to NHDOT or other acceptable professional standards.
  - b. Right-of-Way: Unless the project can be accomplished wholly within the right-of-way owned by the applicant, a cost for acquiring the right-of-way, at fair market value, should be included.
  - c. Construction: Communities municipally managing a project must follow a competitive bid process, as is the case with the Department of Transportation. (It is important that realistic costs of construction be developed including environmental protection costs, safety protection costs, inspection costs, etc.)
8. Funding Source(s):
  - a. The applicant is responsible for supplying the matching funds. It is important that the application show the amount of matching funds (20% minimum) and also the source of these funds.
  - b. The applicant must explain who will maintain the completed project
  - c. A Project location map must be attached.
  - d. A matching commitment letter needs to be attached.
9. Please explain the status of your previously approved TE projects.

## PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The following will be the 2005-2006 Selection Process for Transportation Enhancement projects:

- **May 2, 2005** - The Regional Planning Commissions will notify the municipalities within their jurisdiction that applications are available at their offices. The NHDOT will similarly notify other state agencies and will prepare a press release for publication in newspapers.
- **August 1, 2005**- Applications must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Planning Commissions by close of work on August 1, 2005. This also applies to applicants from the

private sector. If the project spans more than one regional planning commission, such as a bicycle path, copies of the application must be sent to each affected planning commission.

- If the applicant is a State agency and the project is a specific site then the application must be sent to the Regional Planning Commission in which the site is located. As is often the case, state agency applications involve programs covering more than one municipality and/or region. In these cases, copies of the application must be sent to all affected Regional Planning Commissions.
- The Regional Planning Commissions will screen all of the applications under their individual jurisdiction. This screening should include making sure the form is complete, the cost estimates are realistic and that the project is eligible for funding under “Transportation Enhancement”. Regional Planning Commissions are required to check the appropriate eligible categories. **Five (5) copies** of each of the screened applications along with comments and recommendations must be sent to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation by **October 14, 2005**.
- All review comments noted during the review by NHDOT and FHWA will be sent to the RPC’s by December 15, 2005.
- Each RPC will correct any errors or omissions and send **Fifteen (15) copies** of each application, including corrected applications to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation by **Jan 15, 2006**.
- NHDOT will submit all applications to the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee (TEAC) by **January 31, 2006**.
- During the month of **February 2006**, the TEAC will meet to discuss the applications.
- During the month of **March 2006**, the TEAC will hold a public hearing and subsequently meet to make their recommendations and select projects.
- By **April 15, 2006**, the TEAC will submit their recommendations to the Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.
- The Commissioner will develop a recommendation and submit it with the Advisory Committee's recommendation to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation by **April 30, 2006**.
- The Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) select projects for inclusion in the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan by **May 31, 2006**.
- The Regional Planning Commissions include the selected projects in their respective Transportation Improvement Programs by **June 15, 2006** and the approvals, where applicable are completed by **September 2006**.

- The Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation includes the projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for submittal to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

## GENERAL

State applications will be submitted to RPC's for evaluation of the project. All State applications will not be ranked; instead there would be a recommendation of support (or lack of) from the RPC.

Once the projects are selected, the Department will identify the years in which the projects will be constructed or implemented based on the availability of funding and spending authority. The recommendations on project scheduling will be included in the submittal to the GACIT.

Once projects are approved, the successful applicants will be notified and informed. TE/CMAQ Project Manager from the NHDOT will contact the applicants and discuss project implementation schedules. Applicants should note this is not a grant program and each project will be processed consistent with federal-aid highway procedures as outlined in the TE/CMAQ Manual available to all the applicants through the RPC's or through the website: [www.te-cmaq.com](http://www.te-cmaq.com)

cc: Carol Murray, Commissioner  
Butch Knowlton, Director of Operations  
Jack Ferns, Director of Aeronautics and Rail & Transit  
Ansel Sanborn, Administrator Transportation Planning